

ANNFIELD PLAIN & DISTRICT NATURALISTS' CLUB

WHAT WE SAW OR WHAT YOU MISSED 2016

1. 19/03/16 Knaresborough Circular 'A' Jack Armstrong 'B' Margaret Palmer

The day was cold and overcast as 56 members set out on the first walk of the season. After a coffee stop in Ripon, we continued on to Knaresborough where the coach remained for the rest of the day. 19 members set off on the 'A' walk, while after lunch 35 members did the 'B' walk admirably led by Margaret Palmer who volunteered on the day without doing a recce. The 'A' party went along the main street and deviated into the park passing the ruins of the castle with 2 ravens sitting on a nearby wall. These birds were on leads rather than wild birds. We descended through the park and followed a back street passing a farm with long horn cattle in the smelly yard. We crossed the road bridge over the river and picked up the Harrogate Round track. The grassy fields were very muddy in places which made crossing the stiles quite treacherous at times. We crossed a busy road and walked down a lane lined with wonderful pear blossom trees. This linked to Bilton Lane, a track between fields which we followed until the village of Old Bilton. Field paths took us to woodland alongside the River Nidd. It was pleasant walking through the woods, sometimes high above the river and eventually we reached Bilton Lane again. We followed field tracks back to Knaresborough and after a prolonged stop travelled directly home. Flowers: blackthorn, coltsfoot, dogs mercury, gorse, lesser celandine, opposite leaved golden saxifrage, pear blossom, snowdrop and wood anemone. Other: grey squirrel, holly berries, ivy berries, lambs, mallards, rabbits, 2 ravens, red kite and 3 robins.

2. 2/04/16 Little Salkeld Circular 'A' Ken Nevin 'B' Janet Heckels/Maria Regan

40 members set out on a very dull and damp morning. After a coffee stop in Barnard Castle in the rain, we continued along the A66 to Little Salkeld. The coach had to park on the roadside due to cars being parked in a lay by. 16 members set out along a path passing Salkeld Hall. This was the home of Samuel Lacy who in the eighteenth century, created the caves and who also tried to blow up the stone circle (both of which are seen later in the walk). The path came close to the Settle-Carlisle railway and then passed the derelict remains of an old gypsum mine. We walked through mature deciduous woodland with the mighty roar of the Riven Eden surging below. We spotted Long Meg viaduct which took four years to build with four of its seven pillars under water. The paths were very muddy as we made our way to Lacey's Caves. The five rooms of the caves, cut out of the soft sandstone, are connected by flaring arches. Legend has it that Samuel Lacy paid a man to live as a hermit in the caves but they may in fact have been used to store food and wine. An undulating walk on clarty paths through Tib Wood followed then field paths alongside the river to reach Eden Bridge. A short stretch of road walking followed to Kirkoswald, where a delightful cross consisting of daffodils was growing in the churchyard, a cheerful sight on this drizzly rainy day. We passed an unusual bell tower and then spotted amongst the trees the remains of the thirteenth century Kirkoswald Castle as we negotiated our way through a very muddy field while being watched by an inquisitive herd of cows on the other side of the fence.. Further field tracks were followed and we stopped for a break next to a pond while trying to gain shelter under overhanging tree branches. We walked through the churchyard of St Michael's at Addingham and observed the remains of a hammer-head cross opposite the main church door. After crossing fields we emerged on the site of Long Meg and her Daughters, a neolithic stone circle with nearly 70 stones, many of them fallen. Long Meg is a 12 ft high pillar of red sandstone with mysterious cup and ring marks. It stands apart from the large ring of massive stones, the daughters, composed of rhyolite, a kind of granite. We left the site via the farm access track with just a short walk back to Little Salkeld. Flowers: bluebell, butterbur, daffodil, dogs mercury, gorse, forget-me-not, harts tongue fern, larch flowers lesser celandine, opposite leaved golden saxifrage, snowdrop and wood anemone. Other: heron, lambs, mallards and oyster catchers.

3. 16/04/16 Grassington Circular 'A' Ken Armstrong 'B' Pat Gardner

54 members set out for the Yorkshire Dales travelling through sleet and hail showers. We stopped for coffee in Ripon. As we approached Grassington we could see huge marques in a field for a fell race day but fortunately their cars weren't parked in the National Parks car park. The weather was cool and dry as the 'A' party, 22 in number, set off walking up the main street to reach a walled track leading to grassy fields. Various wall stiles were crossed on the undulating

track and we stopped for lunch at Scar Cove sitting in sunshine with lovely views across the valley. We descended to the tiny picturesque hamlet of Conistone and ascended through Conistone Dib, a narrow dry gorge created by post glacial floodwater. It was a steep ascent over rocky outcrops and loose stones with a short scramble through Gurling Trough to reach an area of spectacular limestone scenery. After a fruit stop we headed back to Grassington following the Dales Way long distance trail. Being on the tops there was more of a wind chill factor and at one point quite a heavy shower of hail fell but it didn't last too long. We descended from the tops to emerge at the top of the main street in Grassington. Unfortunately all the cafes had closed by the time we returned. 29 members set out on the 'B' walk after lunch and followed the first part of the 'A' walk returning to Grassington on a lower path after climbing through Conistone Dib. On our journey home we spotted in a field a circle of sheep. A farmer had laid food on the ground. While the ewes were eating all of the lambs were together within the circle running around and playing together. Snow was lying on the higher ground as we travelled to Ripon but disappeared once we had descended to lower ground. Flowers: dog violet, lesser celandine, primrose and wild strawberry Other: curlews and lapwings.

4. 30/04/16 Alwinton Circular 'A' Adam Bent 'B' Peter Gilliland.

There was an early frost but the day was bright as 46 members travelled to Northumberland stopping for coffee at the Heighley Gate Garden Centre. Cheviot and the surrounding fells were capped with a covering of snow. The coach parked in the National Parks car park at Alwinton for the day. 18 members set out on the 'A' walk crossing a footbridge over the River Alwin and followed the stony track of Clennell Street to a stile to cross fields with ewes and lambs. We descended to the River Alwin again and recrossed then passed the front of Clennell Hall and followed a stony track to Biddlestone Chapel, built in 1820 on the remains of a 14th century fortified tower. It was originally attached to Biddlestone Hall, the home of the Selby family. The Hall was demolished in the 1960s and the Roman Catholic Chapel closed in 1992. It is now maintained by the Historic Chapels Trust. We had previously arranged for the chapel to be open for both parties today. The key was collected from a nearby house and everyone had plenty of time to look around. The 'A' party had lunch before setting away through the hamlet of Biddlestone and ascended a steep track to the remote farm of Singmoor. Beyond the field gate we reached the snow line. The snow was starting to melt and it was quite slippery in places. We circled around Cold Law and crossed the Biddlestone Burn, no footbridge this time. We crossed further open fell and descended to another remote farm called Puncherton. There was a steep descent and an immediate steep ascent to reach the derelict farm of Old Rookland. After another steep ascent on the open fell where we disturbed a curlew sitting on a nest containing 4 eggs we crossed fields and emerged on the track behind Clennell Hall and returned to Alwinton. The 'B' party did the first half of the 'A' walk then crossed fields to return to Alwinton but not before stopping for refreshments at Clennell Hall which I believe they all enjoyed. The 'B' party witnessed a local taking her Toulouse ducks and ducklings for a walk in the village, a different sight to end a walk! The evening stop was in Morpeth. The fare today was reduced to half price. Flowers: dog violet, dogs mercury, honesty, lesser celandine, opposite leaved golden saxifrage and wild strawberry. Other: curlews, curlew's nest with 4 eggs, goldfinch, heron, lizard, pheasant, rabbits, red squirrel, skylarks and Toulouse ducks with ducklings.

5. 14/05/16 Reeth Circular 'A' Geoff Palmer 'B' Margaret Palmer

It was dry but very cold as 52 members travelled to Reeth stopping for coffee in Richmond. The coach parked outside the village school up a hill away from the centre of Reeth. The 'A' party set away by descending into the village and taking a path through houses to reach the River Swale which we crossed via a swing bridge. Then the steady climb started onto Harkerside Hill. It got steeper as we neared the top and finally stopped for lunch on the top of High Harker Hill. A level walk across the tops followed, passing the remains of various mining works. We descended on an extremely rocky track where the pace was very slow to ensure that no one injured themselves. We reached Low House Farm and followed a pleasant countryside lane lined with blackthorn blossom to Low Whit where we crossed the river via the road bridge. After a short stretch of road walking we reached a riverside path which was followed back to Reeth. Flowers: blackthorn, bluebell, butterbur, crosswort, dog violet, dogs mercury, forget-me-not, garlic mustard, greater stitchwort, herb robert, lesser celandine, marsh marigold, primrose, purple orchid, ramson, red campion, sweet cicely, wild pansy, wild strawberry and wood sorrel. Other: duckings, 2 geese,

goldfinch, heard cuckoo, mallards, oyster catchers, pheasants and chicks, rabbits, tadpoles and thrush.

6. 28/05/16 Danby High Moor to Egton 'A' Eddie Ashburner 'B' Pat Gardner

Another dry and cold day saw 42 members travel to the North York Moors stopping for coffee in Guisborough. On the top of the moors near Danby Head, 18 members alighted the coach for the start of the 'A' walk. Moorland tracks were followed over Glaisdale Moor. We picked up a wide stony track on Glaisdale Rigg and stopped to watch several grouse crossing the track with lots of baby chicks. We found a comfortable seat in the heather for lunch and saw more grouse and chicks on the track. We descended to the village of Glaisdale and enjoyed refreshments in a cafe within a shed in a garden. At the far end of Glaisdale we stood and admired the Beggars Bridge which was built by Thomas Ferris in 1619. Ferris was a poor man who hoped to wed the daughter of a wealthy local squire. In order to win her hand, he planned to set sail from Whitby to make his fortune. On the night that he left, the River Esk was swollen with rainfall and he was unable to make a last visit to his intended. He eventually returned from his travels a rich man and, after marrying the squire's daughter built Beggars Bridge so that no other lovers would be separated as they were. We didn't cross this bridge but followed paths through East Arnecliff Wood to reach the hamlet of Egton Bridge, the end of the walk. The 'A' party had returned before the 19 members of the 'B' party, so some of us viewed the local Roman Catholic Church of St Hedda. It is a large and beautiful church and it contains the relics of Father Nicholas Postgate who had been born in the village but became a martyr because in 1679 he was executed for continuing to practice his faith. The 'B' party were late getting back due to the confusion of the route that the coach had to take after dropping off the 'A' party at Danby Head. The evening stop was in Guisborough. Flowers: black medick, bluebell, bugle, claytonia, cotton grass, dog violet, eyebright, flowering rush, forget-me-not, germander speedwell, gorse, greater stitchwort, green alkanet, harts tongue fern, hawthorn blossom, herb bennet, herb robert, milkwort, pignut, primrose, ramson, red campion, spearwort, tormentil, tufted vetch, welsh poppy, wild strawberry, wood sorrel and yellow pimpernel.

7. 11/06/16 North Berwick to Archerfield 'A' Peter Gilliland 'B' Kathleen Gilliland

On a foggy damp morning 56 members set out for a long journey to North Berwick stopping for coffee in Alnwick. There were one or two rain showers and plenty of mist especially when we crossed the border into Scotland. However, the day kept dry while both groups did their walks. At 11.45 am 23 members alighted the coach to do a 10 mile linear walk starting with the ascent of North Berwick Law which was shrouded in mist. The coach travelled on to Archerfield (near Gullane) and parked up for the rest of the day in the walled garden's visitors car park. After lunch, 28 members set out on the 'B' walk following the John Muir Way on a track through the estate to the village of Dirleton. We passed through the village to reach a wide track through fields and then woodland to reach the beach at Yellow Craig. Visibility was much better as we stood and viewed 3 of the islands in the Firth of Forth – Craigh Leigh, Lamb and Fidra as well as the Bass Rock in the distance. As it was low tide we walked along the sands and over the rocky outcrops. Plenty of sea shells were collected. We deviated into the dunes to avoid a particularly rough area of rocks and followed an undulating sandy path passing a very expensive looking house with magnificent sea views and beautiful gardens. To descend back onto the beach everyone had to negotiate a tricky descent using a rope hand rail. With able assistance from Keith Bradbury everyone managed to reach the beach safely. We sat on the rocks and enjoyed a fruit stop and the view before continuing on. The rocks in this area were different from anything we had seen earlier. They had lovely rich terracotta tones with patterns of fine white lines, most unusual. We left the beach behind and crossed the Archerfield golf course, keeping close to the perimeter path which meandered over the course and through woodland to return to Archerfield. The walled garden housed a cafe, bar, gift and food shops and toilet facilities. The bar area had been reserved for our group and we all enjoyed refreshments and cakes in a rather upmarket environment. The staff were extremely attentive and the food was first class. The 'A' party returned in time to enjoy refreshments before the coach left at 5.15 pm stopping en route in Morpeth. Flowers: birdsfoot trefoil, bittersweet, black medick, early purple orchid, elderflower, forget-me-not, hawthorn blossom, lupin, mignonette, red campion, red clover, red poppy, vipers bugloss and welsh poppy.

8. 25/06/16 Stainforth Circular 'A' Bill Sillitoe 'B' Gary O'Hagan

It was a warm and dry day as 53 members travelled to Stainforth near Settle. Instead of the usual coffee stop in Ripon the club treated its members to coffee and scones at the Millstones on the A59. The coach managed to park in the village car park at Stainforth which was quite surprising as we thought it would be busy on this lovely sunny day. The 'A' party, 20 in number, set out immediately while after lunch the 'B' party, 29 in number, set out by going through an underpass situated in a corner of the car park. We followed a track then crossed a bridge over the River Ribble and another bridge over the Settle-Carlisle railway and walked to the hamlet of Little Stainforth. There was quite a stiff climb over grassy fields above Smearsett Scar to reach a farm at Feizor. This farm had a cafe and everyone enjoyed refreshments or ice lollies sitting on the patio enjoying the sunshine. The return route involved another ascent with limestone outcrops in the fields. We eventually descended to the village of Stackhouse. At this point the 'A' party appeared and both groups walked alongside the River Ribble back to Stainforth. The evening stop was in Ripon. Flowers: birdsfoot trefoil, elderflower, eyebright, mignonette, oxeye daisy, red campion, rock rose, thyme and tormentil.

9. 9/07/16 Haltwhistle to Gilsland 'A' Eddie Ashburner 'B' Pat Gardner

48 members travelled directly to Haltwhistle where there was time for coffee before the walks commenced. We decided not to stop in Hexham due to the railway bridge being closed for renovations and the traffic chaos it was causing at busy times. It was dull and overcast as 17 members set out on the 'A' walk following the Haltwhistle Burn upstream through lush woods and dramatic scenery of the Burn Gorge. We reached the military road and crossed the bridge then entered a rather wet clarty field which brought us out at the Cawfield picnic site with its huge lake that was once part of a quarry. There were lots of frogs in the water. After a toilet stop we continued along the Hadrian's Wall trail to the remains of a Roman fort, now only a grassy field but with the only remaining original Roman altar on the Wall which had a selection of coins on its top. This was followed by a steady walk on grassy tracks with ups and downs. We stopped for lunch then continued on to Walltown picnic site and information centre. While enjoying refreshments there was a sudden sharp, short shower of rain and we all found shelter under the shop canopy. (The 'B' party weren't so lucky.) We left the trail and followed field tracks to Gilsland passing on the way a group of lads one of which was wearing nothing more than underpants and his boots. Quite a sight on this cool, chilly afternoon. There was time in Gilsland for refreshments before the coach arrived. The evening stop was in Hexham. Flowers: birdsfoot trefoil, broad leaved marsh orchid, broom, bugle, chickweed, red clover, white clover, early purple orchid, eyebright, foxglove, germander speedwell, harebell, hedge woundwort, hemp agrimony, meadow cranesbill, meadowsweet, mignonette, milkwort, red campion, rest harrow, rock rose, rosebay willowherb, silverweed, thyme, tormentil, tufted vetch and yellow archangel.

10. 23/07/16 Away Day to Otley 'A' Peter Gilliland

On a dry and warm day 41 members chose to support the club's away day. We travelled directly to the market town of Otley. After coffee, 17 members set out on a shorter walk than usual going through the town and crossing fields before enduring a steep climb diagonally across a field and fighting our way through tall strands of bracken to reach the Chevin Forest Park. This is situated on a north facing cliff or escarpment which rises steeply to a height of 280 metres above sea level and offers magnificent views of the Wharfe Valley. Lunch was spent on a rocky outcrop with wonderful views ahead of us. Then the walk continued through the woodland on wide tracks before eventually descending on a steep stepped path to emerge in the town centre of Otley. Non walkers spent the day either in the town or wandering along the riverside paths. We all travelled to the Millstones situated on the A59 for an excellent carvery meal before travelling directly home. This was the second outing of the season where the fare was reduced to half price.

11. 6/08/16 Westruther Circular (near Duns) 'A' Peter Gilliland 'B' Kathleen Gilliland

It was dry and warm as 54 set out today for the Scottish Borders. We stopped for coffee at the Jedburgh Woollen Mills then continued on the A68 to Lauder where the road was closed due to an accident but fortunately for us the side road was where we needed to turn off anyway. The 'A' party, 21 in number, were dropped off just past Westruther then the coach travelled to Duns where it parked in the primary school car park for the afternoon. After lunch 29 members set out on the 'B' walk along the road into Duns market square spotting a hedgehog in the roadside. We cut through side streets to reach the North Lodge Archway to the Duns Castle estate. We could

see the activities of the Duns Show across the fields. We followed the estate road to a cairn erected to John Duns Scotus who was one of the most influential theologians and philosophers of the middle ages. The word 'dunce' comes from his name. We followed a track to Hen Poo Loch where the ducks thought they were going to be fed and congregated at the waters' edge. We passed through woodland to reach the mill dam then followed some clarty paths before meandering through the mixed woodland of Castle Wood. The welcome shade kept the temperature down on this warm sunny day. Further estate tracks were followed between open fields where we had clear views of Duns Castle which was erected in the 14th century by King Robert the Bruce's nephew, the Earl of Moray and has been the seat of the Hay family since 1696. Each generation of the family has enlarged and embellished the original tower transforming it into the castle we see today. We returned to the coach and then had a wander into town where a few visited the Jim Clark museum. The coach returned to Westruther to pick up the 'A' party from the Old Thistle pub where arrangements had been made to have it opened early (4pm instead of the usual 6pm). The 'A' walk had followed farm tracks to reach the Southern Upland Way and walked to Twin Law where 2 enormous stone cairns dominate the moorland. They then scrambled through a mature evergreen forest to pick up a track leading back to Westruther. Flowers: cotton grass, eyebright, green alkanet, harebell, honeysuckle, meadowsweet, milkwort, nettle leaved bellflower, red campion, rosebay willowherb, self heal, tormentil and woundwort. Other: bilberries, buzzard, Canada geese, hedgehog, raspberries and tiny frogs.

12. 20/08/16 Glenridding Circular 'A' David Palmer 'B' George Gibson

With a dreadful weather forecast of persistent heavy rain in the Lake District today, 43 members (rather than the 49 that had originally booked) travelled westwards meeting the rain at 10 am. We were going to stop for coffee at the Haughton Garden Centre but discovered that a classic car rally was meeting there between 10 and 11 am with 185 people booked in. The car park was crowded with classic cars when we arrived so we drove straight out and stopped at the Seathwaite motorway services which wasn't half as nice. By the time we reached Glenridding the rain was bouncing off the ground but this didn't deter 11 hardy members for a stiff climb to Cats-y-Cam which is close to the top of Helvellyn. After lunch, 19 members set out on the 'B' walk but the party soon dropped to 17, then 15 and later on to 14. Meanwhile several others caught a service bus to Windermere for the afternoon. The 'B' walk followed a lakeside path with its ups and downs over slippery rocks and passing through woodland. At one point, a tree had a waterfall cascading down its trunk. The fell tops were shrouded in mist but we did spot a lone swimmer in the choppy waters of Ullswater. He had a bright orange floater attached to him and a single canoeist was following close by, I think he was training before he attempted a cross channel swim. Further on there was a group of canoeists being given some tuition but they were safely tucked behind a rocky outcrop offering some protection. The path we were following crossed to the opposite side of the road alongside fields of lakeland sheep. We continued on to Aira Force and climbed to a bridge to marvel at the cascade of water, the best time to see the waterfall with all this rain. As we retraced our route back to Glenridding the rain became heavier and we could see the main road was flooding in places. The stream that runs adjacent to the car park in Glenridding was a raging torrent with the water so strong that it was moving huge boulders along its path. The noise sounded like thunder. The Environment Agency were monitoring the situation after the devastating floods of last winter. After changing into dry clothes we found cafes for a warm drink and cake. The 'A' party returned as wet as the 'B' party as there was no let up in the rain except when we left just after 5 pm when it stopped for a short time and the sun even showed its face. We returned home via the A66 and stopped in Barnard Castle. Flowers: devilsbit scabious, harebell, ragwort, tormentil. Other: mushroom, rowan berries.

13. 3/09/16 Askrigg Circular 'A' Bill Sillitoe 'B' Gary O'Hagan

With another weather forecast of continuous rain, 47 members set out for the Yorkshire Dales stopping for coffee in Richmond. As expected, upon arrival in the pretty village of Askrigg it was raining and it didn't stop for the rest of the day. Brian, our coach driver managed a tight manoeuvre to turn the coach around in an industrial unit's yard at the bottom of the village. 11 members set out on the 'A' walk while after lunch 22 members did the 'B' walk. The coach travelled to Hawes for the afternoon with 14 members who opted not to walk today and visited the Wensleydale cheese factory instead. The 'B' walk followed very wet field paths and lanes and to avoid stepping stones over the River Ure we crossed the river on a road bridge at Worton. After a

toilet stop in Bainbridge we continued on passing Yoredale House hotel and ascended through fields negotiating slippery stone stiles all of which had highly strung springs attached to their stile gates. We reached Mill Gill wood and crossed the stream over a high footbridge with huge rocks and boulders below us. We walked through a field with cows and calves before reaching the outskirts of Askrigg. We walked through a small housing estate to emerge next to the village church. Fortunately there were 2 cafes and 3 public houses to frequent which enabled everyone to escape from the rain until the coach returned from Hawes. The 'A' party returned earlier than expected which gave them time to enjoy refreshments and dry out before travelling home after an evening stop in Richmond. Flowers: Himalayan balsam.

14. 17/09/16 North Middleton to Wooler 'A' Ken Armstong 'B' Janet Heckels/Maria Regan

37 members set out on a dry and warm day to Northumberland stopping for coffee at the Heighley Gate Garden Centre. At North Middleton 18 members set out on the 'A' walk while after lunch 18 members set out on the 'B' walk. Both walks were linear finishing in Wooler. The 'A' walk followed a minor road to Coldgate Mill then crossed the Carey Burn for a walk through Happy Valley, a level grassed area surrounded by hills. At the next bridge we endured a steep ascent on stony tracks past Steely Crag where we stopped for lunch before continuing on to Broadstruther, an isolated cottage. We descended across the fell to reach the Carey Burn again. While we sat and enjoyed a fruit stop in glorious sunshine we spied a couple of crickets in the grass next to where we were sitting. We crossed Wooler Common and passed through woodland with some clarty paths before stopping for tea on Horsdon Hill then descended into Wooler. After a prolonged stop we travelled directly home. Flowers: foxglove, gorse, harebell, heather, herb robert, ragged robin, rosebay willowherb, st. johns wort, tormentil and water mint. Other: brambles and 2 grasshoppers.

15. 1/10/16 Belford Circular 'A' Tom Bell 'B' Lynne Rippon (report by Jennifer Bell)

It was dry and sunny as 50 members set out for another trip to Northumberland. The coffee stop was at the Heighley Gate Garden Centre and then the coach continued on to Belford where the 'A' walk set away following the farm road past West Hall Farm through to Craggyhall Farm to pass through mixed woodlands of Scots pine and beech. After leaving the woods the path followed a field path rising to give views over to Holy Island highlighted by bright sunlight and clear blue skies where we stopped for lunch. From here the walk followed a quiet country road from Detchant to Grey Mare Farm and on to open common with views back over Bamburgh Castle and the Farne Islands. The walk continued through Kyloe Woods past a small tarn under Raven Crag, a sandstone face, then followed a green track down to Holburn with clear views of the Cheviots. From Holburn the track turned left following a wall until it again entered woodland leading to St Cuthbert's Cave where we stopped for an early tea. The walk continued through a plantation passing large sandstone outcrops on the way eventually reaching a farm road to pass Dick's Old Walls and down to Swinehoe Farm. The walk continued to Juniper Hill then down into Belford past West Hall Farm which was originally the moated Castrum de Beleford. The evening stop was in Belford. Flowers: gorse and harebells. Other: buzzards, brambles, hawthorn berries and rabbits.

16. 15/10/16 Barnard Castle Circular 'A' Geoff Palmer 'B' Margaret Palmer

It was a wet and misty start for the last walk of the season as 42 members travelled the short distance to Barnard Castle. After coffee, and just before the 'A' walk started the rain stopped. The 'A' party set away passing the entrance to the now ruinous castle and descended to the River Tees which we crossed on the road bridge. After a short distance of road walking we picked up a track leading us through a caravan park then fields to Egglestone Abbey. Here we admired the architecture and the views before continuing on to join a riverside path through woodland. The path was covered with leaves in wonderful shades of yellows, reds and browns. We crossed a bridge at the Meeting of the Waters where the River Greta flows into the River Tees. Field tracks were followed to the village of Whorlton which we reached by crossing the River Tees on a suspension bridge. After lunch sitting on a circular seat around a tree on the village green, we returned to the river to walk back to Barnard Castle on the north side. This path was high above the river through fields with one field having been ploughed right to the field edge. Everyone had to scrape the mud from their boots after crossing that particular field. We descended a flight of steps in the woodland to view the Meeting of the Waters again. This view being made famous by

the artist JMW Turner. After going through woodland we crossed the main road next to Abbey Bridge and followed field paths back to Barnard Castle where after a prolonged stop we travelled directly home. For the third time this season the fare was reduced, not by half but still a slight saving. A good day to end the season.