

Fittingly for our next long walk ARS will be in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Shropshire Hills near Church Stretton.

**Meeting Point:**

Audlem Public Hall car park.

8:30am

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September.

**Start Point:**

Cardington Village Hall, next to the church (SY6 7JZ), where there is ample parking (£2 honesty box) but no facilities. (There is a scarcity of dense vegetation on the walk so fluid intake may need to be managed.)

**Walk Description:**

This is an old school up and down hills walk. Starting from Cardington Village Hall we will make a steady climb across fields and along tracks to the northernmost foot of our first hill, The Lawley. The Lawley, which in Norse means Rabbit Hill, is known to the locals as Holme's Bank and offers a fine ridge walk of about 2 miles with a summit at 1,237ft. Following a rather sharp descent we will tackle Little Caradoc, which at 1,073ft is officially designated as a Bercow, (short and nasty), before our main hill of the day, Caer Caradoc. From Little Caradoc we have the choice of either smashing straight into the steep northern approach head first with a sustained burst of energy or taking a more considered, meandering and shallower approach up the eastern side. Either way it's the same overall ascent to the top at 1,506ft where we can stop for lunch and take in the stunning views over several counties (eight, I think). If the weather is clear there will be a prize for the person who can identify the furthest visible point. Next there is a very steep and slippery descent past Three Fingers Rock before we work our way up to and round the Gaer Stone towards our final significant climb to the top of Hope Boulder Hill which at 1,398ft has more false summits than an episode of Ru Paul's Drag Race. From here we cross over the top of The Wilderness before dropping back down into Cardington.

Overall, the route is 12<sup>1/2</sup> miles of mostly well-defined pathways with generally good footing including about 2,500ft of ascent and whilst the Shropshire Hills cannot be considered to be mountainous, there are enough strenuous parts to the walk for it to be classed as a 2<sup>1/2</sup> booter.

For the dog walkers, on a recent reccy I counted about 32 gates and styles (mostly dog friendly), 28 head of cattle in one of the fields and many, many sheep (I did try to count them but every time I started, I fell asleep).