

Haworth - Thursday 15th December 2022

It doesn't seem that long ago since we were on the last walk of the autumn series and here we are again - the Thursday walkers embarking on a couple of winter walks!!! Actually it was only two weeks ago that we walked to Thornton and despite only having one Thursday off, I did receive a phone call last week, asking me when and where my walk was starting from!!!

This week we are starting from Beckfoot Lane in Bingley and heading out to Haworth, We were joined by Thursday newbies Katie, Roger T and treasurer Tim, (but he forgot to bring his cheque book!!!), on this cold and definitely winter morning. It was a joint walk with our friends from South Pennine, the train strike had limited their numbers but Pendle Pete, kept the flag flying. The walk leader had again walked the five miles to the start, from Idle Village, leaving on a bitterly cold morning at 6.10am!!! Parts of the Leeds/Liverpool canal were frozen solid, but the River Aire was still flowing!!! I arrived a little after 7.30am to find Chris, Robert and Pete already there and the impressive group of 16 walkers had all assemble in time for the 8.00am start. It was good to see Julia out on an excellent day, weather-wise. Dry, sunny and firm underfoot. Having previously attended the two wettest Thursday walks this year, her luck appears to have changed and I can only foresee good luck for her going into 2023!!!

We headed off towards Beckfoot Bridge and after crossing, Shipley golf course we were quickly into Ruin Bank Wood, with its severe climb, that blew the cobwebs out of everyone's legs. As soon as we had reached the top of the climb we were quickly passing, St David's ruin, (also known as Ferrands Folly), It was built in 1796 by Benjamin Ferrand as a ruin and looks very much today as the day it was built!!! We then started the steep descent, losing all the height we had just struggled to gain!!! The day ahead promised plenty of ups and downs but as long as we finish at the same point we started from, they must equal out surely? If only we had a mathematician with us but she appears to have gone to ground!!!

Having crossed Harden Road we were soon into Goit Stock Wood and the impressive Goit Stock Waterfalls, which although icy, were still flowing. Leaving the waterfall, we headed past Hewenden Mills in the direction of Cullingworth - taking paths that can often be boggy during the winter months but were frozen solid today!!! Passing under Hewenden viaduct and climbing Gleid Hill, to reach Meal Bridge Farm. We dropped down through Holling Park where we crossed Denholme Beck and climbed up to cross the A629, taking Denholme. Edge and Pit Lane to Long Causway, before picking up the Bronte way at Thornton Moor Reservoir and following it all the way into Oxenhope.

Crossing the Keighley and Worth Valley Steam Railway at Oxenhope station, we had another steep climb before we passed the 'Three Chimneys House' which was the family's Yorkshire home in the original Railway Children film. We were now less than a mile from Haworth and our well-earned lunch. Taking the paths via Upper Marsh Farm, we eventually reached Haworth Church and the Bronte Parsonage, at the top of the steep and Cobbled Main Street. It was just after midday and we headed to Cobbles and Clay for lunch – Sweet Potato and Chorizo, seemed a popular choice today.

Departing the warmth of the cafe, We dropped down to Central Park, passing the Bandstand, the last time I had been there was back in June for the 1960's weekend, when I was sat listening to Simon & Garfunkel and Dusty Springfield on a sunny afternoon!!! It all seems

such a long time ago - that's the 1960's not last June!!! No inclination to sit in the park soaking up the music and sunshine today. The Ice-cream van was also missing!!!

Passing Haworth station and the Bronte cinema, we climbed to Brow Top before dropping down to Sugden End, taking paths via Cliffe View and Hunters Hill Farm to Harden Moor. Crossing the moor, towards Bingley St Ives, we skirted the estate, following Altar Lane all the way down To Ireland Bridge in Bingley and the spiritual home of the West Yorkshire Committee – The Brown Cow. At last month's committee meeting, I'm lead to believe that more pints were drunk than actions agreed!!! Following the riverside path into Myrtle Park, we were quickly back onto Beckfoot Lane and our cars just as night was starting to fall at 4.00 pm.

GPS's checked and 19 miles agreed, the end of another cracking Thursday walk, the regular drinkers headed to the Wetherspoon's in Bingley, others climbed into their cars for the icy journey home, the walk leader this week being enticed to join the drinkers. Thanks to Pete's kindness - a coffee was consumed!!!

Next week sees me leading my second and final winter walk, this year - a new venture for the Thursday walkers, as part of the LDWA Pubs & Beer group. Again it is a joint walk with our friends from South Pennine. The start is from Saltaire Brewery at 8.00am, with a second start from Shipley station at 8.15am - for those who want to travel by train. No rail strike scheduled next Thursday – Hooray!!! The walk seems to be generating much interest!!!

I'll be canvassing opinions for themed walks, I could possibly offer next summer – Roger has already suggested a pork pie walk!!! I was thinking more of a literary theme - It was Karen who suggested the Anne Lister, (Gentleman Jack), walk last summer, which along with the Railway Children walk, was a highlight of the Thursday summer programme.