

CONISTON IN THE CLOUDS !

Wednesday 20th August 2003.

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

Time taken 8 hours 4 minutes - Distance 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles.

Height climbed 3100 feet – Average Speed 1.34.m.p.h.

This was another first for the Group, as Paul, Cyril's son had accepted an invitation to join the Group ! It also brought a welcome reduction in the average age of the group from 69 $\frac{1}{2}$ years to 64 years !

David had done the driving, and we duly arrived at Walna Scar car park to find Paul waiting for us, having travelled direct to the venue from Lytham St Annes. After the usual coffee and cake we set off for Goats Tarn, with conflicting views on how the weather would turn out. The pessimists won in the end !

A good pace was set, and we soon met a group of youngsters from Rochdale who had been camping out. Some looked as if they certainly didn't enjoy the experience ! Goats Tarn, and then there was the pull up to the Hause and the chance of a break. Our route was to skirt Brim Fell, with the intention to 'capture' the summit on our return. We enjoyed the views to Dow Crag and the Scafells, and though we did not realize it at the time, this was the last views of these areas we would see for the rest of the day.



Trevor, Paul, Cyril and David, with Seathwaite Tarn in the background.

We duly reached Grey Friar (2536 feet) our first summit after 5 ¼ miles and had lunch looking into the mist and very occasionally seeing glimpses of distant fells. Paul then mentioned that he was experimenting with the 'Atkins' diet, which bars all carbohydrates. It sounded interesting and we were all keen to know more, when Paul stated that Mr. Adkins was now dead ! That brought about an abrupt end to the discussion ! We decided to alter plans and not visit Little Carrs, much to Cyril's relief, and instead headed to Great Carrs (2575 feet). Before we reached the summit we passed by the site of a plane crash in 1944, when a Halifax bomber, flown by Canadians crashed on the site and we believe there were no survivors. Cyril whilst in the R.A.F. had flown Halifax bombers.



Paul, David, Cyril and Trevor at the summit of Grey Friar.

We reached Great Carrs and where there are usually wonderful views, there was just cloud and then came the rain. We contoured round to Swirl How (2630 feet) where we met a couple of young ladies in distress ! We ascertained that they were French which gave Trevor the opportunity to speak to them in their native tongue, however they kept answering in English ! Anyway we set them off on a safe route back to Coniston, and we continued on towards Brim Fell.

Our group must have been looking professional or perhaps the walkers were desperate, but again we were asked by a large group, for confirmation as to where we were, and for the route along the ridge. Perhaps it is because we are of a certain age that we appear to exude confidence. We continued and reached the fine cairn on Brim Fell (2611 feet) still in rain and just having had a slight clearance of cloud which enabled us to see Levers Water.

Next came Coniston Old Man, and to continue the international flavour we met a couple of Greek young men. They seemed quite happy with the conditions, though I am sure they would not encounter much cloud in Greece !

Then followed a discussion as to our route of descent. We eventually decided to go 'cross country' to join a path which finishes up at Boo Tarn on the Walna Scar road. We walked on a compass bearing and 'lo and behold ' as we descended and as the clouds parted, we realized that we were in the right place. It was then a straightforward matter to reach the car park and the end of an interesting day.



David, Cyril, Trevor and Paul after the descent from Coniston Old Man.

We finished off the day with a drink at 'The Church Inn' at Torver, where our two beer connoisseurs, David and Trevor, were not too impressed with the drinks. We lesser mortals were quite content with our shandy, coke and lemonade. Despite being bombarded with questions on medical subjects which we thought had driven him to distraction, Paul said he would like to join us again next week. He must think we have something or perhaps he just feels sorry for us ! A route which comes to mind and would show a different part of the Lakes, would be to travel to Haweswater and ascend Rough Crag to High Street, over to Mardale Ill Bell, then Harter Fell and if energetic enough continue over to Branstree and Selside Pike, we shall see.

Just for the record Margaret did not visit the 'Black Horse' as happened on our last trip to the Lakes, it was a one off ! Instead I have it on good authority she attended 'The Golden Lion' ! Where will it be next week ?