

,Coast to Coast Walk

Accomplished by Pam and Malcolm Simmons in thirteen days. June 2011 .



Cliffs at St Bees

St Bees to Ennerdale Bridge. We started the challenge on the 8th June having travelled to Saint Bees by train on the 7th, we were excited and apprehensive, would we complete the walk and would our feet cope!

Our day started high up on the coastal path with views of craggy red cliffs below and to the sound of various sea birds. This mainly grassy path continued for some miles until we passed the village of Sandwith, then walking on to Moor Row, we found the “Walkers Pop In Café”, where a lady had set up her back garden as a café, we were to come across many such places along our C2C walk and they were always a welcome sight. We then continued through Cleator a place once booming due to the iron ore mining industry, but now looking neglected.

Dent Hill was awaiting us, a hard climb up a boggy path to the summit, with Nannycatch Beck trickling below us and views over the Lakeland Fells and the sea behind us. We could also see The Isle of Man and Scotland in silhouette in the distance. Then as always, after you’ve come down, you have to go up! this being an ascent of Ravens Crag hill one of the steepest of the walk. We arrived at Ennerdale Bridge tired but satisfied with our first days walk of 14.5 miles It rained heavily during the evening.



Day two, Ennerdale Bridge to Stonethwaite a walk of 16.5 miles. As our B&B was a few miles from the start we were given a lift by mini bus and advised by the driver to take the North shore of Ennerdale Water as he said the South side would be steeper, and with streams

traversing it that we would need to wade through. The walk was along an asphalt forest track with views over the lake and south shore where we could see other walkers. We then left the forest track scrambling over rocks beside the lake. We met a man who was searching for his dog that had gone missing the previous day when walking higher up in heavy mist, we took his phone number in case we spotted the dog.

We had opted to miss out the high route via Red Pike and High Stile but were keen to climb Haystacks. We therefore took a path towards the summit of Scarth Gap following the River Liza and onto the high level route to Haystacks (Wainwright's ashes are sprinkled here.) Walking up Haystacks was a real challenge for me as it was a scramble up sheer rocks, taking care where I put my feet so as not to slip. The views were wonderful overlooking Buttermere Lake. We then descended a steep path to Honister Slate Mine Visitors Centre where we had an Ice-cream and chatted to a couple who were doing the C2C in twelve days, (we would see them again over the next few days.) Wainwright's route then took us over some slippery rocks by a stream, it was raining again! We decided to forge the stream as we had seen a couple in front of us do, unfortunately it was deeper than we thought and we got very wet feet. We arrived at our B&B in Stonethwaite to find our cases were misplaced and we had to wait for three hours before we could change into dry clothes. It was still an amazing day.



Haystacks.

Day 3, Stonethwaite to Grasmere, a walk of 8.5 miles. We had a steady strenuous climb from the onset, following Stonethwaite Beck we passed numerous waterfalls and with Eagle Crag to our right we followed a path up towards Greenup Edge and Gill Pass, negotiating our way around bogs and big puddles. We met numerous people along this route including Bill who we had seen every day charging ahead, at this point we were not sure of the direction to take so checked with Bill's maps. Three Canadians also joined us and the five of us then continued up to Greenup Edge and down Gill Pass. We then saw Bill again dashing up the hill towards us waving as he thought he had gone wrong, we checked our compasses and maps and decided he was not mistaken. We found that looking at small scale maps we often under estimated distances between one landmark and the next. We then continued down the rugged path following Easedale Beck and into Grasmere. A shorter walk but hard at times because of the terrain.

Day 4, Grasmere to Patterdale, a walk of 7.5 miles. We needed to walk an extra half a mile to the start of the walk today. We had a choice of two routes, either up and over Helvellyn at 3118 feet or to St Sundays Crag at 2756 feet, as I am not an experienced climber we went up to St Sundays Crag. Our plan being to go by Tongue Gill but as the bridge was broken we took the route via Little Tongue Gill, a very steep climb up a grass track reaching a pretty mountain lake called Grisedale Tarn, we took the Grisedale Valley path and saw the Brothers Parting Stone (so called because Wordsworth in 1800 met his brother John here

for the last time, before he died at sea a few years later.) Then continuing along to St Sunday Crag a steady plod up with some of the best views over Patterdale and beyond to Ullswater (Norse for Water with a Bend) we passed the Cape and then had a steep descent to Glenamara Park and into Patterdale. The rain followed us yet again but at least we had our packed lunch before it arrived. Patterdale is a small collection of houses in a lovely valley, unspoilt by tourist souvenir shops and free of crowds. We had hoped to see some red squirrels as signs told us "to watch out for Red Squirrels" but unfortunately we were out of luck.



View of St Sundays Crag

Day 5, Patterdale to Shap, a walk of 16 miles. The day started yet again with rain and low cloud covering Angle Tarn Pike and Kidsty Pike, as a result we decided to take the lower route to Shap via Ullswater shoreline towards Moor Divock, Howtown Pier and Askham Fell. Following the path above Ullswater Lake for miles having spectacular views of every aspect of the lake and the terrain surrounding it. Howtown Pier is where the cruise boats leave from to cruise on the Lake. Askham Fell was an expanse of open moorland with a few Stone circles, some difficult to spot as they were low lying. We then turned east towards Bampton and found ourselves walking along a road so checked our map and found a path across fields, far kinder on the feet! As we were now out of the Lake District there were no more signs for the Coast to Coast Walk (these were very few and far between anyway because of its national park status.) We had a descent across fields towards Shap Abbey, an atmospheric ruin surrounded by fields with the River Lowther to the right completing the picture. The Abbey has the distinction of being the last abbey to be founded in England in 1199 and the last dissolved by Henry V in 1411. Much ornate stonework can be seen on buildings around the area. Shap is a long narrow village lining a wide street and our B&B was at the far end of the village so we had to walk an extra mile! We were however greeted with a cup of tea and scones and cake, some gluten free ones made just for me, a great welcome. From our window we could see Kidsty Pike and wondered if we should have attempted to climb it. We did meet up with Bill the next day and Leonna who was walking by herself, both said they had struggled to navigate through the mist. Leonna completely missed the turning but fortunately met up with a walk leader who took her to the correct path. We will climb to Angle Tarn Pike and Kidsty Pike next year.



Ullswater.

Day 6, Shap to Kirkby Stephen, a walk of 20.5 miles. The day started with clear blue skies and warm sunshine, at last!! Soon after starting out we crossed a footbridge over the main London to Glasgow railway line and then a footbridge over the M6 motorway and beside the active Hardendale Limestone Quarry, fortunately they were not blasting when we passed! As we were striding along we met two men from Yorkshire who told us, before disappearing over a hill, that we were taking the wrong route, we checked our map and decided we were correct but could not get them to hear our shouts, so they continued in the wrong direction. We saw numerous other people in front of us including Leonna. Within a short distance we passed the walled village of Oddendale and soon after, off the path to the west, two concentric stone circles which could just about be seen, we walked over limestone pavements down into Lyvennet Beck and to Robin Hood's Grave, a large cairn in a shallow fold in the moor. We then continued on and came across a lovely farmhouse where they sell tea and cakes for the C2C walkers, here we met the two Yorkshiremen who had eventually found the right path and we laughed about it. We crossed over Tarn Moor and Sunbiggin Tarn an important bird sanctuary, but only heard the birds. As we continued on along grass paths following dry stone walls there were signs telling us to keep to the paths so as not to disturb an archaeological site, which we could barely be seen except for undulations in the fields. This site has not as yet been excavated but is said to hold much of interest to archaeologists. We then continued down and saw Kirkby Stephen below us, a welcome site. The weather was superb all day and the views over the many fells were spectacular, I even got a bit sunburnt! Kirkby Stephen lies at the head of the Eden Valley at 600ft it is the highest town on the Eden River.



Day 7, Kirkby Stephen to Keld, a walk of 14.5 miles. On the high street as we were leaving Kirkby Stephen we saw a sign post with distances written in furlongs and passed two New Zealanders taking photos of a Reliant Robin (Only Fools and Horses fame) as they were amazed to see one! Once again the weather was overcast and there was low cloud over the high ground. Fortunately we met up with Ian who had climbed up to Nine Standards Rigg once before and was more than happy for us to go with him. Visibility was very poor as we climbed and Malcolm and Ian were referring to the maps and their sat navs, the route took us through a very boggy area and we got wet up to our ankles, thank goodness we had our gaiters on. As we approached Nine Standards Rigg, which are a line of stone boulders of different shapes at a height of 600 metres they were shrouded in cloud but as we arrived at their base the sun came out and we had a great view, they are very mysterious. We had to take a certain path to here as there are different routes at different times of the year to minimize the erosion to the peat bogs. We were also now crossing the Pennines. Keld, where we are staying dissects the northbound Pennine Way. By the time we reached our B&B we were wet from head to foot despite our wet weather gear, we were very relieved to find that the B&B had a drying room.



Nine Standards Rigg.

Day 8, Keld to Reeth, a walk of 12.5 miles. We continue our walk through Swaledale known for its Lead Mining Industry until the end of the 19th Century. We took the high level route and soon came upon Crackpot Hall (meaning deep hole or chasm that is a haunt of crows) it is now a ruin but did belong to a mining manager. We had a steep ascent on a rocky path at the edge of a waterfall. We continued to climb to Gunnerside Moor towards Blakethwaite but missed the turning and had to take a longer route. By the time we reached Gunnerside ruins the skies had opened so we struggled to get our waterproof legging on, only for the sun to come out!! We met Bill and two other men who had followed the correct route. The walk continued up Bunton Hush Gully towards Old Gang Smelting Mill which was being renovated and I would imagine will be quite impressive when completed. Again we were unsure of what direction to take but after consulting the compass and GPS, we then had to negotiate some boggy peat areas but fortunately they were not as bad as the previous day. By mid afternoon we arrive in Reeth which is a very picturesque village with a village green with pubs and a few tea rooms, a typical Yorkshire Dales village which was used as a location for the series "All Creatures Great and Small" televised in the 1980's, it is also the main market town for Swaledale. We sat down on a bench outside one of the pubs in brilliant sunshine and had a drink. We also met up with the two men we had seen earlier in the day and had a chat, they were doing the C2C and we compared our trips.



Reeth

Day 9, Reeth to Richmond, a walk of 12.5 miles. Following the River Swale a wide meandering river, we walk across many fields divided by dry stone walls and various bridges over small streams, taking a leisurely stroll uphill towards Marrick Priory Ruins, although some of it has now been converted into a leisure centre. We then enter "Steps Wood" where we have to ascend the Nuns Steps, 375 of them built by the nuns as a walkway to the priory! We continue our journey passing Elaines Country Kitchen at Nun Cote Farm the last hill farm, leaving the Pennine Way. As we continue uphill we have clearer views of Richmond below us with views of the 11th century castle. There are many benches as we come down towards Richmond so we sit down and enjoy the view and have our lunch in the sunshine. Today we met Bill again and the three Canadian ladies, Bill was taking a rest the following day and meeting up with his wife and the Canadians were taking a different route so it seemed as though we would not see any familiar faces over the next few days. We met a group of 6 Americans who were doing the C2C from East to West. As we had some friends who lived close to Richmond we went to their house for a very pleasant meal.



Day 10, Richmond to Osmotherley, a walk of 24 miles. The day started in fine rain which continued all day, today was the least interesting for scenery as we spent hours pounding roads and across muddy fields. At one point when we looked back we had views over The Vale of Mowbray and the Pennines. The last few miles were a nightmare, the path we were advised to take was through woodland and did not exist so we were clambering over fallen trees and through brambles without being able to see where we were putting our feet. The only consolation was that we saw three hares and a Roe deer. We then had to cross the A19 road trying not to be hit by very fast moving traffic, not an enjoyable day on the whole. Osmotherley had a nice pub where we had a welcome meal.



Day 11, Osmotherly to Blakey, a walk of 21miles. Most of the day we were following the Cleveland Way and then a disused railway track. We walked through woodlands and across moorlands in the pouring rain, at one time coming down in sheets (we walked very fast then) As we travelled along the disused mine rail track we saw numerous vintage tractors in a convoy all stationary, the gate they were to pass through had not been opened as promised and they were waiting for someone to come and open it. They take part in this event every year for a local charity, it was a very impressive site. The B&B where we were staying was perched on a hill overlooking the moors, the fourth highest hotel in England and the views were amazing. The only other building for miles was a hotel next to it. It had been so wet that my rucksack had a few inches of water at the bottom of it. Despite the rain it was a great adventure today.



Farndale Moor.

Day 12, Blakey to Egton Bridge, a walk of 10miles. Much of the walk continued across moorland today and it was warm and sunny in contrast to the previous few days thank goodness, perhaps our boots would dry out today, not a pleasant experience walking in wet boots! Despite the desolation of the moorlands the views are quite beautiful at times. One site which was interesting was a white painted boulder with a face painted on it "Fat Betty" where we were supposed to leave a gift for other travellers, of a piece of fruit or a biscuit bar and take something ourselves, there was an old orange and a few nurofen tablets which we did not fancy, we met up with the three Canadian ladies who were mystified by this. Our walk then took us towards Glaisdale and along a path of old railway sleepers to Egton

Bridge. As it was a short walk today we arrived at the hotel at 2pm and sat outside in the beer garden and relaxed for awhile. When we went down to the restaurant we met Ian's brother (it was Ian who we had walked up to Nine Standards Rigg with some days earlier) His brother had met him at the end of the walk and we had met him briefly, he and his wife were staying in Egton Bridge. We got chatting to an elderly couple who had travelled from Guernsey, their car having broken down they were having a meal whilst waiting for it to be repaired. He was ninety years old and had been a pilot in the R.A.F. during the Burmese War and had numerous tails to tell. It was a pleasant evening.



Fat Betty (Fat Betty on right)

Day 13, Egton Bridge to Robin Hoods Bay, a walk of 16 miles and the final walk of our trek. We walked for a few miles past Egton Manor and along an old toll road where the original toll charges can be seen on a board hanging from Toll Cottage. We arrived at Grosmont just in time to see two steam trains chug into the station. Grosmont is a one street village with a shop where we could buy some food for the day ahead. We then climbed steeply out of the village to Sleights Moor and continued climbing towards Littlebeck and into Littlebeck Wood along a well trodden path, still rising until we reached Hermitage Boulder hollowed out to form a small cave, with a sign above the entrance saying 1790. At last we started to descend to find Falling Foss Waterfalls and Tea Garden where we had a welcome cup of tea, very picturesque place to stop. We met up with the Canadian ladies again. We crossed over Sneaton Low Moor to a point in the road where we could either go over more boggy moor land or along a road, we opted for the road as our feet were wet enough already. Where the moor path and road meet we met up with David who we had walked with early on in the C2C, which was a pleasant surprise, he joined us for the rest of the walk to Robin Hoods Bay. We had to walk along a road for some distance before we reaching the coastal path and closer views of the coastal landscape which was long expanses of sheer eroded cliffs dropping into the sea. We had warm sunshine and clear blue skies as we neared the end of our walk, which seemed very long at this point. We continued through the main street of Robins Hood Bay towards the sea, fortunately the tide was out so we were able to drop the stone that we had brought from St Bees beach, into the sea, an old C2C tradition. The three of us were so exhilarated to have completed the walk we were hugging and shouting. We went into Wainwrights Bar and had a celebratory drink, signed the C2C book and bought a T shirt with Coast to Coast on it. We met David for a meal that night, he was staying at a different B&B, we also saw the three Canadians it was a good way to finish our adventure!



Cliffs Robin Hoods Bay

Day 14 Our journey home by train. We ambled down to the beach to find the tide was right up to the wall so there would be no paddling today! We decided to investigate the numerous narrow alleyways with houses on either side, very attractive. We returned to our B&B and awaited a taxi to Whitby which was a twenty minute journey. We had two hours to spare as our train was not until 12.40 hours so we had a drink in a café. It rained heavily for a few minutes and then we sat on a bench overlooking the harbour with excellent views of the boats and Whitby Abbey. The train was on time, we travelled through the Eskdale Valley and saw some of the paths and scenery we had walked along. We saw two fallow deer skittering through the fields, which was a bonus. We arrived back at Crewe at 18.10 and were picked up by friends who also gave us an enjoyable meal. We both slept soundly in our own comfy bed. WE HAD DONE IT! AN EXPERIENCE OF A LIFE TIME.



We did it



Stone Dropping