

Bremex Mountaineering & Climbing Club

Weekend Review for 15–17th August 2008

A weekend on the Coniston Fells – AKA Jeff's Sunshine tours!

Our party assembled on Friday evening at Scarr Head camp site in Torver and after quickly dispensing with the business of tent erection and eating (were the midges always this bad in the Lakes?) - we promptly retired to the Church Inn where the male contingent played 'Dodge the beams' and we all enjoyed a drink or two.

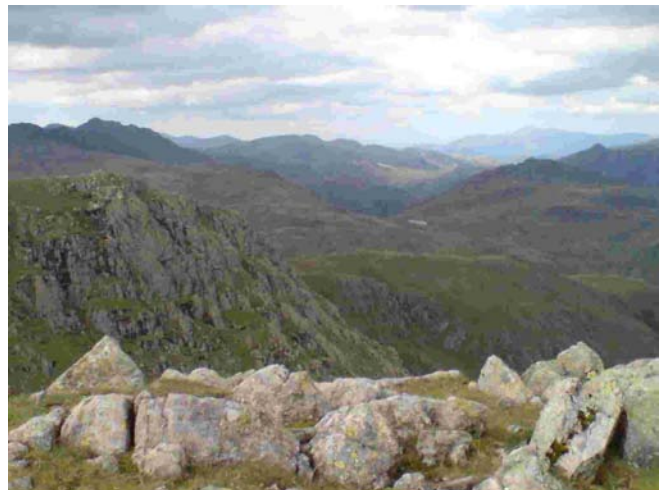
After a damp night the first decision of the day was to abandon the original start to the walk and opt for a less squelchy alternative. Amongst the objectives for the weekend were Navigation Practice, Flora Identification and Wild Camping. We all took our turn with navigation legs and collectively shared our experience and techniques/ideas for effective navigation. Our success rate in locating 'vague springs/ over-grown Tarns/ ring contours and grid line intersections' was encouraging but there is always room for improvement and it was great to be out with others who are happy to take the time to practice and review techniques.

Interest was maintained (and timings complicated) by frequent stops to identify Flora, I certainly learned a lot from the group in an area which is definitely weak for me.

We adapted and extended the route as took our fancy and after a glance down at our intended wild camp site at Seathwaite Tarn where the water level was very low and there seemed to be some building work, we decided to camp further upstream. After a slightly knee jarring descent we followed Tarn Head Beck until we found a flattish spot with a view that met with Sylvia's approval. ☺



Looking down the valley towards Seathwaite Tarn



The Central Fells from Swirl How.

We were allowed a pleasant hour at camp before the rain came, but when it came – it stayed, forcing an early retirement. It rained heavily from 7:00pm until at least 1:00am when I finally had the sense to put earplugs in and get some much needed sleep.

Sunday morning started dry for long enough for us to take breakfast, strike camp, make a challenging stream crossing, and find a tiny Tarn high above camp. Then it was back to Jeff's (Liquid) Sunshine Tours!



*Penny on the first leg on Sunday morning.
of Dow Crag's gullies.*



*The Window at the head of one
of Dow Crag's gullies.*

A further navigation leg in deteriorating weather saw Jeff marginally taking the honours for the nearest (GPS verified) and someone else winning the award for 'most improvement potential'. Great practice for everyone and more lessons learned such as "allow a little extra time for each stop to check the compass bearing" and "watch out for interference from trekking poles on compass bearings".

Once we picked up the main ridge close to the summit of Dow Crag it was just a case of heads down and follow the ridge south over Buck Pike and Brown Pike, occasional glimpses down some of Dow's impressive gullies was as much as we could see until we descended to the Walna Scar pass and improved visibility. An interesting route back through old quarry workings led us back to our camp site in Torver.



The team (minus Photographer Steve) at the Pudding Stone.

This was my first outing with BMCC and I hope the first of many. I certainly learned a few things and more importantly, had a great time in good company.

Thanks especially to Jeff for planning the weekend and to Sylvia, Penny and Steve for the company.

Mark Ainsworth Aug 2008