

## **Trip Report: Ribble Valley**

**Date:** Aug 24th, 2017

**Group:** Steve (leader), Sarah, Lynn, Selina, Mike W, Ian, Les, Mike A, Colin, Amanda, Dave C, Ann, Jo, Jeff, Heather, John, Dave B (guest), Janet (guest)

**Route:** A circuit in the Ribble Valley from the Roman town of Ribchester (Pathfinder Guide: Lancashire Walks, walk 25, page 77).

**Total Distance:** 11.1 miles

**Total Ascent:** 1578 ft

A group of 18 assembled in the car park at Ribchester after a drive up the M6 through intermittent rain, except for Jo who joined us directly from Bingley. As we prepared for the walk the rain had stopped but with the skies still looking threatening everyone pulled on a waterproof top and some decided to go for over-trousers as well.

A footpath past the remains of the Roman Baths led us out of town and we were soon crossing the first of many fields. The weather started to look better and as everyone started to get warmed up there were a few pauses for clothing adjustments! For the leader, one unexpected difficulty soon became apparent - the paths were poorly signposted and little walked, so that direction finding across fields was particularly troublesome. As a result we did make an early deviation from the book route but since it avoided having to walk 500m on a B road I was quite happy to quickly plan an alternative. And I thank the two Mikes for each providing some reassurance with path-finding, in various fields and farmyards, based on their GPS devices.

After a coffee break at a spring and a bit more zig-zagging across fields we soon re-joined the planned route and followed a bridleway down into an attractive wooded gorge. We walked just above the stream in the gorge for a short distance before gently climbing out of the woods to the edge of the village of Hurst Green. Here we entered the grounds of Stonyhurst College, an Elizabethan mansion dating back to 1592 which has, for over two hundred years, been a Roman Catholic school adhering to the Jesuit tradition. We walked down the long drive that provides the main approach to the College and decided that a rugby pitch at the end of the drive offered the best place for lunch, sitting on the grass with a view of the College buildings.

We continued on a loop through the extensive College grounds which then led us into Hurst Green. The public loos in the centre of the village were a welcome sight and it was suggested that such mid-walk facilities might have been a first on a BUMS outing! After a pause for use of the facilities we found the track that we needed to get down to the river Ribble. At this point we joined the Ribble Way and I was expecting that route-finding would become easier.....but no such joy, the little signposting that existed was tricky to follow. Nonetheless we managed to find our way across a few fields, some distance away from the river, and then come down to the river bank at the right place. To my relief the Ribble Way footpath was well defined along the river bank and, although rather muddy in parts, made an attractive section of the walk. We reached Ribchester Bridge and joined the road on which we had arrived in the cars, following it into the town. By this time the large group was

a bit fragmented but everyone managed to find the car park and quite a few returned carrying well deserved ice cream cones!

Rehydration in The Dysart garden rounded off an enjoyable day.

Steve