

STRIDERS 2023

January 2023: OXTON & CALVERTON

Illness, holidays and Ballet restricted our numbers to 10 this month. Setting off from the car park we walked past Oxtan Bogs (not the toilets) before entering the woods and walking towards Gravelly Hollow.



A short stretch of road walking then took us to our lunch stop in the grounds of St Wilfrid's Church in Calverton. We then returned to the car park for an early finish.

February 2023: LIMESTONE WAY & HIGH PEAK TRAIL

14 of us enjoyed a cold but sunny day in Derbyshire. We set off from Middleton Top Visitors Centre and after a short walk along the High Peak trail we branched off behind Harborough Rocks and walked towards Longcliffe before picking up the Limestone Way and after joining the High Peak Trail we followed it back to the car park.



March 2023: WHATSTANDWELL

Having just managed to squeeze into the busy car park, 16 of us set off along the canal towpath from Whatstandwell in the direction of Cromford. On reaching High Peak Junction we broke with tradition and stopped for a coffee break and made use of the toilets, a rare find on one of my walks.



Avoiding Middleton Incline we walked steadily up through the woods before exiting and enjoying fabulous views across the Derwent valley towards Crich along with a beautiful rainbow.



After clambering over a number of stiles we joined the road and walked past the impressive Wigwell Grange.

Returning to Whatstandwell over open fields we were treated to another view of Wigwell Grange which looked even more impressive from the rear. Having been tasked by Gail to find her some lambs I feared I had failed, however just as we approached the car park we spotted a field with some sheep and their lambs so Gail could go home happy and I could return feeling smug.



April 2023: ASHOVER

8 Striders walked from Ashover along an old pony trail & then up a steep climb to Ravensnest. There were excellent views over the valley from a well positioned lunch stop & then a ridge walk before descending back to the start after crossing old lead mine workings. This was a varied walk with lots of interests too.



Crossing the River Amber at Ashover

May 2023: DEEPDALE

14 of us enjoyed a sunny day in Derbyshire. Parking at the White Horse Car Park, we set off up Deepdale where we stopped to admire the orchids and Meadow Saxifrage. Exiting the dale we walked across to the Magpie Mine where we stopped for a coffee break and some of the group explored the site while others studied the Flora which was varied but dominated by the rare Alpine Pansies.



A short walk took us to the lunch stop where we enjoyed the view across Ashford in the Water and the countryside beyond. Descending to Ashford we then returned through the woods which were carpeted with wild garlic flowers.

June 2023: WELLINGTON'S MONUMENT & EAGLE ROCK

Holidays and family commitments reduced our numbers to 11 this month.

We started our walk from Baslow and climbed steadily up to Wellington's Monument.

After a short detour to see a deer we crossed to Eagle Rock and having failed to see the eagle we continued to Curbar Gap.

The storm clouds gathered as we approached the car park but we were able to shelter in the trees until it passed.



We then walked up to the trig point on White Edge where we stopped for lunch and enjoyed the panoramic view.



As we approached the end of the walk we encountered the second storm of the day so returned to the car park by the route we had taken earlier in the day without getting too wet.

July 2023: EYAM

A select band ignored the weather forecast and set off for Derbyshire. Having discovered the intended path to be dangerous when wet, we took an easier path down to Stoke Ford in a light shower of rain which fortunately didn't spoil the views up to Bretton Clough.

After a short ascent we stopped for lunch where Gail and I debated how the landscape may have changed over the last millennium. We then walked past the field where Mary had become well acquainted with a sheep on a previous walk before ascending to Eyam Moor and after a brief stop to sample the bilberries on the moor, we descended to the car park where we started the walk.





August 2023: BASLOW

Twelve Striders set off from Baslow car park following a somewhat trepidatious AWL (Apprentice Walk Leader) appointed for one month only. An easy walk to navigate was in order and a couple of 'recce's' had confirmed that this one fitted the bill perfectly.

Striding along to enter the gate to Chatsworth estate - perhaps 300m into the walk - we were met with a 'footpath closed' sign with a diagram showing a diversion. AWL immediately went into catastrophising mode "we are going to get lost and I will be responsible for a dozen Carlton and Gedling U3Aers perishing in the wilds of Chatsworth" but fortunately others were a calming influence who reassured AWL that we were sure to join up with the original route at some point and if we didn't, we'd just be a bit misplaced for a while and that might be a bit of an adventure. It would be alright in the end and if it wasn't alright then it wouldn't be the end.

And so it proved and all was well a mile or so further on. We then had a very pleasant walk through the beautiful Ednesor village (alas the cake stand with the honesty box was closed that day), up the hill and down towards Calton Lees. The hill was rather more strenuous than AWL remembered but she has learnt at the feet of a master - PWL (proper walk leader) - who describes mini mountains as "steady climbs" and a series of hills as "a few undulations". Fortunately we were able to pause at the top for coffee and to admire the lovely views of Chatsworth House, Emperor Fountain and the Hunting Tower.

The walk also featured unaccustomed luxuries - picnic tables for our lunch and posh loos at Chatsworth - before PWL identified a better route than the diverted one back to the car park. At which AWL breathed a sigh of relief and looked forward to more carefree Striders walks to come, just following the person in front - she's good at that.

September 2023: LATHKILL DALE

Holidays and illness restricted our numbers to eight this month. Leaving the car park in Over Haddon we descended into Lathkill Dale and climbed steadily up the other side of the dale. Unfortunately one of our members became ill on the way up the hill and after careful consideration it was decided that she needed to return home so ably assisted by Nurse Gail and Taxi driver Frank she was escorted back to Gedling. A steady improvement on the way back meant she was feeling much better on her return.

The five remaining members continued onto the Limestone Way and after dropping back down into the dale we stopped for lunch where we were entertained by a woodpecker which was feasting on the grubs in the trees that had been killed by Ash Dieback.

A pleasant walk down the dale followed by another steady climb took us back to the car park where a phone call confirmed the recovery of our ailing member.

October 2023: WINSTER

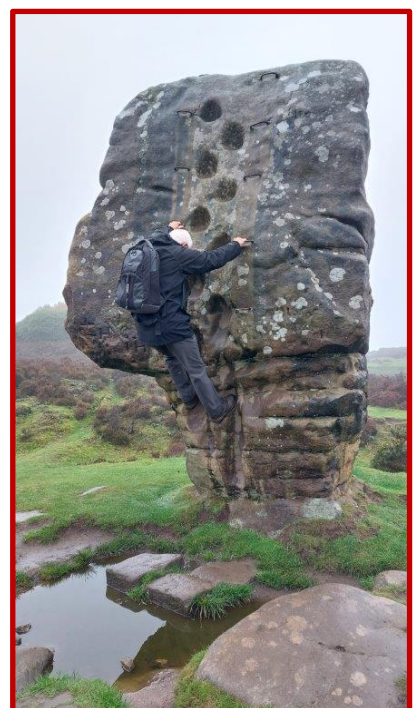
9 intrepid walkers started out from Winster in the rain & drizzle which soon stopped to be replaced by mist on Stanton Moor! This gave an ethereal atmosphere at the Nine Ladies Stone Circle.



All had cleared by the Cork Stone, which Richard had a go at climbing.

Lunch was under an overhang at Rowtor Rocks, a strange place of caves & seats carved out of the rocks by a 17th Century priest.

All in all a varied walk topped off by a stop at The Miners Arms at the end.



November 2023: VICAR WATER

Illness, injury and holidays restricted our numbers to 8 this month however, we enjoyed a dry sunny day which was a pleasant surprise at this time of year.

After an inauspicious start through a housing estate we walked down through the woods to the river Maun which we followed downstream to a bridge where we stopped for coffee.

The autumn leaves on the ground and on the trees were a glorious golden colour and seemed to glow in the dappled sunlight. Continuing our walk upstream along the opposite bank we eventually reached the Spa Ponds Country Park where we followed the trail back to Clipstone.

After a short walk through another housing estate we climbed the ridge to the south of Vicar Water where we stopped at the viewpoint for lunch. As the clouds gathered we returned to the car park just before the rain started.

December 2023: COTGRAVE COUNTRY PARK

8 of us left the Gedling car park in pouring rain but by the time we reached the start of the walk, the rain had stopped and there were signs of blue sky.

Although we did not enjoy the magnificent scenery of Derbyshire we were rewarded with the sight of a Kingfisher on our walk along the canal as well as a family of deer on our return journey.

A rainbow warned us of what was to come and the heavens opened just 3 minutes before we reached the car park. On reflection, given the weather we have had over the last few weeks we were actually quite fortunate not to have got much wetter.