

STROLLERS

June – July 2023 Newsletter

Finningley - Thursday 27th April 2023

This month's walk took us around an area of Finningley.

Everyone met at the car park of The Harvey Arms. It was a good turnout of over twenty strollers and the weather, although fresh, stayed fine.

We started off at a good saunter, passing through the churchyard and by the Commonwealth graves to a path passing between the houses and the Airport boundary, a nice quiet green area. This path led onto Old Bawtry Road where we continued on to the end where the road has been closed and is now grown over. From this vantage point one can see the whole of the airport, now very quiet and completely empty except for the Vulcan, which still has a place there for the time being.

The walk then took us through the woods, the peace being broken by the new aggregate works and also the Motocross bikes racing around their course. The path eventually led us onto fields where we walked around before arriving back on Old Bawtry Road and returning to the Harvey Arms.

There, for those who wanted, we were fed and watered. Good food and long chats brought the stroll to a good finish.

Peter Hattam



Barnburgh - Thursday 23rd March 2023

The u3a Strollers walk in March was to Barnburgh Crag which is an outcrop of magnesium limestone. On a cool but fine morning, 19 strollers set off from the Crown Inn car park and crossed over the main road to a country lane. Our route climbed steadily along this quiet lane until we reached the Barnburgh Crag. We were then rewarded with clear views across the Dearne Valley and beyond. Following along a leafy path we looked closely at the sections of rock to find mysterious faces that had been carved into the rock face. We then descended down a muddy lane, where the weather changed dramatically with a heavy downpour of rain. We were now a little wet as we headed back into the village of Barnburgh but then all enjoyed an excellent lunch at the Crown Inn. Jackie and the team looked after us exceptionally well even opening the Crown for us to use their facilities before starting the walk.

Sue Stenton, Sue Coote and Joy Belk



February 2023

There was a good turnout of 21 of the Strollers group which met at Yorkshire Caravans of Bawtry for the February walk. We set off walking along Bawtry Road and then turned into Kings Wood and keeping the railway line to our right made our way to the Mosaic Trust land at Austerfield, which is a former sand quarry and maintained as a nature reserve. It was dry underfoot and the weather turned out to be sunny and bright. Eventually we made our way back to Yorkshire Caravans where we had lunch in The Classic Cafe.

Cynthia Morris



January 2023

The January stroll led by John Weston, was a circular walk from the Cheswold, via Bessacarr and then around the Lakeside lake back to the Cheswold. On the way we met a man feeding the cows and saw a very young calf. Afterwards the group enjoyed a welcome meal at the Cheswold.

B Thompson



February – March 2023 Newsletter

December 2022

On a cloudy day in December the Strollers set out from the Newton Arms, walked up Sprotbrough Road and turned right onto the Transpennine Trail. Turning left we made our way alongside Newlands Park and then past the Lower and Middle Fish Ponds at Cusworth Park. After going around the Upper Fish Pond we retraced our steps back to the Newton Arms for a welcome Christmas lunch.

Strollers walks usually take place on the fourth Thursday of each month but members agreed to defer the November meeting until the beginning of December so as to be able to choose a meal from the new Christmas menu. With crackers pulled and party hats on, the atmosphere was congenial and the food delicious. A good time was had by all. Thanks Wendy, for suggesting the change of date.

B Thompson



December 2022 – January 2023 Newsletter

On 27th October an intrepid group of 9 strollers set off from the Angel Inn at Blyth in pouring rain. The village of Blyth boasts a Norman church founded in 1088 as part of a monastery and the impressive set of entrance gates to the now demolished Blyth Hall.

Due to flooding of the river Ryton the group had to brave the spray from lorries on Sheffield Road but soon arrived at a small farm track which took them up to a wooded area. At this point the rain stopped and in the warm wind the walk became very pleasant.

After crossing an agricultural field the strollers arrived at Hodsock Priory, a country estate once visited by Henry VIII. Here they stopped for photographs and to admire a field of horses.

Setting off again they crossed Worksop Road and continued on a path across Moore's potato farm arriving back in Blyth, passing the ancient leper hospital. An excellent lunch was enjoyed at the Angel Inn and the strollers were full of praise for landlord Alan and his staff.

Thank you to all the strollers who braved the rain. It was well worth it.

Julia Toft



July Walk round Sandall Beat Wood

This is a traditional Strollers summer walk – meet at the Sportsman Pub on Armthorpe Road and walk around Sandal Beat in the cool shade of the trees. There was a request to look at the new children's playground after the fire that destroyed the previous version. Happily our walk down a central avenue took us straight to the shiny new playground. Metal this time to thwart the arsonists.

We would normally cross the railway via a footbridge to allow us to cover more ground but on this particular day the footbridge was closed for repairs so we had to improvise!

If you have ever looked at a map of the wood it is laid out on a grid so we could have just crisscrossed the area until it was time to go to the pub – but we decided on an adventure instead.... We headed towards the racecourse wondering if we could add an additional loop there. The ground was a bit uneven and not everyone carried on but what we discovered was a field of barley – see the photo. Having skirted the southern edge we then took to the tractor tracks to make our way along two other sides of the field and back into the wood. Who knew there was a field of barley planted right in the centre of Doncaster? It certainly surprised me! We then made our way back through the wood to Armthorpe Road and the pub.

The pub staff were very welcoming and most members stayed for something to eat. Another enjoyable Strollers walk.

Wendy Hattrell



23rd June 2022

Forecasters predicted temperatures in the high 20s for our Thursday walk and it was certainly a hot one!

The Strollers met up in Arksey village. All 18 of us set off led by Jim Sambrooks, ably assisted by Ken Bradbury, to explore the lanes and pathways around Arksey and Almholme. We began opposite All Saints Church which stood proud in the sunshine ... a mere nine hundred years old and a Grade 1 listed building.

The route took us all along Church Lane and Ings Lane to the tracks leading through the lovely rural countryside. There was not much in the way of a breeze to stir the crops which stretched field after field.

We stopped for water breaks and photo ops under leafy spreading trees. The long farm track alongside Almholme Lane took us into the shade of the hedgerows.

Wending our way past Wittsend Park back into the village we were hot, thirsty and most grateful to arrive back at The Plough for refreshments and a spot of lunch.

Many thanks to the landlady who opened specially early just for us and for a lovely summer's walk.

Chris Allcock



June – July 2022

Walk to Barnburgh - Thursday 24th March 2022

On 24th March 2022 the Stollers met at the Crown Inn at Barnburgh. On a lovely bright, sunny warm morning 19 people walked through the village and passed the Old Coach and Horses pub which is a Grade 2 listed building. At the end of the road we turned left and looked at the Pinfold with views across the Dearne Valley. This is where we took the photo. We then followed the bridle way track off to the right and uphill to the top. We then followed the path that led into the woods. On our left was Barnburgh Cragg, an outcrop of magnesium limestone and where strange faces were seen in the carved stone. At the end of the Cragg (after admiring the views of South Yorkshire) we briefly joined the main road before turning onto a track which led us back to the Crown for an enjoyable lunch. 18 people stayed for lunch. Jackie and the team looked after us exceptionally well, even opening the Crown to use their facilities before starting the walk.

Sue Stenton, Sue Coote & Joy Belk



Surviving Hail, Wind, Cold and Sun!

If the hail had started at 9 a.m. instead of 11a.m. my guess is the numbers on the Strollers walk at Sprotbrough would have been greatly reduced! About 30 of us met at the Newton and, ably led by Ken Bradbury, we set off to walk part of the Trans Pennine Way to Cusworth Park. It was cold and snow had been forecast. We didn't have snow, but instead we got hail – and it was hail that hurt!

Cusworth Hall was looking magnificent and the sun did come out, briefly. A friendly swan came to greet us as we congregated for the customary photo. We then retraced our steps back to the Newton. The pub were offering a carvery – beef, pork, gammon or a pie with all the trimmings of course. Well worth the £8.50 they charged. Jim Sambrooks was only having a small portion as he was eating out that evening – it was the largest small portion I've ever seen! How did you get on in the evening Jim? Thank you Ken for the organisation and the last minute rearrangement as the proposed walk along the river bank was off because of flooding – something for the summer months instead.

Wendy Hattrell





November - Walk Round Tickhill

It was a bright sunny day when we set off to visit the Tickhill Alpacas. Walking to the west from the centre of Tickhill we passed the newly restored church and continued walking out of the village under a disused mineral railway and turned left down an unmade road. About a mile out of Tickhill we came to the farm where Tickhill Alpacas reside. There is quite a large herd – they are available for trekking or you can stay on their glamping site. We climbed up the track to the side of the field to get closer to the alpacas – who soon lost interest in us!

Continuing on round a field edge we rejoined the road we had left a short while before. As we had time to spare we diverted across the A631 to catch a glimpse of the Friary before walking through Lindrick past the Mill Pond and the Castle and returning to the car park where we started. Some of us then went to Roccos for an Italian lunch. A very enjoyable morning with plenty of time to chat and enjoy the fine weather.

The next Strollers walk is at Lakeside – as is traditional for January.

Wendy Hattrell



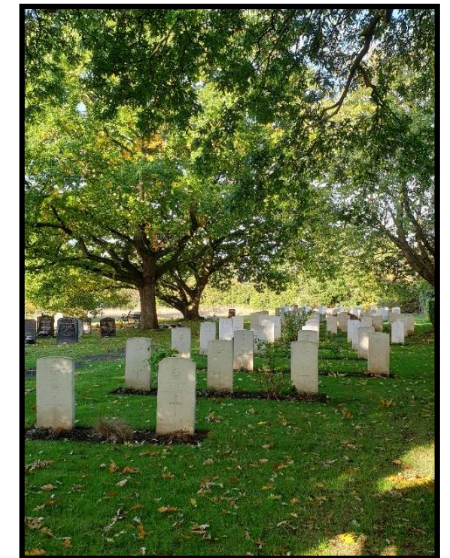
September

The Strollers met at 10 a.m. on Thursday 23rd September 2021 in the Harvey Arms car park in the pretty little village of Finningley. Kevin the chef kindly opened the pub early so that we could all pre-order and pay for our lunch.

Seventeen members met for the walk and it was on a bright sunny morning. We left the Harvey Arms at 10.30 a.m. and headed through the grounds of St Oswald's Church, which is a Grade 1 listed building. We then made a stop at the Commonwealth War Graves which is just behind the church. A member of the group was interested to see if she could locate an Australian war grave which she found and photographed. We proceeded along the lane and then up the main road towards Blaxton going over the level crossing. Turning left we went down Back Lane crossing the main road and then across the fields, seeing some alpacas on the way. We walked through an ancient wood which had been the site of a motte and bailey castle. Out of the wood, we walked down the side of a maize field and then over the main road into a small housing estate before crossing the road which led to Westwoodside. We continued into another small wood before arriving at the bulb field which we walked around.

We then arrived back at Finningley in time for a very enjoyable lunch which was waiting for us at the Harvey Arms. Seventeen people stayed for lunch. As the walk was so varied it was suggested by some members that we could do the walk again in the future. It was a very enjoyable morning.

Sue, Sue & Joy



August

I joined U3A in March 2019 the week before Lockdown. All activities moved to Zoom only, meeting other members virtually online when I joined their groups.

On Thursday 26th August I attended my first face to face meeting with Doncaster Strollers at Highfield Country Park. We met at 10.00 a.m. for a 10.30 a.m. start. The group was led by Jim who had walked this route previously. There were a few new people who hadn't been before, and we were all welcomed warmly and introduced to the others. I think we had about 26 people. I was surprised at how large the group was. Orders were taken for those who would be staying for lunch on our return to ensure we would be suitably refreshed afterwards. I was concerned that I would hold up the group as I use a rollator to get about but needn't have worried. There were a few rough patches but nothing I couldn't handle. We ambled along at a steady pace getting to know each other as we walked. Mike, Jane, and a couple of others stayed as rear guard to ensure we didn't lose anyone along the way and to offer support if needed.

The weather was kind. It was a good day for a stroll. Meeting like minded people in a group setting especially when communing with nature certainly lifts your spirits. You focus on what you're doing rather than what you can't do if you're mobility impaired. Lunch was lovely, giving everyone the opportunity to chat and share a variety of other interests they had. It was a lovely morning, well planned and organised and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Yvonne McGowan



February

Despite all the rain and the cold winds that we had experienced recently, we were again very lucky with the weather for our February walk. We met at the Park Club and pre ordered our lunches before setting off.

We had a group of 26 strollers with some new and welcome faces and set off to walk along the rear of Highfields lake where the fishing landings were still under water from the floods last Autumn. At the bottom of Highfields we crossed the main road and walked towards the Park and Ride turning left to go carefully along a muddy track towards Doncaster Greenway.

As we approached the end of the track, Dave was able to point out what we believe to be the site of the motte and bailey castle that stood there from the 11th century and is recorded in the Domesday Book and makes sense of why that area is called Castlehills.

We then turned along the Greenway and came to a bench, that sadly has been vandalised with paint, commemorating the steam train Flying Scotsman with a model of the train built underneath. What a shame this is where no one sees it as it is a fine bench and could (should) be displayed in a better place. A little further on we needed our wellies as the path disappeared completely under water. For whatever reason, the men decided not to be gentlemen and piggyback the ladies through the water. Good job we are tough! We then came to what could be described as a modern, cast iron totem pole erected by the cycling group and depicting Doncaster through the ages and showing fossils, coalmining, the railways ropemaking and other Doncaster industries. We were very pleased to see this had not been defaced. It was then only a 10 minute stroll back to the Park Club and a freshly cooked lunch which we all enjoyed.

Dave & Pat Burton



January 2019

After the Christmas break we met for the first time this year at the Cheswold for a walk through the new housing estate, on into the back of Bessacarr and back towards Lakeside and round the lake.

The sun soon came out and with four new "strollers" we set off to walk off the mince pies and Christmas pudding. There was plenty of chatting as we had last met in November and, as this was a very gentle, flat walk, everyone enjoyed it.

There were plenty of people, like us, walking round the lake enjoying the Springlike sunshine. We spotted two cormorants as well as a multitude of ducks and some swans, but what was amazing, we spotted daffodils that were bursting and ready to open!

On our return to the Cheswold, the tables were reserved for us and very quickly our well earned lunches arrived, tasty and piping hot. So a good start to 2020.

Dave & Pat Burton



November 2019

After the wettest November for many years our last walk of 2019 could have been a bit tricky. It was a damp start but the 'brave strollers' set off through the leaves and trees of Kirk Sandall and Barnby Dun then alongside the very full canal to the old St. Oswald's Church where we paused for our photo call. We had to make a detour to avoid a flooded lane but got back for lunch at the Glasshouse just before the heavy rain arrived in the afternoon.

Thank you to Pat and Dave for a great year of walks and we will be back to do it all again in 2020.

Allen Whittaker



After several days of endless rain, again we were lucky and the day dawned fine. Austerfield was a new destination for us with a walk that was led by Martin and Jackie who walk this area regularly with their great dog, George.

We were walking in the old sand quarries so the ground was fairly dry and the trees were displaying their beautiful autumn colours. If we had been knowledgeable about fungi we could have had a feast. Never have we seen so many different varieties, and so many of them, different colours, shapes and sizes, seemed to be sprouting round every tree. The most striking one was bright red with tiny white spots and seemed to have only just emerged as it still had soil clinging to it. Needless to say, with our combined lack of knowledge we looked, admired but didn't touch.

Everyone enjoyed the walk and we made it back to the start just as the weather began to change so it was into our cars and off to The Ship at Bawtry where we were made very welcome, had a menu to suit everyone and the tasty and very generous portions of food came quickly to our reserved tables.

Pat Burton

An earlier Strollers walk via the Yorkshire Wildlife Park.



July

On what was forecast to be the hottest day of the year so far, fifteen intrepid strollers met to walk through Sandall Beat Woods and Cantley Park. Everyone arrived suitably dressed with a varied display of sunhats, worn by both the ladies and the lads, and all carrying bottles of what appeared to be water, could have been G&T, who knows?

As it was so hot Dave sensibly decided to omit the Cantley Park section of the walk as there was no shade. So we set off into the woods. It was lovely. The trees gave us shade and the sun filtered through the overhead branches highlighting all the different shades of green. We even saw three squirrels. As we were walking in the far side of the wood we practically had it to ourselves. It was very tranquil but with a noticeable lack of birdsong, perhaps they too were resting in the heat.

When we reached the Information centre and playpark we were delighted to see an ice-cream van and I wish to stress no children were harmed in the rush to purchase ice-creams which provided a welcome break and were very much enjoyed. With more of a stride in our steps we then continued our walk and returned to The Sportsman for an enjoyable lunch and more cool drinks.



August

WE DIDN'T TAKE MACHETES

On another pleasant day we met up in Arksey and were pleased to see three new "strollers". Off we set on a new walk. All went well and the directions were clear, along well defined bridleways and paths. That is, until we came to what should have been the prettiest part of the walk, and it was when we checked it earlier this year! Oh dear me, we really did need machetes. It was like a jungle but without the animals. The path was completely overgrown with brambles, nettles and overhanging branches but we bravely pushed through and as one stroller said, "If we get stranded the blackberries are plentiful and delicious".

Fortunately a local guy who was crow shooting for the farmer came to our rescue and said the farmer would not mind if we walked along the edge of the field which would take us back to the bridle path. This we did and so we were able to complete our "stroll" and make it back to 'The Tea Pot' in time for our lunch. It was decided it was to be treated as an adventure, and it was certainly an eye opener for our new companions who we hope will join us next time for a less dramatic walk.

Pat and Dave Burton



August – September 2019 Newsletter

Conisbrough is always a popular venue for Strollers. We love the fish and chips afterwards, but our previous walks had taken us over the viaduct which some found a little daunting so this time we tried out a 'new walk'.

This took us round Martin Wells Lake (despite the news coverage we didn't see any piranhas) and was a lovely, flat walk along well marked paths through the countryside. At one point we crossed a park which gave us stunning views of Conisbrough Castle and we were very pleased to have two newcomers who we hope to see on our next walk. Once again the weather was kind to us and we all felt we deserved our delicious fish and chip lunch.

Pat Burton



For our June walk we returned to a favourite of ours - Langold Lake. A gentle, picturesque walk through woods, around the lake and across parkland. A brave robin followed us as we made our way into the woods. Dave and Pat had been unable to lead this walk and had entrusted the task to yours truly. So, armed with their comprehensive instructions, I boldly led the group through the woods heading for the lake - and was lost in 10 minutes!

However, June, one of our group, knew the area and came to my rescue and got us back on track so that I could do the easy bit. Thanks June.

More excitement followed as Jane, our new publicity officer, decided to attract some publicity of her own and shot across the park on a zip wire - hey ho! We finally reached the real reason the walk is one of our favourites - the corned beef and potato pie at the café. Another successful day with the U3A.

Mike Bowser

