

rip Report: Stiperstones from Snailbeach

Date: Fri Sept 26th

Group: Steve (leader), Sarah, Bruce, Lynn (and Cloe), Lesley, Mike, Janet, Jim, Dave B (and guest Jessica), Ann, Jo and Clare

Route: A circuit in the Stiperstone hills of Shropshire

Total Distance: 8.7 miles **Total Ascent:** 1870 ft

Weather: A beautiful day!

The day started with some good news from Anne, which was that husband Fred was leaving hospital after a short absence from home. And there was also a change in the usual pair from the Bond house, with Christine carrying an injury, and Dave bringing along daughter Jessica as a guest walker.

The drive to Snailbeach went smoothly and the village hall car park was busy with a photography group looking to enjoy snapping in lovely weather, but there was plenty of space for all. So off we went, climbing steadily from the start through an area of mining, for which the village was once well known. Tarmac ran out and the route became a rough vehicle track where we were surprised to be passed by a farm truck promoting the local Wildlife Trust (especially when it parked in a field of sheep!).

The track continued to climb gradually giving us some wonderful views of clouds in small patches hiding areas of the countryside below us. When a coffee stop became due we sat down around a small rocky outcrop to get some shelter from the breeze. By this time the path we were using was the Shropshire Way and the surface of it was also quite rocky and awkward. It would have been good to have had Iain in the group, as I am sure he could have told us a bit about the local geology! In the next mile we passed two large outcrops of rock, namely Devil's Chair and then Manstone Rock. As the latter had a trig point at the top, there were a few of us who couldn't resist the temptation of a scramble over it!

The path began to gradually descend and it soon occurred to me, at the back of the group, that we were on a slightly different route from the one I had intended. But it was easy to make a correction that put us on another suitable path heading north at a lower level than we came. Soon we stopped for lunch and then followed the path down towards the village of Stiperstones, mainly following a fence. Confidence in our route following was slightly shaken when we found ourselves in the company of several cattle and little space to reach another stile! Happily, we all made it to the next obstacle, which was someone's garden, where the very understanding owner gave us some guidance and blamed the problem on Ordnance Survey!

By this time everyone realised that getting back to the cars involved a steep climb of about 500ft before dropping down to Snailbeach. Everyone adopted their own pace and soon we were gathered up high and close to the path that we had used earlier when heading the other way. A different path took us gently down to the car park at Snailbeach.

Thanks to the group for making it a very enjoyable walk. Especially thanks to Jessica for joining us and taking a few photos. And not forgetting the contribution of the drivers. And nice to see a few non-walking BUMS at the Dysart.