

**Trip Report:** North Pennines

**Date:** Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2019

**Group:** Jim G (Leader) Mike H, Dave C, Mike A, Lesley, Ali & Dave F

**Route:** Cross Fell (at 2930 feet the highest point in the Pennines) from Kirkland

**Total Distance:** 9.5 miles

**Total Ascent:** 2457 ft.

**Weather:** Dry (mostly) windy with thick clag

An early 7am departure from Bunbury sees only the keenest Bums up for the challenge of another visit to the North Pennines. We decide to squeeze into one car, to help save the environment, and a 2hour 20-minute uneventful drive sees us in the remote village of Kirkland, with Ali & Dave arriving shortly after us.

Cross fell has a fearsome reputation for poor weather, sub-zero temperatures on at least a third of the days of the year, rain on two-thirds and snow, often well into the summer. It also suffers from a phenomenon known as the Helm Wind, a remarkably ferocious and localised gusting of the wind, what could possibly go wrong!

The route starts up an old corpse road linking the church and graveyard at Kirkland with the distant community of Garrigill. Fairly easy going on a path alongside Kirkland Beck, curving round High Cap and then alongside Ardale Beck. The weather is cold and blustery and it is not long before we disappear into the ever-thickening clag.

The going under foot is typical high moorland, a mixture of reasonable paths, peaty bogs, running streams, large puddles and floating bog. We continue our ascent into a stiffening breeze, thicker clag and a bit of mizzle with no chance of any shelter for a coffee stop. We continue the ascent, passing a remote bothy (I bet Bob has kipped here) until we intercept the Pennine Way, just past Crossfell Well. A sharp right hand turn, heading southeast on the Pennine way, we follow a line of intermittent cairns to the summit of Cross Fell.

No mention in the route description but there is a substantial shelter near the trig point where we can escape the wind and drizzle to take a well-earned but short coffee break.

We are now following the Pennie Way, and cairns of various sizes, looking for Tees Head. The navigation gets trickier as the path we need to find down is far from obvious, after multi Satmap consultations and a check on the OS paper map, we set off down towards Wildboar Scar. The path is a little intermittent in places but we eventually locate a narrow path flanked by the occasional cairn. After a mile or so we finally drop out of the clag as we round the flank of Wildboar Scar, we find the most sheltered spot we can and sit down for a well-earned lunch break. The path down is now clear passing the farm at Wythwaite, we walk through the Hanging Walls of Mark Anthony, these cultivation terraces are possibly 3500 years old or maybe only 7<sup>th</sup> century, nobody really knows!

An uneventful drive back down a quiet M6 sees us back in the Dysart at 4.45pm for rehydration.

Jim G