

Birchen Edge Trip, 7th February 2015

Driving into the Peak District, the abundance of snow was a conspicuous omen. Not to be deterred by such typical conditions for a UBMC trip this year so far, nor the overcast nature of the day, 30 stoats ventured forth. Birchen Edge, known typically as a beginner trad crag was the destination for our journey that day.

Sam Hockley's driving gets a special mention, as even after breaking down 5 times and opting to spend much of the journey significantly below the speed limit, beating 3 other cars to the crag is impressive. Another special mention goes to Greg's navigator, who decided turning off the M42 in the middle of a convoy of 3 was clearly the correct way to go.

Finally, after everyone meeting up in the Robin Hood Inn carpark stoats ventured up the, always surprisingly muddy, path towards the crag where the day would be spent.

First stop at the crag were the Three Ships atop the edge, named so after the carving of the names of Horatio Nelson's ships on each rock. The stoats were apparently in a crushing mood, as these problems were quickly dispatched and still hungry for a challenge the stoats ventured forth with the exception of John Harrison, who opted to spend the majority of the day working a gnarly problem that shredded hands and hopes alike.

Down on the lower tier, in search of Seasick Slab, the stoats ambled to the very opposite end of the crag to Poop Deck. Here, a challenge was issued by some of the committee to walk up the central slab without hands. After all who dared accept this challenge saw it off without a hitch, a short(ish) snowball fight ensued.

With another glance at the guidebook explaining the stoat's displacement, a renewed effort to find Seasick Slab – this time on the correct end of the crag – ensued. After a rocky start to attempts at Seasick Slab, UBMC clearly got into the groove and soon this problem had been overcome by almost all.

Around this time a fair few stoats opted to return to Robin Hood Inn for food and a spot of tea, but a brave few souls decided to stick out until nearer sunset. While walking off the crag, with what we ventured was everyone, a few super keen freshers were spotted to the very far right of the crag trying a few problems. After calling to them that the day was coming to a close, they too made their way back to the cars and after a few minutes the first load of UBMC were leaving the Inn while others stayed to eat a meal and debrief.

Thanks to everyone that came on the trip! Especially to Greg, who agreed to drive despite still nursing a broken arm and climbed one handed!

Brian