

Route(s)	St. Sunday Crag via Pinnacle Ridge, Fairfield and Seat Sandal
Elevation(s) (ft/m)	St. Sunday Crag (2,759ft), Fairfield Peak(2,874ft), Seat Sandal (2,415ft)
Date(s)	August 26 2017
Partner(s)	Kyle Finnegan
Elevation gain/loss (ft/m)	3,700ft/ 1,127.76m
Distance (miles)	11.2 miles / 18.02km
Total time (hours/mins)	8 hours 28 minutes
Equipment	Helmets, 60m 8mm rope, small rack, BD couloir harness, trekking poles
Weather Forecast	Grey with 10-20% chance showers
Weather Actuality	Occasional sprinkles, but mostly cloudy and dry with occasional sunbreaks
Flora/Fauna	N/A
Wildlife	Sheep, cows, ravens and a beetle
Starting Point/Trailhead	Patterdale Hotel Parking Lot (4.50 sterling to park)
Grade/Rating	Class3 / 4 with one short section of low fifth class (not exposed) (US ratings)
Accommodations	Drove out that morning and slept in the Ford that night
Tourist Attractions	N/A
Motto for the day	N/A

Day 1	
Drive time	3 hours
Daily Distance	11.2 miles / 18.02km
Daily Elevation	3,700ft/ 1,127.76m
Daily Time	8 hours 30 minutes
Rise and Shine	6am
Start Drive	6.45am
Arrive Patterdale Hotel	9.30am
Depart Patterdale Hotel	9.45am
Base of Pinnacle Ridge	Est. 11.45am
St. Sundays Crag	2.07pm
Fairfield	3.10pm
Seat Sandal	3.55pm
Arrive Patterdale Hotel	6.10pm
The Story	

It was a bit of a last-minute decision to head to the Lake District. Originally, we thought we were going to head to London to catch up with friends, but then when that didn't pan out we started looking at where the weather might cooperate enough to do a little scramble. I thought I'd seen some scramble areas to the south of Hellvelyn and Kyle did some research and came up with a few. Pinnacle Ridge on

St. Sundays looked interesting and so we decided to head out in that direction. The weather was looking like typical British fare. *Unreliable*. Kyle got home ahead of me on Friday and started laying out the gear. We didn't really need a lot. Just day packs and a change of clothes for the car and a cooler of snacks etc. We scrounged it all together and went to bed, but not before pushing the alarm back another hour. It's a three-day weekend but I was counting on the Brits not to get up too early.

The alarm went off at 6am and we were out the door by 6.45am only forgetting the peanut butter and jelly and the salad mix. *Good thing I had a dream to remind me to get my St. Bernard pendant!* We're quite the A66 cross Dales veterans now. We can navigate to Penrith and mostly around The Lake District without the GPS being constantly on. It makes it feel like we've 'settled' here in a way. That we can navigate around without constant assistance. We're both more comfortable on the roads now, but that being said, we still see signs that boggle us. This trip I appreciated the exclamation point with the Badgers for ½ mile and the yellow square with an arrow. *I get the badgers, but why an exclamation point and not a picture of a badger? And what in the name of all that's random is a yellow square supposed to be telling me?* Good thing Kyle drove over!



We passed through Glenridding and pulled off onto the road we suspected was the 'start' of the path up to the hills. We were hoping to just park on the side of the road but no such luck. Aside from there being signs that it was private etc., there was also a sheep herding competition going on. The guys told us we could pay to park there with the other participants and onlookers, but we did not have any cash and the surrounding villages were quite small, so we opted to head through Patterdale and see if we could find some

parking in the village. Pretty much everything was for residents only or a pay to park. We pulled over at the Patterdale Hotel and ending up parking there as Kyle could use his card to pay for parking inside the hotel. We then pulled out our gear, threw some snacks in our bag and headed back towards the sheep herding to-do. We made it up the road and I thought I was following the directions as spelled out in one trip report, but it was a little unclear, and thankfully we got stopped by some construction on the road and had to turn around and ask one of the local gents on the other side of the sheep fence the way to St. Sunday Crag. It's good we asked, because I would have had us herring off in the wrong direction. Even when he told us the way to go, it didn't seem right, but fortunately Kyle convinced me to try it. *Oops*. When we got partway up this road Kyle realized he couldn't find the keys to the car. *For serious?!* It seems that something like this happens at the start of every trip! I was glad I had packed my spare key (a new development). Kyle was gone for a while and eventually came back and said he'd found the key. *Did I mention he'd realized it was in his pack the whole time...Geez!* In the interim, I scouted out the turn off for the trail that the locals had given us and was trying to figure out the way to the crag by looking at

the tiny Garmin screen and scrolling all over the place. We'd followed the directions of the locals and found the turn off suggested, but it didn't seem quite right compared to the trip reports. It took a frustrating amount of time to puzzle it out, but we eventually decided to follow the cement road all the way around to the farms in the valley just to the north of St. Sunday Crag. Turns out I was one valley off. *Oops. That was my actual bad!* The map we were looking at had that initial bit cut off.



As we rounded the forested road into the valley we followed up-valley past several farms and old houses. I'd had to relieve myself since we'd left the car, but a number of people were out walking or running as well, so there wasn't really a good place for me to stop and pee for quite some time. And by the time we were far enough out I felt like I'd worked through it pretty well. We moseyed up-valley until we passed Dalemain Estates and just on the other side of that gate we veered uphill. The trail follows near the wall and then cuts above it across a rocky stream. Kyle did point out that it looked that way, but it wasn't really clear, so instead, we just cut straight uphill. Besides it being a bit mossy, squishy and slippery in some places, it was fine going. *Always glad to have gaiters in the UK though. Never leave home without them!* Once the terrain eased a bit at 1500ft (460m), we traversed under the north side of St. Sunday Crag looking for Pinnacle Ridge. It then occurred to me that we were looking for a specific route on a very craggy side and we had no actual way of finding the start point, aside from the trip reports. I quickly scanned over them again, and it was fairly vague. Like there'd be a 'rowan' tree to your right. *What? Does a rowan tree have a distinguishing look about it? Honestly, I didn't even know that was a type of tree.* Another said you'd go up a scree patch and there'd be a cairn. *Okay. There was a lot of scree coming off this north side... that wasn't narrowing it down a bunch.* In the end, I eyed a distinctive looking rock that looked like a canon from one of the report photos we had and started scanning the hillside for that, as we traversed westward up-valley, under the north side. *Needle in a bloody haystack...* We ended up following the trail to where it started to peter out and that was at a scree section. As I looked up my eyes alit on what appeared to be that canon feature. I was trying to factor in the difference of angle etc. but I was pretty sure this was our spot. Thus, with no better alternatives, we moved upwards on the loose rock and dirt, straying to the right as often as possible to stay near the more compact grassy spots. It was easy going and given the fact I came across some wrappers I figured we were on the right path. It was confirmed when I found a cairn at the bottom of the 'ridge'. As we grabbed some water and put on our shell jackets I casually mentioned to Kyle that a flare gun was on my Christmas list, and also some of my special deodorant and toothpaste. Kyle laughed and later put up on Facebook that it'd be a 'special Christmas in the Warren Finnegan household!' *But really... those are contenders on the list!*

I must say, nothing about this had a very 'ridge' feel to it. It was more like a gendarme or something, not a proper ridge. It was almost more effort trying to find the scramble bits than just following the trail



that'd been somewhat worn in. The air was still a little moist and our boots were damp from slogging uphill so it made the rocks feel a little bit slicker. But, we tried to aim for the actual scramble pieces and add a little fun to the mix. We ended up bypassing the first 'pinnacle' which looked a bit more slabby and about 20-25ft in height with a 10-15ft downclimb on the other side. It looked fun, but in damp boots and minimal places for gear immediately

visible, plus not knowing if that was actually a part of it, we ended up on the backside a minute later. Really, this is a very short little scramble! The backside after the short downclimb is the 'crux'. It's a fairly vertical section of rock that is about 30ft-35ft or so. The rock is full of very protectable cracks. On a nice day, especially in boulder/approach shoes, you may not want or even need to rope up. But a slip could still be injurious, so we opted to use the rope we carried. At any rate, it's good practice. I lead up the right corner, like an open book, to stem up the first ten feet or so. Then I switched to the left (face) side and moved upward there. There were ample holds and I only hit one loose rock with my foot, otherwise it felt solid. We also climbed this in our Asolo boots, which I think are a bit on the loosey-goosey side. Designed more for long day comfort than edging. I placed a nut and a few cams on the 'pitch'. As I yelled 'off-belay' Kyle yelled something about the radio. I clicked on my radio. And it was nice to have that clear communication. I also learned I can hit the buttons through the mesh of the pocket without loosening the cord. I'm still a bit paranoid about losing something from that pocket after the GPS incident on Tower Ridge earlier this year.

Kyle scampered up next and we had to once again downclimb a short section. It was only about fifteen feet and it was fairly straight-forward with a big step at the bottom. *Easy-peasy*. From there we headed uphill and climber's left towards a rocky looking section (otherwise it'd just be a dirt scramble to the top). On this rocky out-cropping I headed up climber's left to a slabby looking ramp tucked slightly under another larger rock. It was a really fun piece. My boot was a little too big to get in at the angle I wanted so I ended up having to lie-back and pull myself up the first section. I really liked that move. Kyle later said he wasn't so sure when I yelled down that I had to lie-back but he did it and ended up enjoying it as well. We were milking this scramble! At the top, or basically, when the rock turns to a dirt trail I took the pro back from Kyle and started to put everything away. Kyle was, in my mind, dawdling a little bit. It was a nice break in the day so I got it, but I wanted him to work on efficient turnaround and so I told him I was going to keep moving if he was okay with that and he should work on getting everything off and sorted in efficient time. *Hey! It's very important to be able to turn around quickly and better to practice now then in difficult circumstances.*



I hopped up the remaining bit of hill and saw other people making their way up via the trail. I then turned around and yelled to Kyle that I was going to walk over to the summit. It was a very mild hill with a trail and it was levelling out. *Keep him moving!* I found the summit pile of rocks and dropped my pack to have a sip of water and mark it with the GPS. As I was doing that I heard Kyle yelling off in the distance that I must have ran the last bit. We briefly talked with a group that was up there hillwalking together and they snapped a photo of us. Then we waited a minute for the rest of their party to arrive and Kyle took their picture with this weird space age looking white ball – think it was some sort of Samsung camera. I acted out on my tech-ignorance when I asked if I need to duck and get on the ground to not be in the photo. *Hey! I thought it was one of those weird rotating 360 photos!* After that brief interlude, I was ready to go! The hills were wide open in front of us and it was time to roam free! Kyle was fiddling with his pack so

I told him I was going to start. I somehow managed to get quite a bit in front of him, but when we did meet up again he told me that the women on the summit of St. Sunday Crag had liked our packs and wanted a picture of the name so they could look it up online.

From St. Sunday over to Fairfield, there is a bit of a rocky trail, but a trail nonetheless. We followed it up and over to one of the many piles of cairns and wind walls on the 'summit plateau'. I think that's the best way to describe summits here in the UK. They are quite frequently like plateaus. Large and flat enough it's hard to distinguish one spot as the true summit. While up on this top we noted some more of the huge crows. Kyle and I briefly debated on whether or not they were crows or ravens. I was tempted to go with extra-large GMO crows but Kyle said that had to make them ravens. *Debate is still open.* Again, we didn't stick around long. We'd spent enough time earlier in the morning looking for the actual road, trail and then route! Time to get moving! We backtracked slightly, but it looked like a little too far perhaps and ended up cutting across an open grassy spot to the west side of Fairfield and down the established trail on that side. It was a good trail, albeit a bit rocky, with some little gravel-like sections. I had my eye on the little hill in front of us and figured we could go up that and then descend, and if we were feeling it go up the next hill on the north side of Grisedale Tarn. On the descent, Kyle reminded me that his foot had only been out of the boot cast for a few weeks and he didn't want to push it too hard. *Double crap! I forgot and I think that makes me a bad spouse!* At the saddle between Fairfield and Seat Sandal, Kyle took the trail that ran just above the lake and I went up and over the Helm. I wanted to work off some of this energy! It was actually a really quick jaunt up. It was a bit rocky, and the trail was a bit more gamey than the really worn ones in the vicinity, but still clear. I ascended the

east side and then stopped at the first big pile of cairns I encountered. Per usual, the large flat area meant it was hard to tell if it was the precise summit. I saw another pile of cairns a little more west but it didn't look substantially different in height. I knew I wanted to head north off to meet Kyle on the trail on that side, but I couldn't find a trail per se, so I just started heading downhill. I aimed towards the stone fence as I've found people tend to follow those and sure enough I came across a trail not far off (on the east side of the stone wall) that headed downhill.



I had turned on my radio when Kyle and I parted and just before I started heading downhill Kyle crackled over the radio telling me I was slow and to hurry up. Naturally after that, I stopped and took a whole bunch of pictures on the way down. At the saddle between Seat Sandal and Dollywaggon Pike we ran into a group of three men who wanted to know what the trail was like going down the east side. I indicated it was fine but a bit rockier and a little wet in some places. One gent, who said he'd already landed on his backside

three times today, opted to follow the trail around the lake as well. Kyle and I took off around the north side of the lake on a faint trail. The south side trail looked much nicer! Lessons learned. It was quite boggy and wet in this section. Maybe that's what inspired us to take a potty break. Honestly, the UK makes outdoor potty breaks seem so much more exposed. It was like a giant amphitheater of people all over the place, on different hillsides. I just figured we were as far from people as we were going to get, and if I ducked down low, hopefully, it wouldn't be too obvious. That, and the likelihood of finding anything more secluded on the way down seemed remote.

Once at the east side of Grisedale Tarn we crossed over an outlet stream and then followed the trail as it switched back left (north) under the craggy hillside. We followed the trail down valley crossing a couple of bridges and one magical looking section of woods, before making it back to where we had turned off alongside the stone wall. I was in my groove and just spaced out and kept going. Kyle told me I was speeding off. I just felt like I was in my zone. *The go zone!* We back tracked to the car where we changed into our urban outfits and then wandered over to the Patterdale Hotel to see what was on the menu. I had told Kyle en route that salmon sounded good, and lo and behold there was salmon rosti on the menu. I had no idea what that was, but it was salmon with potatoes so okay. Turns out a rosti is a potato cake of sorts and it had pieces of salmon with capers and was covered in a hollandaise sauce. *Yum!* Then we hopped in the car, feeling good, and debated on where we should car camp. We found a pull over spot near **** where we could get a little bit further off the road than most and where we still had some cell reception. We then went about determining if we'd be able to fit in the car sleeping. Kyle cranked his driver seat back as far as it'd go and it was fairly flat. We both tested it out and decided we would at least be willing to give it a try. We had a tent but this would reduce our unpacking and

resituating. Even after our dinner of salmon roti and chips I managed to crack open the chips and salsa and we put on a movie as we fell asleep. Kyle went down near immediately. It took me a while to fall asleep and I tossed and turned quite a bit. I know I dozed because I dreamed. Overall, it wasn't the most comfortable I've ever been, but it was repeatable.



Lessons Learned
1. I yelled something like "Unbelieve Tech Ops!" at Kyle early on and it just might stick!
2.
3.



