

**Trip Report: Long Mynd****Date:** May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017**Group:** Steve (leader), Sarah, Lynn, Tony, Selina, Mike, Ian, Chrissie**Route:** A circuit at the northern end of the Long Mynd. Starting from All Stretton over Betchcott Hill and down to Ratlinghope, using part of the Shropshire Way, then looping back over the Mynd close to Pole Bank.**Total Distance:** 9.94 miles**Total Ascent:** 1495 ft

It was nice to set out with a group of eight after it seemed, a couple of days earlier, that we might only need one car. And especially nice to have Chrissie Latter with us making her first BUMS appearance of the year. The starting car park at All Stretton is very handy for the northern end of the Long Mynd so after a drive down the A49 we were underway before 10am.

A steady climb on a good path took us out of valley and up onto the open landscape of the Mynd that is home to a considerable population of wild horses. In his role as “photographer of the day” Tony did his best to capture a few shots of a cute foal but didn’t get much cooperation from the foal’s mum! As we reached the point of joining The Shropshire Way we met a group of school children each carrying a large rucksack - the classic look of a DoE expedition party! They were just the first of many as we seemed to pass a group every ten minutes for the next hour or so. The Shropshire Way took us over Betchcott Hill and provided far reaching views to the Wrekin on the right and to Stiperstones on the left.

The weather remained overcast all day and with a chilly breeze there was quite a debate about where to stop for coffee. We settled for a spot that was OK but then found 2 or 3 in the next few minutes that would have been more comfortable (blame the leader for insufficient route knowledge!). We soon reached the hamlet of Ratlinghope and left the Shropshire Way to begin climbing back up onto the Mynd, first on tarmac and then on a well trodden bridleway through the heather.

The lunch stop was a grassy verge and then as we headed eastwards we enjoyed the views ahead of The Lawley and Caer Caradoc, popular hills on the other side of the A49. Faced with a few options for getting back to the cars I steered the group towards Church Stretton golf course and then down a broad ridge that was familiar from The Long Mynd Valleys fell race. Ian and Tony seemed to particularly enjoy this bit as we lost them off the back for a few minutes as we descended more steeply to join the outward route in the valley floor.

All the walkers returned to The Dysart for rehydration and were pleased to be joined by Colin and by Mike who had tales to tell of the SW Coast Path.