

## **Trip Report: Christmas Family Walk**

**Date:** 27th December 2014

**Group:** Lynda (Leader), Tony, Lynn, Jim, Colin, Dave Cadman, Mike Hiscock, Ed, Jenny, Selina, Caryle, Sandra, Chris, Ian, Penny, Jean & Jake. Dogs: Mollie, Jess & Fudge

**Route:** Whitegate Way from Winsford onto Delamere forest, Old Pale Heights to Gresty's Waste at Kelsall

**Total Distance:** 11.9 miles

**Total Ascent:** 997 ft

**Weather:** Beautiful Sunny Snow covered day (OK - so we saw the blue sky once and the snow was a bit wet under foot, oh and there were a few showers around too!!)

**Time:** 5 hours

All met at the Pavillion car park at 9.30am, all but Colin - sitting at Gresty's Waste Car park in Kelsall following a confusing email from Lynda needing his car at the end of the walk. The rescue party went into action quickly realising a plan was required and taking a slight diversion on the way to the beginning of the walk at Winsford. Brilliant team work! So, starting the walk slightly later than planned (half an hour to be precise - oh dear!!), the Bums went on their merry way walking the Whitegate Way. This pathway being where heavy goods trains laden with salt once lumbered to Cuddington to join the Chester - Manchester line.

As this was a family walk, all needs and lengths of walk were catered for, allowing walkers to join at various points but also being wheelchair accessible. A logistical challenge indeed! First stop for coffee at Whitegate railway station for 11.15am - only 10 minutes late and welcoming Penny, Ian + 2 dogs, Mollie & Jess.

The Whitegate Way is around 7 miles long with a newly built link path to Delamere forest, however a recent check of this foot path proved it to be extremely muddy. A slight diversion was taken along the country roads from Cuddington to the back of Delamere forest arriving at the next designated stop off point for lunch (just half an hour late) and to welcome a smiley, patient Jean and Jake to the now "a little wet and cold" group of walkers! Jenny having sat in her All Terrain Buggy for sometime needed a good warm up in Jean's car. Fudge the dog was also looking extremely cold and wet so a quick towel down and refreshments seem to pull her spirits up too, whilst everyone tucked into their turkey sandwiches and Christmas cake.

Onwards to the final leg of the walk via the Visitor Centres toilets at Delamere and a final check of chip butty numbers phoned through to the

Yew tree with a now later ETA of 4.15pm (where does the time go??). Up Old Pale Heights for the high light of the walk with promised views stretching to all adjoining counties and land marks around. Excellent team work was required by all to get Jenny to the top, requiring the very strongest of the walkers working 2 by 2 pushing up the steep hill. Various comments were heard such as - "you need to loose weight Jenny" and "how about just letting go on the way down to see how far the buggy goes?". Ooh and - sorry Penny I forgot to point out the alternative flatter route around Old Pale Heights, but then you would have missed the beautiful views!! Well done you managed it and still smiling - at the top anyway! The final descent to Gresty's Waste was now in sight with the thought of hot chip butty's and a pint, only to be obstructed by a very fool hardy front group waiting with snow ball's in hands to ambush the rest of the group. Selina - really - throwing a snow ball at our eldest family guest using walking stick to stop herself from falling, Shame on you!! We finally arrived at Gresty's Waste near Kelsall where Ed's van and Colin's (nearly didn't happen) car were parked to take drivers to pick up the other cars at Winsford. A shivering, wet, Fudge and almost blue looking Jenny managed to get a lift too to warm them up. Really, really, really sorry to those poor folk that had to wait in the freezing cold for the car's to come back and pick them up, how ever the chip butties and usual hydration made it all worth while and only 1 hour later than planned!! Various other BUMS that had not been able to make the walk but interestingly were able to make the pub, joined us for tales of the adventures of the day. A good end to the Year of the Classic Walks of 2014.

Lynda P.S. Sandra was happy to report, Fudge fully recovered from her near hypothermic experience!

Lynda