

BUMS Walkaway Weekend

6th to 9th October 2023

Team:

Richard and Della Calder, Neil and Ann Bodfish, Mike and Selina Willis, Steve and Sarah Hammond, Fred and Anne Morris, Tony, Lynn and Ponya (non-human) Quinn, Jeff Ewin and Debbie and Spot (non-human) Sargent, Jo McKinley and Claire Groves and Janet Murray.

Friday:

Most people arrived early enough to have a wander into Osmotherley or take a short stroll around the nearby reservoir before preparing for the evening meal. Early doors seemed to be the order of the day and there were a good number of the usual suspects established in the Golden Lion when the rest of the team arrived at about 7:00pm. The early doors gang were not being anti-social, it was just that there was no phone signal at the campsite and we were unable to alert them to the situation as it unfolded!

The Golden Lion proved to be a very convivial hostelry, providing us with excellent beer, wine and great food and everyone enjoyed the evening chatting and drinking.

Richard announced the plan for the Saturday which was to offer two options; walk one was to be a circular route, led by Richard and walk two was to be a linear route, led by Mike, both starting at Clay Bank car park between Stokesley and Chop Gate. The linear walk would finish at Osmotherley.

The group were left to sleep on it and to ponder which option they would take; an answer being needed in the morning.

Saturday:

A 9:30am start had been agreed and the team assembled at reception for the drive to Clay Bank. Debbie and Jeff opted out as Spot was not feeling up to a 10 mile walk and Anne Morris decided she would remain behind and took her camera for a local walk instead.

The drive to Clay Bank was easy enough and we were soon all in our walking gear and ready to ramble just after 10:00am.

Two groups had formed: Mike, Claire, Steve, Sarah and Neil taking the linear route and Richard, Jo, Della, Ann B, Janet, Selina, Fred, Tony, Lynn and Ponya on the circular option.



The two groups walked together up to the top of Hasty Bank headed south to the Wainstones battling a strong easterly wind whipping across the open moorland. Richard decided a coffee stop in the lee of the Wainstones was an opportunity to get out of the relentless wind so a rest was taken.

Mike and his team chose to press on and they were never seen again (until the Golden Lion later that afternoon!)

Richard decided a lower-level route was going to be preferable to struggling head on into the wind across the exposed Cold Moor and so we turned east at the col below the Wainstones and made our way lower down along the south side of Bilsdale heading for Chop Gate. The way was through pleasant woodlands and fields one of which reminded us that RUBY was 80!



After crossing the road at Chop Gate we began to climb up the north side of the valley and for want of a better place we sat next to a farm track and ate our lunch near Stonehouse Cote. Not having receded the route our next path proved to be quite elusive but after backtracking and then backtracking along our backtrack we eventually spotted an unlikely gap in the bracken which proved to be the way onward proved by a footpath arrow on the next gate we encountered after a prolonged battle with bracken, brambles and gorse bushes. This way was clearly not one of North Yorkshires more popular routes. The way forward however looked simple enough, a ladder style over the wall at the top of the field seduced the leader and a beeline was made for it. This path wasn't giving up easily and after crossing the style the bracken and gorse became more belligerent and soon gave way to woman eating tussocks! Clearly, we were off route and after a bit of fence hopping, we struggled uphill through the waist deep (for Jo and Lynn at least!) tussocks to the path proper. Well, it had been a path when the ordinance survey was last here in 1897 but since then had fallen into disuse. Again, we were rewarded with a gate onto the moor and the group gradually assembled after trial by bracken. We seemed to be one short though and after a recount we were greeted by the sight of a white baseball cap bobbing along just below the top of the bracken, it was Jo!



Not many yards further we were greeted by a lovely firm land rover track which we followed west along the edge of the moor until we were able to turn north across Urra Moor.

It was whilst walking along this track that I got my phone out and formed the BUMSapp group to pass the time!

Fortunately, the wind was behind us now. The final “climb” up to Round Hill the highest point in the North Yorkshire Moors at 454m was the gentlest gradient possible without actually, going downhill! Team photo then we wandered along the north edge of the moor back to Clay Bank.

Distance 10.2 miles, ascent 1680 ft according to Strava.

Mike’s linear walk:

Having been a voluntary ranger on the North Yorkshire moors for a couple of years I was able to impart some of my knowledge about the moors. Much of the landscape is not as people think natural, and been like it for 100 years, it is the result of mining and the other human activities, which have shaped the face of the moors.

The alternative Saturday walk rather than the circular was a direct route back from the Clay Bank car park all the way to Osmotherley. We went over the Wainstones and had a little bit of fun by climbing down through some of the standing stones while Richard’s group stopped for coffee. The rest of us carried on and climbed up onto Cringle Moor and finally across to Carlton bank at which point there is a very nice café, Lordstones where we availed ourselves of a coffee and had a quick bite to eat. After our coffee stop we carried on to Carlton Bank where the Teeside gliding club operate. We didn’t see any gliders, think it was a bit windy for them on that day. Continuing along the Cleveland Way we descended from the exposed edge down towards Swainby. The route now changes from the exposed edge to more wooded paths which eventually brought us to Osmotherley. We ended up back in the Golden Lion after 10 1/2 miles and just shy of 2 1/2 thousand feet of ascent. It was a good workout for everyone concerned. Excellent walk, thank you.

Saturday evening saw us eating in the Three Tuns which was not as good as the Golden Lion so after eating some decamped across the road to the Golden Lion for further rehydration and others went back to the campsite to do the same.

Sunday:

It seemed like a good idea to begin Sunday’s walk to Rievaulx Abbey with a leisurely drive across the moors and dales to Old Byland to showcase the beauty of the area. The weather had other ideas offering us low cloud and fog which spoilt the effect! Nonetheless one feature of the journey did cause some concern to the other car drivers, Caydale Mill Ford! Not your usual little stream running across the road, more like the road joining the stream and following it for 100m along its length. Richard, using local knowledge, boldly motored into the flood and demonstrated that it was only 6 inches deep with a concrete base and emerged unscathed. Debbie hesitated for a short while then plucked up courage and followed with Neil and Steve close behind. Definitely a one-off ford!

Again Mike offered a linear walk back to Osmotherley but only Sarah opted to join him. We dropped them off near Hawnby on the way.

At Old Byland we booted up and headed down through the charming village to find our bridleway. My first choice was soon relegated to second when I saw the depth of the nettles and brambles and realised it had not been used in this century, so we moved 50m along the road to the next one which did seem to have seen some recent foot traffic. The path leads us through a wooded valley and brought us out in fields leading to Callister Wood. Another slippery path descended to the bottom of the valley and a pleasant track eventually met up with a quiet lane leading to Rievaulx Abbey.

Coffee and a cake was taken at the café by the abbey and most of the group decided they didn't want to walk around the ruins so suitably fortified we set off across field adjacent to a barely discernible ancient canal used to bring stone to build the abbey. The path brought us to a bridge over the River Rye and further quiet tracks lead us further up Ryedale to a bridleway into Birk Bank Wood where we managed to find a sloping bank to sit on and eat our lunch. Sandwiches all gone we carried on through the woods and emerged on the lane from Caydale Mill ford. Turning left we trudged up the tarmac and arrived back at the cars in Old Byland.

Distance: 7 miles, ascent 715 feet according to Strava

After de-booting a tea run was suggested to Helmsley where we had a wander round found another café and had tea/coffee and cakes before returning back to Osmotherley.

Okay, my alternative for Sunday was going to be another one-way route. This time going from Hawnby back to Osmotherley. Richard and the gang dropped us off and when I say us it was just Sarah and me. We had worn everyone else out on the Saturday one way walk and Sarah was the only one game enough to walk the route with me on Sunday. Sarah and I set off through the fog. It was bit boggy to start with as we made our way up through the woods and then ultimately back up onto the Cleveland Way. This part of the Cleveland Way, running north south from Osmotherley is the old drovers road where they drove the cattle from the Scottish central belt down to York and ultimately through to London. As we got to Boltby forest up on the edge of the moor we could hear there was a motocross event going on but it didn't affect us.

Unfortunately, the clag gave us no views. That's the weather we got for about 2/3 or 3/4 of the walk, it wasn't until we got past black Hambleton up to Thimbleby moor where we finally got some views and I think Sarah was impressed and surprised by the views up there. A very nice part of the world. We got into Osmotherley and made ourselves at home once again in the Golden Lion and we were joined by Stephen Selina, who decided against the T run in Helmsley, and joined us at the pub.

Distance: 11 plus miles, ascent: not much

Sunday Evening:

Most of us ate at the youth hostel café that evening and the food was surprisingly good. There then followed an impromptu birthday party for Selina in Steve and Sarah's palatial flat, not joking it was palatial!

Great weekend away with a great bunch of friends. Weather was kind to us and the location was perfect.

Thank you all for your company.

Richard