

**Trip Report: The Stretton Hills**

**Date:** 6th December 2009

**Group:** Mike (Leader) & Lesley, Jim G, Chris & Chrissie, Lynn, Jim & Jean, Selina, Caryle, Lynda, Sue, Graham Sutton, Richard, Elena & John, Colin, Allie (Selina's guest) + 3 Dogs (Roxy, Tess and guest dog)

**Route:** Caer Caradoc (459m) - The Lawley (377m)

**Total Distance:** 9.5 miles

**Total Ascent:** Unknown

**Weather:** Sunshine and showers

**Time:** 5 hours

For some reason this was one of the best attended walks on record. It could have been the choice of leader or the brilliant weather but more likely it was the prospect of sitting in a car for only one hour each way instead of the usual two.

We all assembled at the Pavillion at 07.45 except for Colin who arrived unfashionably late at 07.59. The short trip also attracted more drivers than required, so Richard was able to stand down.

Firstly, a welcome to some first timers: Graham from Delamere, John who was introduced by Elena, and Allie all the way from Wolverhampton. The weather was miserable on the journey down but by the time we started the walk, some blue sky was showing and we enjoyed good clear views during the morning's higher level walking.

We started the climb up Caer Caradoc after about 30 minutes and half way up there is a stile. Caryle was suffering from ailments too numerous to mention and refused to carry on, worried that she might not be able to get round the route. Reluctantly, we let her turn back to find some gentler walking, and if necessary, the pubs and cafes of Church Stretton. We continued up to the summit of Caer Caradoc which is topped with an Iron Age fort and regrouped while sheltering from a stiff southerly wind. A number of the girls went off to find a suitable location for a loo stop so we there was a straggly group making its way down over Little Caradoc and then descending to the little wood below where we had our coffee stop.

From here, the route took us up The Lawley, which is a whaleback hill to the north of Caer Caradoc.

Our arrival at the summit coincided with the arrival of the leaders of the Cardington Cracker Fell Race. We knew some of the Tattenhall Runners who were taking part which made for an interesting and unusual spectacle for a BUMS outing.

We descended the long grassy slopes of The Lawley to the northernmost

point, which marked the half way point of the walk. We then started the low level walk along the western flank back to the start point of The Lawley's ascent. This was a very boggy section and produced mutterings from the troops. We then found a sheltered spot and stopped for lunch. We then returned to the foot of Caer Caradoc and a debate took place about the route back - some wanted to go back over the top, while for others the lower level route was more attractive. We took the low level which was a good choice as the weather had started to close in and walking into the teeth of a squally shower on the top would not have been much fun. Also the path was less boggy and higher than we had expected, so everyone was happy (possibly).

The path returned us to the aforementioned stile (Caryle's stile) from where we retraced our steps to the town where we found Caryle safe and well. In fact she had found a good low level walk and had not spent too long in the hostelryes of Church Stretton. We all made our way back to the hostelryes of Bunbury (The Dysart) for the usual rehydration. It was an excellent day out for a short December day.

Mike A