

SWF 2019 event notes

Saturday 29 June

10.30am Opening local walk

"Oh yay, Oh yay, Oooh Yaaaay" called Dennis the Sandbach Town Crier, in his wonderfully sonorous voice, to announce the start of the Sandbach Walking Festival. It was a hot day on the cobbled square by the Crosses, but about 40 people, including the Town Mayor, turned out for the spectacle and were then ably led by John Woods on a walk round the park and on through Dingle Lane and other shady paths, eventually leading into Dingle Wood and the new footbridge to return, via Front Street, to the Crosses.

Everyone enjoyed it and said they would come on more walks during the Festival.

2pm Sandbach Tree Trail - Tree identification in Town Park

Fiona Bruce MP and the Town Mayor met us at the start to see us off. We checked the trees between the library and the Masonic Hall, then in front of the fire station before touring the Park proper. In all we found 43 different species of tree. Not bad for a small town park.

It happened to be fun day in the park, so it was pleasantly busy with people enjoying the lovely June day.

2pm Nordic Walking introduction

A great afternoon for the first of the Sandbach Walking Festival, Nordic Pole Walking events. Thanks to Bev and Ian, from North Cheshire Nordic Walking Group for their support. 10 walkers, 1 no show and 1 apology.

7pm Brook Wood and Tall Chimneys from Waitrose car park.

15 of us set out via Brook Wood to Mill Hill Lane then through the Dancing Bridge archway along the canal and veering off left through Maddock's Wood up to the Rail Trail and over the canal. Then along the canal to Malkins Bank and a short stretch of Betchton Road to Stannerhouse Lane pausing to look at the tulip tree and Tall Chimneys, followed by Houndings Lane for 200m and through Willis's yard, averting our eyes from the carefully and neatly piled arrangements of antique drainage equipment, to the bypass, St. Mary's Dell and back to the start.

15 people and about 4 miles.

It went quite dark at one stage and might have rained but we kept dry and the evening turned out much cooler than the day.

Sunday 30 June

4.30am Dawn chorus birding

A total of 10 brave walkers forsake their warm beds for an early morning stroll. The air was fresh and the weather perfect to enjoy the early light in the beautiful Cheshire countryside. Despite visiting some of the best, varied habitat in the area, not so many birds were heard or seen. Nonetheless a very enjoyable experience.

10.30am Daisy Bank with lunch at Malkins Bank Gold Club

This mornings walk was lovely, with 22 of us, including myself (Graham) and Geraint. We had lots of new faces, in fact some 60% of the group was new to me, with an age range from 27 to 77. There was a little confusion at the golf club, because there was a chicken option for an extra £1 and a lamb option for an extra £2.00, in addition, I hadn't thought about pudding! Anyway, it all worked out fine in the end. Everyone seemed to enjoy it, and Colette from MBGC did a great job. The food portions were very generous and the quality was good for the price.

I forgot my bag of 5p coins, but every one was happy to pay a round £7.00, so that's £21.00 which I will transfer to the SFG bankaccount later.

Graham said "I'm enjoying this!"

2pm Hollins Green

A nice afternoon for the walk, 9 walkers (including Leader John Hind and Alan Boardmann) and 2 dogs (one dog seemed to like to be in the canal)

The 2 dogs and thier owners were new walkers to our group.

7pm Jacobs Ladder

We walked from Green Bank via Cotton Lane, Maddock's Wood, and the Bidneys to Malkins Bank Golf. Richard queried the name Bidneys but later found on the tithe map that the footpath runs through two fields with the names:

- 1) Biddence Field; and
- 2) Second Bidner Field.

So you can imagine where the name for the Bidneys came from.

The walk passed Jubilee Villas, Hassall Moss and climbed Jacobs Ladder (5 easy steps, like stairs with a hand rail), proceeding to School Farm, Alsager Road for about half a mile, to Wheelock Heath Farm. Then to Holly Stile, the tunnel and Mill Lane to return to Green Bank. 18 people, mostly new to SFG, only 6 regulars. Nice to see the new people.

Monday 1 July

10.30am Mother and Toddler nature trail

Comment from a parent:

"Please can you pass on an absolutely HUGE thank you to the women who organised the toddler walk on Monday. It was a perfect length, pace and the painted stones were just brilliant. Our son and his sister have played with them every day since. Thank you so much!"

It goes to show that painted stones are much more fun than any plastic toy or electronic gizmo ever could be.

10.30am Winterley Long Walk

There were 9 walkers including David and me (Roz).

People were positive about the festival and we had a lovely group with about 5 new people.

The weather was just perfect for a longer walk with just a little bit of drizzle.

2pm River Wheelock return Elton Lane

A very peaceful walk along the river, enjoyed by 7 people and one dog in nice weather. Met Barry Poole of CEC PRoW team clearing some vegetation.

7.30pm Tall Chimneys

A perfect evening for the Tall Chimneys walk tonight, back in time for Sunset. 10 walkers and 2 dogs. Miriam took some nice pictures, especially the orchids by the canal. (From Facebook).

7.30pm Geology in Sandbach Town

This was postponed to Wednesday evening due to the guides being unavailable due to a bereavement and an illness.

Tuesday 2 July

10.30am "We're all going on a bear hunt"

Today was our We're going on a bear Hunt. It was great fun. Making binoculars to "spot" the Bears, Rhymes around the Pond area, parachutes and the Story all outside in the beautiful Park in the fresh air. Huge thanks to Rowena and Staff at Sandbach Library and Children's Services for organising this event at Sandbach Park. Thanks also to 19 parents and 24 children who attended and they enjoyed the Library's mobile facility

10.30am Brereton to Swettenham Arms for lunch

12 people started the walk, but unfortunately someone fell on the way to the pub; nothing broken, but grazed and bumped head and chin. Her friend took her home and she recovered to be seen riding her bike into Sandbach a couple of days later.

Other than that, it was a nice walk enjoyed by the remaining 10.

An incident report form was filled in.

2pm Malkins Bank Golf to Ettiley Heath, no stile

The route out on the canal towpath was delightful with the hogweed, meadowsweet, woundwort and common valerian lining the towpath on both sides. Walked Elton Road to join onto the on Rail Trail, crossing the bypass to return. Only 6 people, so we crossed over the bypass, but not recommended for a large party.

2pm Hassall Green Nature Reserve

A lovely walk and there were 14 of us. Andrew the Ranger was accompanied by Josie from the Land Trust, who's the project officer for their new "Green Angels" project. Andrew was very interesting, gave a very informative talk as we walked around the site. From Roz.

A comment: Loved this afternoon's walk. Hassall Green Nature Reserve. Not open often to the Public. Thanks to Jenny and Robert, Andrew the Ranger and Josie and to Paul for the lift there.. what a beautiful place.

Wednesday 3 July

10.30am Strollers Sandbach short walk

Taking in Dingle Wood, Brook Wood and Houndings Lane. 15 people total.

This morning's walk. 13 walkers, lovely scenery, fresh air and Sunshine. What more could you ask for. Jane and Pam.

2pm Rode Heath Ramble

A very enjoyable and varied walk. Salt Line, the Borrowpit, a bit of road walk, keeping as a tight group single file, and return on canal. 13 people and beautiful weather.

6pm and 7.30pm Geology in Sandbach Town

Two groups were run 6pm and 7.30pm because of the Monday postponement. Dr Ian Drew was introduced to the group by Julie Molyneux and we set off to be shown the rocks in the built environment. Prof Cynthia Burek could not be present, but the preparation the Dr and Prof had done really showed through. Ian took us to the churchyard and showed us rock relics from basalt that had been subjected to slow or fast rates of cooling in the earth with the corresponding large or small crystals clearly visible. Ian was a very enthusiastic speaker and his deep knowledge came through to engage and fascinate the audience. Other rocks were the weathering wall by the flight of steps, the Portland Stone of the war graves in the churchyard and a gneiss tombstone. A very instructive and enjoyable evening.

Thursday 4 July

9am Sandbach to Swettenham

From Sandbach via Pillarbox Lane over M6 to Brereton Heath CP for elevenses and on to Swettenham for lunch. Return to Brereton Heath CP for afternoon break and then via Taxmere to Sandbach. A good day enjoyed by the 12 people who attended, one had a lift home from Swettenham and one a lift with Jenny at the second visit to Brereton Heath CP.

Keith and Jenny Haines.

2pm Salt Line and Borrow pit Meadow

'On another warm and sunny day Cheshire East Ranger, Alistair, led 8 walkers along the Salt Line to Borrow Pit Meadows. Al was very knowledgeable about the flora and fauna of the area, giving an insight into the ranger's working life and countryside management. We had a leisurely 2 hour walk that was enjoyed by everyone.

7.30pm Watch Lane and Crabmill Flashes. £1, 4.5 miles, 2 hours, about 6 stiles. Meet Plant Ln/canal CP. Led Graham W, BM Andy D.

Friday 5 July

10am Winterley and Haslington Circular

Haslington Circular' walk this morning. 16 walkers and Poppy the dog. It was perfect weather too.

1.30pm wheelchair and dementia friendly slow walk with carer. From Sandbach library, Trevor talked about playing bowls, the flowers and the trees, ending up at the gazebo for tea and cakes, organised by the PCSOs, Sandbach Partnership and Friends of Sandbach Park. Back marker Dave Peever. The Leonard Cheshire Home were not able to send any disabled people.

2pm Nordic Walking

Many thanks to Bev and Ian for their support in this, the second Nordic Walking event. Seven people joined in and learned the basics of using the poles, lent by Bev and Ian of North Cheshire Nordic walking.

7.30pm St. John's and the Quarry. A surprising turnout for a Friday, 31 people, including about 4 people waiting at FP14 on Hawthorne Drive. We stopped a few times to discuss the Persimmon development, the permissive path now fenced and a little nearer the A534, the quarry, the now defunct airport and paused to admire the views of the Cheshire Landscape with Mow Cop a highlight. We just arrived back at Waitrose at dusk. We have not walked on a Friday evening before, perhaps we should try another time.

7.30pm Birding at sunset.

The same route as the dawn chorus walk, but in reverse. 9 budding ornithologists struck out enthusiastically, but the birds knew we were coming and hid. Similar varieties seen as on the dawn walk. Once again perfect weather but not even an owl to be seen in the fading light. One highlight was good views of three hares frolicking in one of the fields. Once again a very enjoyable walk

Saturday 6 July

9.30am Old Hall walk,

It was a soggy Saturday, but there was a good turnout, over 20 people attended, many bringing dogs, enjoying a quick breakfast to begin, followed by a local walk and ending with coffee at The Old Hall.

10.30am Merlin Micro Brewery, led by Graham. I think everyone had a great time despite the rain on the outward journey. The beer and food helped raise the damp spirits. Thanks to Sue and David at the brewery for being such good and informative hosts.

2pm Dancing Bridge and canal.

Extended rain prior to the walk cut the numbers down to 4. It stopped before we set out, and all enjoyed the walk. We altered the route to avoid the muddy Stanner Brook valley, crossing the canal at Malkins Bank golf club to Stannerhouse Lane.

Keith Haines

7pm Warmingham via The Moat nature reserve. Meeting at the Plant Lane canal car park. The rain in the morning freshened up the woods (temperate rain forest) and we had a nice walk in perfect weather. 5 people seemed new today and all but 3 new in the Festival. 3.6 miles, 11 people, one little dog.

Sunday 7 July

10am Wildlife Wander Coppenhall and Maw Green. 9 walkers, 1 dog enjoyed the long walk, but certain people were too tired to do another walk in the final afternoon, even falling asleep whilst trying to organise the numbers expected for the buffet at The Market Tavern.

2pm Jacobs Ladder and Tall Chimneys in reverse direction, led by Trevor. From Sandbach Market Tavern via Willis's to Tall Chimneys, Stannerhouse Lane and Malkins Bank to Jubilee Villas and then to Hassall Moss, up Jacobs Ladder (safer up) and right (shooter route) passing Wheelock Heath Farm across fields through tunnel, The Valley, Brook Wood, playing field, and Flat Lane to return to Market Tavern 5.20pm. 10 people, 6 new, one not for buffet, but one walker phoned wife and she came, Meeting us at the Market Tavern.

3pm Bradwall Manor

Led by Shaz, 23 people on the walk with a few dogs, who benefitted from the stile-free circular route, ending at the Market Tavern.

3.30pm Short Local. A gentle stroll taking in St Mary's Dell, Dingle Wood, and Sandbach Park. 11 walkers, returning to the Market Tavern for the "Grand Finale" and buffet.