

# TRICOUNI NEWSLETTER

## AUTUMN 2015



Those in attendance were Richard and Katie Stockwell, David and Joyce Clode, Karen Clode and John Caldwell, Helen, Roy, Emma and Peter Cross, Stuart, Kristina, Raya and Iris Clode, Peter Leigh, Lynn Leigh, Mark Champion and Sandi Ling. Vicki Lincoln had to cancel at the last moment due to illness in the family.

THURSDAY APRIL 2<sup>ND</sup> 2015

Joyce and David Clode and Richard and Katie Stockwell arrived early so took advantage of the sunny weather with the intention of doing a round near the Whinlatter forest. The walk didn't quite go to plan as many of the trees had been cut down and the area was nothing like the description in David's book! After following the forestry track uphill in a Northerly direction parallel to Aiken Beck we branched off left at the brow of the track towards Lords Seat and then descended contouring round to Broom Fell and onto Graystones via Widow Hause and finally onto Kirk Fell. This is where the path completely disappeared so we had to find a way down the steep grass bank picking the best route as we went towards the Whinlatter Pass at Scawgill Bridge. The walk was 13km and took 4 hours and 40 minutes- not quite as planned. The views of Skiddaw and Hellvelyn were superb and we could see all the way to Scotland. Although there was snow on the tops it was not cold.



Helen, Roy, Emma and Peter also took advantage of the lovely weather and did a circuit to Helm Crag in a clockwise direction opposite to Wainwright lasting 2 and half hours. Helen was busy with her phone on the top! Various members of the group took different routes to the top but all got back safely. The highlight on the way down was seeing some Indian runner ducks at the farm.

### FRIDAY APRIL 3<sup>RD</sup> 2015

The weather was a little disappointing after the lovely sunny Thursday with low cloud, fog and drizzle. Cloud was as low as 400m.

Stuart, Kristina, Raya and Iris went to Hilltop farm a firm favourite with Iris and had lunch in Grasmere before heading to the Bowderstone to do a bit of climbing but it was too wet for them to get very enthusiastic!

Joyce and David, Karen and John, Katie and Richard, Helen, Roy, Emma and Peter, Peter and Lynn all met up near Church Bridge near Troutbeck to walk up the valley a 4 hour walk from the Pathfinder book. Conditions were as described with much low cloud and drizzle! The route took them up a stony path towards Green Head descending towards a ford and on towards Lowther Brow where it was possible to return via a foot bridge on the other side of Hagg Gill. Feeling intrepid despite the weather the group continued on to the north end of the Tongue where they ascended along the ridge having lunch by a cairn and then descending on a steep grassy path to rejoin the path from earlier and then following the path to Ing Bridge and branching left onto a bridleway which reached the valley road and led to a path back to the church.





Mark arrived late at about 2100 due to traffic on the way up. Sandi had had a fall earlier in the week and was unable to drive up after all.

### SATURDAY APRIL 4<sup>TH</sup> 2015 (KATIE'S 50<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY!)

The weather forecast was for some sun but remaining cold with low winds. There was some thought as to whether there was still snow on the tops as conditions had been quite difficult on previous days.

Lynn, David, Karen and John headed up the Miners track towards High Spy and onto Maiden Moor and then to Catbells and Portinscale catching the open top bus back from Keswick but needed hard hats due to the branches attacking them en route!.

Roy, Emma, Peter and Peter Leigh did the Buttermere Horseshoe with Peter Leigh leaving the group at Buttermere to have ice-cream instead (!). They too went up the miners track to High Spy and onto Dale Head, Hindscarth, Robinson where the group split and Peter Leigh came down at a leisurely pace and the others raced off to complete the round via Red Pike, High Stile, High Crag and Haystacks back to the Honister Pass to catch the bus at the top, getting back just in time for drinks to celebrate Katie's birthday in the Library!



Joyce, Stuart, Raya and Iris walked from Seatoller House to Grange on the low track joining the high track with Raya and Stuart going up Castle Crag being Raya's first Wainwright. They celebrated by having ice-cream in Grange and a trip on the open top bus.

Helen, Katie, Kristina and Richard walked to Stonethwaite from Seatoller up to Dock tarn and onto Great Crag via swampy ground and then a cliff ascent - they had some difficulty finding the best path! They had lunch by the cairn and descended to Watendlath and onto the Lodore with the intention of walking back via Grange. They came out near Shepherds Crag looking forward to a cup of tea and cake to celebrate Katie's birthday but sadly the cafe was closed. Setting off for Grange in search of cake and tea they met Stuart, Iris, Raya and Joyce at the bus stop so decided to forgo cake at Grange for a trip on the open top bus back to Seatoller.



The open top bus was very popular with Tricounis today!

Sandi arrived late in the afternoon catching the train up.

SUNDAY APRIL 6<sup>TH</sup> 2015

It was a lovely sunny day with low wind. The Easter egg hunt was enjoyed by the small members of the group!



Mark and Sandi went to Cogra Moss lake near Lamplugh where they walked around the lake a circuit of 3.6 miles.

Richard has written his version of the day out at Cam Crag.

An ascent of Cam Crag.

Bearing in mind that she is somewhat nervous about heights and 'drop-offs' such as those experienced on Striding Edge on Helvellyn, or Sharp Edge on Blencathra, I never expected Katie would ever agree to tackle a long scramble such as Cam Crag, let alone actually volunteer to do it! But so it turned out, and on Easter Sunday this year we set off from Stonethwaite, in the company of Peter Cross, to make our way up Langstrath, and an hour and a quarter later we found ourselves at the foot of the rocky start of the ridge.

Luckily, for it can get quite popular at peak times, there were no other contenders. After some deliberation we agreed on the precise place to start. This is important because to get the full value from the experience you have to start correctly, then keep to near the right-hand edge, which is where the most interesting, (and difficult), rock lies. The rock fades into the hillside on the left hand side, so it perfectly possible to 'cheat', avoid all the most difficult bits, and even walk up alongside it there. Cam Crag seen from below looks like a more or less continuous piece of rock, but in fact is divided up into steep sections, interspersed with rock and grass set at an easier angle. The guide book describes it as 'episodic'.

We all three soloed the first easy pitch, but from there on I decided that Katie's confidence would be boosted by her wearing a harness and being belayed with the rope we had brought for the purpose. I had also brought along a small leader set of 'Nuts' and 'Friends', but in the event needed only a couple of Karabiners and thin Dyneema slings to set up the anchors.

As I wanted to stand while belaying, so that I could visually check Katie's progress as far as possible, I found it most convenient to use the very old-fashioned, but still effective in this context, shoulder belay. And so we progressed we two, virtually Alpine-style, Katie 'following through' on the easier

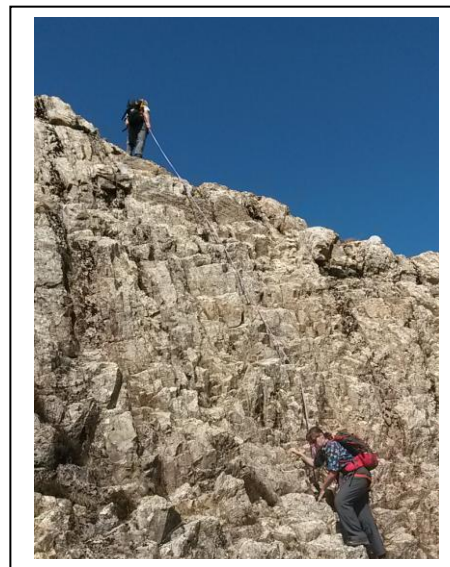
sections, and with Peter soloing close behind and offering advice and encouragement. Thanks Peter, that was most helpful.

After a couple of hours, a total of 11 pitches and nearly 200m of ascent we finally gained the top of the Crag, nicely in time for a late lunch. Just as well, since Katie's arms were by now complaining! Cam Crag is rated as a Grade 2 scramble. It proved to be a very satisfying expedition, and while not technically very difficult maintained interest throughout, while in 2 or 3 places on the route even the two rock climbers in the party had to think carefully about what they were doing.

To return to Seatoller from there, apart from descending alongside Woof Gill then going back along Langstrath, there are several options. One could, for instance, turn left SW and make for Glaramara. I'm aware also of an unmapped path in the opposite direction that comes down near Stonethwaite, descending steeply in the woods near Little Stanger Gill.

But the route we took was over Rosthwaite Fell to Tarn at Leaves, then down a path, (with great views across Combe Gill to Raven Crag), and shown on the OS map heading NW then N. It joins the Borrowdale road near Strands Bridge, but before then an unmapped permissive branch leads back by the campsite and church to Stonethwaite.

Incidentally, the path down from Tarn at Leaves is described elsewhere as 'faint and indistinct'. Although it is not at all difficult to find the way down here, 'invisible' would be a more apt description for the path itself, at least until one is almost down off the fellside!

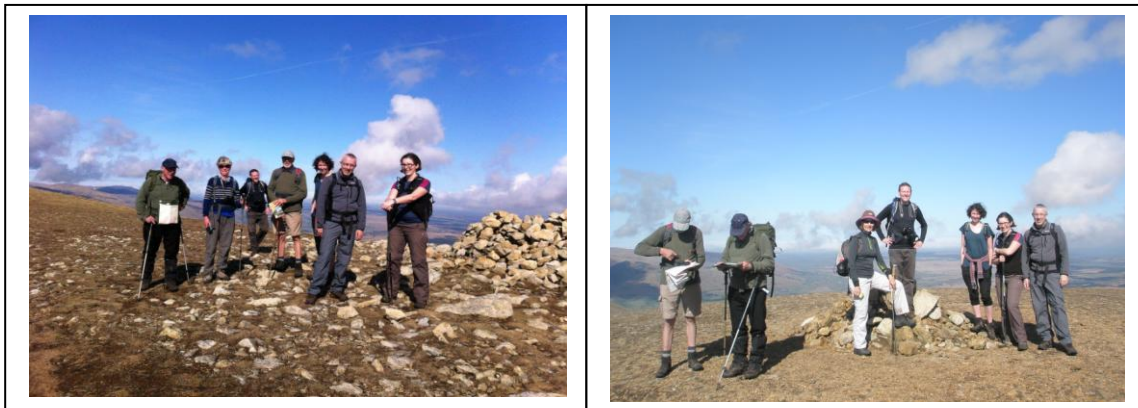


David, Joyce, Kristina, Raya and Iris also walked along Langstrath passing the campsite and frolicked in the sun falling in the water and enjoying the scenery. David, Joyce and Kristina didn't fall in the water as much as Raya and Iris!

Peter Leigh, Karen and John, Helen, Roy and Emma, Stuart and Lynn set off to do the Dodd walk that Peter had tried to do the previous October. They started from the village hall in Legburththwaite and ended at Lowthwaite so had to park a car at each end. Some of the party climbed Raise but Peter, Helen and Lynn did not. The group climbed up Sticks Pass to Stybarrow Dodd where they saw Skylarks and Highland horses. There was skiing at the top of Sticks Pass but the group decided the walk was enough for them without extra skiing activity!



They then went on to Watson Dodd, Great Dodd, Calfhow Pike, Clough Head and White Pike and came down via the Patterdale road to St John's in the Vale.



### MONDAY APRIL 6<sup>TH</sup> 2015

The weather forecast was for low cloud clearing to sun. Peter Leigh, Lynn Leigh, Katie and Richard and Joyce and David decided to do a 3 hour walk around Sheffield Pike out of the Pathfinder book as Peter and Lynn had to drive back to Kent and didn't want to leave too late. They parked at the National Trust car park at Glencoyndale. The weather was very foggy to start but did clear away to lovely sunshine by the time we were on the top of Sheffield Pike. The path rose steeply to begin towards Sheffield Pike via Blea side and Nick Head. There were lovely views across to the Dodds and the Helvellyn range where you could still see some snow on Striding Edge. They then descended towards Heron Pike on a boggy path and downward on a narrow winding path towards Glenridding Dodd where you have to climb up again out of the coll to the cairn where they had lunch and then descended to the col again to descend on a very muddy and slippery path to join the road to return to the car. The 3 hour walk turned out to be more like 4 hours!



The rest of the group returned home by various routes some visiting friends and family en route.

TUESDAY APRIL 7<sup>TH</sup> 2015

Joyce and David met up with Karl and Marie their friends from Carlisle and did a walk around High Rigg. High Rigg is a lovely hill with good views all around, especially Blencathra. They parked on the grass verge off the A 591 just before the St John's turn off. They headed north over High Rigg until they reached the church and then returned along the Coffin Route stopping for tea at Low Bridge End Farm. They chatted with the owner who told them of the trials and tribulations of farming sheep.

Richard and Katie were en route to Yorkshire so decided to do a short round from the Pathfinder book around Dalemmain and Dacre starting at Dalemmain house. The route went over the hill, along the river and back thru Dacre dropping into the church yard to see the unusual sculptures of the Dacre bears and along the back entrance to Dalemmain house. The walk took just under 2 hours so time for tea and cake before setting off to Barnoldswick.

John crossing the stile in the rain

in the middle of nowhere!!!!



How not to cut the bread at Seatoller!

Karen was not responsible ☺



Someone to eat the leftover bread ☺

Thank you to Richard for this extra story for this edition of the Tricouni news.

A Tale Of Two Compasses “It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.” (Apologies to Charles Dickens).

This is a cautionary tale. After the Easter Seatoller Tricouni Club meet Katie and I spent a week or so walking in the Yorkshire Dales. After doing a couple of walks it became clear that the author of the walking guide we were relying on had a habit of sometimes writing NE when he really meant SE.

So naturally from then on we thought it wise to double check, especially at the start of each route. So at the start of the third walk we duly pulled out Katie's compass from her rucksack and compared the notes and the little sketch map provided and checked these against the terrain, using the compass to orientate everything.

To our puzzlement it somehow wouldn't all fit together. After a bit of poll-scratching I started to suspect the unthinkable - the compass must be wrong, which I confirmed by checking the position of the Sun. Now as ex-yachties we are very familiar with the necessity of keeping a magnetic compass clear of other magnets, ferrous metal etc., but this didn't somehow seem likely to be the problem, standing out in the open and having neither a 20 horsepower diesel engine nor iron keel in the near vicinity!

Anyhow, we easily managed to complete the walk without the aid of said compass and on our return to our accommodation I compared the offending instrument with my own. Lo and behold they pointed in opposite directions! Not only that, but the one at fault was very sluggish. I put my 'Radio Ham' hat on and had a think and I believe I now know the cause.

And the moral of the tale? **DON'T KEEP YOUR COMPASS TOGETHER WITH YOUR MOBILE PHONE!!!** For not only does your mobile phone have a small, but powerful, permanent magnet for its loudspeaker function, but also when someone calls or texts you, the ring tone voltage through the coil around it causes it to emit a series of strong electro-magnetic pulses, which are all in one polarity - hence, I believe, the reversal of the compass magnet.

So don't put them together in the same rucksack pocket but try to keep your phone at least 2', (60cm) away from your compass. This should be enough to be a 'safe compass distance'.

Happy & safe walking :=)),

Richard



What are they doing? Captions to the Editor!