

Trip Report: Cheshire

Date: 18th February 2006

Group: Tony (leafer) Jim G, Mike and Lesley, Selina and Mike, Amanda, Lynn

Route: Sandstone Trail from Frodsham to Beeston and on to Bunbury via tow-path

Total Distance: 17 miles

Total Ascent: Unknown

Weather: Sunny, cool at times, no rain

With just a short drive to the start of the walk, we treated ourselves to a later than usual start time of 8.00 am. Selina was delayed a bit picking up Jim because of an articulated lorry, which had decided to fix itself up Jim's lane. Tony had decided to start the walk from the same place as when he had last walked it in 1981, which avoided the slog up to the top of the hill from Frodsham High Street.

The route is a bit tame and over sign-posted for the usual Bunbury Montaineers expeditions (no map or GPS needed today), but we were soon following a very pleasant path through Frodsham Woods, along the sandstone escarpment of Frodsham Hill, and where we were met by a couple looking for their lost dog - Tilly.

The pleasant walk ended with a boring road walk through the village of Manley, but improved again with a trek through Delamere Forest. The hoards and their cars were a noisy shock for us, and it was a while before we found a quiet place for a coffee break in the forest. After risking our necks crossing the busy A54 we were again at last in the peace and sylvanian tranquility of Primrose Wood. We left the wood and had to tread carefully around a bull in a field near Kelsall tea-shop, especially Amanda who unfortunately was in a red coat.

By the time we had reached Utkinton it was time for lunch, but Lesley wasn't too happy with the location, so Mike arranged for a bench to be placed down a green pleasant lane. After lunch the route became muddier and muddier and the progress slower and slower. With Beeston castle refusing to get any nearer, we did eventually reach the Shropshire Union canal expecting an easier home-run back to Bunbury. Alas, we faced even more mud on the last slog to Jim's house.

Our 17 mile trial on the trail was soon forgotten as Jim's cold beers (Amanda said it was the best beer she had ever tasted), slipped down. A quick dash for some to pick up the cars and then it was back to the Dysart Arms, Bunbury for a few more drinks and the important debrief.
Tony