

Trip Report

Lyme Park, 25th August 2022

Distance: 9.17 miles

Ascent: 1,270ft

Participants: Richard (Leader) and Della Calder, Steve and Sarah Hammond, Lesley Arrowsmith, Lynn Quinn, Andrea Percival, Fred and Anne Morris

The move from pre bank holiday Friday to Thursday to avoid holiday madness on the roads didn't prevent a late start from Poynton. First on the scene was Andrea followed by Richard and Della then Fred and Anne all just in time. No sign of the Hammond's car. Transpired Lesley had missed Steve's note about meeting in Bunbury at 08.45 so she rolled up for 09.00 this was then compounded by Steve's satnav not being aware of major road changes in the Poynton area. Never mind we all had a good natter and met Fred and Anne who are new members while we waited for Steve (who is usually early by the way!)

All assembled and faffing completed we set off and Richard the leader immediately instilled confidence in everyone by not being quite sure which direction the first style was. OS maps to the rescue. I'd selected Lyme Park for this walk as I was familiar with it having used it as my after work mountain biking playground when I was gainfully employed in Poynton. I hoped to be able to show people familiar with the park some places they didn't know, I think I succeeded.

Leaving the road, a path lead us to the Macclesfield Canal where we crossed over a lattice footbridge and headed across a meadow, then along a gently climbing path past Hagg Farm then Green Farm and lots of undersize ripe blackberries not worth picking (they are rubbish this year!). The climbing and the rising temperature lead to a degree of disrobing by various members of the party at this point. Continuing to climb we crossed the deer fence into the park and walked up to a track where the views of the Cheshire Plain began to open out. I mentioned the deer fence but I'm not sure there are any deer left these days, we certainly didn't see any.

We followed the track down to West Parkgate and on to Shrigley Road where we immediately turned left by Green Close chapel to follow a track leading up onto the moors. The track petered out after the last house and we soon came upon a curious old hen hut which had been renovated and made into a religious oratory in memory of a local resident. Inside it was beautifully painted white with a simple table as an alter decorated with a variety of coloured tea lights and the like. Very thoughtfully the caretakers had put nine chairs around the perimeter making it an ideal coffee stop!

Suitably fortified, spiritually and physically we set off with new vigor heading ever uphill towards Sponds Hill the highest point of our walk at 1345ft. Disappointingly the views were not brilliant due to the general overcast skies but it was possible to imagine Liverpool Cathedral, the Clwydian Hills, Shining Tor, Shuttlingslow, not to mention Beeston Castle. Go back on a clear day if you don't believe me.

Continuing along the top of the ridge we made our way to The Bowstones and after a quick look at the remains of the Saxon crosses began our descent back into Lyme Park. A rough track lead us down to Knights Low Wood which we entered and immediately turned left off the track to follow the perimeter wall to a very lofty style over a high wall. Following the other side of the wall we arrived at a building which is not on the map and is not mentioned in the history of Lyme Park and remains a mystery to me (and you unless you know better!) here we stopped for lunch sitting on a small knoll.

Victuals consumed off we went again and using my encyclopedic knowledge of the area I got lost for the second time, OS to the rescue again. A short bushwack brought us to the gate we needed and we were soon skirting past the hoards visiting Lyme Hall of which we got a fleeting glimpse before continuing on our chosen way. OS are usually very good but following the path on the map we soon came to a gate which was padlocked and no explanation why NT? Never mind there must be another way and there was. We were soon back on the intended path which wandered through pleasant woodland until we met a farm lane. Turning left we picked up a series of gently descending paths through fields and the odd wood, the weather brightening up as we went, (why does it do that when there are no views?) until we arrived at the canal. A short stroll along the canal then a deviation onto the Middlewood Way saw us soon back at the carpark.

Nice varied walk with nice varied people in nice varied weather.

Thank you all for your company, please come again.

Richard Calder