

Trevor

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## FIVE MEN IN A CAR –

Not forgetting the Dog.



Three 2,000 peaks above Mallerstang, tackled on 26.2.2003 by David, Roy, Cyril, Trevor and Bill – not forgetting Popsie. Bill was rejoining the party after convalescence (arthritis knee). He began limpingly and ended the day wondering where the pain had gone. He rediscovered as he clambered out of the car back in Giggleswick.

Weather as forecast by Cyril: Much the same as it is (misty, dry, windy). Weather as experienced – ditto.

David packed the rucksacks, etc – also Popsie – in the back of his vehicle, then packed himself and friends on the seats. If we had been cattle, the RSPA would have been making urgent inquiries. Mist over Wensleydale. Hills are a uniform dove-grey. Ballet involving three cars at the narrow bridge near Appersett. Topics ranged from football to the state (more likely unstate) of the pound in relation to the euro.

Patches of snow on W--- B--- F--- (a name codified for the benefit of TR). Lethargic traffic lights appear to have been set to allow for the passage of footloose sheep (and lambs). Buzzard rides the wind. Canada geese on the artificial pond near Nateby.

It was hereabout that David, as instructed by Roy, took to the hills. We were out to bag some 2,000-footers and determined to start as high above sea level as possible – i.e., c1,550 ft on Nateby Common. The road authority has made a car park as close to the Cumbria/North Yorkshire Border as possible. (Maybe they foresaw a movement of illegal Cumbrians to the fleshpots of Yorkshire and wanted a place where passports could be checked). Cyril (catering officer) issued coffee and cake. Popsie, who was to have been kept on a doggy diet of pellet-like biscuits, hoovered up the dropped crumbs.

The grassy area where we usually park was not obvious. From the new park, we faced an anguished journey across a peaty

landscape, complete with knolls thatched with heather and plated with lichen, also peaty pools that looked deep but, being frozen solid, except for the top inch, bore our weight.

Lots of grouse droppings, ages ranging from half an hour to a fortnight. Twa grouse, moving off, low and fast, calling.

We battled with a keen s.e. wind that, perversely, moved round as we travelled, so that we had the wind in our faces for the whole expedition. Bill told the story of the local preacher who was pedalling to an appointment in a high wind; he prayed that the wind would change direction. It did. He had a head-wind on the return journey.



We find the path, just before we have to ford a stream, and start climbing, with Popsie playing a favourite game – retrieving thrown stalks. (No pieces of wood could be found; Cyril suggested we might take one with us on the next trip). The terrain on the hillside is “white” ground, consisting largely of the coarse grass the farmers called “bent”. It is sere after being frosted during the winter. We failed to find any green shoots.

Roy revealed his master plan – to ascend all 2,000 ft-plus summits in Lakeland and the Yorkshire Dales in 2003. He had assessed the total number to be 225. Thus far he had climbed 52, so by the day’s end the figure had risen to 55. Roy had climbed his beloved Ingleborough yesterday- for the 476<sup>th</sup> time.

(We met a man and three sons – from Ashby de la Zouche who, having parked at the roadside, were intent on climbing Nine Standards Rigg – and camping out all night – in their quest to climb all 2,000 footers. One of the lads said he might sleep in the car. Father gently pointed to his rucksack – which contained the expedition’s stock of food and cooking equipment).

We ascended the fellside, walked through another area of chocolate-brown peat and puddles, then stood beside the mountain indicator that Bill had officially unveiled in the year Prince Charles married Princess Diana. The indicator had been erected by the Kirkby Stephen Fell Rescue Team and Bill (to his everlasting shame) had agreed to travel to the felltop in a Land Rover. The indicator stood at 659m and was numbered NY825064. The plaque with the details of peaks and heights was set in a circlet of concrete that had been tarred. The concrete was ringed by a hoop

similar to the type that was once fitted to the wheels of horse-drawn carts.

We trudged to the Nine Standards, at 2,171 ft., assured ourselves there were Nine (plus a seat and stone table). Popsie retrieved Bill's windblown notes. The wind howled around the lofty standards with a Dervish-like wail. In the lee of each cairn was a micro-climate, where the wind was 10 degrees warmer. We now plodded the weary mile to the top of White Mossy Hill (2,175ft). Roy doubled the height of the summjt cairn when he placed one huge water-worn boulder on top of another. We looked around and – lo and behold – W--- B--- F--- had been following us around. It had struggled from its old foundations to taunt us by dominating every view. It almost collided with Great Shunner Fell. Amazing.

Back down the hill we went, with David making a particularly deep impression with one foot on a boggy patch. We had our butter-stop beside an old sheep croft and in the lea of limestone crags. Roy pointed to High Pike (2,105 ft) that rose immensely to the south, with the cores of old snowdrifts in its ancient joints. Up, up, up, on a path that passed through a limestone area with open shafts. Up, up, up passing a dead mole. At the capacious top of the fell, we heard grouse (and saw two birds in flight. Bill heard the melancholic whistle of a golden plover. At the cairn, both Cyril and Bill established telephonic communication with their homes.

The journey was completed with a return to the car (and a chat with the aforementioned party who were setting off (with a spaniel) intent on camping overnight. Bill mentioned the story of the couple of campers who did the Coast to Coast with a dog. They had two tents. A small one was for the dog – which snored!

The next stop was at The Moorcock, for liquid refreshment. A new kitchen had been installed at a cost of £20,000 – a snip – and ere long they would resume advertising their speciality – the 24 oz steak.

In answer to a query about the derivation of “yob” –

**Yobbo, yobo.** (1922). A lout, a hooligan. Slang. An extended form of yob. This originated as a black-slang version of *boy* in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its modern negative connotations do not seem to have become established until the 1920s.

