

BUMS Walk – Friday 31st July 2026

Location: Lud's Church and The Roaches

Route: Gradbach – Lud's Church – The Roaches - Gradbach

Weather: Dry and partially sunny

Party: Mike A (leader), Lesley, Steve, Bruce, Lynn, Gordon, Claire, Fred, Anne, Chris, Chrissie, Cate, Sue L, Richard, Della, Clare + 2 well behaved dogs (Chloe and Lula)

Distance: 14 km (8.7 miles) **Total Ascent:** 483m (1580ft) **Time** 5 hrs

With a perfect weather forecast and a classic local route in prospect, we had an excellent turnout for our trip to Gradbach. Not the usual starting place for this one, which possibly added to the attraction.

The predicted 1hr 15m journey time turned out to be optimistic. As usual we were plagued with road works and diversions which added a quarter of an hour each way. Anyway all 4 cars made it safely to the designated car park which was about full by the time we departed, so good timing despite everything.

The walk started from alongside the River Dane, briefly along the road before dropping down to reach Gradbach Mill which is now a hotel and wedding venue. After a few minutes we entered the woodland over the river and started the gradual ascent up towards Lud's Church, stopping at a rocky outcrop for delayering and a group photo. It then wasn't far to the natural chasm which is Lud's Church. Famous for secret 15th century religious worship and Robin Hood myths. About 100 metres long and 18 metres deep it is certainly an atmospheric spot and thanks to the recent heatwaves did not present the usual boggy challenge walking through. A few members of our group had not been here before, so it was good to visit while looking at its best!

We then continued ascending through the woodland before emerging onto the ridge where we stopped for a coffee break while enjoying decent views to the south and west. We continued walking south along the ridge and eventually the trig point came into view standing at 505m and giving us superb 360 deg views of the surrounding area including Tittesworth Reservoir.

We continued almost to the end of the ridge and with a bit of mild scrambling descended to a lower path where, still with some decent views, this time to the east, we decided to stop for lunch amongst the heather and rocks. Having completely descended the ridge, at the end of this path we resisted the temptation of Hen Cloud beyond and turned left away from the hill and took the north easterly path rising gradually to meet the tarmac road which we had earlier crossed on the early part of our ridge walk.

The route was now consisting mainly of open farmland which didn't please some members of the party who had been over hydrating. As usual there was the occasional abandoned ruin which offered some protection from the general public.

Up to this point, the route had been previously reccied by the leader and his assistant, but for reasons I won't go into here, the last mile or so of our route was uncharted. So, we were relying on the accuracy of the OS map and the hope that the waymarking hadn't been sabotaged by the local farmers. The result predictably did involve some bushwacking over rough ground but our group was resilient and relished the challenge.

Either by skill or good fortune, we emerged back at the car park without having lost a single member of our party to injury or pestilence and judging by the comments of the group, everything seemed to be positive, especially the weather!

So it was back to the Dysart garden for rehydration which provided the perfect ending.

Mike A

