

Bramhope - Thursday 22nd September 2022

As I awoke and looked out of the window, I could see it was a pleasant late September morning. With the forecast for next week as we approach October, being for colder and wetter weather, I thought I would have possibly my last summer breakfast of the year, so the day began for me, with some scones, a butter knife, cream and strawberry jam - jam on top of the cream, the Devon way for me!!! Heading out a little before 7.45am, I arrived at the village carpark to find Karen & Mike already there and over the next ten minutes I am joined by my regular group of Thursday walkers for the 8.00am start. We set off at a steady pace, because sometimes we take for granted, just how beautiful the surroundings are and by walking slowly you are able to absorb the vibrancy and the colour of the land and the wildlife through the ever-changing seasons. Appreciating the lush fields and deeply inhaling the fresh air as we took the steep descent from Mitchell Lane down to the Leeds/Liverpool canal before crossing the river Aire and heading up towards Yeadon.

As well as our usual walkers, it was good to welcome newbie Nick to the group. Although usually walking with East Lincs or the Irregulars, he decided to join our Thursday group this week. It was also good to welcome Ralph back into the fold, having missed last week to attend Pontefract races - I was also presently pleased to see he still had his shirt on his back!!! Sara was also a welcome returner from last year, delaying her appearance until a guaranteed lunch stop in a cafe was on the itinerary. 'I walk on my stomach as well as my legs' is her philosophy!!! Iain was also a welcome returner from last year. His last appearance being on the Christmas tree walk in December 2021 - Don't leave it so long next time!!!

These returnees boosted our number to nine and we were soon heading through Yeadon for West Carlton, before arriving on Otley Chevin by 10.00am, dropping down Millar Lane into Caley Deer Park, we headed towards Pool bank before reaching Bramhope for our morning stop at the pavilion fields. No cricket match to watch but there is covered seating to take advantage of.

Heading out of Bramhope via the Knoll, we passed a number of ventilation shafts from the Bramhope railway tunnel, Built in the late 1840's at the cost of 24 lives of the workers. The knoll is the old waste or spoil from the tunnel, which is now a children's play area. The line is still in use today, with trains using it to get from Horsforth station to Arthington viaduct, on the Leeds to Harrogate line. We made good time in reaching our lunch stop at Crag House Farm in Cookridge, arriving at 11.40am. There's an impressive Granary restaurant as well as a coffee shop but it was the coffee shop food for us today. There is an old saying, you can take the boy or girl out of Yorkshire but you cannot take Yorkshire out of the boy or girl, so despite all the gourmet food on offer in the restaurant, it was toasted sandwiches from the 'Grab & Go' coffee shop and we decamped to the outdoor seating area, as the sun made a welcome appearance whilst we consumed our toasties and drank copious amounts of tea and coffee.

Suitably refreshed we were back on the walk by 12.30pm, heading towards Leeds/Bradford airport, which seemed especially busy today. Do the passengers know something we do not? Undeterred, we reached the airport fence and followed the path, which was firm underfoot and had recently been cleared, making our passage easier than it can be at times. Leaving the

airport behind us, we crossed Yeadon Moor and headed for the famous Yeadon Tarn for our afternoon stop, taking advantage of the seats outside Yeadon Boat Club. Yeadon tarn was man made in the late 1860's to provide water for the Crompton Mill Company, which was destroyed by fire in the 1950's. The tarn is now used for leisure activities as well as being home to the boat club, (model boats), it houses a sailing club and is also popular for fishing.

Departing the tarn, we headed down Yeadon Banks to Engine Fields before picking up the Yeadon/Guiseley cycle path. This 1.5km path follows a disused railway line from Parklands View in Yeadon to the old Coach Road leading into Guiseley. There are a number of tree roots pushing through the surface of the cycle path, which makes it difficult for cyclists but fine for walkers. Despite rain being forecast for mid-afternoon, we had been lucky so-far, but on the cycle track, I could feel droplets land on my jacket, like tears falling from the crying eyes of Zeus's daughter, and by the time we had reached Guiseley, it was time to stop and put on our waterproofs!!! From here we headed down to Esholt junction and into Esholt woods, the trees keeping most of the rain off us, eventually arriving at the famous 'Woolpack' public house, (from Emmerdale), in the village centre. We were now on the final leg of our walk, following the river back to Thackley, where we saw a young Egret looking for fish in the river. From Thackley, we took the woodland path alongside the canal, crossing the bottom of Ainsbury Avenue before climbing up through the woods, (these woods were the route of my old school cross country run in the early 1970's), to Park Road and the short return to Idle, arriving at 4.00pm. GPS's checked and 22 miles agreed.

4.00pm was also the ideal finishing time for Mike, it's coincidentally the time the White Bear opens and he was off up the high Street like a rocket, certainly the quickest, he had walked all day and I would suggest also the quickest he has walked, since his mother called him in for his dinner!!!

Next week sees us on our fifth walk of the autumn series, this time heading west to Keighley, with our lunch stop planned for the Buddhist 'World Peace Café' in the town centre. I respectfully request that no dictators, despots or warmongers attend this walk!!!