

ANNFIELD PLAIN & DISTRICT NATURLISTS' CLUB
WHAT WE SAW OR WHAT YOU MISSED SUMMER 2014

1.22/03/14 Weldon Bridge – Warkworth 'A' Eddie Ashburner. Druridge Bay–Warkworth 'B' Pat Gardner

62 members set out on the first walk of the season in a 57 seat coach and a 7 seat minibus. The weather forecast was not particularly good – snow showers, high winds and thunder. The coffee stop was at Heighley Gate Garden Centre. At Weldon Bridge, just as 22 members set out on the 'A' walk following the River Coquet towards the coast there was a rain shower but it didn't last for long. The coaches continued on to the Druridge Bay Country Park via a very scenic route on a B road unsuitable for heavy goods vehicles. During the journey we saw lambs, llamas and a buzzard on the ground having just caught a rabbit. There was time at Druridge Bay to have lunch before the 'B' walk set off towards the coast for a 7 mile walk. Just before we set away, there was a quick shower of hailstones. Rather than descending to the beach, we followed paths through the sand dunes over Hadston Links then Togston Links. At Hauxley Nature Reserve we stood and admired a huge flock of Canada geese on the ponds and also in the fields beyond. Coquet Island with its dominant white lighthouse stood proud in the clear blue North Sea. At Amble we had time for either fish and chips or a rest near the harbour where we looked down over the wall to see several 'cuddy ducks' (Eider ducks). Although dry and bright the wind was cold and strong and we were soon on our way passing through the marina with its vast array of expensive looking leisure boats. Alongside the River Coquet we saw mute swans and a heron standing next to a weir waiting for its next meal. We walked around the ramparts of Warkworth Castle where the daffodils were just breaking bud, another few days and I think there would be a splendid display. After a prolonged stop we travelled directly home. Flowers butterbur, celandine, coltsfoot, dog violet, gorse, primrose and wood sorrel. Other: buzzards and rabbit.

2. 5/04/14 Helmsley Circular 'A' Jennifer Bell 'B' Pat Gardner

After a week of heavy fog, it was a joy to have a much clearer day as 51 members travelled to Helmsley, stopping for coffee at Thirsk. 20 members set out on the 'A' walk (11 miles) following the Cleveland Way to Rievaulx Abbey then taking tracks to Oscars Farm, Collier Hag Wood and descending through Borough Beck Dale back to Helmsley. During the walk the 'A' party came across a patch of white wild pansies, quite unusual I think. Meanwhile, 27 members did a 'B' walk to Rievaulx Abbey, following the same track as the 'A' party. After spending time at the Abbey, they returned to Helmsley along the same route. In addition to these two walks, a party of 2 opted to walk within the parkland of Duncombe Park, the seat of the Duncombe family whose senior member takes the title Baron Feversham. After paying £1 each entrance fee they were given a map and set away passing a bird of prey demonstration in progress with a hawk flying directly above them and landing on the ground nearby. The walk comprised a mixture of field and woodland tracks followed by a stroll alongside the River Rye to eventually return to the entrance gates of the estate. They saw a male brimstone butterfly, bright yellow in colour and this is where the name 'butter-fly' comes from; the female is a paler white-green. The evening stop was spent in Thirsk. Flowers: blackthorn, bluebell, butterbur, celandine, coltsfoot, dog violet, germander speedwell, ground ivy, lungwort, opposite leaved golden saxifrage, primrose, strawberry flower, white pansy, wood anemone and wood sorrel. Other: bumble bee, brimstone butterfly-male, peacock butterflies, grey squirrel, 2 grey wagtails, ladybird, mallard, pheasants and rabbits.

3. 19/04/14 Grange – Keswick 'A' David Palmer 'B' Margaret Palmer

Numbers were down to 44 today, possibly because it was Easter Saturday. It was a beautiful sunny day as we made good time to the coffee stop at Houghton Garden Centre. We continued along the M6 to the Penrith turnoff and got a short way along the road before we were stopped as the road ahead was closed in both directions due to a horrendous traffic accident. We had to travel north on the M6 and followed a minor road to Wigton then the A695 to Keswick. This detour took so long that the 'A' party leader decided there was insufficient time to do the planned walk (Grange circular) and instead did a shortened version as a linear to Keswick. After dropping off 40 members in Grange the driver continued on to Seatoller in order to turn the coach around. He had nearly exceeded his driving time and had to park up in Seatoller for an hour before returning to Keswick for the afternoon. The 'A' party (12) went ahead and ascended the fells to enjoy a ridge walk. The 'B' party, 28 in number followed a minor road then joined stony tracks to reach Derwent Water. Lunch was spent sitting among the dainty white flowers of wood anemones. Delightful tracks through Brandelhow Park woodland and lakeside paths with amazing views on this sunny afternoon made for a pleasant enjoyable walk. We left the lakeside near Portinscale admiring the bright red flowers of rhododendrons and followed the track to Keswick. We left the Lakes at 5pm and it took 30 minutes to reach the M6 as opposed to 1h 40m to reach Keswick earlier in the day. An evening stop was spent in Barnard Castle. Flowers: bluebell, butterbur, celandine, cowslip, dog violet, dogs mercury, garlic mustard, germander speedwell, gorse, lady's smock, periwinkle, primrose, stitchwort, wood anemone, wood sage, wood sorrel and yellow dead nettle.

4. 3/05/14 Whorlton - Piercebridge 'A' Lynne Rippon 'B' Kathleen Reavley

A dry and sunny day as 57 members made the short journey to Barnard Castle for coffee before the coach travelled on to Whorlton where 26 members set out on the 'A' walk while the coach continued on to Piercebridge for the 'B' walk. The 'A' party followed the Teesdale Way long distance footpath by joining the riverside path adjacent to the River Tees from a stony track in Whorlton. Most of the time the path was high above the river separated by steep cliffs. As we walked at the side of Wycliffe Woods we could see the woodland floor carpeted with bluebells and primroses. We stopped for lunch in a grassy field where red helleborines were growing, quite a rare sight. Good paths were followed through a nature reserve and then there was a stretch of road walking to Gainford. We passed Gainford Hall, built about 1603. It is grade 1 listed and has numerous tall chimney pots on its roof. At the far end of Gainford we passed the imposing building of St. Peter's. This was built by the Catholic Church around 1900 as an orphanage for 300 boys. This lasted for almost 40 years. In 1940 it became an approved school until the 1980s and it was then a care home until 2000. It now belongs to two housing companies but the site is currently derelict because planning permission has not been granted for a housing development. We crossed pasture fields containing horses with hoods over their heads with see through gauge eye slots. Some thought they were being used to keep flies away from the horses faces. We rejoined the riverside path to eventually reach Piercebridge. The coffee shop was overwhelmed as both the 'A' and 'B' parties descended at the same time. The service was slow but the drinks and food lovely. An evening stop in Barnard Castle. Flowers: apple blossom, arum lily, bird cherry, bluebell, white bluebell, borage, butterbur, chickweed, dog violet, dogs mercury, dusky cranesebill, flowering rush, forget-me-not, greater stitchwort, ground ivy, ivy leaved toadflax, leopardsbane, lesser celandine, marsh marigold, opposite leaved golden saxifrage, primrose, ramson, red campion, red helleborine, white dead nettle, wild cherry, wood anemone and wych elm. Other: bumblebee, orange tip butterfly and peacock butterfly.

5. 17/05/14 Kielder Reservoir 'A' Ken Armstrong 'B' Pat Gardner

Another dry and sunny day as 50 members travelled to Kielder stopping for coffee in Hexham. The coach dropped 22 members of the 'A' party on the main road then travelled on to a point just south of Fairloans Farm on the road leading to Scotland where 25 members set out on the 'B' walk. After a very short stretch of road walking we deviated over rough ground to ascend to the source of the River North Tyne. A monument was recently erected to indicate the source. We retraced our route back to the road and shortly afterwards followed tracks through woodland on the side of Deadwater Fell. We stopped for lunch next to several log piles of recently cut tree trunks. We continued on, eventually passing the 'A' party coming in the opposite direction. We stood and observed puddles of water containing tadpoles and in another puddle fully grown newts. We crossed the road and followed a disused railway line to eventually walk through Kielder village and on to Kielder Castle. The cafe had a couple of monitors showing live coverage of activity on two osprey nests in the forest. The evening stop was spent in Hexham. Flowers: bluebell, bugle, coltsfoot, crosswort, cuckoo flower, eyebright, greater speedwell, greater stitchwort, lesser celandine, marsh marigold, milkwort, primrose, violet, wood anemone, wood sorrel and yellow pimpernel. Other: buzzard, hare, kingfisher, newts, orange tip butterflies, oyster catcher, peacock butterfly, red cones on fir trees, small white butterflies, tadpoles and tortoiseshell butterflies.

6. 31/05/14 Settle Circular 'A' Bill Sillitoe 'B' Kathleen Reavley

It was cool and dry as 53 members set out for Yorkshire today. Arrangements had been made to stop for coffee and scones at The Millstones, a cafe on the A59 not far from Bolton Abbey. This was the first time the club had stopped here and as an extra treat, the club paid the bill. Everyone commented on how nice the scones were and there was brisk business in the shop for bread and cakes. At Settle, 20 members set out on the 'A' walk while after lunch 30 members did the 'B' walk which started by going through the town to follow Brockhole Lane, a walled lane between fields. There was a steady climb through grassy fields to reach Cleatop Park Wood. We walked through the wood but were glad to leave as the midges were biting. We rested on rocks and enjoyed the views of Settle below us. There was a steep descent through fields to reach Upper Settle where we admired an art exhibition in an old red telephone box. We walked through the back streets spotting interesting features on the houses and admiring tiny gardens to emerge in the centre of Settle. An evening stop in Ripon. Flowers: bluebell, bugle, cotton grass, cow parsley, eyebright, foxglove, germander speedwell, greater stitchwort, green alkanet, herb bennet, herb robert, ivy leaved toadflax, milkwort, oxeye daisy, red campion, rhododendron, silverweed, tormentil, tufted vetch, valerian, water aven, welsh poppy, wood sorrel and yellow pimpernel. Other: tadpoles.

7. 14/06/14 Harestanes (near Jedburgh) 'A' Peter Gilliland 'B' Kathleen Gilliland

It was a horrible gloomy day as 54 members set out for the Scottish Borders stopping for coffee at the Jedburgh Woollen Mills. Fortunately the weather had changed for the better before the walks began. The coach parked up at the Harestanes Visitors Centre just north of Jedburgh and 26 members set out on the 'A' walk while 20 members set out a little later on the 'B' walk. Both parties made their way to the top of Peniel

Heugh hill where a monument stands to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo. The 'A' party was already there having lunch when the 'B' party emerged from the woodland. Eventually, the 'A' party left in a westerly direction while the 'B' party went towards the east over the grassy fields. However, we encountered a large herd of cows with calves and a bull in one of the fields further on. We followed the fenceline to the next field but we had the same problem so we continued to follow the fence line to a wood. The gated entrance had an electrified cable across the gate but it was easily disconnected until we climbed over the padlocked gate and followed a stony track to the main road. We continued on to ???????????? and met up with another couple of members who wanted to do a shorter walk. We crossed a bridge over the River Teviot and followed the Borders Abbey Way alongside the river on a level path to eventually return to Harestanes. A good 7 mile walk with a little bit of adventure today. The evening stop was in Hexham. Flowers: chickweed, comfrey, crosswort, dog rose, elderflower, germander speedwell, greater stitchwort, herb bennet, orange hawkweed, orchid, red campion, silverweed, storksbill and valerian. Other: 3 hares, heard cuckoo, heron and yellow hammer bird.

8. 28/06/14 Dufton Circular 'A' Bill Sillotoe 'B' Geoff Palmer

On a nice day 39 members set out to Dufton, stopping for coffee in Barnard Castle. Only 14 members set out on a tough 'A' walk today after being dropped off in Dufton. The coach retraced its route to Appleby where 23 members set out on the 'B' walk. We followed field paths and green lanes and as we stopped for lunch, a shower of rain started but it didn't last long. We continued through newly planted woodland then over marshy ground where we walked past a huge black and white dragonfly basking in the afternoon sunshine. In Appleby we headed for tea and cakes in the cafes before travelling back to Dufton. As we rode along the windy country lane a buzzard began flying alongside the coach – quite a sight. The evening stop was in Barnard Castle. Flowers: crosswort, dames violet, early purple orchid, elderflower, forget-me-not, foxglove, green alkanet, hawkweed, herb robert, himalayan balsam, honeysuckle, lady's mantle, leopard'sbane, meadow cranesbill, meadowsweet, mignonette, milkwort, mimulus, nipplewort, oxeye daisy, pyramidal orchid, ragwort, red campion, slender st johns wort, spleenwort, tormentil, tufted vetch, water crowfoot, woundwort, yellow loosestrife and yellow rattle. Other: buzzard, curlews, 2 deer, 2 hares, harts tongue ferns and lords 'n' ladies berries.

9. 12/07/14 Annual Outing to Harrogate

52 members came on the outing to Harrogate today. We stopped for coffee in Ripon before going to the RHS garden at Harlow Carr and Harrogate. It was a lovely sunny day as the majority opted to visit the gardens. Everyone did their own thing and met up at 3pm to walk together through woodland and the Valley Gardens park to Harrogate town centre. The coach left at 5.30pm and travelled directly home.

10. 26/07/14 Morebattle 'A' Adam Bent 'B' Kathleen Gilliland

On one of the hottest days of the year, 54 members travelled to the Scottish Borders, stopping for coffee at the Jedburgh Woollen Mills. As we travelled to Morebattle, the 'B' party alighted at Cessford (32 in number) to do a linear walk back to Jedburgh. 22 members opted for the 'A' walk today, walking mainly on St Cuthbert's Way on the highest part of this long distance walk. The 'B' party followed stony tracks and field edges for an undulating walk following St Cuthbert's Way in the opposite direction to the 'A' party. All around us the fields containing grain crops were aglow with a beautiful stunning golden sheen. The lunch stop was in woodland to make use of some shade. As we continued on, the heat began to affect some people and I had to arrange for the coach to meet 9 members at the roadside while the rest of the party followed the Borders Abbey Way into Jedburgh. It was so hot that most people bought cold drinks at the Jedburgh Woollen Mills and sat in the shade until it was time to travel to Morebattle to collect the 'A' party some of which were suffering from the heat. We stopped in Hexham on the way home. Flowers: broad willowherb, green alkanet, meadowsweet, mimulus, ragwort and rosebay willowherb. Other: buzzard, red deer, stoat and yellow hammer birds.

11. 9/08/14 Blubberhouses - Ilkley 'A' Peter Gilliland 'B' Kathleen Gilliland

On a dry sunny day 47 members travelled to Yorkshire today, stopping for coffee and scones (paid for by the club) at the Millstones on the A59. The 'A' party, 19 in number set off on their walk from a layby next to Blubberhouses reservoir for a 9.5 mile linear walk to Ilkley. The coach continued to Bolton Abbey where 25 members set off for a 6.5 mile walk to Ilkley. The 'B' walk was a stretch of the Dales Way, a long distance walk from Ilkley to Bowness-in-Windermere. The start of the walk was a short stretch of riverside path alongside the River Wharfe then along a very busy narrow road before going through fields adjacent to the road. Everyone stopped to put on waterproofs as a quick sharp shower appeared from nowhere. It soon passed as we reached a friends quaker meeting house. We looked inside before having lunch in the grounds. We rejoined the river to follow field paths to Addingham, passing the parish church and admiring the fine houses along the route. We walked through a former mill which had been redeveloped to form a small hamlet then rejoined the riverside which we followed to Ilkley where unbeknown to us there was a continental market taking place. A nice way to fill in time while awaiting the return of the 'A' party. An evening

stop in Ripon tonight. Flowers: heather, ragwort and tormentil. Other: brambles, 3 herons, kingfisher and lords 'n' ladies berries.

12. 23/08/14 St Abbs Head - Eyemouth 'A' Tom Bell 'B' Gillian Walton

On a dry but windy and overcast day 51 members travelled to Scotland stopping for coffee at the Heighley Gate Garden Centre. It was a slow journey on the narrow road between Eyemouth and St Abbs Head. The coach parked behind a row of individual craft shops and cafe. 25 members set off on the 'A' walk going straight into the nature reserve for an undulating walk to the rocky coast. We stopped for lunch next to the lighthouse and found shelter from the wind behind a wall. Just as we were about to leave, the 'B' party (19 in number) appeared. The 'A' party continued on to St Abbs village where a cavalcade of 26 motorbikes were just leaving the village – quite a noisy event. Time was available to have a look around the new visitors centre and the harbour. The area is very popular for divers and the harbour was bustling with activity. A few members were able to chat with the harbour master while we regrouped before setting away towards the sandy beach of Coldingham Bay. Here we descended a lot of steps and walked across the beach to ascend steps to the top of the cliffs again. At the edge of a caravan park we admired a huge showman's vehicle. It was very big and very ornate. Not something you would see everyday. We visited the headland and viewed an old cannon but it was too cold to stop for tea so we carried on to find some shelter. We descended into Eyemouth where the Liftboat Institute was having a fundraising fair. Hot tea and cakes were being served. As we returned to the coach which was parked at the far end of the harbour, we stood and watched several seals being fed from the harbour walls. Quite an unusual sight to see the seals cavorting about. An evening stop in Morpeth tonight. Flowers: aster, bindweed, broad willowherb, convolvulus, devilsbit scabious, flax, greater knapweed, harebell, hawkweed, heather, ragwort, red campion, rest harrow, sea campion, silverweed, sow thistle, thrift, tormentil, water mint, yarrow and yellow vetchling. Other: brambles, elderberries, marram grass, pied wagtail and seals in Eyemouth harbour.

13. 6/09/14 Masham Circular 'A' Bill Sillitoe 'B' Kathleen Reavley

With a dry start to the day 39 members travelled to Masham stopping for coffee in Ripon. The rain started just after the 'A' walk (19 in number) set out passing the Black Sheep brewery and after going through a residential street we reached the track to Micklebury Farm. Field paths were followed, stopping for lunch in a grassy field where a flock of geese flew in formation overhead. Further field paths and a quiet country lane were followed to reach the Druid's Plantation. We followed the clarty woodland track to the Druid's Temple. At this point it was pouring with rain, some viewed the structures while others found shelter but it was too wet to stop for long. A small group of people were setting up a canopy over one of the structures. It looked like a wedding ceremony was going to take place here the following day. We retraced our steps to the entrance to the wood and passed High Knowle farm which looked like it offered accommodation for large groups and campers. There were a number of tepees in an adjacent field. We descended the field and crossed the Sole Beck then followed a stony walled track to reach Micklebury Farm and we retraced our steps to Masham. After a prolonged stop we travelled directly home. Flowers: evening primrose, harebell, honeysuckle and mint. Other: acorns, brambles, geese and haws.

14. 20/09/14 Rothbury Circular 'A' Eddie Ashburner 'B' Janet Heckels

A misty, drizzly start to the day as 40 members set out for Rothbury stopping for coffee at the Heighley Gate Garden Centre. The weather was dry and bright as the 'A' party left the coach park and followed a lane passing Whitton Tower before joining footpaths to Whittondean. Moorland tracks were crossed, stopping to admire ancient carvings on a large rock adjacent to the path. We felt the wind as we ascended Dove Crag and sought shelter on the top of Simonside amongst the rocky outcrops when we stopped for lunch. There was a steep descent off the tops and as we walked through woodland we kept standing aside to let fell runners pass. They had come from the agricultural show at Thropton. Later, we sat in a field for a fruit stop and the same runners passed us again, this time on their way back to Thropton. We walked through the hamlet of Great Tosson and followed stony tracks to reach the River Coquet which we crossed using a footbridge. Further on, we came across a herd of longhorn cattle with plenty of calves. We passed over the stile without any incidents but some of the cows were looking rather intimidating with their long curved horns. A pleasant riverside path was followed back to Rothbury. An evening stop in Morpeth. Flowers: broom, convolvulus, foxglove, harebell, honeysuckle, ivy leaved toadflax, red campion, st johns wort, tormentil, white campion and white dead nettle. Other: bilberries, bracket fungi, brambles, dead mans fingers fungi, haws, 2 mute swans and 4 cygnets, rabbit and rowan berries.

15. 4/10/14 Alston Circular 'A' Geoff Palmer 'B' Margaret Palmer

On a wet and cold morning, 45 members travelled to Alston stopping for coffee in Hexham. At Alston, the coach parked at the South Tynedale Railway station. 21 members set out on the 'A' walk while a little later, the 'B' party, 15 in number, set out to the road bridge crossing the River South Tyne. After crossing we turned immediately right to follow a fenced path between housing to reach open fields. As we approached Harbut Lodge lots of conkers were collected from the ground. Upon crossing the road we ascended the hillside to

reach open fell. Before long we descended into the valley bottom, crossing a raging torrent of a stream over a footbridge. Here we stopped for lunch sheltering from the chilly wind. As we ascended up another hillside, the ground was wet and muddy then quite marshy but we reached stony tracks and carried on to the site of Whitley Castle Roman fort. It was used by the Romans as an auxiliary fort to accommodate troops and due to its position in the South Tyne Valley it enabled the Romans to exert control over the local area and in particular over local lead production. We descended to the main road and on the other side crossed fields to reach firstly a bridge over the railway and then a bridge over the River South Tyne. After a short stretch of road walking we deviated into woodland just as a heavy shower of hailstones fell. The shower didn't last long and we crossed level fields to reach the railway track. We walked on a trackside path back to the station.

16. 18/10/14 Swainby Circular 'A' Tom Bell 'B' Pat Gardner & Janet Heckels

56 members travelled directly to Swainby and parked up for the day in the Black Horse pub's car park. It was dry, sunny and breezy as 23 members of the 'A' party set away. The 'B' party, 27 in number, set out shortly afterwards, going through the village to reach a stony track through woodland. We ascended firstly Hollin Hill and then Live Moor where we stopped for lunch. It was difficult to find shelter on the top but the fine views towards the coast and Teesside made up for the chilly wind. The walk descended on muddy tracks to reach a country lane leading to Whor Hill which involved another steep ascent but this time through woodland. Field paths were followed where we came across a horse on its own in a field. It was given lots of attention as members queued to cross a stile but the horse wasn't happy when the attention stopped and bit Margaret Hope on her back when she turned away. There was a little incident with one of our members taking ill for a time but she soon recovered and we continued on passing the ruins of Whorlton Castle before returning to Swainby. We all descended into the Black Horse for prebooked meals at £6.95 each. As the 'B' party was being served, the 'A' party returned, After an extended stay where everyone enjoyed their meals. We left at 5.30pm to travel directly home. A good day to finish the season. Flowers: convolvulus and honeysuckle. Other: beech mast, haws, holly berries, sloes and a yellow ladybird.