

Tuesday, 21st July – Bystock Nature Reserve with Brian Gannon

“Just managed to get all the cars in the car park although some ‘poor innocent’ was accused of reversing into barbed wire!

Brian was particularly well organised even supplying a copy of his route on a second map for the back marker – which made it easier for yours truly to accept my nomination for this role. More on that later.

Starting a walk near reservoirs and fishponds is always good although I often wonder about what one gets out of pond fishing on a weekday morning. Good health and safety stuff evident though – but no rubbish bins – two of us picked up discarded drinks containers and had to carry them for far too many miles. I’ll have to carry gold stars from now on.



As it was a warm, sometimes hot, dry day some chose purposeful but lighter footwear which worked well for most of the time. There was, however, a lengthy downhill stretch on what resembled a stony riverbed where this caused discomfort for some. Remembering this helps explain the subsequent lengthy inclines which to silly me seemed inexplicable at the time.

The route turned out slightly longer than billed but this was not an issue although we all politely declined the offer of a short extension up and down a rather steep hill. In places Brian commented that the vegetation had grown rather a lot since his reconnoitring visit which unhelpfully partially obstructed some views for those of somewhat shorter stature.

We encountered only one other walker and few vehicles so we were not challenged as to whether our group was big enough to walk with the traffic rather than against it.

The walk was like a clockwise lozenge to gain the benefit of magnificent full frontal views from the ridge overlooking East Budleigh. Brian had thought this through carefully to avoid cricked necks likely from the opposite direction.

Lunch in East Budleigh by the Village Hall was very pleasant and some of use bought hot drinks & ice creams from the community shop. Not sure if others got a better deal as my cup was half empty or was it half full?

The tail enders had an interesting chat with the previous occupants of the house that collapsed whilst under renovation a year or so ago. We felt very sad about the difficulties the current owners now appear to be in. This caused the tail to get even longer which took a while for the Back Marker to fix as he was mostly responsible.

When we saw lots of pigs someone asked why roast pig was mostly billed as Hog Roast, but I thought it was probably because we males are less useful overall! A farming lady we saw seemed not to appreciate a need to ask such a question and maybe just assumed we were pig ignorant – whatever that really means

Although the map I had shewed (correct, but archaic- Ed) lots of straight lines quite a few were straight in more than one sense of the word – although not particularly steep.

A very enjoyable day out in good company with much debate about spelling and pronunciation – I might in future just say lovely. I was particularly delighted to learn that Jean had known Brian since she was 14!"

Andrew Berisford
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