

A Cara-Van trip to the Derbyshire Peak District (Six Go to Camp... and Hike).

It may be too early in the year for a tent (especially for those of us with old bones), but a group from Leicester & District headed off for two days rambling near Flagg in Derbyshire. It started from a hope that there must be other ramblers like me - with a caravan or a campervan, and some energy to combine their hobbies. I sent out a Group email and booked two nights at Flagg Hall Campsite for those that expressed an interest. The aim was to park up in a secluded site and walk from there.

We all arrived around noon on Monday 14th April. The first surprise was sunshine. The second, was an unplanned (but exciting) Group activity - towing one of our number out of the mud. We had a quick lunch and headed off for a 6 mile afternoon ramble, taking the long way round to Monyash, via Pomeroy and the Pennine Bridleway, past the Whim and into the village. Unfortunately, the pub was closed Mondays, but the Tea shop was open; so we sat out in the sunshine with a cuppa and once refreshed, pushed tired limbs along Cross Lane and back to Flagg.



Restored by a nap, out came the BBQ... a spectacular Waldorf salad, haloumi, Waitrose stuffed olives, sausages and a few burgers. Several bottles were drained, fervent conversation erupted and the world was set to rights (as the bats circled and the sun set). Blankets helped keep us going for a while, but eventually warm vans beckoned and we took to our beds.



Breakfasted by 10am sharp, we were ready for an all-day 11 mile walk. This headed north toward Taddington and then dropped through the woods of Deep Dale toward the River Wye. Our talkative Leader (me) was hijacked by a sheep trail and in the spirit of adventure recommended 'abseiling' back down to the path. No audible dissent was heard....and ignoring a re-strained finger, we made it intact. Even so, the path was a mere thread along a steep slope, meandering through a beech wood and overlooking the river (and the A6). Bluebells nodded and wild garlic cloaked the woodland floor; their pungent smell meant that when we stopped for lunch, it was garlic flavoured.....

Afterwards we continued the climb into Sheldon and over the fields to the spectacular remains of the Magpie Lead mine. Recollections of yesterday's tea and flapjacks fortified us on the route-march back to the cafe at Monyash; and when sated, we retraced yesterday's path back to the campsite.



That evening The Royal Oak in Hurdlow provided dinner and beer (all highly recommended). Safe to say we were tired and as the weather had finally broken, everyone was happy to listen to the wind and rain from inside their cozy van and dream of future adventures. We left after breakfast, with new friends and happy memories. I'm thinking about where to go next and will contact everyone soon.

Ian Forsythe.