

**Location** : Marbury Country Park and surrounding area.

**Distance** : 7 miles

**Ascent** : negligible

**Weather** : Frequent heavy showers.

**Squad** : Tony, Lynn, Carol, Chris W, Jim, Mike W, Selina, Ali, Caryle, Chris, Chrissie, Ian L, Sue, Dave, Christine, Cate, Derek, Ian L, Mark, Andrea, Heather, Fred and Anne.

**Plus 3 dogs.**

The weather forecast at the beginning of the week promised a sunny Thursday but as we got nearer the day storm Gerrit decided to hang around mid-Cheshire a bit longer and much of the walk was accompanied with heavy rain.

With a civilised 10.00 am departure from Bunbury we met up with more of the squad at the walk start point in Marbury Country Park. Over-trousers were definitely needed as we started the walk in the rain but the park's extensive tree cover did help lessen our discomfort.

We walked along the shore of the lovely Budworth Mere and followed a woodland path to the towpath of the Trent and Mersey Canal. The canal was completed in 1777 by James Brindley after much encouragement from Josiah Wedgwood who was fed up with all of his pots getting broken on the poor roads of the time.

After changing his mind a few times the leader finally decided we did need to cross the canal footbridge, and now the rain had stopped, we were once again a happy bunch making our way towards Neumann's Flash. The lake is a popular bird-watching area and we stopped beside it for our coffee and slices of Quinn home-made Christmas cake - much appreciated by Jim especially.

After the Flash the trail runs through fine woodland and follows Witton Brook on to Anderton Nature Park. The heavy rain returned and so we didn't have much time to admire the Victorian engineering marvels of the Anderton Boat Lift. In fact it was now so wet, a few of the squad decided to carry on to the car park and not stop for our lunch on the canal bank. Thankfully the rain did actually stop for a bit and even a few patches of blue sky started to appear.

The final stretch of the walk continued along the canal and back through Marbury Park to the cars.

It was then back to the Dysart for drinks, thick-cut chips and the chance to dry out.

Thanks to everybody for turning up in such stormy weather and I hope you all enjoyed it !

Cheers

Tony.