

Bailiff Bridge Christmas Walk

18th December 2021

16 miles

15 walkers

Leader Chris Burrell

Photos Karen Pickersgill and Chris Burrell

On a dark and foggy morning 15 intrepid and excited LDWA members waited patiently for the off from Victoria Park Bailiff Bridge. First there was a quick briefing and what the day had to offer. To make it feel like Christmas [the weather certainly didn't feel like Christmas at all] Christmas hats were donned and the 'find the Christmas decoration challenge' was explained.

Climbing out of Bailiff we walked on the old Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway track sometimes known as The Pickle Bridge Line [Dave this might answer your question?] built in 1874 and closed in 1952 due the mining subsidence. We followed the track down to Bottom Hall Beck and after crossing the A641 we encountered our first obstacle, a fallen tree across the stile [good job I did the walk the day before and managed to clear a way thorough].

We then headed North up the Coach Road passing Crow Nest Golf Course, built after Crow Nest estate had been demolished, who's famous owners were, Ann Walker [Ann Lister's friend] and also Sir Titus Salt, a well-known Manufacturer, Politician and Philanthropist.

By this time three Christmas decorations had been found, and the competitive edge of the group was growing.

The group crossed the A 644 and dropped down into Sunny Vale [not very sunny today though!!!!] passing old quarries Judd walls holding back tons of quarry waste. Crossing Red Beck, the group was entertained by the number of Art Wall paintings which adorned the old brick works buildings. After a quick climb out of the valley a swift morning break was taken [too cold and miserable to sit around for too long]. Passing old quarry working, we walked a small section of the Calderdale Way up into Southowram and onto Siddal Top where fantastic views were taken in of Halifax and beyond, sorry getting carried away here, the truth is we could only see about 15 yards as the fog was so bad [so just to prove there is some fantastic views, I have attached a couple of photos taken the day before, what a difference a day makes?]

Moving on, we arrived at Beacon Hill, again the fog was so bad we had trouble seeing each other. Again the day before when I passed there was a film crew of around 30 people filming a scene from Ackley Bridge [channel 4 school drama set in the fictional Yorkshire town of Ackley Bridge].

Coming down from Beacon Hill the fog did clear a bit to see the splendid Shibden Hall [home to Ann Lister and also West Yorkshire LDWA Treasure Hunt in the Park 22nd May 2022] leaving Shibden Park crossing the A58 with a brief visit to Shibden Fold, and then a swift sharp climb to Lower High Sunderland taking lunch on Hag Lane in the mist and fog again unfortunately.

The cyclists amongst the group [as well as others] were impressed with the steepness of Lee Lane which was used in the Tour de France and Tour of Yorkshire, with its cobbles and uneven surface it must have been a challenge riding up it.

Passing Scout Hall, we ventured up into Shibden Vale along muddy paths up to the old quarry man's tunnel which was built from stone flags and covered over to form flat fields on the side of the step valley sides.

By this time all the Christmas decorations had been found and the lucky finders were eager to know the significance of their find, which was soon to be revealed.

Walking down Landmere Syke [topographic name for someone who lives in a hollow] we arrived at our afternoon pit stop, where Mrs B senior, My Mrs B and Gareth were on hand to hand out Christmas cake, mince pies, chocolate buns baked by Sarah [daughter in law] along with sherry, pop and water, serenaded with Christmas carols. Then the moment everybody had been waiting for, the Christmas decoration hand out [sorry there was no alcohol but I thought it might be a bit heavy to carry back].

Once the refreshments were consumed, we were off heading across fields to Coley down into Priestley Green across Lightcliffe golf course and back into Bailiff Bridge, with just over 16 miles clocked and with the daylight fading fast, thanks were given to all for supporting the walk. Christmas wishes were exchanged and hoped all had a safe trip home.

Safe and enjoyable walking over the festive period and see you WYLDWA New Year's Day Walk.

Best wishes

Chris Burrell.