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South West Peak Mosaic – Case Study 2:

Hill Skills Training

Day 1 - Saturday 5th June 2021

Venue: White Peak/South West Peak

Valley Base: Buxton

Route: Buxton Pavilion Gardens – Grinlow Woods – Ladmanlow – Turncliff – Diamond Hill – Fern House – Buxton = 9km

Weather: Fine, very warm & still

Syllabus Covered:

- Planning – how to successfully plan a hill walk in the UK or Ireland. Looked at different scale maps, guidebooks, web sites and so-on.
- Walking skills – what things should you consider while out walking and what can make life easier (pace, nutrition, movement skills etc.). Talked about nutritional / fluid needs for days in the hill. Used different skills on the varied terrain.
- Clothing and equipment – being suitably dressed and equipped can make the difference between a great day out and a complete disaster. Talked and demonstrated different types of waterproof and walking boots. Talked about layering and spare clothes. Talked about the use of poles, torches, mobile phones, map cases etc.
- Weather – how it affects the hills and your day out. Talked about the differences in the weather in the hills and explained the hazards that the weather can bring. We also talked about where to get mountain-specific weather forecasts.
- Navigation in the hills – everything from selecting a compass to navigation strategies and an intro to GPS. We studied ticking off features, catching features, setting the map, contour lines, pacing, timing, grid references, scale, using the key and introduced compass bearings. Also talked about various apps and their pros and cons.
- Hazards and emergency procedures in the hills – how to respond to any hazards you encounter and what to do in an emergency. We talked about Mountain Rescue, what to do in an emergency, how to attract the attention of others and get in touch with the emergency services. Also, and what information will be required by the emergency services.

Photographs from day 1



Navigating your way around a map



Livestock handling!

Day 2 - Sunday 6th June 2021

Venue: South West Peak

Valley Base: Macclesfield Forest, Trentabank

Route: Trentabank – Higher Ridgeway – Ashpree – Walker Barn – Teggs Nose – Ward's Knob – Green Bank – Trentabank = 10km

Weather: Warm, grey with sunny spells

Syllabus Covered:

- Planning – how to successfully plan a hill walk in the UK or Ireland. We talked about the different areas of the UK, including National Parks and the (generally) less popular areas just outside the parks. We talked about the different scale of walks in the mountains, including Scotland and areas which are great for walking but a little less extreme than the Peak District. We spoke about different scale maps and how it is easier to plan on a 1:50 000.
- Walking skills – what things should you consider while out walking and what can make life easier (pace, nutrition, movement skills etc.) Used different skills on the varied terrain.
- Clothing and equipment – demonstrated spare equipment to carry including group shelter and first aid kit.
- Weather – how it affects the hills and your day out. Looked at how to plan a walk best for the conditions on the day. Talked about using emergency shelters, getting out of the wind for breaks and how you can make bad decisions when you're cold. Also, the importance of cutting a walk short, or changing plans if the weather is poor.
- Navigation in the hills – everything from selecting a compass to navigation strategies and an intro to GPS. We practised the skills from Saturday.
- Environmental knowledge – how to minimise your impact on the hill and information on good practice and useful organisations. We talked about keeping to footpaths and the work of conservation organisations to reduce erosion by laying flagstones and how we should stick to these paths even though it can be more difficult to walk on. We also touched on keeping dogs on leads; littering, including dog poo bags; impacts on wildlife and so-on.
- Hazards and emergency procedures in the hills – how to respond to any hazards you encounter and what to do in an emergency. We ran through a scenario on the hills.

Notes:

The group were keen to develop the skills they learnt on the Saturday and worked together to plan and lead the route.

Photographs from day 2



Sharing skills and helping route planning



Navigating challenging countryside furniture

Feedback from participants

"We've had a really good weekend on the hill skills course, learning to map read which I feel more confident with now, and knowing how to take a compass bearing."

"I feel that it's helped me to gain confidence in leading groups of people and being within groups of people, and brushed up on my navigation skills."

"My favourite part has been the scenic views and learning how to use a compass and navigate using a map."

"Mine is lovely scenery and learning how to use a map which I never thought I'd get at the beginning, but it's quite easy when you know how."

"I've pushed myself with regards to the walk, we went up quite a few hills, I wouldn't have thought I'd be able to do that but we did. Feeling great, it's been a wonderful experience, we'd do it again."



Participants relaxing after the Hill Skills training day