

Trip Report: Christmas Family Walk

Date: 28th December 2015

Group: Mike A (leader), Lesley (co-leader at rear), Lynda (real leader), Jim G, Mike W, Selina, Lynn, Debbie, Mike H, Sue, Caryle + 5, Ann & Neil + 6, Gerry + 4, Mark & Michael Hallett, A few other unspecified humans
- 3 mutts

Route: Coppermine Lane - Raw Head - Kitty's Stone - Maiden Castle - Brown Knowl - Gallantry Bank - Coppermine Lane

Total Distance: 7.3 miles

Total Ascent: Unknown

Weather: Dry and overcast

Time: 4 hours

Unfortunately, Lynda's carefully researched route from Betws-y-Coed was scuppered due to the flooding in North Wales and we had to hastily invoke plan B which was a local yomp around Bickerton Hill.

A vast army from Bunbury assembled at the top of Coppermine Lane - there must have been nearly 40 present but no one managed an accurate headcount - and it was a case of every family for themselves as we followed the Sandstone Trail to Raw Head, where we just about managed to fit everyone on the summit for the compulsory 'trig point' photo. Continuing along the trail, having descended from Raw Head, came the opportunity for a bale out but there were no takers and we all safely made the perilous crossing of the A534 at Gallantry Bank. Following the tarmac section to Bickerton Church, we re-joined the Trail and climbed to Kitty's Stone up on the ridge where we stopped for lunch, scoffing turkey sandwiches and christmas cake. Also we enjoyed views of the Clwyddian Hills and areas of floodwater from the swollen Dee.

Continuing along the Sandstone Trail, we regrouped at Maiden Castle, the Iron Age hillfort, at which point we left the Trail and looped around to the south of the hill. We eventually briefly rejoined the Trail (heading north) as far as the car park at Duckington, where we kept to the edge of the wood and headed towards Brown Knowl. Just before reaching the village, we turned back into the wood and then picked up the perimeter path which took us back almost to our point of entry onto Bickerton Hill, not far from the Church, from where we retraced our route to Gallantry Bank. Recrossing the A534, we then turned right passing the Coppermine chimney and then to Coppermine Lane, from where a shortish walk back up the hill to where our cars were parked.

Only the short drive back to the Yew Tree lay between us and the chip butties and pints of ale (or equivalent). As far as I know, we managed to

avoid losing a single person or dog, which would have been a very bad PR story and not helped our recruitment drive for 2016.

Mike A