

BUMs walk 23rd September 2017

Bridgnorth rocks, caves and vegetables

Walkers: Leader Lesley, Debbie, Jeff, Sarah, Steve, Sue Lancaster, Colin, Ian, 2 dogs, Spot and Ellie

This walk was described as one for all. In the end it was 'all for one' as team work once again proved a certain method to prevent getting lost.

Arriving in Lowtown, a superb of Bridgnorth, on the Severn's eastern banks, we managed to squeeze 8 walkers and 2 dogs into two cars.

Local knowledge established (Debbie and Steve) I felt supremely confident leading the walk (pride goes before a fall).

We started the route (Cicerone guide to the Shropshire Hills - walk 3), walking south along the banks of the River Severn. The weather was dull, but mild and not raining, and we soon crossed the A442 and began a road ascent up Chapel Lane. This proved to be more or less the only ascent of the walk. We continued 'forward' up to our coffee break spot by Hoccum fishing lakes.

It's a good thing I was reminded about coffee as with all the concentration going on I had completely forgotten about this important break (unlike me normally).

Onwards up towards the B4363 following instructions we climbed a broken stile into a field being ploughed by an ancient tractor, driven by an equally ancient farmer. On reaching a 'small brook' Jeff claimed this was not THE small brook (according to Satmap) and we had gone wrong. I make no excuses as I had thought we should have proceeded across the field in a left diagonal direction but multiple voices and an obvious path forward swayed me from any little resolve I had and so it was that we retraced our steps and our brave chairman decided to stop the tractor and ask for directions.

The ancient farmer was even more ancient than first thought, but a lovely man to boot. He admitted that the stile we should have climbed over from the road might have been hidden and the sign post might have fallen down.....enough said we managed to find the correct path and onwards we went.

Here the walk became more interesting as we walked on paths hemmed in by sandstone cliffs. It was a little dank here so we ploughed (!) on to reach Rindleford Mill, now a dwelling with a small holding. I had promised shopping on this trip (meaning a COOP back in Bridgnorth), but nothing had prepared me for the outdoor green grocery store with honesty box. Sue stuffed a marrow (get it?) into her rucksack and Debbie similar with green beans, crying "there's nothing in the fridge for tea- these will do". The stall held a plethora of greens but sadly Ian didn't have space to take anything back for Penny and I was too busy leading to stuff a gigantic cauliflower into my bag.

We carried on to our lunch in a clearing (a spot found by the delegated lunch spot spotter - Ian) and scoffed our sandwiches. What a spot! I shall employ that spotter again.

A fairly anti-climactic section led us onto a rather tricky part of the route with often a choice of paths, but only one which would lead us to our cars.....with a little back up support from the group, now working as one, we negotiated the confusion and came out, at last to the bluff overlooking Bridgnorth, and onwards to the 'famous' hermitage caves (now sadly hemmed in behind metal bars).

We soon descended back into Lowtown, no worse for wear and those who had shopped till they dropped, pretty pleased at the prospect of a vegetarian feast.

Checking the stats we had achieved almost 11 miles with anywhere between 1000-2000 ft of ascent. We must coordinate these navigational devices *

* statto may need to check these footages with Colin and Jeff