

Trip Report: The Namby Pamby Walk (Wikipedia definition: Childish and weakly sentimental)

Date: 15th January 2011

Group: Jim G (Leader), Tony (driver 2), Lynn, Mike A, Lesley, Sue, Lynda, Colin, Hugh, Roxy and Tilly

Route: White Lodge-Brushfield Hough-Priestcliffe-Taddington-White Lodge-Deep Dale-Magpie Mine-Shacklow Wood-White Lodge

Total Distance: 11.5 miles

Total Ascent: Unknown

Weather: Dry (mostly) and very windy

Time: 6 hours

With the last minute withdrawal of Jim W (injured calf) and Jean (in sympathy) 8 intrepid Mountaineers set off at 8.10 am (the earliest late we have ever been!) from the pavilion car park. Jim G's Tom Tom takes us by a very devious route to Congleton and then onto Taddington and down the A6 (Colin getting quite tearful at this reunion with his favourite highway) to the car park at White Lodge. Hugh is already there having driven up from Luton.

After a faff with the pay and display machine (only spitting out every other ticket) we set off in a bit of rain and a fair amount of wind.

We head into the deep cleft of the Wye Valley and head steeply up Brushfield Hough before traversing along a ridge through a dense thicket of Hawthorn Trees! The vertically challenged have a distinct advantage here! We join a track that takes us through Lower Brushfield and along with great views down into High Dale. We turn left at Priestcliffe Lees Nature Reserve (unofficial toilet break taken here by one of the vertically challenged) and just before entering the hamlet of Priestcliffe the Leader calls for the official coffee break.

Suitably refreshed we pass through Priestcliffe past Rock Lodge Farm, past the strip lynchets (medieval cultivation) on Horse Stead Hill crossing the A6 (Colin gets emotional again) and into the village of Taddington.

Passing through the village; one of the vertically challenged (yes the same one from the unofficial toilet break) remarks that "this is a bit of a namby pamby walk"! The Leader, showing remarkable restraint, refuses to rise to this blatant challenge to his authority and competence. (Not known for his weakness or sentimentality although he may agree to having been childish on the odd occasion).

We make our way via tracks and green lanes climbing up a bank to reach High Well enclosure a walled natural spring. Tony decides that his feet and lower legs are too hot and promptly stumbles backwards into the

spring which comes up to his knees, note Tony's boots are definitely not designed to be waterproof to a depth of one metre. When the squad have stopped pissing themselves with laughter, we proceed forward passing Lodley View Farm and reach the village of Taddington Field. We then continue down a shallow valley passing the head of Dimin Dale before contouring round and back to the cars at White Lodge car park where lunch is taken. Hugh decides that his sore knee will mean him not taking part in the next section and heads off back to Luton.

After lunch we set off and through Demon's Dell before turning right and proceeding the long climb up Deep Dale into the teeth of a brisk wind. At the top of Deep Dale we turn left up a Howgills type steep grassy slope (the namby pamby remark now long forgotten) and cross various stiles and pastures as we finally arrive at the picturesque village of Sheldon. We cross the village green and again crossing stiles and pastures make our way to the Magpie Mine. This is a fascinating collection of preserved buildings and workings of a Lead Mine reputed to have been worked for over 400 hundred years, the main shaft is 222m (728ft) deep and Lynn tosses a stone down to test it's depth. We make our way back to Sheldon passing a nice looking pub on the way. Descending a shallow valley; we make our way down and through Little Shacklow Wood; stopping only to watch Tony exploring a cave in the hillside. At the end of the valley we meet the river Wye and turn left onto a track passing the ruins of Shacklow Mill and then Magpie Sough, a drain from The Magpie Mine completed in 1881. The path then continues up and through Great Shacklow Wood and back to the cars at White Lodge car park.

An excellent day and luck with the weather. We arrive back at the Dysart at 5.15pm for the traditional re-hydration therapy

Jim G