

STRIDERS 2024

January 2024: STOKE BARDOLPH & BURTON JOYCE

It was raining as we left the car park on Ranmoor Road but by the time we got to Stoke Bardolph the rain had stopped and although we didn't walk in blazing sunshine it remained dry and considerably warmer than the week before.

The walk took us west along the river where the hard work of the volunteers who had cleaned up after the flood was noted. After a short detour through the woods which involved scrambling over a couple of trees that had been blown down in the storms, we eventually reached the railway bridge where we ascended to the Netherfield Lagoons.

A short stop to admire the wildlife and to ease any aching limbs was followed by a walk across the fields to the road where we circumnavigated the sewage works and Ranjit took over the lead to the outskirts of Burton Joyce and back to the car park via the flood bank.



February 2024:

For the first time in over 10 years we had to cancel the walk due to torrential rain and flooding.

March 2024: SHERWOOD FOREST

The walk saw 10 people in the Sherwood Forest area for a 7.5 mile walk. As it's mostly sandy & well drained there was (almost) no mud & the rain only started just as we got back to the finish. Good timing!

The route went through Edwinstowe, along the river Maun, then up the edge of the forest past the Duke of Portland's Archway house whose facade has a number of well known characters , including Robin Hood & Maid Marian. It was built as part of a wide private drive from Welbeck to Nottingham & has views underneath of the Centre Tree Oak.

The path then led onto Budby Heath, a heather & gorse open area , now managed by the RSPB. Most people did not know that this existed as a distinct part of the forest. The return route went straight through the forest on a path where there were many ancient oaks. It was a relatively easy walk as it was largely flat.



April 2024: DALE ABBEY

This month, we explored part of the quiet and lovely area of countryside between Ilkeston and Derby. The walk started near Dale Abbey, and we began with a visit to the twelfth century Hermit's Cave, followed by a short but very steep climb up to the ridge overlooking the village with views to Ilkeston and beyond.

Our route continued through beautiful bluebell woods in full flower, through Locko Park estate and then on to Stanley, where luckily there was no sign of the advertised 'bull in field'! After a picnic lunch we returned through more of England's green, pleasant and extremely muddy land, and eventually arrived back at Dale, with a chance to look at its lovely old buildings and abbey ruins.

Amazingly, although it was a chilly day with a gloomy weather forecast, there was no rain, and even a bit of sunshine to light up the spring flowers. Everyone survived a few wobbly stiles and managed to squeeze through an interestingly narrow kissing gate, (great photo opportunity) and there was a drink available at the end at the local pub for those who wanted!



May 2024: GEDLING COUNTRY PARK

So this is what happens when you grant a group convenor a bit of sick leave - for the first time in Carlton and Gedling U3a history, the May Striders walk planned for Derbyshire failed to take place. A lack of suitable transport for the group meeting at Ranmoor Road meant that there had to be a last minute cancellation and a hurried phone call to the one member who was going straight to the start in Cromford (thank goodness for mobile phones).

Not wanting to miss out entirely, five Striders set off for Gedling Country Park with Doris leading us on a nice scenic route. OK we didn't quite have the Derbyshire views but we had a very pleasant walk indeed and personally I was delighted to discover roads and paths I'd never been on before. Thanks Doris for that. We were also home in time for lunch and an afternoon snooze - I mean getting chores done, so some advantages of not going so far afield!

Gail

June 2024: CALVER

I (Brian) was able to join the group for the first part of the walk and it was good to back. Staying with the group for the first couple of miles, Ranjit and I returned to the start, completing a 4.6 mile walk with more up and down than I have done in 3 months. It was however very enjoyable and I hope to be up to the full distance in the near future. Kath has kindly written a short account of the full walk

Striders were back in Derbyshire for a 7.5 mile walk from Calver. It was an exciting one with several "events" along the way. We rescued 2 other walkers from their fear about cows with calves; one of our group slipped into a stream (but managed to dry off by the end of the walk); & the people with shorter trousers battled nettle patches! But the views were tremendous, we walked along ridges & the wild flowers were at their very best. An intrepid group who said they loved it.

Kath



July 2024: CROMFORD MILL

Eleven Striders set off from Cromford Mill on a warm, bright morning. Aware of my responsibility, I counted them all out and counted them all ba.....hold on, there's only nine now. Had we lost two people on the way? Was this going to be like last month's walk of untoward incidents only worse? I'm happy to report though that the missing was our group convenor (plus companion) rehabbing after recent surgery but still managing to join us for a shorter version of a very nice route. Phew.

So it was uphill all the way to Black Rock and having got our breath back, we made our way along the High Peak Trail and Midshires Way. We stopped for a spot of lunch in a lovely meadow before descending down to Whatstandwell. Having been occasionally 'challenged' by the first five miles, we then had an easy stroll for the final three alongside the verdant canal path to Cromford (with a quick stop off for ice creams at High Peak Junction of course).

All in all then a varied walk in good weather and beautiful, Derbyshire countryside. It was very agreeable indeed. Thanks also go to my co-leader (and expert navigator) Chris.

Gail



AUGUST 2024: 3 DALES

Ten of us squeezed into 2 cars and set off for Derbyshire in strong winds. Despite the weather forecast by the time we reached Middleton the wind had dropped and we set off in dry weather. On reaching Bradford Dale a brief shower was enough to persuade us to put our waterproofs on, however it was short lived and the rest of the day remained dry.

Assisted by Kath's local knowledge we amended the planned route and avoided some rough ground which had proved difficult on the recce and climbed out of Bradford Dale and a short road walk allowed us to admire the views before we descended into Gratton Dale where we stopped for lunch.

We then entered Long Dale and admired the sculpture before climbing out of the dale along a path where we saw some stemless thistles which apparently are quite rare this far north. A short walk across fields and a road brought us back to the car park just in time to beat the Matlock u3a walking group to the toilets.

SEPTEMBER 2024: BESTWOOD LODGE

Unfortunately, the recent heavy rain meant that we had to change our plans from a circuit around the Chatsworth estate to one around the more local Bestwood Lodge. Despite the poor forecast, four stalwarts set out, and the rain held off.

There were even some glimpses of sunshine and the woods were looking beautiful, with fine views from Warren Hill across to Derbyshire. This was an interesting and varied walk, including the country park, the historic Lodge gardens and Mill Lakes (and lots of horses) and we all enjoyed ourselves. Waterproofs weren't needed after all

OCTOBER 2024: HIGH PEAK TRAIL

Having promised magnificent views we arrived at the start of the walk in swirling mist which continued for most of the day. After negotiating the complex parking charges at Middleton Top, thirteen of us set off along the High Peak Trail before following a route that took us behind Harborough Rocks on the Limestone Way and Midshires Way before returning to the High Peak Trail.

Fortunately, the mist cleared in time for our lunch stop which provided us with the promised views across the Derwent Valley and beyond.





NOVEMBER 2024: PENTRICH

Our walk was in east Derbyshire, starting at Pentrich, famous for its revolution in 1817. We were lucky with the weather, which was perfect - frosty but clear, meaning we could enjoy the lovely views over to Heanor, Crich, and the hills of the Peak District.

There was plenty of historical interest, as we crossed the route of the [Rykeneld Way Roman road](#), and passed the dramatic and extensive ruins of Wingfield Manor where Mary, Queen of Scots was imprisoned on several occasions.

We returned through Pentrich churchyard with graves dating from the seventeenth century and had time for a drink at the very welcoming local.

This was a new area for us, with surprisingly beautiful and varied countryside, which deserves to be better known.

DECEMBER 2024: BOXING DAY WALK

A select band of 6 gathered in the car park on Boxing Day and as the Country Park was shrouded in mist we decided to do stay at a lower level and do a walk around Netherfield Lagoons.

With the usual route blocked off for a housing development we had to walk out to Stoke Lane before Richard navigated us through the new industrial estate and Rivendale development. After circumnavigating the Lagoons, we returned via the retail park where we were happy to be walking instead of shopping.

A short walk through Netherfield and the back streets of Carlton brought us back to the car park and a brief visit to the Willowbrook for a few of us.