

**Trip report for the Christmas family walk
Tuesday 27th December
In and around Ruyton XI Towns, Shropshire**

PRESENT

Iain McNeil
Ian Langford
Jim Grant
Chrissie Latter
Colin Christie
Cate Gregory
Lesley Arrowsmith
Chris and Carol Wallace
Jeff Ewin
Debbie Sargent

With dogs: Spot, Hudson and Pippa

Following a few cancellations due to lurgy and other factors, nine walkers and three dogs left from Jeff and Debbie's house having partaken of a glass of mulled wine (people only, not dogs).

Crossing wet and muddy fields we arrived at the pretty Little Ness church, built on the site of an old motte and bailey castle. The churchyard contains Celtic graves of the Darby family (relatives of Abraham Darby of ironmaking fame).

From there we walked to Great Ness and another sandstone church. We passed the village animal pound used to hold stray animals which were returned to the owner on payment of a fee, and the village pump dated c.1800.

After crossing more muddy fields we emerged at Nesscliffe Country Park where we saw the cave where Humphrey Kynaston, a notorious Robin Hood-style Highwayman, once lived.

The nearby impressive quarry wall is used to this day for rock-climbing practise and abseiling.

Leaving the Country Park at the recently excavated gateway to the Iron Age fort we ascended the sandstone ridge known as the Cliffe. This geological feature is a continuation of Peckforton and Bickerton hills. Settling down for lunch near the trig point there was a slight concern that bad weather seems to be approaching, fortunately this never materialised.

Dropping down into woodland on the other side of the Cliffe we studied the remains of some troglodyte homes which were still in use as late as the early 1900s.

We then headed for the village of Ruyton, and yet another church! From here we crossed the River Perry and made our way back along the water meadows to the Mill House.

We had walked 7.8 miles with 600ft of ascent, the weather had been better than expected with only a slight drizzle.

The majority of the walkers return to the Dysart for rehydration while Debbie and Jeff finished off the mulled wine!

Thanks to all who attended and we wish a happy and healthy New Year to all BUMs.
Debbie