

Bog Monster

A CAUTIONARY TALE

T'was the eve of the famous Allan Jefferies Trial. Deep in the heart of Wharfedale, high on the fells above Halton Gill, an intrepid band of course plotters battled their way through the dense mist and drizzle trying to find the elusive North West Passage to Raysgill. I remember thinking, whilst knee deep in sludge, carrying my Beta between two peat hags, that this was more like the North Back passage to hell. Looking back you could hardly see the trail of orange course markers zig zagging before disappearing into the mist.

Just when I thought we had traversed the worst part, it happened. Suddenly and without warning, the entire front half of my bike disappeared before my very eyes. I was thrown violently forward and my arms and legs likewise vanished. When I regained my senses, a horrifying scene unfolded out of the mist that surrounded me. All around were rotting, half consumed carcasses of dead sheep. I tried not to panic as the terrible realisation dawned on me that I had stumbled into the lair of the legendary Yockenthwaite Bog Monster. As I lay there, slowly sinking, with my nose inches from that of a decomposing ewe. I tried not to inhale the putrid stench that hung in the air. (It smelt like some of Ron Eddings' after dinner cheese). I felt like a fly trapped in a spiders web and was awaiting my doom, when I heard a noise behind me. Hardly daring to look, I craned my neck out to see a strange shape looming out of the fog - it was Anthony Ayrton and the rest of my trusty crew. After much heaving and pulling, they managed to overcome the suction on me and the bike and extract us both from the quagmire.

After hurriedly scraping off the thick of the gunge, I kicked up my trusty steed and we headed off towards Rasgill. This time I was happy to ride at the back (the lads didn't want me up-wind anyway). I was so relieved at not being meals on wheels for the Bog Monster, (no man has seen it and survived) that I hardly noticed the smell, but back at base camp they wouldn't let me near the BBQ 'til I had had a wash in the river.

Anyway the moral of this story is, if you are riding in this years Allan Jefferies Trial, for your own sakes, stick to the course markers like glue, or you could find yourself being the last man alive to see the Yockenthwaite Bog Monster.