

The Fountains Fell Circuit.

Wednesday 8th October 2003.

Group: Trevor, David & Popsie

Weather: Almost continuous Wind Driven rain with Gusts on higher ground

Time taken 7hrs 50 minutes – Distance 12+ miles

Total Height climbed 1,970ft Average Speed 1.53 mph.

8.20 am Arrived at Stainforth and parked car outside church entrance to leave immediately in damp conditions passing the old Residential Home that is undergoing alterations.

We took the "Ribble Way" and passing the appropriate named **Rains Barn** ascended the hill alongside How Beck. On crossing Moor Head Lane climbed the boggy Great Moor Head to reach Overdale and onto Churn Mill Hole.

We then turned right to join the Pennine Way to go through Dale Head 'Farm' where the greeting was for once limited to one dog barking from the shelter of it's kennel due to heavy rain !

10.40 am A short road walk was then necessary to start the second climb of the day and on reaching the stile a coffee break was taken – cowering behind the wall against the driving wind and rain. Once refreshed we set out to reach the main summit of **Fountains Fell's "Pile of Stones" 2192ft (668m)** from where we set off on a compass bearing to rejoin the main path and descent to Tennant Gill Farm. A new cattle building was in progress with a great deal of noise as bedrock was being dug out.

12.45 pm On reaching the road the finger post gave a vague indication of the general direction to Henside – our next objective but compasses were needed especially as new wire fences have been installed. When we came to a suitable stone wall it was decided to take lunch in it's shelter.

After the break we set off in mist with occasional rain and followed a clear path for sometime until the dilapidated wall turned in the 'wrong' direction. On checking the maps it was decided that we had missed our footpath and set off on a cross country route which brought us to deep sink holes. After negotiating these hazards we started the descent and came onto a track coming from an easterly direction which led us to Henside Road. **Note:** this is a complex area with various tracks and paths criss crossing Knowe Fell – shooting parties often get misplaced and one beater finished up at Buckden ! Perhaps in clear weather there would be no problems.

A road walk towards Cowside was necessary to reach the next pathway which led to Cowside Beck where the footbridge has been destroyed by flooding so that our boots were filled again. Goat Scar Lane gave us a gentle return to our transport.

3.50 pm We were too late for Stainforth's hostelry which was closed and so we retired to Helwith Bridge Inn to quench thirsts and dry out by the fireside!