

In search of the 'Over Exposed': Part 2

OUR intention was to include a visit to the crash site on Higher Shelf Stones in a circular walk to Bleaklow Head, starting and finishing at Old Glossop. There are very few well-trodden routes across the moor so the plan was to navigate with map and compass using two large outcrops of weathered rock as landmarks. A rough farm track soon gave way to a narrow path climbing steeply to the edge of the moor. We were using a route downloaded from the internet which included a new track not shown on our map. This disappeared each time boggy ground was reached only to re-appear later so we settled on following a fence line above a steep-sided valley. The first target was Dog Rock at the head of the valley. We missed the direct route but staying with the fence eventually brought us to it.

THE Hern Stones were the next navigation target, situated one mile away just south of east. In most places an object that distance away would be in plain sight, but not here. There was now no path so we continued climbing gently alongside a brook until it disappeared into its source in a peat bog. We soon lost direction and climbing to the top of a peat hag did not reveal our target group of rocks. Following a compass bearing is fine if you know where you are. If you don't then that marvel of modern technology, satellite navigation, will tell you with great accuracy. We always carry a GPS unit and seldom have to use it, but today we did. The Hern Stones eventually came into view but it was a struggle to reach them, with the bilberry up to our knees. The Pennine Way crosses the moor near by and it was only half a mile to the north to reach Bleaklow Head. It may be the highest point on the moor but sits so little above the surrounding land that it was never used by Ordnance Survey and has no triangulation pillar.

Higher Shelf Stones is at the same height as Bleaklow Head so could not be seen. The intention was to navigate to it from a pre-determined point on the Pennine Way that lay due east from the site of the wreck. We retraced our steps and headed south. Although the Way provides easier walking it makes use of stream beds and gullies that are too deep to see out of, so we stayed with it until the GPS displayed the grid reference we were seeking. Now we had to do battle with half a mile of rough, wet ground that lay across our path. But at least Higher Shelf Stones could be seen, standing well clear of the surrounding moorland and fully deserving its triangulation pillar. The climb up was a relief from clambouring through the peat.

(to be continued)

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