

Saturday, 31st October 2015, A Walk Around Branscombe with Jon Roseway

"Stunning views, sun and mud on a Halloween's walk"

On a gloriously sunny autumnal day 16 walkers met at Branscombe Village Hall, for a figure of eight walk that circled first to the west of Branscombe and then to the east.

We eagerly set off up a nearby road and then onto a footpath that led down to a small stream. Unfortunately the wet weather of the previous few days had resulted in very muddy conditions and this combined with a steep drop enabled one of our group to demonstrate just how slippery the slope was.



"for the nth time, yes its mud!"

Despite the help of outstretched hands he managed to gracefully slip and then fall onto the muddy embankment. Others soon navigated another way round, and we continued with only a few chuckles at the muddy behind that accompanied us for the rest of the walk.

We crossed the river heading up the hill through Hole Coppice and Hole Pits emerging alongside the Fountain Head pub. A wander through the woodlands of Pit Coppice eventually brought us out onto the South West Coastal footpath near Berry Camp an Iron Age Hill Fort. There were magnificent views of the beaches and cliffs and these would continue throughout the rest of the walk.



are you sure these cliffs are safe?

The ground was drier here as we travelled along, a contented group chattering amongst ourselves, with the sounds of the sea and birds around us. A few fungi were spotted amongst the grass as we walked along enjoying the warmth of the sun.

Lunch was at Branscombe Mouth where some of the group indulged in food at the Sea Shanty. A few walkers took the opportunity to head back home at this point, some to ensure they would be home to enjoy the forthcoming Rugby final, or was it to get dressed up for the evening's Halloween party?

The remaining twelve walkers set off into the undercliff heading towards Beer making the most of the beautiful surroundings and glorious weather. We skirted below Branscombe East Cliff and Hooken Cliff admiring the rocky outcrops of Greensand and Chalk.



where's the bird (of prey)?

There was a short stop along the way looking back towards a cave in the chalk where a Bird of Prey, possibly a Peregrine Falcon, was circling and landing in the cliff ledges. We had a quick geology lesson on the various rock formations viewed including the age of the Greensand and Chalk rocks and also noted that the Hooken Undercliff was formed in 1790 after a dramatic landslip.

From this point close to the beach we then climbed up the narrow pathway to the top of the cliffs on South Down Common where there were again magnificent views backwards to Branscombe and forwards towards Beer, Seaton and beyond. After a short rest to admire the views and recover from the climb we were off again.



how did our intrepid photographer take this pix?

We headed towards Beer and then turned back by the caravan park to complete the final leg of the figure of eight over the top of the hill and down into Branscombe Mouth with yet more stunning views in the fading sunshine.



A short walk up the Branscombe valley, past the Branscombe Vale Brewery and the sewage works, eventually brought us back to our starting point.

We returned home a well-satisfied group, albeit a little muddy but content in making the most of a sunny day and walking 8 miles.

Many thanks to John for organising a stunningly beautiful walk and arranging such wonderful weather to accompany us.

Stella French

6 November 2015