

Force Fell-Walking Section – Winter Outing to the Lake District

Our annual trip to the Lake District took place between 31st January and 3rd February this year. Twenty serving and retired officers, plus guests, walked for three days in the frozen wastes of the Lakes. We started off with a short seven mile walk on the afternoon of arrival, around the Cartmel area where a quick 'jog' up Hamps fell gave us a view and taste of things to come. Excellent views from the top gave us our first glimpse of well known mountains and hills we were to tackle over the next few days and have done so, so many times in the past.



The view of the Mountains from Hamps Fell

Going for broke on the first full day, we decided to complete a long elusive horseshoe, that of Wetherlam, Swirl How and The Old Man of Coniston. Usually beaten back by terrible weather we embarked on the walk in fairly agreeable conditions, and completed the first hill without too many issues. On dropping off to the col between Wetherlam and Swirl How, however, the weather suddenly closed in, as it does so well in the Lakes, and the second ascent was only undertaken by four of us with the correct

equipment. We battled on, nevertheless, through thick snow and heavy hill fog leaving the others on the downward trek, until the summit was reached. The frozen aspect was awesome and full winter gear was required to stay upright for the walk across the plateau to the Old Man of Coniston. The downward trek was no less eventful as the snow had piled high on the leeward slopes and was 2-3 feet deep in places. Compacted and iced over it made for a precarious journey down. Après walk in the Bulls Head at Coniston was well worth the effort of getting there in one piece!



Pc Pete Gilbert and Sgt Tracey Moran from B Div plus Insp Dave Shardlow from A Div pose in full winter kit at the top of the Old Man of Coniston

The following day started wet and so the group split and some went low in Borrowdale whilst others went higher over High Raise and back into snow again, albeit lower and not so treacherous. Borrowdale was its usual picturesque self with views to die for off Shepherds Crag (below)



Part way through, the day cleared and the sun came out for a spectacular finish along the River Derwent back to the vans at Rosthwaite.

The last day, some went for a short walk up Great Dodd whilst others went for a short walk around the shops at Keswick – whatever takes you fancy!

The trip, as ever, was successful with everyone getting more or less what they wanted out of the expedition. Meals were excellent cooked by colleagues on the trip and the local hostelrys were as accommodating.

If you want to join the Fell Walking Section and go on one of our monthly walks please contact Insp Dave Shardlow at Mansfield South on 805 3160 or 07971562235 or by email.

The walks are usually between 10 and 20 miles, sometimes supported and only cost £5 a time (reviewed at the AGM). You must be a member of the Sports and Social Club and have a modicum of fitness as we are not a rambling section and do attempt some challenging walks – but they are within the reach of most with a decent pair of boots and the right wet weather gear.