

## Cromford to Whatstandwell, Derby

## Lower Derwent Valley, Derbyshire



The Derwent Valley line at Cromford (c1960's), Crich Stand, and the Derwent valley over Cromford

### 25 were up for it:

Yupmeister, Mid Week Tone, Granpop Bill, Stubbee, JayCee, Dasher, Debbie Holihead, Mr Tahoohigh, Heavy Steve Machine, Rob Sparklette, Thingy, Ali Gee, R G Bargee, Tim Mothy, Corky - Graham Cork, Bradders, Barry, Scott, Andrew, Zolette, Devine Steve, Rob Sparklette's son and heir Tom, Dave 'Lufty Tufty', Retro Graham, and Stevie 'Lufty Tufty'.

Doubtful from the offset, Spikelet dropped out, as did Alice and Rich Robertshaw with bugs of one kind or another. Simon 'Lufty Tufty' also dropped out, but good old Retro stepped in to take his place.

Never before, however, has the organiser dropped out, but there's always got to be a first. Yes, Slippery, who had put so much effort into organising this one, dropped out at the last minute, and was tied to his bed.... probably with slip knots mind.

The Derby train left Stoke on Trent at 08.33, bob on, arriving at platform 2b in Derby at 09.24. Groupsaver train tickets were bought at just £5.90 return to Stoke.

The phone rang; it was Joan from the Cliff Inn making sure we were on our way. It was snowing heavily she warned. 'We won't let you down Joan, we've got lads on board wearing 'Winter walk 2010' hats and they're still smiling.' replied Yup; crossing his fingers behind his back.



We arrived at platform 2b at the Derby station and Yup set off to the enquires desk to check which platform we needed for Cromford. Was it 2b or not 2b. Luckily it was 2b 2b. A quick cuppa and we jumped aboard with the journey up the white over Derwent valley taking less than half an hour.

A couple of group photos on the platform heralded the start of the walk, and off we slid down the lane, literally, towards Cromford Mills, home of the World's first water powered cotton mill (<http://www.arkwrightsociety.org.uk/>). This was to be our eagerly awaited hot breakfast stop, arranged by Slippery. Now, where was he again?



Alas, they had no record of any advance order so could only offer shrivelled up remnants of dried manky bacon from the previous day which they offered to reheat in the microwave. After deliberating for a good 5 seconds, and with the weather and treacherous conditions in mind, we opted to continue and make the most of the Jug & Glass.

Passing another cafe around the corner, Granpop Bill was spotted through the window with a bacon butty in his mits and a cup of tea. 'I'll be with you in a bit lads', he spluttered.

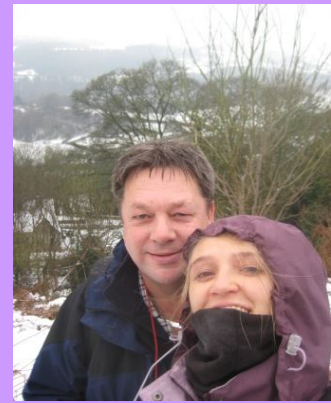
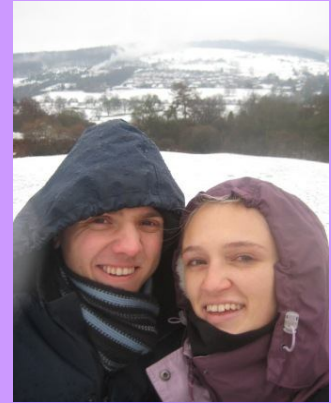
A short toilet break and we headed off, all feeling envious of Bill's quick thinking, and forgetting to take a head count. We walked up and over the railway bridge and just ten minutes into the hills a voice on Yup's phone cried 'I'm lost Yup, which way do I go?' Yes, it was Dasher the Slasher.

With a few directions and Granpop Bill running back to help, to burn off those extra calories, he soon caught up with the pack. Even Pedro knows that you should never disappear off to the toilet on your own !!





Zolette could hear the Arctic 'woooo' whistling past her hood as we gathered momentum again. We were intrigued, well and truly. Devine Steve tried his hood but to no avail. A thingy type tree stood out in the white snowy background. Perhaps the wooo sound was coming from the tree? (Turn your speakers up and you might just hear it !)



We arrived at the river which was not as deep or fearsome as originally expected.

Even so, with a multitude of cameras clicking away, no-one took a chance as they inched across the icy stepping stones ....



Pit stops en route – Jug & Glass in Lea, Cliff Inn in Crich, and The Old Brunswick Inn, Derby



It was a relief to see the Jug and Glass, at Lea, finally, and the sight of a decent pint, after what was supposedly only a short two mile walk; it was uphill mind.

(<http://www.jugandglasslea.co.uk/>).



We didn't stay too long, but long enough to drink them dry of the **Golden Pippin** and the **Hartington IPA**. A couple of 'bus' anoraks discussed the local timetables in depth and calculated the times and distances **between local real ale pubs**. Now if that's not commitment, I don't know what is.



It was about 3 miles, with mainly flat and downhill sections to the historic village of Crich. The proposed slight detour to climb the Crich Stand was kicked into touch due to the poor visibility and pace, and the fact that we just wanted to reach the Cliff Inn by the allotted time. This memorial incidentally was built in 1923 for the soldiers in the Sherwood Foresters Regiment who had died in service.



The Cliff Inn (<http://www.thecliffinn.co.uk/>) was very welcoming, except for the brisk mannered barmaid who's attitude took no prisoners, especially if you were named Dasher.

I don't recall the names of the beers, so they must have been good. There must have been several local brews including ales from the Derby Brewing Company.

Having downed a couple of beers, Joseph frowned in trepidation of traversing the wet floor in the gent's toilets without his infamous pub slippers, which he'd forgotten to pack. Will he, won't he ..... In desperation, he did. ugh.

The meals were served quite quickly to everyone, except Dasher who was still waiting for the emergence of his tuna bake. His silky charm to speed up delivery fell flat as the brisk barmaid curtly confirmed it was on it's way, followed by, 'you can eat yours in the car park'.

Puddings were ordered and Stubbee dared to ask if there was any more custard. What a brave fella ! Not a problem however, Joan bought out more jugs of custard.

Scraping every last drop into his bowl, Joan asked if he'd like to get his lips round her jugs. 'It's not every day a woman whips her jugs out for you', cried Dasher. Another curt look from the barmaid followed.



As we finished off, the barmaid asked Dasher if he'd enjoyed his meal. Cowering in a corner he had no choice but to answer 'excellent thanks', and slipped out to put his boots on.

We headed downhill to Whatstandwell, ignoring the steep slippery steps and instead followed the road, down to the station platform. The return trains to Derby ran hourly so we didn't have too long to wait.

From Derby Station, it was a short 200 metre limp to the well-known Brunswick Inn, which I'm reliably informed opened in 1842 "for the railwaymen and second class passengers"! Today it opened for the squawkers.

Plenty of ales as usual. Did anyone try the Dasher the Flasher?

With the hard work done it was time to relax and conjure up ideas for future doos, including barge trips and tobogganing at Llandudno. Debris quite fancied the idea of being strapped down and being thrown about. Okay, but what about tobogganing?



'How about catching a later train or staying for a lock-in?', suggested Corkster. We didn't of course; we sensibly caught the 6.40 train. For Corkster however, it may have been the right option, as there were major delays on trains back to Manchester.

Another successful xmas walk, unaided in the end by the organiser.

Well done Slips !! Man flu has got a lot to answer for....

Yuppers  
(enjoy yer Flasher)