

Trinity Rambling Club - Chadkirk - 12th January 2013.

**This month's walk, led by Pat Vickers, was the first of our 2013 season. Once again we** were lucky with the weather as, whilst it was cold and crisp with a keen easterly breeze, the sun stayed out for most of the walk and vitally for the lunch stop!

The walk started from the car park for the Chadkirk Estate near Marple and the first port of call was the nearby Chadkirk Chapel where St. Chad founded a monastic cell in the 7th century. We were too early for the opening times of the chapel itself but had an interesting meander around the gardens and ancient gravestones.

From the chapel it was a short climb up the road to the towpath of the Peak Forest Canal, **passing St. Chad's Well and Kirkwood Cottage, a former toll house, on the way. The route** then took us along this towpath past Oakwood Mill which was built for cotton spinning in 1848 and is now, we believe, used for the manufacture of cardboard. On reaching the Hyde Bank Tunnel the path climbed away from the canal, passing Hyde Bank Farm, built by one Robin Hyde who sided with and fought for Oliver Cromwell in the Civil War. We then rejoined the canal on the other side of the tunnel and were soon on the magnificent three arched stone-built Marple Aqueduct almost 100 feet above the River Goyt. The construction of this aqueduct was a remarkable achievement of 18th century engineering - work began in 1794 and was completed in 1800 using 8,000 cubic yards of masonry and spanning over 300 feet. Leaving the aqueduct, the towpath began to climb the flight of 16 locks which in a little over a mile enable the canal to rise some 200 feet. The canal was built primarily for the transportation of manufactured goods and raw materials, in particular limestone from the quarries up in the Peak Forest, and there are many reminders of its history in the form of Lock Keepers cottages, warehouse buildings, **'roving' bridges and 'legging' tunnels along the way.**

We took advantage of a very convenient picnic site alongside the towpath and about halfway up the flight to take lunch following which we pressed on to the top lock to join the Macclesfield Canal at the Marple Junction. From here we followed the towpath past the massive Goyt Mill and then turning away from the canal crossed the fairways of Marple Golf Club to reach the Middlewood Way. Leaving this disused railway line soon Afterwards at the next bridge we then had to negotiate couple of extremely boggy fields and a churned up muddy track littered with reclaimed stonework and abandoned farm machinery before reaching the main road leading back to Chadkirk.

A very interesting walk in ideal weather and a great start to the season for the thirteen participants.



Our group and a 'friendly' warning!

