

Trip Report

Rowarth-Coombes Rocks-Lantern Pike

Distance: 9 miles

Ascent: 1381 ft

Weather: surprisingly dry (few short mizzly showers)

Squad: Jim G (Leader) Steve & Sarah, Dave Barker, David & Christine Bond, Cate, Dave French, Neil & Ann, Dave C, Iain, Tony & Lynn, Janet

Mutts: Jasper & Ponya

So a few last-minute squad adjustments lead to 4 cars full of Bums off to Rowarth in Derbyshire. I follow Tony, who's Satnav takes an interesting route through some of the lesser travelled country lanes of Cheshire & Derbyshire, not helped by Tony overshooting a couple of right turns! Eventually we all meet up in the free car park in the small village of Rowarth. Rowarth dates from the 1780s, when around six watermills were built along the stream which runs through the village. Some of these mills were still operating in the early twentieth century.

The walk begins with a bit of tarmac and then a farm track and a bit more tarmac. Then heading across fields, the Leader makes a slight navigational error which sees us on the wrong side of a barb wire fence, which needs crossing to get back on track. There is a bit of muttering from the ranks, when lo and behold David Bond produces, from his rucksack, a 3ft long piece of foam pipe insulation! This is fitted over the top strand of barb wire and enables a safe crossing for all without any nether region damage. Still have not had a satisfactory explanation for why David would be carrying such a piece of equipment, the mind boggles!

Next along our route we come across the very strange **Robin Hood's Picking Rods**



The Group have various hypotheses about what they are, mainly linked to their phallic appearance!

Archaeologists have examined the stones and have concluded that the columns are thought to have been carved in the 9th century AD by Anglo-Saxons. The stones may originally have been a single column that at some time has been broken and the two pieces mounted side-by-side. Shortly after a coffee break is taken.

The next objective is Coombes Rocks, en route to which the Leader repeats his previous mistake getting the wrong side of another barb wire fence! Further mutterings from the ranks but fortunately it is easily crossed without the need for David's device. The route now follows the very impressive path along the top of Coombes Rocks, which looks like a massive gritstone quarry.

The legend of Coombes Rocks, allegedly the site of a battle between the Britain's and the Romans in 79AD. It is said that at certain seasons of the year, when the moonlight falls upon the Coombes Rocks, the ghosts of the ancient heroes marshal on the battlefield, waving in phantom hands their phantom axes, as though ready for the coming of the Roman foe. This they keep eternal vigil over the wild land they loved of old.

Onwards and downwards we pass a couple of Hill Billy Farms before we hit the Pennine Bridleway which we follow for a while until we take lunch just below Lantern Pike.

A short sharp pull sees on the summit of Lantern Pike (373m) the high point of the walk. We take the customary summit team shot (hoping to get in the 2023 Calendar) There is a small summit cairn dedicated, by the Ramblers Association, to Edwin Royce (1880-1946) "who laboured in the cause of securing the freedom of the hills". Lantern Pike is believed to be the site of an old fire beacon, hence the name.

Following the Pennine Bridleway again we follow old tracks back to the cars at Rowarth.

An uneventful journey and we are back in the Dysart for the usual re-hydration therapy, joined by Lesley, Mike W & Selina

Jim G