

**Trip Report: The Lake District**

**Date:** 4th-5th March 2006

**Group:** Jim Grant (Leader), Lesley and Mike Arrowsmith, Jean and Jim Walker, Bob Capes and Hugh Anstee

**Route:** See below

**Total Distance:** See below

**Total Ascent:** See below

**Weather:** Clear, cold, sunny and snowy

**Saturday 4th March:** Skiddaw Little Man, Skiddaw, Carl Side, Long Side, Ullock Pike, starting from the Skiddaw Car Park at Gale Road near Underscar

**Total Distance:** 10 miles

**Total Ascent:** 2850 ft

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> March:** Helvellyn starting from the Wythburn Car Park at the southern end of Thirlmere

**Time:** 3.25 hours.

**Length:** 7 miles

**Ascent:** 2700 feet.

The journey started at 7am, departing from the Acreage, with Jim G and Mike driving. There had been a hard frost and snowfall overnight, the deepest snow we saw all day was on the A49 between Cuddington and the M56! The snow eventually thinned out and the M6 was completely clear from just north of Leyland through to Keswick and our start point just north near Underscar.

The weather was magnificent with clear blue sky and wonderful winter sunshine, the views across the Lakes all day were breath taking. The path from the car park to Skiddaw Little Man is well beaten and a bit of a flog until it levels out where we hit the snow line. A straightforward ascent over Skiddaw Little Man, where an official coffee break was taken, and on to the summit of Skiddaw. On the top of Skiddaw it was bitterly cold with strong gusting winds but Lesley did observe some yellow stains on the snow plastering the trig point, nobody owned up to leaving their mark! We then descended from Skiddaw down a steep icy slope, with various slip sliding away from some team members, some employing poles and even an ice axe in evidence. Whist crossing this slope Jim W took two phone calls on his Mobile! He has been reported to the Bums ethics committee for breaches of "Health & Safety in the mountains", "being a bit of a poser" and "getting a life" codes. He can expect punitive fines to be

levied; this could include lots of free beers for all people affected by his misdemeanours!

We arrived safely at Carl Side tarn. Where an official lunch break was taken. At this point Hugh (blisters) and Bob (dodgy knees) decided to head off back down via the Millbeck path and roads and back to the car park.

The rest of the squad made the short ascent to Carl Side before heading up to Long Side and then along a treacherous ridge path to Ullock Pike. The selfless leader took 3 falls along this path clearly helping the remainder of the group to avoid the slipperiest parts, he got no thanks for this indeed has to suffer a bit of piss taking about his almost new, very expensive, high mountain boots!

This narrow ridge is well worth doing for the magnificent views, particularly of Skiddaw and makes a fairly steep descent north down to Ling How.

We then found a route, via various paths and some bits of road slogging, taking in a proper indoor ladies toilet break. To be met by Hugh and Bob in the leaders van. A short drive back to the start point to retrieve Mikes car and then onto the B&B in Keswick for a rest and shower. Bob had booked himself into his own B&B that apparently had hot and cold running French Widows!

We had pre-arranged dinner at the Mill Inn in Mungrisdale arriving there at 6pm for a beer or two, followed by a selection of thei home-made pies! If you like pies this is the place for you!

We had pre-ordered tickets for the evening's entertainment, which was a lecture at The Rheged Adventure Centre near Penrith. The lecture was "The Full Mounty" by Alan Hinkes, tales of his conquest of the 14 peaks in the world over 8000 metres in height. He is only the twelfth man alive to achieve this feat and the first and only Brit to do it for which he was awarded and OBE in this years New Years Honours List. The lecture was very amusing with tales of how not to take a wee at altitude, well not into a aluminium bottle, lots of spectacular slides and video clips. Jim W has a career change planned to become Alan Hinkes Marketing Director, he could double his sales of books, posters etc. in 5 minutes! The lecture finished at 10pm driving back to Keswick for a well-earned sleep.

### Sunday 5th March

Ascent of Helvellyn starting from the Wythburn Car Park at the southern end of Thirlmere.

A big English breakfast to set us all up for another day in the hills!

Although the sausages do tend to start kicking around again half way up

the hill, we are away from the B&B by 9.15am. A very short drive to the car park to start the route up Helvellyn, although Mike went the long way round, could be time to invest in a GPS for his car? (Christmas present idea Lesley?)

Hugh (blisters) and Bob (dodgy knees) decided not to climb Helvellyn but the rest of us set off up the Bridleway path towards Helvellyn. The path starts off in the forest through Comb Crags before emerging onto the western slopes of Nethermost Pike. The path is not too steep and zig zags up onto the ridge above Thirlmere. An official coffee stop is allowed, but Lesley had no coffee (note to self: coffee breaks not required on second day of a 2 day trip). Mike was clearly struggling and so decided to lighten his load by leaving his glasses on the ground amongst the boulders, to be collected on the descent.

The route then reached the snowline along the flanks of Nethermost Pike; a straightforward snowy/icy path then leads to the summit of Helvellyn. The views all-round were magnificent, particularly Swirral Edge, Striding Edge and St. Sunday crag, all in winter condition. Looking down the cliffs of Helvellyn there were lots of climbing parties making winter ascents of the various gully lines.

An official lunch break was taken at the summit trig point; we then reversed our route back to Thirlmere and the cars. But not before Jean showed us her magnificent triple salco, with full BUM landing!

Arrived back at the cars followed by an uneventful drive back to the Dysart for the traditional re-hydration therapy.

One mystery that remains is where was Scotchio? He was absent from the Dysart on our return! A full turn out of the Bunbury Mountain Rescue Team was ordered but they were unable to locate him despite an extensive search of all the alehouses in the area!

Jim G