

Helvellyn - Feb 2012

My first meet this year was to Helvellyn in early February. The weather forecast was reasonable for the day of the meet, however it had put some snow down over the previous couple of days so the drive up to Glenridding was taken very carefully over icy roads, with even the motorway over Shap being treacherous in places.

The meet was very well attended with sixteen of us setting off up the valley of Glenridding Beck towards our mountain. Many of the party were carrying two ice axes with the intention of climbing one of the gullies on the East Face. At Red Tarn the party duly split, with five heading up Swirral Edge, opting for the snowy ridge rather than a gully. This route did turn out to be great fun, with the narrow ridge proving entertaining all the way to its exit onto the summit plateau. The summit was fairly busy, with space around the cross-shaped shelter at a premium due to most of it being banked out with snow! Our descent over Raise and down into Keppel Cove was a nice relaxing way down, followed by the required beer in the Traveller's Rest.

Reports from the climbers were of a good day out too, with three parties attempting different routes in difficult conditions, with soft snow and not much in the way of belay anchors other than frozen turf. The parties all finished their descents at different times, but all managed a quick well-deserved drink in the Travellers' Rest on the way back to their cars.

Jason Whitely



Swirral Edge