

Trip Report: The Roaches

Date: 27th April 2004

Group: Tony Quinn (leader) Jim Grant, Colin Christie, Selina Green

Route: Flash - Three Shires Bridge - Grinbach - Lud's Church - The Roaches - Hen Cloud - Ramshaw Rocks - Flash Bottom - Flash

Total Distance: 14 miles

Total Ascent: Unknown

Weather: Overcast then bright

Time: 7 hours

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

This trip was always planned to be more of a ramble than a high level hike. The highest point (altitude) of the trip was at the start, in the car park, in the Staffordshire village of Flash. At over 1500ft it's apparently the highest village in the British Isles - so it was downhill all the way after that! With holidays, golden weddings and some members a bit fearful to step out after the last BUM expedition, there were just the four of us on this trip.

The walk started from Flash over typical Staffordshire moorland - boggy and monotonous - but we eventually reached the well known Three Shires (Derbyshire, Staffordshire, and our own beloved Cheshire) Bridge.

Unfortunately, it wasn't particularly impressive - until I realised I hadn't read the map properly and the real bridge was further round the valley.

The real bridge was quaint and in a beautiful setting. The walk then headed south towards the village of Grinbach and its silk-spinning mill, now a Youth Hostel. (There was also a bit of difficulty in finding the route to the village, but I don't want everyone to lose total confidence in my map-reading abilities).

At Grinbach the sun came out, and we headed up-hill through the Swathermy woods towards Lud's Church, which is a deep rock chasm where the Green Knight was supposed to have fought some other Arthurian character. With a stop for coffee we carried on along the ridge towards the Roaches, rewarded along the way with glorious views across the moors and Rudyard lake.

The Roaches are a series of wind-sculptured gritstone rock formations popular with rock-climbers. After another stop for coffee and sandwiches (gee, I love these walks with plenty of time for refreshment stops) we traversed the Roaches ridge stopping frequently to watch the climbers making their way over some pretty dangerous looking over-hangs. The walk then took us over to Hen Cloud - another rocky outcrop, which sadly looked like it had suffered badly from a recent forest fire.

Ahead of schedule, we had time to traverse Ramshaw Rocks and make our way back to the car via the part-appropriately named Flash Bottom. The New Inn in Flash didn't look particularly new or flash, so we decided to wait till we got back to Bunbury for more refreshment. It only took an hour to travel home, so that left even more time for the essential debrief in the Dysart.

MATTERS ARISING

Members should be discouraged from taking out with them their mobile phones to keep up with the latest football scores. Colin was depressed all afternoon.

Tony