

Trip Report: Winkle and The Dane Valley

Date: April 27th, 2018

Group: Steve (leader), Sarah, Les, Jeff, Debbie (with Ellie & Spot), Della, Selina, Chrissie, Colin, Dave C, Tony (with Riley)

Route: A circuit from Rushton Spencer on the edge of the Peak District ([link to Walking Britain](#))

Total Distance: 10.0 miles

Total Ascent: 1500 ft

Rushton Spencer is a small village just outside the western boundary of the Peak District national park that is easy to get to and so makes a good start point for various walks in the area. Not much more than an hour after leaving Bunbury, eleven hardy BUMS prepared for a damp day ahead by pulling on waterproofs as soon as the cars were parked! The number of expected walkers had fluctuated in the previous few days for various reasons including the weather forecast.

The walk began on paths, lanes and tracks across farmland. As we crossed a stile into one field I read from the walk description "Look out for the goats!" and sure enough within a minute a large herd came galloping around the corner, hugging the fence, and passed us before I could get my camera out. With sheep and lambs around as well on some parts of the walk it was a day when the dogs were regularly on and off their leads.

We soon reached the Dane Valley Way and followed it for a mile alongside a disused canal which was built to feed water from the River Dane to Rudyard Lake. At the old lock and weir where the canal was fed from the River Dane we crossed a metal bridge over the river and continued along its opposite bank, stopping briefly for coffee before climbing up through the adjacent woodland. As we walked towards the village of Winkle, in a brief moment of brighter skies, a good view opened up of The Roaches. Before reaching the village we changed direction to again follow field paths, and then a lane, to the old buildings of Winkle Grange (originally constructed from the local red sandstone grit by monks in the 14th century, according to Historic England).

Rising to the challenge of some awkward stiles and cattle trodden, muddy farmland we descended to a stream and then up through woods, past a derelict farm and on to a track leading to our high point of the day at Minn End Lane. A gnarled old tree beside the track provided less-than-perfect shelter for a lunch break and the cool breeze meant that, after some banter about the merits of various sandwiches, they were consumed without delay. Even Riley had to put his coat on!

A Minn End Lane we had a murky view to the west across Cheshire but it didn't last for long as we descended on the Gritstone Trail back down into the Dane valley. We crossed the river and arrived at the old canal that we had followed earlier, but this time turning on to a path in the opposite direction. Unfortunately, although we were still on the Gritstone Trail there was no grit underfoot - only a lot of very gloopy mud.....and it continued for about a mile. I think by the end of it everyone was just happy to have kept on their feet! At last the path improved despite continuing to follow the bank of the overgrown canal all the way back to Rushton Spencer, at times seemingly through a few back gardens.

After the mud and the rain - did I mention that it drizzled all day!? - it took a while to strip off all the wet and dirty gear before the drive back to The Dysart where a few other BUMS were already gathered. It was

particularly brave of Bob to show up and the opportunity was not missed to tease him about his wimpish late withdrawal from the walk due to the weather forecast!

Thanks to all the walkers for contributing to an enjoyable day and for not abusing the leader too much for the mud-fest near the end.