

TO THE HEAD OF HOPE GILL.

Wednesday 3rd September 2003.

Group Members, Roy, Cyril, Trevor, David & Popsie.

Time taken 7 hours 43 minutes - Distance 8 ½ miles.

Height climbed 3500 feet – Average Speed 1.10.m.p.h.

David once again provided the transport and drove us up to new parts of the Lake District. Trevor had special dispensation from Doris to join us, as they were both off the next day to the Loire Valley for a fortnight's holiday. Possibly to 'wind down' after the visit from the Valencians, which we understand went down very well. Today's walk was planned to give Cyril a new summit, as over the years when we reached Hopegill Head, he would look down at the rough and rocky path to Ladyside Pike, and decide not to make the effort. Today was to be different as Ladyside Pike was to be the first summit, and we would then ascend (which is easier) the slope to Hopegill Head, and the plan was to come down at the end of a day on a grassy slope.

We sped past the usual parking place at Braithwaite, past the Whinlatter Centre, and on over Blaze Bridge until we reached a gated road, and then found our appointed place to park. As usual we were indebted to Margaret for coffee and cake which was enjoyed by all. Our route, new for us all, took us along the side of Hope Beck which would eventually lead to Hopegill Head.

After about a mile we reached a sheepfold in good condition, and we then decided to ascend a dried up but grassy stream bed which would lead us up to the ridge and then to the summit of Ladyside Pike. It was steady going on a reasonable path, through masses of heather which was still in bloom. When we reached the ridge wall, refreshments were taken which gave us a chance to look out over the extensive view to the Solway Firth and Scotland. Once again we had been fortunate, and the forecast said the weather would get better as the day wore on !



David, with Popsie, Trevor and Cyril on Ladyside Pike, with Hopegill Head in background.

The ascent of Ladyside Pike (2300 feet) gave us all the opportunity to see the cliffs of Hopegill Head and see both Whiteside and Grisedale Pike from a different angle. At the summit the obligatory photos were taken and then we made our way to the summit cairn of Hopegill Head (2525 feet). This involved some scrambling and hand work, but eventually the four of us were at the top and looking over to Causey Pike to Grasmoor and the other fells beyond.



Cyril, David and Trevor on Hopegill Head with Grisedale Pike in the background.

We now set off for Grisedal Pike (2593 feet) which we reached without too much difficulty, and then well below the summit and on the way back to Hopegill we had a forty minute lunch break !



David, Cyril and Trevor at the new summit on Grisedale Pike, looking towards Hopegill.

Felling refreshed we 'raced' past Hopegill Head once again, and walked along the ridge to Whiteside. Cyril reflected on the last time we walked along this ridge, with myself, Tony and Bill, which was in October 1998, and then it was raining quite heavily and we were in thick cloud, so we saw nowt! Today was so different as we could look across to the mass of Grasmoor on our left and on our right was a Hope Dale, and we could see quite clearly our route taken earlier in the day.



Cyril, David, Trevor and Roy at the summit of Whiteside, Grisedale Pike just in view !

Eventually we reached the end of the ridge and the summit of Whiteside (2317 feet) where we were able to look down on Crummock Water (a place Shirley would not have wanted to see according to David) and Loweswater. The sun was warm and the vast expanses of heather made the views. A gentleman who walked by was persuaded to take a photograph of us all, and we gained the impression that he had no use for these new fangled digital cameras. He duly showed us his large, heavy and no doubt excellent camera.

We then retraced part of our route for a couple of hundred yards before we started the descent towards Dodd (insignificant at 1200 feet), with David's car in view. We managed to find an excellent viewpoint where we sat in luxuriant heather seats whilst looking over the areas where we had walked earlier in the day. At this point, with Roy checking the route again he noticed a footnote on the Wainwright route which stated that for our road where we were parked, 'it was not suitable for cars' ! We had no trouble perhaps it's been improved since AW wrote his guide.

As usual we finished up the day with a drink, this time in the garden of the Coledale Inn, before David whisked us back home. For most of us the chance to relax, but as we raised a glass later in the evening we thought of Trevor, packing, packing, packing ! prior to his trip to foreign parts. Let's hope all goes well, and we shall look forward to hearing and seeing him on Wednesday 24th September.