

Trip Report: The Long Mynd

Date: 29th November 2013

Group: Jeff (Leader), Jim G, Lynn, Lesley, Karen, John, Heather, Hugh, Ann

Route: Shropshire Way, Port Way, Pole Bank, Adstone Hill

Total Distance: 10.4 miles

Total Ascent: 1952 ft

Weather: Wind, cloud, short spells of light rain and occasional bright intervals

Time: 4 hours 45 mins

An overenthusiastic start time of 7.30am meant that the group was ready to trek at 9.30 a.m. at the designated meeting place, the car park at the YHA hostel of Bridges on the west side of the Long Mynd. Inventive satnav systems had brought the two cars by different routes and taken John up the 1 in 4 out of Church Stretton via the Devil's Mouth, an interesting start to the day. We were pleased to be joined by Hugh keen to try out his recently refurbished knee on a Friday special.

The route was a circuit of the softer rural western side of the Long Mynd, and initially followed the Shropshire Way north easterly alongside the Darnford Brook, much of which seemed to be on the path at this point. A climb up through the Golden Valley brought us to the Portway, a mediaeval (or much earlier) trackway where we turned right to climb up onto the Long Mynd itself. Shortly after, we arrived at the first trig point of the day at Betchcott Hill (413m) and gathered for the traditional photo.

Calls for coffee were already being made so we stopped beside the Portway itself, little shelter being on offer, and which turned out to be cold, windblown and richly fertilised by the local sheep. The windchill was noticeable so we pressed on fairly swiftly soon turning

west to climb up to Pole Bank (516m) the second trig point where we admired the impressive views of the various Shropshire Hills, and the literati in the group were heard to mention A.E. Houseman.

It being far too breezy and cold to stop for lunch on the top the group carried on a further mile and headed down the escarpment towards Stanbatch where a reasonably sheltered gulley allowed us to have lunch and question the sanity of a lone glider pilot rocking and bumping around the sky above us.

We now continued west to the bottom of the escarpment and across more sheltered agricultural land towards Adstone, with the steep western flank of the Long Mynd stretching away to the south. The area is

fascinating to geologists as these are the oldest rocks in England, being a complex mix of Pre-Cambrian and Cambrian marine sediments and volcanic rocks.

A short stretch of tarmac took us to the southern end of Adstone Hill (but not short enough to avoid fond recollections of the Peris Slate Trail) where we climbed north over the hill (369m, sadly no trig point) and came down into Bridges past the pub of the same name. The pub seemed to have a magnetic pull on members of the group and John appeared to have fond memories of the spot but we resisted in favour of the traditional rehydration at the Yew Tree, and returned to the Hogwarts style hostel where Hugh left us to return south.

Due to the early start and lack of serious traffic ample time was available for rehydration at the Yew Tree where we were joined by the Chairman convalescing from a recent bug. Overall it was an invigorating walk in remote and beautiful rural surroundings and hopefully contributed to Hugh's recovery.

Jeff