

Trip Report: Long Mynd and Betchcott Hill

Date: Oct 28th, 2022

Group: Steve (leader), Sarah, Lynn, Tony, Chrissie, Chris, Richard, Debbie, Dave B, Jim, Gerry, Mark, Ann, Neil, Anne, Fred, Lesley (and three canine friends: Spot, Jasper and Ponyia)

Route: A circuit at the northern end of the Long Mynd. Starting from All Stretton over Betchcott Hill and down to Ratlinghope, using part of the Shropshire Way, then looping back over the Mynd close to Pole Bank.

Total Distance: 10.0 miles (or 9.95 for those in car park 2 !)

Total Ascent: 1500 ft

It was nice to find that we had a big group interested in a trip to Shropshire with 16 of us gathering in Bunbury and Debbie making her own way, with Spot, to the start. The National Trust parking area at All Stretton is very convenient for the northern end of the Long Mynd and everyone had found it by 10.00.

But we didn't have long to wait for the first notable "incident" of the day, which was the realisation that Chris's rucksack - containing his lunch and various items of clothing - was still in Bunbury! Fortunately, given that he had 16 companions, it seemed unlikely that Chris would starve or freeze, and we were soon underway as the sky cleared following some early morning rain.

A steady climb on a good path took us out of the valley and up onto the open landscape of the Long Mynd where a scattering of sheep meant that the dogs were on leads rather more than they perhaps would have liked. Then we joined a track heading north over farmland and following a fence that took us to a triangulation pillar at the top of Betchcott Hill, where a break was taken to drink coffee and admire the views.

After a short distance we turned to head south-west on a path that was a section of the Shropshire Way and descended steadily to the village of Ratlinghope. The earlier rain meant the path was rather slippery in places and needed some care: at least one case of muddy trousers was recorded!

At the village we left the Shropshire Way and started a gentle climb back to the Mynd up a minor road. Leaving the road to follow a path, I was guilty of not concentrating and mistakenly led the group into a farmyard dead end! Fortunately, the error only took us off route for 10 minutes before getting back on to the right bridleway.

Once we had done most of the climbing we found a slightly sheltered spot for lunch and enjoyed the company of a couple of red kites swooping around overhead. The way back to the cars took us over Haddon Hill, from which there was an excellent view of Caer Caradoc and The Lawley, popular hills on the other side of the A49. We then crossed Church Stretton golf course and followed a bridleway through bracken down to the cars.

We bid farewell to Debbie and then all of the Bunbury contingent of walkers returned to The Dysart for rehydration where we were joined by other BUMs. Thanks again to the drivers - Neil, Richard, Tony, Dave.