

## Selside Stroll 17th May 2010

As the team drove up to the start point of the walk at Otter Bank just north of Kendal on the A6 the weather forecast sounded most encouraging with a bright and rain-free day predicted. The objective was an intermediate walk of 6 miles around Selside led by Richard and Gea Champness.

The walk description promised us insignificant height gains throughout the day which generated some discussion among the 5 strollers as we battled up the first short sharp pull of Dry Lane.

This was a most intriguing lane because the picture clearly shows that the fingerboard calls it Dry Lane and the left hand sign says road liable to flooding!!!

Wandering up the steep lane was very colourful as the hedgerows were full of Bluebells and Jack by the Hedge (commonly known as garlic mustard) with celandines in abundance to give a glorious panoply of colour



After the initial steep hill it was a pleasure to saunter downhill and enter a cart track across some fields. However some concern was expressed as the noise of motor cycle engines could be heard, surely they were not coming our way. Oh yes they were as 8 motorcyclists travelled past. There was much consternation about this with thoughts of reporting to the relevant authorities. However it turns out that they were quite within their rights as this was a green lane no -U 5281 and all agreed with the relevant authorities in Cumbria despite a primary school lying directly on the route!!!



Passing through the school yard we turned sharply south east and headed up hill towards the farm of Bouthwaite. Looking north east to admire the superb views of the Kentmere Horseshoe the skyline of Selside Hall could be glimpsed. This was built in 1540 and is a twin towered house, one 15th century, and the other 16th century. It is reputed to be full of priest holes and it is thought that the hall belonged to the staunch catholic Thornburgh family of Hampsfield in Cartmel, although it was probably built by the Selssed family. It is now a private residence.



A coffee halt was taken here, I only had tea but was allowed to partake, and the views over the Howgills and Whinfell were superb as the clouds reflections were shown up in the hillsides as they progressed through the sky.

Just after Bouthwaite Richard warned us about a deep bog however when we arrived everywhere looked really dry especially the direct route to the stile. I decided to try this and sank to the depth of my left boot in black claggy ooze causing much laughter. Managing to recover the other sensible members circumnavigated the hazard and we proceeded to Patton Bridge where the Mint was at a very low level.

This was a beautiful spot with an amazing array of colours provided by a staggering display of different flowers trees and plants. The mill here was built in the

13<sup>th</sup> century but is now a tastefully converted private residence with 2 nude statues in the garden. Patton Bridge also has a Victorian letterbox.



Suitably replenished after a hearty lunch on the delightful banks of the river Mint we headed west and soon picked up the Dales Way. The difference in paths was immediately apparent as this felt like a motorway compared with the little used ones previously experienced.

The way ahead now was very clear as many boots had traversed this route in the past. To the North West were excellent views of the Kentmere Horseshoe but to the west another panorama was opening up, that of the Coniston fells with Bowell and Crinkle Crag also featuring prominently.



Continuing along the Dales Way was extremely pleasant as different views with well preserved farmhouses and houses came into view after each twist and turn of the way in addition to the superb views on all sides. It was distinctly noticeable around this area that farmers had made a policy decision to leave many of their gates open linking several fields so that sheep could travel in a wide area instead of restrained to one field. This was amusing because there were several occasions where they would race past us only to race back again after we had passed!!!

Very soon we reached the charming location of Black Moss tarn where two swans had taken up residence.



The way ahead continued along the Dales Way but we had to take our leave and head northwest past Edge Bank and back to Otter Bank where we had started this super walk.

This is a really worthwhile walk in an area usually overlooked by walking guidebooks and is strongly recommended.

Alan Sattenstall  
18<sup>th</sup> May 2010