

**Trip Report:** The Howgills

**Date:** Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2019

**Group:** Jim G (Leader) Mike H, Dave C, Colin, Mike W, Steve, Sarah

**Route:** The Calf from Sedbergh

**Total Distance:** 11.5 miles

**Total Ascent:** 2500 ft.

**Weather:** Wet wet wet & windy

An early 7.00am departure from Bunbury with one late withdrawal, Mike A (sicky, not under starters orders). Mike H kindly agreed to drive as the Leader's car had also thrown a sickie (nasty grinding noises emanating from the rear wheel (started on the way back from The Roaches!)) A slightly shorter than advertised drive time of 1 hour 45 minutes sees us parked next to the river on the outskirts of Sedbergh. The Leader had been watching various weather forecasts during the week and confidently predicted we would be back in the Dysart by 4pm, before the real rain got going, famous last words!

We set off back into Sedbergh, which incidentally was part of the West Riding of Yorkshire only becoming part of Cumbria in 1974 (I think the locals have ignored this). The route takes us through the town and up a track to Lockbank Farm, the 4pm rain starts here and stays with us on and off for the entire day.

The path climbs up steeply, into the clag, before easing off as we contour around Winder, skirting around Arant Haw (Higher Winder) with little enthusiasm for any gratuitous peak bagging in the rain and clag.

Continuing along Rowantree Grains the wind picks up with the vertically challenged amongst us finding it increasingly difficult to stay upright. A clear path takes us over Calders and Bram Rigg Top to the summit trig point of The Calf (676m) the wind and rain mean we don't hang about and abandon the usual coffee stop as there is nowhere to shelter.

The path now heads off descending northeast, but we need to leave it, across trackless country in poor visibility, to try and find Bowderdale Head and a famous sheepfold, without plunging down Cautley Spout! After a bit of bushwhacking (Dave C, one man down) and meandering around we eventually locate the sheepfold. The wind and rain have relented for a while so we decide to take a brunch and a toilet stop here.

Suitably refreshed, although somewhat damp and cold, we turn right and start the steep descent down Cautley Holme Beck. On the steep descent number two man goes down, Dad takes a dramatic flyer landing heavily and breaks one of his very expensive walking poles! He seems uninjured (other than his pride and his very expensive pole) and we continue downwards in the increasing rain. The route now follows a muddy/boggy bridleway back along the River Rawthey valley back to the start.

An uneventful drive back to the Dysart for rehydration to be informed that it has been dry all day in Bunbury!

Jim G