

*Crash Course
in the Peaks
March 2019*



Crash Course in the Peaks 2019

Mick's idea of exploring the numerous aircraft crash sites in the Peak District was novel – in fact it was also a novel; he had acquired a book dedicated to this topic. In the previous expo episode we had flown above this area on the way to Glasgow, so it would be a sobering expo experience to take a look at aircraft wreckage in this area marking tragic events of the past.

So put down your Ovaltine, put on your protective goggles, stow any loose items under the seat in front of you and buckle up for another extraordinary expo edition -all from the comfort of your favourite arm chair.

DAY ONE (Friday 22nd March 2019)

3+2 head for the hills – Roaches and Lud Church (6.2 miles)

With the lure of bonus photographic opportunities Mike had decided at the last minute (thus allowing for more accurate weather forecasting) to extend his stay beyond the allotted weekend. His amendment to delay exit from this break (i.e. Bryant exit or in its shortened form – Br-exit) was debated among expo members and a meaningful vote was held at the last possible moment. The right honourable member for Southend was accused of “kicking the can down the road” and “running down the clock” but he claimed that the only choice was between his car or no car. A split in the expo party was therefore inevitable. The right honourable member for Brentwood decided to join the Bryant breakaway party as he could always jump rat-like from the sinking “Remain” ship later – we therefore ended up heading northwards in two cars; us old retirees in Mick's remarkably economical Hybrid Prius – and the younger workers union party departing Brentwood at 6:30 am.

Roger had cunningly packed two extra pairs of underpants (not in case of accidents I hasten to add – although from previous episodes you might be excused for making this assumption). No, it was to allow the possibility of transferring his allegiance and swinging behind the Remain option if the weather and his constitution were not in crisis.

We were all now on the M25 heading anti-clockwise towards the M1 and radio contact was soon established between the vehicle parties. The original default position written into expo email lore was to meet for breakfast at Watford Gap services on the M1, but a roadside sign indicated that the M1 was closed and so we made an agreed evasatory manoeuvre up the M1 toward the A1 without significantly disrupting the overall route plan. In fact it was just about at this point that a visual sighting was made as the “youngsters” sailed past with no thought whatsoever for speed awareness



- the oldies tutted to each other as their on-board engine management system automatically responded by directing all available power resources to the drive mechanism.



Caught on camera: line of sight link to Mike's vehicle (travelling at 77+ mph!) established from the Prius cockpit (Mick's display shows the national speed limit has been exceeded by 7 mph)

With all this early morning excitement behind us and an expo convoy established, it was time to forget about Brexit and turn our attention to a welcome break service station Brexit breakfast stop.



Roger's capacious Costa coffee cup - the Prius will need to direct some of its resources to liquid management



With all bodily requirements serviced it was time to forget about breakfast and turn our attention to our northerly destination in the peaks.

Avid readers of previous publications might recall that on the 2017 Nam trip Mike's navigation equipment was a bit misleading – a bit like HAL the computer in 2001 A Space Odyssey. Mike's satnav was trying to take us somewhere else – it clearly had ideas of its own and was attempting to seize control of the expo mission. I expect the satnav was saying "I'm sorry Michael, I'm afraid I can't let you go that way."

When control of our destiny had finally been asserted, we found ourselves heading south on the A1 and then back onto a more direct route to the Peak District.



Pre-Peaks preparations (Prius party pensioner person ponders pending plane patrol)

Suitable roadside parking for two vehicles was found and we were soon stretching our legs, trying to stand up straight and emptying the contents of Mike's boot onto the road.

The weather was dry, the sky was grey but all in all, acceptable conditions for the first walk of the weekend and with the forecast looking reasonable we were optimistic about the weekend's walking prospects. Surely nothing could go wrong; surely Roger would not succumb to any mis-adventure this time. Well if there's one thing that life teaches you: you can never be sure.

Read on if you dare.



*With cars left behind we were soon enjoying interrupted views of the local scenery
("Oi you – yes you - get out the way!")*



*Aaah at long last – a view without those pesky hill walkers (apart from Mike who is only included for scale)
Steve was soon clambering around like a mountain goat on *The Roaches'* dramatic rock formations.*



Mind the gap



Prius pensioners – note at this point Roger is using his walking pole



News Flash: A camp fire caused a huge Roaches fire in Peak District in the hot summer of 2018. Firefighters were called to the moorland fire on Thursday, August 9th at around 1.30pm. It's believed people had been wild camping in the area. They apparently tried to cover the fire with more rocks to extinguish it, but it ultimately spread across 200 acres of land - which is now destroyed. Several homes also had to be evacuated during the blaze.

– ITV Report 17th August 2018



Suspicious looking characters have been spotted among fire ravaged countryside. One was said to be wearing a tea cosy and poking around with a walking stick. It is thought he may attempt to lose the stick.





Large area of Roaches consumed by the fire of 2018

We turned our attention to the interesting Roaches rock formations ...



Roger reconstructs one of his previous mishaps in the hills – note he still has hold of his stick



The last reported sighting of Roger's stick

*Subsequent events would confirm that this was the last sighting of Roger's stick at about 2:05 pm.
We were descending the Roaches and heading for ...*

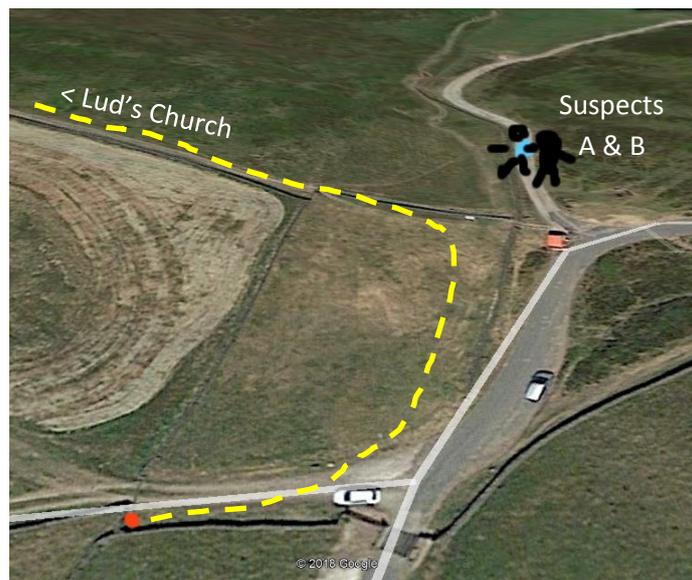


... Lud's Church, a deep rocky ravine as confirmed by this photo taken at 2:20pm (15 minutes later).



The first reported sighting of Roger oblivious to his missing stick (taken about 2:31 pm)

The working theory is that when Roger took a photo from the corner of a wall as shown below by the red dot, he left his stick there.



Crimewatch reconstruction showing possible pole position, Roger's footsteps and the suspects' getaway vehicle.

I'm sorry but this is just a google map from 2018 – surely the cars have moved since then. Unbelievable!

Meanwhile we headed on towards Lud's Church blissfully ignorant of Roger's latest mishap.



Last lingering view without pesky poleless hillwalkers – but look: suspects A and B caught on camera (far left).

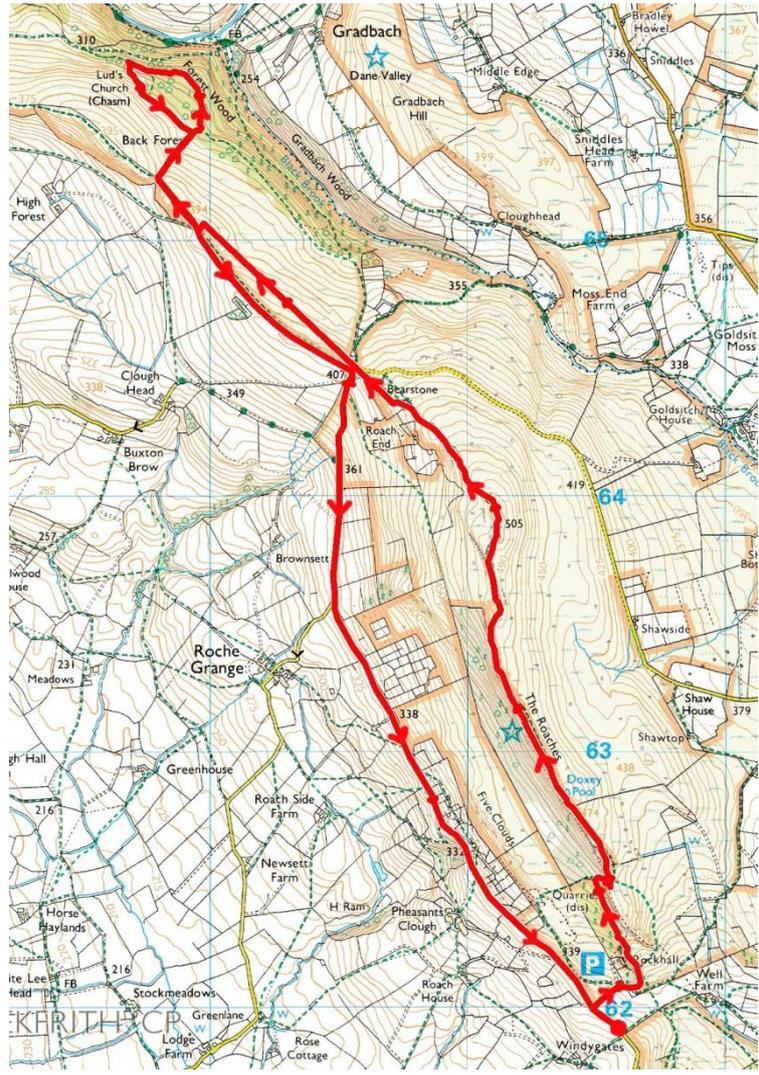


Expo members get into a rut – can they find their way through the impasse?



“Now where’s my stick when I need it? Oh dear!”

Indeed where was Roger’s stick? It was at this point that we trawled recent photographs to determine when his stick had disappeared. We traced our way back to the last known location where Roger had stopped to take a picture, and sad to report it was not there. After searching around other possible sites we had to give up and declare the stick lost without trace.



The Roaches and Lud's Church route

It was time to book into our five star accommodation. Due to an administrative booking anomaly we had been assigned a small room at Eyam Youth Hostel. Note that Eyem is pronounced "Eem" by the locals and "I am" by the tourists. We had in fact visited this Youth Hostel back in 2012 but records are a bit sketchy – I was not then the retiree I am today so there is no report to refer to. However I have included the photo opposite taken at the time - as was the photo on the front cover.



Flash back to Eyam YH - November 2012



1887: Olde Youth Hostellers arrive at YHA Eyam



After a short recovery period we headed off to the local pub (The Miner's Arms) down a steep muddy track opposite the Youth Hostel.

Here's another 2012 archive photo from the Miners Arms "Cheers"

"Order! Order!"

During this meeting of members we had to take no-meal off the table.

Good grief! Is that the best you can do?



Flash back to Miners Arms - November 2012



Mike's atmospheric evening shot of Miners Arms 2019

*From this photograph from Mike and trawled internet images I can confirm that the 2012 group photo was behind the right window and the 2019 meeting was behind the left window. **Point of order Mr Writer - does this really matter?** Er, no, not really.*

So let's leave the expo members to debate matters of the day before clearing the lobby and wending their weary way up steep slopes (where Roger's legs nearly stalled on the way up) back to the Youth Hostel.



DAY TWO (Saturday 23rd March 2019)

Crash site 1 and 2 (3.6 + 5.5 miles)

The dry weather was holding up for a second day and following a cooked Youth Hostel breakfast the five squeezed themselves into the Prius for the most efficient mode of transport available.

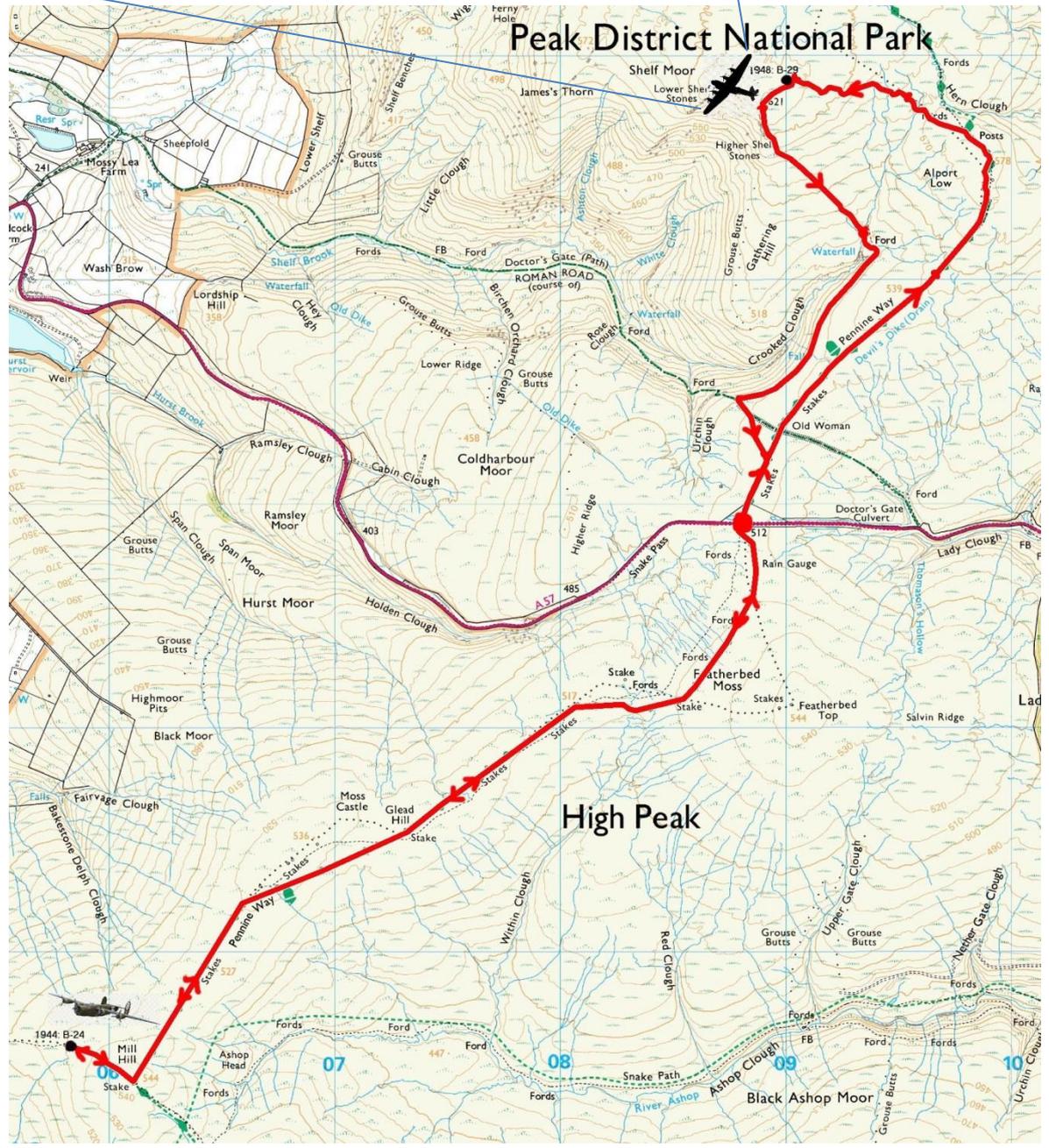


Wot no Moor jokes please: Now where did I put my stick?

The start of the walk and convenient parking spot was at the intersection of Snake Pass and the Pennine Way.

The strange cackling call of the Red Grouse, the mournful wail of the Golden Plover, the bubbling cry of the Curlew; these were just some of the evocative phrases spotted on the nearby National Trust Sign.

We strolled along the Pennine Way before heading off across the Moor to the first crash site of the day located at Gathering Hill on Shelf Moor.



The Crash Course route: 1948 B-29 and 1944 B-24



Tri-athletes set off on their crash site quest



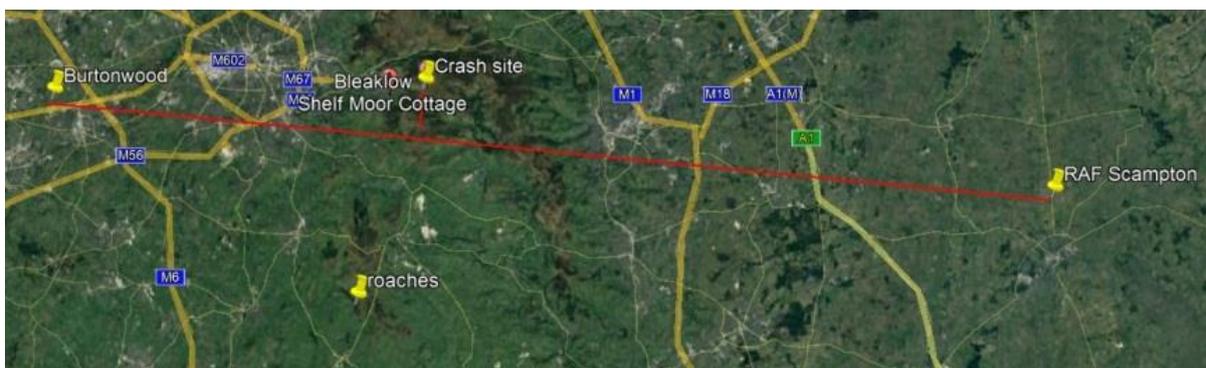
Moor hazards ahead



On reflection - please stick to the path (substitute stick courtesy Mick)



Memorial: The wreckage of B-29 Superfortress named "Over-Exposed" of the 16th Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron USAF which tragically crashed whilst descending through cloud on 3rd November 1948 killing all 13 crew members. The aircraft was on a routine 22 minute flight from RAF Scampton to American AFB Burtonwood (86 miles). It is doubtful the crew ever saw the ground – the pilot had elected to fly under Visual Flight Rules (maintain visual contact with the ground).



1948: Routine flight from RAF Scampton to Burtonwood (86 miles)



Radial engine and other wreckage at the crash site



The image above is a 1948 photo of the tail of 'Over Exposed!' layered over a photo of the crash site taken in 2008. It is thought that the aircraft was named 'Over Exposed!' after it flew too close to the flash during the nuclear bomb tests at Bikini Atoll in 1946.

More details can be found at <http://aircrashsites.co.uk/superfortress-44-6199-over-exposed-2/>



Avid readers of previous Expo publications might recall that Steve is always on the lookout for a comical rock support photo opportunity – so it is no surprise to find another example of him in another supporting role on this trip:



Sturdy St Steven stoically steadying standing stone



Customary group photo – Steve is oblivious to being elbowed by Mike



Downwards onwards and upwards



We eventually returned to the start point and had to make a decision on the next destination ...



Back to Snake Pass layby for an indicative vote: Who's for another crash site? All those in favour say "Aye"

Roger decided he would say "No" and have a break while the rest of us headed along the Pennine Way in search of another crash site.



Mike is paving the Way across the Pennines



It was a bit of a trek, but the paving slabs along the Pennine Way made it easier to make rapid progress. When we arrived at Mill Hill, we turned right and eventually arrived at another crash site.



Mick surveys the wreckage of a Consolidated Vultee B24J Liberator





The aircraft was being ferried from Burtonwood to Hardwick by a two man ferry crew on the 11th October 1944. They climbed to an indicated altitude of 2800 feet (180 feet above Kinder Scout). While in cloud and moderate to severe turbulence the pilot (Lieutenant Haupt) spotted a small gap in the cloud and saw the ground was only about 150 feet below



B24J Liberator

him. He then applied full power and began to climb, but before they could gain any meaningful height the aircraft struck the ground on Mill Hill.

The two men extricated themselves from the shattered cockpit and walked along one of the streams until they reached the Hayfield to Glossop road. A passing lorry driver stopped and picked them up and took them to a nearby pub where Lt Haupt telephoned Burtonwood to report the accident. They were then retrieved by an Ambulance from Burtonwood and their injuries were then treated. These were mainly cuts & bruises but Lt Haupt did suffer a broken jaw.





There was not as much wreckage compared to the first crash site. After a quick survey we marched back to the car to check that Roger had not wandered off.

That evening we returned to our local pub - the Miners Arms - for food and liquid refreshment.

As background research into life in a Youth Hostel I decided to record the nocturnal noises in our room using my "Dream Catcher" app. This had been successfully used to record Mrs B's nightly mutterings - the best one of which so far is "Steve, don't go in the bog - you're an idiot if you go in the bog" which she said in a very concerned voice.

As I settled down to read my copy of Investment Times others in the room were still nattering; the noises being picked up among the 248 noise hits between 11:30pm and 5am. The first of these was Roger trying to turn on his bedside light.

Then for some reason he wanted to put a shoe in the door to let some air in. Steve told Roger that Mike had already locked the door and suggested that they could open the window. Roger did not want others to suffer with cold down draughts from the window, so I assume that the room's ventilation was not pursued further.

*Roger changed the subject and announced that you could tell a person's character by looking at the title of the books that they read. He wandered over to Steve's bunk - Steve's book was *The Living Mountain* which Roger felt confirmed his hypothesis. Steve said it was about a lady who walked all her life in the mountains and relayed her experiences in the Cairngorms. Mike's comment was that it was not a very thick book. Laughter.*

Of course as Roger had consumed some beer and was now feeling quite jovial - the conversation soon went rapidly downhill - somehow the topic was Roger's pyjamas which had been thoroughly decontaminated following the Scottish episode (you'll have to read the Trossachs write up for more details, but I would not recommend it). Steve was surprised that they had not been thrown away. Mike said they were his "Lucky" pyjamas. Based on the words of a Tina Turner song Steve's response was "What's luck got to do with it?" Of course this got Roger into reminiscing about that event further and even quoting a passage from the Trossachs write up about the possibility of him being caught on CCTV creeping down the corridor with nothing on but a frown.

*As I hid my copy of Investment Times under the covers I smiled to myself - these expo events would self-perpetuate in the annals of Expo archives. *That's a rather unfortunate turn of phrase.**

The nattering ceased but was soon replaced by the odd cough, door creaks and ultimately by the rhythmic sound of snoring hillwalkers.



DAY THREE (Sunday 24th March 2019)

Alport Castles (7.3 miles)

It was a glorious morning on the last day of our weekend. The sun was shining the birds were tweeting and the Sunday visitors would soon be filling up all available local parking spaces. It was imperative that we made an early start to avoid disappointment. There should be no delay to our exit – so we just needed to get our withdrawal agreement through the house. Rather predictably our exit strategy would be delayed as members spent extra time in the second chamber or sought alternative exit arrangements.



Spring is in the air



Prius packed and ready to go

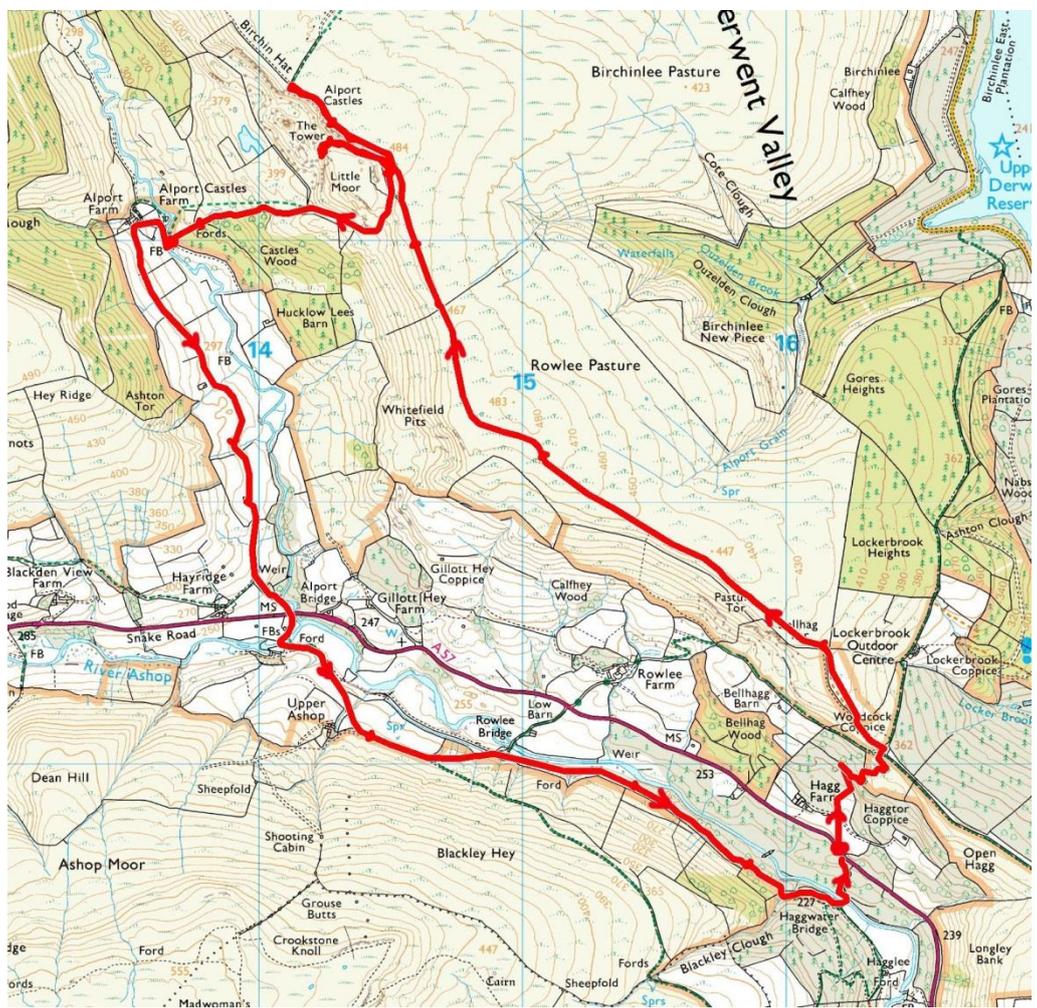


The consequences of a delayed exit had been predicted. The car parks were full and a range of alternative exit strategies would now need to be debated.



Mick consults Mike at the exit of a full car park

We eventually found some off road parking on the A57 Snake Road so it turned out nice again.





Sunny intervals and strong wind – hillwalkers lay low to reduce exposure



Mike's camera is always ready to capture Moor photos



Straddling streams to find a dry path



First view of The Tower rising up through a gully



Moor sunny intervals



On the last leg – Roger crossing the footbridge near Alport Farm

Roger decided not to join Mike for an extended Expo as he was already on his last legs.



Expo Diaries: Behind the scenes

(To be read in the voice of David Attenborough)

As I have said once or twice before - you may think that taking Expo photographs is easy. Well in a way it is - a simple click usually does the trick. But on some occasions getting the desired result can be a challenge. This can be particularly so when faced with a limited vista. You may think you have a privileged view of the scene, but in these instances there will always be a rival predator trying to muscle in on the action. So it's here within the limited lighting of this dark and dank ravine otherwise known as Lud's Church that we find two such adversaries both staking their claim to the optimum vantage point - a narrow opening in this the most inhospitable environment known to man. Listen carefully and you can almost hear the body language as these two rivals manoeuvre into position. And then when everyone is least expecting it a primeval yelp is heard as one of them realises that his stabilizing accessory has been mislaid. "Where's me stick!"





*The End
... of the Stick!*



Have you seen this stick?

Oh stick man oh stick man

Oh where can it be

Did you leave it alone

While having a pee?

Perhaps it fell over

When you took a pic

And now that you've lost it

You're feeling quite sick

Perhaps you could make one

How hard could it be?

Mike's found one for you:

A branch from a tree





The End