

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK WALK

Step this way to recognise the good work of volunteers

WALKS & TRIPS

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We're approaching that time of year again - National Volunteer Week (June 1-7) - which

is an opportunity to celebrate volunteering in all its diversity and a chance to say thank you for the fantastic contribution millions of volunteers make across the UK.

To mark this celebration, for the past five years a walk has been organised in Cuerden Valley Park as part of the local effort.

Why Cuerden Valley Park? To begin with the walk was organised for Brothers of Charity Services Lancashire which is based at Lisieux Hall at the southern end of the park. For more than 85 years, Brothers of Charity have worked to support people with learning disabilities in the north west of England. The services that are offered include supported living; residential, nursing and respite care; supporting people with complex health and social needs; dementia care and transitional services including employment, social enterprise and volunteering options - enabling choice, control, increased independence and above all dignity to the people it supports.

I became involved with BoCS after a walk through Worden Park, Leyland with John Griffiths co-founder of the Lancashire Walks website. We came across the remarkable Walled Garden project one of BoCS social enterprises which restored the kitchen garden of Worden Hall to become one of the park's most attractive features. Intrigued I suggested to Sarah the young woman from BoCS that should the project need promoting in the local press I might be able to help. Sarah passed my name onto Kathleen Page the then volunteers co-ordinator for BoCS and in Kathleen's eyes my suggestion made me a volunteer. This was back in autumn 2010 and I have been involved with BoCS ever since.

It was Kathleen's idea I organise a walk to mark National Volunteers Week in 2013. As well as being for volunteers we also included people supported by BoCs and support



staff. As Cuerden Valley Park was so close naturally the route took us there. Also we crossed Dawson Lane to climb an artificial hill known locally as The Mound on the edge of Buckshaw Village. Here we had the official photo a ritual that has been on the programme of the walk since then.

When Kathleen and I started to plan the walk in 2014 we wanted to see if we could involve other organisations that offer volunteering opportunities. It was at this point we noticed something quite striking about the park - that besides BoCS, in or close to it are four other entities that involve volunteers in their work - these being the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Greater Manchester and North Merseyside, Sue Ryder Care at Cuerden Hall, St Catherine's Hospice Care and the

park itself. Cuerden Valley Park was a veritable volunteer hotspot. We contacted each of these bodies and invited their volunteers to join us.

This is how the event was established. On Tuesday, June 5, this year after gathering at the newly opened visitors centre in Cuerden Valley Park (details below) at 10.30am, following introductions participants will be led on a gentle walk through the park by Michael Swarbrick an experienced (voluntary) health walk leader for South Ribble to arrive at Lisieux Hall for around 12.30pm.

After a presentation by Voice For All the advocacy group of BoCS, we will picnic in the grounds of the chapel or in the chapel itself should the weather be inclement. Light refreshments will be served but bring your own picnic.

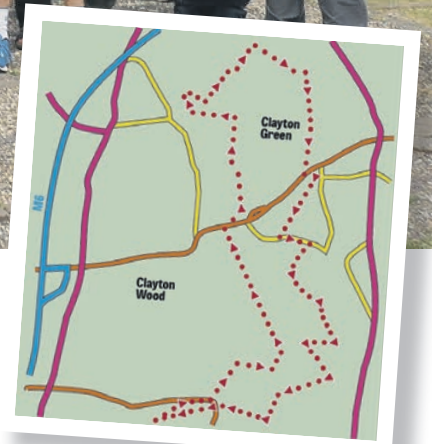
After lunch we will process

down to Dawson Lane to climb the Mound and have our photo taken which will appear in this paper on the following Saturday.

From here the main party will return to the visitors centre while those who joined us at Lisieux will be led back there.

This walk is open to all even if you do not volunteer for any of the organisations below - or indeed volunteer anywhere. It is a chance to enjoy fresh air, exercise and a walk with agreeable companions so please join us.

For more information about volunteering for the organisations connected with the walk see www.brothersofcharity.org.uk/england; www.lancswt.org.uk; www.stcatherines.co.uk; www.sueryder.org/care-centres/neurological-centres/cuerden-hall; www.lancashiremind.org.uk; www.cuerdenvalleypark.org.uk/
 ■ Walk devised by Michael Swarbrick.



The remarkable Walled Garden project restored the kitchen garden of Worden Hall



WALK FACTS

Start: Main walk: 10.30am, The Visitors' Centre, Cuerden Valley Park, Berkeley Drive, Bamber Bridge, PR5 7BY.

Short walk: 12.30pm, Lisieux Hall, Dawson Lane, Whittle-le Woods PR6 7DX

Distance: Full walk 6½ miles/10k, short walk 1 mile/1.6k

Time: Full walk: event to finish by 3.30pm approx. Short walk: finish by 2pm approx.

Grade: Easy

Map: Unnecessary as you will be guided.

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