

Trip Report - Friday 4th March 2022

Location : Little Moreton Hall to Mow Cop, Cheshire/Staffordshire

Distance : 8 miles

Ascent : 275m

Weather : Dry, overcast and windy high up.

Squad : Tony, Lynn, Iain, Cate, Ray, Mark, Selina, Bob and Jim.

Dogs: Pippa and Flora.

With the start of our walk just 45 minutes drive away it meant a not too early 8:30 departure from Bunbury and in no time at all we were parking up at the car park in Little Moreton Hall, a beautiful 16th Century half-timbered Cheshire manor house.

Leaving the car park and crossing a busy A34 our route took us across soggy fields past a couple of farms and past the entrance to Rode Hall which is famed for its snowdrop walks (currently at their height of floral display). However we had Mow Cop summit in our sights and carried on along roads and even more soggy paths passing Whirligig Woods camp (an outdoor art events place) until we reached the unusually named Bleeding Wolf pub (complete with its roof-top straw wolf) at Scholar Green.

We then joined the Macclesfield canal and headed northwards along the Gritstone Trail and on the lookout for a place to sit and take a coffee stop. We found a suitable place by a public footpath swivel bridge which caused a great discussion on how to operate it but in the end we didn't as we might get told off !

We left the canal and followed the trail upwards to Mow Cop via a hamlet or two. Once at the top some of us started to hack up a narrow ridge only to be advised from a local chap walking below that we were heading towards a dead-end. We climbed down and followed his advice and we moved through an old gritstone quarry and emerged at the top with views all round including the distant Beeston Castle.

The top is crowned by a folly built to look like a ruined castle by the owner of Rode Hall in the eighteenth century. The gritstone around the castle has been used for centuries to make millstones and we could see the circular cut-outs in some of the rock faces.

Shelter from a cold wind was needed and we munched our lunch before moving on to see the Old Man of Mow and hit the trig point at 335m. From the top we descended along the South Cheshire Way through Hanging Wood and along a track with strange piles of broken pottery (you could tell we were near the Potteries) and once again joined the canal.

A final flat, soggy walk over fields (where poor Pippa got stuck in the mud) led us back to Little Moreton Hall car-park. We waved goodbye to Cate (who thanked us for what she termed a quirky walk...) and we were in the Dysart at 14:50 which is surely a record and enjoyed some fine ales and wines by an open fire.

Lynn and Tony