

## **Trip Report: Yorkshire Dales**

**Date:** 16th June 2012

**Group:** Tony (leader), Lynn, Colin, Rob, Jim, Lesley, Ian, Mike H, Sue, Lynda, Philip, Selina.

**Route:** **The Train:** Horton-in-Ribblesdale to Dent, **The Walk:** Dent to Horton-in-Ribblesdale

**Total Distance:** 14.5 miles

**Total Ascent:** 1968 ft

**Weather:** Wet, wet, wet

**Time:** Too long...

In planning this was meant to be a classic walk with a classic train journey thrown in, but on the day the English Summer weather had different ideas, and it turned out to be a long soggy tramp across the Yorkshire moors between stations on one of the most isolated railway lines in England.

We had set off as planned, bright and early from Bunbury, and arrived in Horton-in-Ribblesdale in good time for the 10:16 to Dent, except the leader must not have had his glasses on when he read the web timetable as the train was actually due to depart at 09:58. Good job for the leader we were 50 minutes early.

No worries, a train arrived, and we travelled northwards to Dent crossing the famous Ribblehead viaduct - a magnificent feat of Victorian engineering and sadly the killer of one hundred navvies during its construction between 1870 and 1874.

The train journey was just 2 stops, took all of 16 minutes to Dent (the highest railway station in England) and what's more there's no charge! There was a lady selling refreshments, and a gentleman selling souvenir guides but no-one from Northern Rail turned up selling railway tickets! Colin had pangs of guilt over travelling for free, but was relieved a little when I promised him we would use the money saved to buy a round at the Dysart later.

It was hard to leave the warm dry train for a wet and windy Dent we could see from the windows, but at least it was all downhill from the station to the Dee valley where we joined the Dales Way. Looking at the miserable conditions, Lynda remarked that it was at least a good job we'd brought the BUMs shelter on such an inclement day, and with a guilty glance between the leader and Mike H, we had to confess we'd left it back in Mike's car in Bunbury.

The first few miles were road-bound but relatively quiet along the Dales Way and followed the gushing river Dee re-tracing our earlier train

journey past Artengill Viaduct and eventually sheltering under Dent Head viaduct for a coffee break and thanks to the father of modern Geology - Dent born, Adam Sedgwick.

By now it has to be admitted that spirits were becoming a little dampened by the rain, but anyway it was onwards and upwards for the BUMs and we left the valley for yet another road, over Blea Moor, but thankfully we could then escape the tarmac and joined the Ribble Way for our own Burton-Speke expedition to find the source of the river Ribble.

The guide-books tell me Gavel Gap is the river's source, but to me it just looked like a gap in the wet-stone wall, and also many of us were in a hurry to get off the wet and exposed high moorland. We were then starting to stretch out with an increasing distance between front and back walkers - not such a good idea considering the conditions and poor visibility.

Thankfully, we met up again at the aptly-named Cold Keld Gate where we joined the Pennine Way. Poor Rob was looking a bit exposed, as he'd not brought any over-trousers with him so the best thing to do was to press on and be prepared to make a route change decision when we got nearer Ribblehead station still over four miles away.

The conditions also seemed to diminish the usually excellent BUMs appetites and it wasn't until 2:30 when we stopped for a quick 5 mins stand-up lunch at Cam End. Consulting the map we could see we were soon going to reach less exposed terrain so we decided to stick to the original route and not make a dash for Ribblehead station, and probably because we also had no idea when the next 2-hourly train was due.

We were happily losing height on our route south into Ling Gill valley of which Ian became quite fond.

We then met a group of blokes who had the right idea and made the most of the wet weather by disappearing down wet holes in the ground to explore the marvellous limestone caves spread all this area.

We also met another group of blokes had an unusual idea and made the most of the wet weather by playing golf all over the wet fells and hills spread all this area. Bizarre!

H-in-R and the 3 Peaks hordes soon came into sight and the comfort of our cars beckoned and relief from the rainy heavens.

All in all, an interesting day out exploring the Dales on rail, road and bog which may have been better if we'd gone out a day later!

Tony