

BUMs Report on Summer BBQ 2018 walk and social August 25th

Attendees: Lesley and Mike A (Leaders), Sarah, Steve, Ann, Selina, Mike W, Mike H, Heather Foster Dave Cadman, Gerry, Jim G, Debbie and Jeff, Sue L, Chris and Chrissie, dogs-Ellie and Spot

Weather: Showery

Miles 9.8

Ascent: 1500 ft

Having suffered perishing cold hail last year on the Cloud, near Congleton, we once again decided to give Congleton another chance, but with showers in the forecast most had come fully prepared for anything.

Four cars left the Pavilion at 9.00 heading for a car park at the back of the main shopping street in Congleton. We all arrived and squeezed in the small car park and headed south towards Astbury golf club which we crossed twice carefully checking for flying balls (good job Ian wasn't there). It's amazing how quickly we were out into open countryside and soon reached the Macclesfield Canal and then emerged onto a very busy, narrow road with no pavement or verge, gaining some very strong looks from motorists as 17 humans and 2 dogs marched on the right, dodging cars.

Safely turning right just before the garden centre it was fields and tracks right up until we reached Nick l' th' Hill – yes, that is actually the name of the point we accessed the Staffordshire Way, leading onto the Gritstone Way. This area was quarried widely, evidence of which is clear on the ridge, with good views both of Biddulph to the south east and Congleton back north west. We stopped on a wall for coffee where I ensured my brand new sunglasses were firmly in my bag, and then down towards the Old Man of Mow for lunch, where one bench proved too small for 17 of us. Looking out towards the west we could clearly see the hill of Beeston Castle which was rapidly disappearing into an oncoming rain storm. With waterproofs at the ready we retraced our steps to a path crossroads where we headed towards Ackers Crossing and the canal once more where, 4 bridges later, we directed our steps towards the steeple of Astbury Church. A bit of a road slog for $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile and soon we reached Astbury Mere and then made our way, back to Congleton and the cars.

We deliberately skirted round the shabby shic Mow Cop 'Castle' as it would have added on a gratuitous mile but it interestingly was the location of the first ever 'camp meeting' popular with Primitive Methodists, a group, nicknamed 'the ranters' who developed a rather puritanical Methodist off-shoot – yes even more puritanical than the normal Methodists. There are 30 chapels and churches scattered around this area as a reminder of the zealous population.

Thank goodness we managed to escape from temperance and all joined up again with partners and others at Penny and Ian Langford's house to enjoy superb hospitality and a damned good BBQ, with lashings of punch, which Ian served decorously from a newly bought (we hoped) watering can. Food and drink flowed well into the night, highlighted by a magnificent full moon, which Jim G could not get over and desperately wanted to photograph.

We soon found Ian's hidden bottle of malt Jura and a jolly good time was had by all.

The walk punctuated by showers and the evening felling an autumnal nip I would like to thank Penny and Ian for volunteering their lovely home to 33 BUMs and look forward for the next volunteers to step forward as hosts for 2018.