

Trip Report: Hawes in the North West Yorkshire Dales

Date: 17th November 2013

Group: Jim G (Leader), Ian, Colin, Amanda II (Colin's guest), Lynn, Mike A, Lesley, Tony, Jeff, Gerry, Karen (new Bum), Lynda & Brian, Roxy & Mollie

Route: Dodd Fell Hill (668m) & Drumaldrace (614m)

Total Distance: 13.4 miles

Total Ascent: 1680 ft

Weather: Mizzle, drizzle and heavy clag

Time: 5 hours 42 mins

A very early dark o'clock start at 7am to ensure no benightment on the hills! This proved to be too much of a challenge for Gerry who had forgotten about the end of British Summer Time and we had to dig him out of bed, which delayed our departure, Colin picked up Amanda II from the Hollow Tree by the M56. An uneventful journey, via the M6 until we reach Sedbergh to find that the A684 to Hawes is closed, so a 25 mile diversion via Kirkby Stephen is needed! We arrive at Hawes about 25 mins late for our rendezvous with Lynda & Brian.

We park at the old station yard, fully equipped with toilets and set off through the town to locate the Pennine Way heading southwest. The weather looks distinctly poor with low clag and mizzle and after a bit of faffing by the church the Leader sets a fastish pace, with Lesley bringing up the rear as Miss Whiplash to encourage any stragglers, to ensure we are back before sunset. The Pennine Way starts off with the crossing of many grassy fields before merging with a clear track, West Cam Road, with occasional glimpses through the clag down into Widdale. These hills are riddled with shake holes (a shake hole is a steep-sided hole or funnel shaped hole in the ground, these are formed when the ground falls into underground holes).

The first summit of the day is that of Dodd Fell Hill (668m) so we strike off left from the Pennine Way heading up into the thickening clag. This pathless bushwacking is quite trying across this boggy, grassy terrain and we continue to head up following the occasional sheep trod. The GPS really comes into its own, as these featureless slopes and tops give no indication of where the summit is! After a bit of yomping about, the summit trig point looms up out of the clag, it is surrounded by it's own moat and one intrepid Bum jumps up and down and we discover that the surrounding area is sort of solid but is really a floating raft of bog and grass! We now follow a vague boggy path (Tony gets very excited here) back down to the Pennine Way and fairly soon arrive at Kidhow Gate

where we join the Roman Road that runs from Ribbleshead to Bainbridge. Some mutterings here about the Tarmac finish that surely can't be of Roman origin, but it still is a lot rougher than the A6 (Colin and Ian get quite excited here). The route now follows the Roman road high above Langstrothdale at the head of Wharfedale, none of which is visible in the clag, we find a convenient limestone pavement to stop for our lunch. We eventually leave the tarmac and continue along Cam High Road (Roman road) before a short diversion left brings us to our second summit of the day, Drumaldrace (614m). Now the fun really begins and the pathless, boggy, peaty, tussocky, lumpy, bumpy soggy, grassy, haggly descent off the top of Drumaldrace! (Tony is almost orgasmic by now). There are no landmarks or features of any kind other than the occasional shooting butt (well an upturned wooden pallet really) and we are now navigating purely with the GPS and occasional checking of the compass. This is bushwacking at it's finest, trying to stay out of the swamps, streams and shake holes, eventually we find a wall and the gate that leads us onto a green path that winds it's way down to the hamlet of Buttersett, formerly a Norse settlement. An interesting paved footpath takes across fields and back to Hawes.

We say farewell to Brian & Linda and take the back roads to the M6 at Lancaster to avoid the silly detour to Sedburgh. We arrive back at the Yew Tree for the usual hydration therapy after a long but rewarding day out!

Jim G