

Trig Point Art in the Context of Fell Running Club Livery

The great minds of investigators, academics and the scientific community alike, have for many years agonised over the mystery, “Who did paint Cock Hill Trig point?”. So it was, that when dawn broke in late May 2015, as the sun began its irresistible westerly traverse, it cast its glow upon the Triangulation Pillar at Cock Hill, and the world would change forever. The international press descended on the scene, along with perhaps half a dozen other people, determined to understand the significance of the blue and orange regalia. Meanwhile, back in the pubs of Glossop the mystery swirled, with one local quoted as saying, “Yeah I heard something about it, but can’t be arsed walking up there”. Another was overheard to say “What’s a Cock Hill?”.



Some were in no doubt that this the work of the fabled Banksy. The press seemed to believe this the work of some extra-terrestrial force. The New York Times were fairly reserved in their judgement, but likened the appearance to a “kind of like a sort of British crop circle”. Meanwhile, The Daily Sport ran with the headline “How did the aliens get the lines so straight?”. Those in the know would immediately suspect, with some justification, that this was the work of a rogue or perhaps disgruntled Glossopdale Harrier. Some in the club scoffed at the notion, putting the uncanny likeness to the world-famous vest down as, just “sheer coincidence”.

Fancying myself as an amateur sleuth, I decided to launch an investigation, not to uncover the perpetrators of the act, but to delve into any related history, precedents and perhaps gain some insight into the minds of those that practice this extreme sport. Armed with an empty fag packet, Google and an annoying pen that works one minute and not the next, I set to the task. I landed upon the catchy title for my investigation “Trig Point Art in the Context of Fell Running Club Livery”. This last part was necessary, as some preliminary Googling revealed some monstrous acts of vandalism such as painting Trigs up like Minions, Ghosts, or in Burnley FC colours. Such terrorism would only distract me from my true purpose. My Googling became steadily more extreme, and I became consciously aware that alarms could now be chiming at both MI5 and CIA headquarters “code red, somebody’s looking at painted Trig points!”. After a while, with the internet and other comms still operational and no sign of helicopters circling the house, I shelved my paranoia and ploughed on.

And as is so often the case, having built this huge level of expectation, I shall now disappoint. In summary, I was surprised to find that there has been seldom instance that Trigs have been painted in the colours of fell running clubs. Just 5 that I found, and all those within the borders of the Peak District. To narrow down the practice even further, with the exception of Cock Hill, it would seem our friends on the Sheffield side of the hill have the form book.

Very much in a way that no longer fits with the modus operandi of the practice, Will McLewin of Dark Peak Fell Runners painted both Back Tor and Blackden Trigs in the club colours of purple, yellow and sludge, and is photographed at the scene of the act. It’s unclear when exactly this was, and my budget application for carbon dating was declined. We can conclude however that the photo is “pretty old”. The second image shows the same Blackden trig point in 2003, where the stripes are still just visible. As a side note, many may not recognise the Trig, but that’s because in 2013, it was outfitted with red plaques to commemorate a scout unit, and the bog around it flagged.



In 2019, a fairly hasty looking copy was made on Win Hill Trig. In 2020, die-hard fans were left stunned and outraged, with a radical effort on the very same Trig, which broke away from the established horizontal striped convention. Apparently going for some kind of purple and yellow smashed pint pot look, and owing to the tell-tale signs of overspray, this appears to have been done with a customised stencil and spray paint, presumably by a hemp inebriated art student at Sheffield University. In both cases, the Trig was repainted white, and in short order.



Back to Cock Hill, and the trig remained blue and orange until at least November 2015, some 6 months. Five and a half years later, we still don't know who did it and why. But this is perhaps the most endearing part of the story, and very much in keeping with this emerging and underground practice. Some stones are better left unturned, or perhaps, the first rule of Trig Point Art in the Context of Fell Running Club Livery, is that we don't talk about Trig Point Art in the Context of Fell Running Club Livery. Hmm, this bit might need a bit of work.

An unofficial spokesperson for Glossopdale Harriers has said. "we absolutely and categorically condemn the practice is painting trig points in anything other than depressing off-white. Disciplinary action will be taken against a member found guilty. But it did look pretty cool though eh?"

The club are currently negotiating with Netflix for a 4 part docu-series chronicling the mystery, with Euan McGregor odds on favourite to narrate, and Danny Dyer vying to play the landlord of The Queens.

In all seriousness, please don't even think about going out to paint any trig points, blue, orange or otherwise! I shouldn't need to spell out why, other than to say it would reflect very badly on the club! Let us view the 2015 incident as a misguided stunt, which we can now safely reflect upon with some amusement, and no small sense of pride.