

Easter Weekend Meet 2003 – Langdale, the Lake District

Friday 18th April – Monday 21st April 2003

by Dave Stevenson, with pictures by Ian Cheshire

Participants List:

Name	Member or Guest	Arrival time	Departure time
Peter Hesslegrave	M	Thursday evening	Saturday evening
Jon Sparkes	M	Friday evening	Monday morning
Ian Cheshire	M	Friday evening	Monday morning
Gaynor Clift	G	Friday evening	Monday morning
John Boycott	G	Friday evening	Monday morning
Dave Stevenson	M	Friday evening	Tuesday afternoon
Martin Stace	M	Friday evening	Monday morning
Mick Burton	M	Saturday morning	Sunday evening
Ros Bonner	M	Saturday morning	Sunday evening

Friday

I arrived at the National Trust campsite in the dusk round about 8:30 on Friday evening and was disconcerted to find it was already full. I parked up by the Old Dungeon Ghyll (ODG) hotel and had a wander round, no sign of anyone else. I returned to the ODG and found Pete there beer in hand, so I joined him. He talked about the great day he'd had on Black Crag. He'd gone there with the intention of soloing some easy routes but met up with an E5 leader who was also there on his own, who'd taken him up a couple of E2s.

Jon S, Ian, Gaynor, and John B pulled up much later and told us they were camping at Thrang Farm at Chapel Stile, a couple of miles back down the valley. Martin arrived later still. Jon S also informed us that Giles and Val, who we had also been expecting, had phoned to say they had gone on to Wasdale on finding the NT campsite full – in fact we were to see nothing of them all weekend.

At closing time the seven of us drove back to Thrang Farm, which somewhat resembled a refugee camp – tents everywhere. We camped on a field a good 200 yards from the farm itself – the true campsite being full also. Only 2 proper toilets and 4 portaloos for about 1000 people, still it was cheap and they let us on.

Saturday

Saturday dawned clear and sunny, and the decision was made to climb on Gimmer Crag – which is high up on the north side of the valley – taking in Middlefell Buttress (a classic 3 star "diff") on the way. No sign of Mick and Ros. Six of us (Jon S, Gaynor, Pete, Martin, Ian, and myself) did a mass ascent of Middlefell Buttress, which we found to be very polished and "good value" for the grade. It started with an evil

chimney, and our heavy packs made it harder for us. Steep walking then led us to Gimmer Crag, which is extremely imposing and in a superb position high up the hillside.



Dave, Pete, Martin, Jon S, and Gaynor Approaching Gimmer Crag

Pete and Ian climbed Bachelor Crack (HS) which they found very hard for the grade. Jon S and Gaynor, and myself and Martin climbed Main Wall Climb (VD) which, despite the boring name, was an excellent climb and also good value for the

grade. The hand traverse to unseen holds round the arrete at the start of pitch 2 was particularly exciting. The weather was generally good, but we wouldn't have minded not having the intermittent gusts of cold wind.

Having completed our routes successfully, the three climbing pairs met up again back at the ODG. Pete went home – family responsibilities calling – and Gaynor and John B went home also. The remaining four of us drove to Ambleside for dinner, where we had pizza which was very good. After this, we drove back to the ODG, where we found Mick and Ros. It turned out that the reason for their late arrival that morning was that Ros had dragged Mick into Kendal for some “shopping therapy” on the way. The six of us spent the rest of the evening in the pub, together with a couple of biker chaps Mick knew who were there by pure coincidence. Mick and Ros had struck lucky with the NT campsite, they had arrived just as another party was leaving.

Sunday

Sunday morning at Thrang Farm dawned mostly sunny but with a cold wind. The consensus was that a scramble would be more enjoyable than climbing that day. The four of us at Thrang met up with Mick and Ros and we parked up at the New Dungeon Ghyll hotel (about a mile down the valley from the ODG). The six of us set off for Pavey Ark via Jack's Rake – which is a three star, grade one scramble along a diagonal line of weakness on a cliff face. The scramble was very enjoyable and not too difficult and takes you through some dramatic scenery. From Pavey Ark we also took in Harrison Stickle and Pike of Stickle before returning for a pint in the hotel beer garden. It was unambiguously agreed that it had been an excellent day on the hill.

The “Thrang four” moved camp to the NT campsite, which is much better than the Thrang one – many of the other campers had departed that day. We joined Mick and Ros at the campsite for a while, before we drove to Ambleside for dinner and they packed up and went home.

Monday

We had some rain in the night but it stopped about 7:30 when we made breakfast. It started raining again and we made a hasty retreat to the tents. Jon S, Ian, and Martin decided to go home, as the rain had obviously set in for some time – meaning that I was the only one left, so I suppose the club meet really ended at this point.

It is now 11:35 as I am sitting in the car writing this, and it is still raining.

In fact the rain stopped late afternoon and I managed a stroll up the valley. On Tuesday I set off at 7:00 and managed a decent walk on the south side of the valley, over Pike of Blisco, Crinkle Crag, and Bowfell. It didn't rain but the clouds were down, shrouding the hills. They finally lifted as I was back at the campsite packing up to go home.

In summary, an excellent weekend for everyone who took part, despite the inauspicious start of the NT campsite being already full when we arrived.



Ascending Jack's Rake