

Hamps Valley Walk 27th June 2021 led by Richard Lake

Please text on 077 571 04 926 to book a place. Some places still available.

The River Hamps flows from just south of The Roaches in the wild and remote Staffordshire Moorlands, down to Waterhouses before swinging north to join the River Manifold. This walk covers two very different parts of this beautiful, but little known valley. We also follow the heights between the Manifold and the Hamps, which offer really stunning views across the surrounding countryside. Our walk begins at Onecote and ends at Waterhouses, via 'The Hill', Butterton and Grindon.

From the pretty village of Onecote, we head north along the upper part of the Hamps valley, a pleasant, remote area with few roads and even fewer hikers! We follow a farm track as far as Mixon, where we pass a former copper mine. From here, the footpaths see very little use, so are sometimes slightly overgrown and poorly signposted. We pass an abandoned dam before crossing the river and walking alongside another dam and pond to Lower Green Farm. Here, we turn east and climb 'The Hill' a highly original name for what is possibly the tallest hill in the area. Fortunately, the climb is relatively easy on this side, so we quickly reach the top. Here, we plan to have a long break. The view from here is simply stunning, with panoramic views across the countryside in all directions.

After our break we descend part way down the eastern slope of the hill, past a farm called 'Under The Hill'. After a further small descent we turn south along the ridge overlooking Warslow, past Ryecroft, Hole and another 'The Hill', before crossing the main road and approaching the delightful village of Butterton for our second break of the day. The tall spire of Butterton church is visible for miles around. Of far greater interest to the group is probably the local pub, the Black Lion. Queue outside at the back of the pub for service.

One of the special features of Butterton is its unusual ford, which follows the bed of the stream for a short distance, rather than crossing at right angles. We follow the ford and ascend the hill by the road for a short distance before setting off across the fields towards another prominent church spire – that of Grindon, via Oxclose Farm.

The pub at Grindon closed a while ago, so we merely pass through the village, past The White House and onto a green lane in the direction of Waterhouses. By now the River Hamps is both to our east and to our west as it performs a U turn at Waterhouses on its way to meet the River Manifold. Again we have stunning views as we head south. As we near our destination, we descend again into the Hamps Valley, which by now is flowing north. The valley here is deep and steep-sided. We walk along the trackbed of the former Leek and Manifold Railway which ran from Hulme End to Waterhouses. It is now a well-maintained path called the Manifold Way. Look out along here for Pugwash!

Our destination is Waterhouses, which has public toilets in the car park. There is also a pub called the Olde Crown Hotel. Our coach will leave from the bus stop almost opposite this pub at 6:30pm.

Booking is mandatory for this walk. Please text on 077 571 04 926 if you have not already reserved a place, stating your name, telephone number and the pick up point you will use for the outward journey.

This is a very rare opportunity to walk an almost unknown, yet very beautiful part of the Staffordshire Moorlands. It would be a shame to miss it!