

Walking Group 1 and 2 Annual Linear Walk



2012 The Sandstone Trail
2013 The Dane Valley Way
2014 The Gritstone Trail
2015 The North Cheshire Way
(part 1)
2016 The North Cheshire Way
(part 2)

Over the last few years a custom has grown up for these two groups to take part in a walk that is not our customary circular; a longer walk in one direction, which takes place over a period of 4 - 6 days. Since 2012 when I managed all 6 days of the Sandstone Trail I have not missed a day of these longer walks. They have become an important part of my annual planning. As soon as our hard-working leader gives us the dates, then they have taken pride of place in my diary and have remained sacrosanct as other events have needed to be fitted in around them.

Those of us walking (and there are now a small band of die-hards who have managed the whole walk or very nearly all) have much to thank the leader for. From the initial idea of where we might walk, he has to make a decision, taking into account feasibility and appeal. Months of detailed planning follow; splitting the walk into manageable sections; parking (two places per day) and travel instructions; the recruiting and liaising with a walk leader for each day; sending out emails etc. Day leaders are appointed early in the planning however an individual recce can only be truly relevant if done close in time to the actual walk. So any flagged problems have to be sorted out promptly and information collated. The final details can only then go out to the group.

What about the weather? Mostly it has been unexceptional, however in 2014 we did have some glorious days when walking the Gritstone. Only on this year's N.C.W did we encounter real wet. It wasn't that we were caught in heavy rain but the problem was surface water - the aftermath of a localised flash flood - a deep and lengthy "puddle". Caught as we were in a narrow, hedged lane we had a choice of wading ankle-deep in water or crashing through rampant, lacerating weeds beneath the hedge!

Pouring water from your boots might be marginally better than searching for non-existent dock leaves for soothing multiple nettle stings! Or maybe not!

One thing is absolutely certain though these linear walks have never failed to give pleasure to those of us taking part.



We have Rod Howgate and Tony Roberts to applaud for their imagination, commitment and logistical know-how in securing the linear walk for us each year.

I am already looking forward to next year's.

Pauline Hales
1.8.'16