

Trip Report: The Yorkshire Dales

Date: Saturday 14th April 2018

Group: Jim G (Leader) Mike H, Tony

Route: Great Shunner Fell & Lovely Seat

Total Distance: 12.7 miles

Total Ascent: 2054 ft.

Weather: Cloudy & Dry

The combination of an early start and a longish drive seems to put off all but the keenest Bum's! A sign of the times or maybe old age and apathy reducing the levels of enthusiasm?

Anyway, a nice bright early 7am departure sees only 3 intrepid explorers keen to visit the 3rd highest peak in the Yorkshire Dales. Surprisingly there is little traffic, even on the M6, and it takes us just over 2 hours to reach the start at the picturesque village of Hardraw.

Roadside parking, next to a clear fingerpost signed "Pennine Way" means, for a change, we have little trouble locating the start of our walk. The route sets off up a wide walled track, where we are overtaken by a farmer on a quad bike, off to feed his ewes and lambs. He drives into the middle of a field and there is a sheep stampede from all corners of the field to get at the food he is delivering. The way is clear ahead and we overtake two groups of Duke of Edinburgh participants, one group seems to be struggling more than the other but all are carrying enormous loads! A clear path, heavily paved, takes us to the summit of Great Shunner Fell (716m) the third highest mountain in the Yorkshire Dales with great views into Wensleydale and Swaledale. A brief tea break (no coffee today) and a chat with a Duke of Edinburgh Awards minder as she is keeping an eye on the progress of the groups we passed earlier.

We turn away from the Pennine way and drop down following a fence until we make a bee line for the less than imposing summit of Little Shunner Fell, a small pile of rocks in the moorland. There is a fairly clear, not too boggy, path that follows a fence taking us on a boggy passage through the interestingly named "Grimy Gutter Hags" quite a few jokes are cracked here but none that I can repeat in the trip report! We continue along the fence until we arrive at Buttertubs pass.

We cross the road and follow another fence, a 500 foot 1km ascent sees us rapidly reach the summit of the aptly named Lovely Seat (675m) where we take a seat and eat our lunch, while Tony tries to arrange a new windscreen for Rosie.

Now for the interesting bit, the route takes us virtually due south across open and trackless moorland (aka bushwacking). We are heading for High and Low Millstones, where the geology changes from millstone grit to limestone, both outcrops completely invisible until you walk over the top of them. There are some mutterings, but not the open revolt that the usual Bums would be contemplating at this point. Careful bobbing and weaving is required to avoid the many bogs, peat hags and streams that criss-cross this whole area. Undeterred the Leader ploughs on and we finally arrive at a giant swallow hole and a wide track above High Clint. Easy going now before dropping down to Shutt Gate and Shutt Lane, which is followed to the little village of Sebusk. There is a clear path now, through numerous stiles, to Simonstone, but not

before a rather large lamb takes a shine to Tony chasing him across the field! Cue various sheep jokes that are not repeatable, well not in print. Round towards Simonstone Hall and across another couple of fields sees as back at the car at Harddraw.

A very uneventful drive back down the very quiet M6 sees us back in the Dysart at 5.0pm for rehydration. We miss the chance to see the new mutt Foxy, Colin has gone home! A few Bums eventually drift into the Dysart Garden, where we take our first outdoor drinks of the season, Colin does ,of course return, but without the new mutt. Not a problem as he has plenty of photos on his phone, a very proud parent.

Jim G