

Route: Chrome Hill and Parkhouse Hill from Longnor

Distance: 9.5 miles; Ascent 2340 ft.

Squad: Mike & Lesley, Steve & Sarah, Debbie, Mike W, Mark, Colin, Mike H (Leader)

Following 3 days of heavy rain and floods to the north and west, the squad set off expecting a drenching. Arriving in Longnor we geared up in our waterproofs ready to set off only for the leader to find his GPS would not fire up: useful tip - turn the power on when charging it up! So with various back-ups - paper map, mobile phone and Mike A's new GPS we started to follow the Manifold trail.

We soon met our first challenge - crossing what would normally be just a simple ditch that was now in full flood. Not to be delayed, we all managed to leap over the fast flowing water and vault a barbed wire fence with no mishaps. Following the trail over numerous soggy fields, we then followed a narrow country road only to see another challenge ahead - the river Manifold in full flood flowing over the road. Checking the river as we walked towards the flooded road we could see nowhere else to cross. We were all relieved, especially the leader, to discover a footbridge hidden by trees (and not on the map!). So we were able to cross the river with dry feet.

We now left the Manifold Trail and headed northwards to reach Hollingsclough. This being a obvious coffee stop, someone suggested looking for a couple of benches were needed to sip our coffee in the dry. Lo and behold as we turned the corner - three benches!

After a brief rest our route then took us through the village and around Hollins Hill. The wet grassy slope of this hill proved a bit tricky for the leader who slipped and slid on the way up - but this time he didn't need rescuing.

Making our way along the ridge of Chrome Hill became rather tricky as the rocky limestone path was wet and slippery and the force of the gusts increased as we gained height. Not to be deterred this hardy Bums squad found some shelter on the leeward side of the ridge to have lunch, before descending towards Parkhouse Hill. On reaching Parkhouse we decided to avoid the hazardous conditions on the very narrow path of this second ridge and walked round the base of the hill. The return route back to Longnor took us through the village of Earl Sterndale where the local pub named, 'The Quiet Woman', created much discussion. Carrying on we had the final challenge of trudging through deep cow slurry to reach the green lane back to base.

Arriving back in Bunbury we all had plenty of time to change from our slurry-smelling gear before rehydrating and enjoying the sausage and cider evening in the Dysart.

My thanks to Mike W and Mark for driving, to Mike A for help with navigation, and to the whole squad for their humour and determination.

Mike H