

# Trekking in the High Tatras through Poland and Slovakia

by Sue Boardman



*High Tatras - View to the Five Lakes Hut - Steve Clark*

My partner Steve and I joined the AAC(UK) eighteen months ago with a view to experiencing trekking using mountain huts and a trip, organised by Tony Cooper this year to the High Tatras, proved to be just the ticket.

We met Tony and the other members of the trip, Trevor, Chris, Ruth, Clive and Rowena on Saturday evening in Zakopane. The following day we took a short bus journey to Kuźnice to begin our trek. It was a delightful walk with some 500m of ascent to the Murowaniec hut. Here half the group opted to have lunch then explore the nearby lakes. The rest opted to continue ascending a further 550m taking in the Poland / Slovakia border ridge. Here we had wonderful panoramic views into both countries and of the rocky ridge leading to the top of Świnica.

Our second day began with a 600m climb taking us across beautiful mountain landscapes and over the Krzyżne pass at 2112m. Some of us had a tricky traverse across a particularly steep scree filled area which tested my mettle. Descending to the Five Lakes hut we enjoyed refreshments chatting with fellow walkers. This hut proved extremely busy with people sleeping overnight in the corridors, on the dining room floor and outside.

On the third day we had a short and relatively easy stroll through the mountains to the Morskie hut which was absolutely teeming with walkers and families. Morskie Oko, the lake in front of the hut, is an extremely popular destination for Polish people with many walking

for two hours from the nearest road or taking a horse drawn cart. Some of the group stayed and enjoyed the tremendous views, lively atmosphere and lake whilst three of us opted to take in the ascent of Hrubý štít at 2172m.

*Sue, Steve and Clive on Hrubý štít*  
- Steve Clark



Next day we descended to the Slovakian frontier walking against the thousands of people walking up to Morskie Oko. It was a phenomenal sight. Crossing into Slovakia a road brought us to the forest trail leading to the Green Lake Hut. We journeyed up a valley continuing our ascent of 550m to Kopske col passing through verdant landscapes before descending to the Green Lake hut. It was a truly wondrous sight for me when I woke in the morning and saw the mountain reflected perfectly in the still lake bringing a tear to my eyes. We stayed two nights here and on the second day a group of us took in the 700m of ascent of Jahňací štít at 2,228m. This was a steady climb with a small area of chains just before the col followed by a less well defined rocky ridge path.

*The Green Lake from hut Window*  
- Steve Clark



Day six began with a steady ascent to a 2020m col and peak before descending to a busy ski-lift station where we met Steve and Sue who joined us for the remainder of the trip. We arrived at the Zamkovského hut around two; the smallest hut we stopped in. Some of us then opted to walk to the Téryho lake, some 550m higher up.

*Sue and Steve at Teryho Lake* -  
Steve Clark



Our next destination was the Bilíkova hut with a choice of two routes. Steve, Trevor and I chose the high level Sedielko pass at 2362m and 900m of ascent. There was about 300m of a chained section for the final 100m of vertical ascent which was a new and daunting experience for me. With Steve's help I made it safely to the top, then being more concerned about what the descent was going to be like. I just kept all my wits about me, took things slowly and soon we were on more comfortable terrain.

On the final day of the trek, after yet another scrumptious mountain hut breakfast, the majority of the group went for a short walk around the Štrbské Pleso lake before taking the tram to Poprad - Clive and Rowena setting off for home en route. Steve and I chose to walk 1150m up to Slavkovský štít at 2452m before re-joining the group at Poprad. We had our first taste of rain here. Up to now the weather had been mainly sunny and warm.

Tony had also arranged an optional two day add on in the Slovensky Raj National Park, which eight of us enjoyed. I would like to thank Tony for his organisation and leadership throughout the trek and my thanks to all of the group, for their warmth and friendship making it an excellent and memorable first mountain hut trekking experience.