

Hellifield to Otterburn

Saturday 16th January 2010

Distance: 8 Miles

Time taken: 5 hours

Graham Thomas (Leader)

Denise

Terry

David (Area Secretary of Mid Lancashire Ramblers)

The weather had been very cold for the last 3 weeks with snow and ice.

At 06.30am as I lay in bed, the rain was buffeting hard on the window and it wasn't conducive for walking. I decided to go to Hall gate and cancel the walk.

I arrived and found one member waiting. We chatted and because the rain had stopped with a forecast to improve later on we decided to continue with the walk.

After picking one more member up we proceeded to Hellifield. I, as the leader had to go anyway as some members go straight to the venue and sure enough there was one more walker there. So now we were 4.

Started the walk at 11.00am and walked through Hellifield on the main A65 road to the east for a few yards before turning left Haw Grove with terraces on both sides. This soon became a track that crossed the railway. This section and beyond on Haw Lane track was covered in compacted ice and was very slippery so we had to walk on the edge on the grass.

Haw Lane was just the same but as it was a lot warmer, the ice was melting with a lot of water just underneath the ice forming a groove about 12 inches wide so you could walk up it. Walked on a bank by the side of track.

A tractor came up the lane carrying bales of hay for some highland cattle that were in a field further up the lane. This broke the ice up further giving us a chance.

We caught him up and chatted for a while. He told us about some more cattle up on the Moor. He told us that he had to put a shovel on the front of the tractor to act like a snow plough to gain access in the lanes blocked by high banks of drifted snow.

We carried on up the lane that passed through a gate and into a field with Weeningber Hill to the right. We then continued to a gate that was the start of Dacre Lane and continued down to Otterburn. Went left to cross Otterburn Beck via an old hump backed bridge. Turned left straight after and had a rest sheltering by an adjacent cottage.

Continued up this access to Grove Farm and the track by the beck. At a gate, beyond wasn't a right of way but the path went through a gate on the right and ran along the edge of a hillock. Eventually descended to High Barn and sheltered at the Barn for lunch.

Followed the access track down to the adjoining farm by Pot House Hill. A gate led onto the open Moor. By flanking a hillock, passed through a gate and across next field to Orms Gill Green Lane. Walked along this very icy lane to the left and soon passed through the hollow of Orms Gill Farm farmyard.

Followed a track beyond and soon found a stile on the left to cross 2 fields filled with knee high snow. This made walking very tiring.

At a footbridge just south of Crake Moor Covert, I had to make a decision as the warmer air coming in from the east hitting the cold ground was creating a fog. This was freezing and the light was going fast.

I decided to take a short-cut but this would take us back to Haw Lane and all that ice but we were all of the same mind, which was to get off the Moor as the going underfoot was very energy sapping.

Walked to a track and turned right then after a gate, turned right and walked over Ling Hill. The freezing fog was fast approaching from behind.



With Newton Moor to the right and Newton Gill to the left, a pair of ravens passed in front of us and their kronking seemed to be bidding us farewell from the high; wild snowy moors. Had to walk through the herd of highland cattle that were happily feeding on the hay that the farmer had brought to them earlier.

Retraced our steps back down Haw Lane to

Hellifield.

After changing we visited Hellifield House Social Club for a well deserved drink. This club is situated opposite The Black Horse public house and had a very cosy atmosphere.