

The 117th KFellfarers Midweek Walk A Low Level Walk from Staveley 29th January 2020



The highest tops we could see, those at the back of the Kentmere Horseshoe, were covered with fresh snow. Everything below that was wet and gloomy and the windscreen wipers were kept busy. The conversation in the car went something like this:

"There's snow up there and this morning I took my instep crampons out of the rucksack."

"That's ok, this is just a low-level walk."

"Yes, but it's a Mike Walford low-level walk. Anything below 3,000 feet is low-level to him."

We parked on the main road well before the advertised time and walked in the thin drizzle to Wilf's where the smell of coffee and the buzz of conversation of an already full table of Fellfarers greeted us. We agreed that it would be nice to spend the morning, or longer, there. More friends arrived and our numbers swelled to 16.

Mike made it clear that he would have none of the usual Fellfarers' relaxed attitude to timing: The walk would commence at 10.30 sharp from Barley Bridge but he did concede that, with heavy rain forecast to arrive at lunchtime, we might consider a plan B when we reached Gurnal Dubs.

Mike led us off from the bridge, up the steep glutinous fields to the north of Craggy Woods, to Littlewood farm and, with Potter Fell rising before us (*bottom left*), on to quirky and quaint Frost Hole. The horse ignored us but the two donkeys watched us curiously as we tramped wetly by.

We chatted and climbed easily by zigzag pathways to a wall corner high above Potter Tarn. Kendal sprawled across the valley floor below and the Kent estuary just showed, a faint silver gleam in the greyness beyond.



We contoured eastwards to a stream crossing (*above*) where, despite our best encouragements, Graham refused to fall in this time.

We lost sight of all landscape markers and the terrain seemed wild, somewhere other than our familiar little hills. Mike led on and the faint trod became a track which led downwards to Gurnal Dubs and our picnic site, just as the predicted heavy rain came, borne towards us on a cold breeze. A key to the little boathouse would have been handy but no-one had one. The high banking gave some protection, though, and we settled down on the heather, brushing aside the little patches of soft snow.

We munched sandwiches happily enough and shared

