

**Trip Report: Aldford**

**Date:** 18th July 2015

**Group:** Colin (leader), Jim, Caryle, Gerry, Jeff, Mike H, Tony, Lynn, John, Heather, Selina, Steve, Sarah, Ian and his mutts (Molly and Jess)

**Route:** Aldford - along the river Dee, back via Churton

**Total Distance:** 7.5 miles

**Total Ascent:** Almost none

**Weather:** Mostly sunny

**Time:** About 4 hours

I was charged with the responsibility of leading a very gentle local walk as an appetiser ahead of the annual BBQ and chose a pleasant looking stroll along the banks of the Dee from Aldford. The rules are relaxed for the BBQ walks whereby mid walk, and also immediate post walk re-hydration therapy is permitted under the constitution, so this seemed to tick the boxes with the Grosvenor Arms at Aldford and the White Horse in Churton possible watering holes.

Taking my responsibilities very seriously I wished to ensure that the paths were not overgrown and therefore carried out a "reckie" on the Wednesday prior, whereby I ran round the route. Well I tried to run round the route but got lost! Yes, lost on a riverside walk! Set off at about 5.30pm got back to the car about 8.15pm! Oops. I then had to go back to Churton on Thursday to check where I had gone wrong! Such dedication... and the White Horse and Grosvenor had not muddled my navigation skills. The fact that the path disappeared did throw the spanner in the works though, which I guess justified my decision to carry out a reckie. Undeterred with some overgrown areas, I stuck with the route, having found a way to bypass the blocked path.

Unfortunately, come walk day, we had a late call off when Amanda called in injured but happily Steve and Sarah had managed to change plans so they could come. Mike Ws's knee was not quite ready so he was also left on treatment table to prepare the BBQ. Top empowerment from Selina!! We parked up in Aldford car park and took the path behind the Church to join the river. This was where we very shortly encountered our first of many many maize fields. Apparently the land is owned by the Duke of Westminster, so maybe there be much brass to be made from those maize fields!

Well the troops must have been feeling in a good mood as we made our picked our way through some fairly unspectacular trails by the side of the maize field after maize field offering minimal views of the river. The call came for a coffee stop and of course the perfect place would have been

by the river but sadly when we did find our way back to the riverside (we had the leave the riverside path to bypass the blocked footpath) the site the leader had in mind was somewhat underwhelming with bits of machinery everywhere and no great views to be had. Well we still stopped anyway and again the good natured troops took it all in their stride. On we ventured, alongside and sometimes through more maize fields, through some stretches which were a little overgrown whereby those who chose longer trousers were feeling smug. The reward was finding some "hill billy" holiday shacks by the river before we then took the path back to Churton where we had a wee chat with a lovely lady walking about 8 dogs, all on the lead! (one a very cute, three legged doggie, but not as cute as Molly and Jess of course). We passed by the White Horse and decided to keep walking. We must be getting semi sensible in our old age. After crossing the Chester Road we started to make our way back. Lunch was called for and we stopped outside a farm where the farm smells proved to be very powerful as the farmer was busy spreading silage on his fields, Heho, we still stopped. When you need to eat, you need to eat!

We were soon back in Aldford where we sat out in the Grosvenor for a cheeky one whereby the boys who bought me a beer seemed to be very impressed with service from the bar staff

Back to Yew Tree, for a further scoop, which was also very friendly, but even Myles may have to admit he wasn't quite as attractive, before we dispersed to get ready for a very fine BBQ organised by our gracious hosts Mike and Selina. The walk was probably not the best we have done but still very enjoyable indeed and to cap it all the Mike and Selina set the bar very high for next years BBQ hosts, so many thanks to them.

Colin