

East Cheshire Ramblers Weekend Away in Ilkley – 13-15 June 2025

Back in 2019, East Cheshire Ramblers had a weekend away at the Craiglands Hotel in Ilkley and we thought it was time for a repeat performance. A group of 31 joined in the weekend away – 27 at the hotel and 4 staying elsewhere. Despite somewhat threatening weather forecasts, the weather was very kind and we had a thoroughly enjoyable time walking in the Bolton Abbey area on Saturday and on Ilkley Moor on Sunday. Fortunately, there is also a lot to do in the surrounding area so those who were not up to walking both days could enjoy the delightful towns of Ilkley and Saltaire and the various National Trust properties during the day but join us in the evenings. A huge thank you to the walk leaders for making this such an enjoyable weekend.

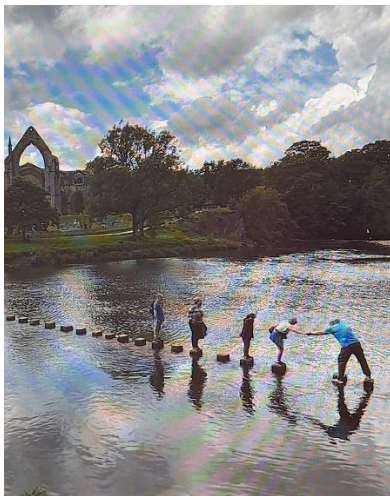
THE WALKS

Saturday 14 June 2025

Short Walk led by Melanie D

We had a delightful short walk from Bolton Abbey Cavendish Pavilion. The weather was lovely and we enjoyed the dappled shade from the trees along the river. This was nominally a figure of 8 walk, covering both sides of the river and returning to the Pavilion after 5 miles with an optional additional 2 miles to the Bolton Priory ruins and back. Nine of us set out on the leisurely 5-mile walk. We made full use of all the benches along the way, strategically placed to get the best views. We had a brief photo stop on Harrison's Ford Seat. (I was quite excited originally when I mis-read it as Harrison Ford's seat), then continued to Lord Morpeth's seat where we stopped for coffee and had a wonderful view of the Aqueduct Bridge, built by Bradford City Council to carry water to the city from Nidderdale. As we approached Barden Bridge, we glimpsed the ruined Barden Tower, originally an old Hunting Lodge and home of Henry, 10th Lord of Skipton (1454 – 1523), who was the great-great grandfather of Lady Anne Clifford who spent most of her life in a long complex battle to obtain the rights of her inheritance, only succeeding at the age of 60. However, she lived to the ripe old age of 87 (no mean feat in 1676) and during that time managed to restore the mainly dilapidated family castles to their former glory - big cheer for a feisty woman from our little group! When we reached Barden Bridge, by happy chance there was an ice cream van selling proper Yorkshire ice cream (none of your whirly rubbish). Seven of us tucked in and after our welcome refreshment crossed Barden Bridge and began our walk down the other side of the river. We got a very good view of the Strid which, despite the recent dry spell, was still quite a torrent. We had lunch by the river and then continued to Cavendish Pavilion where 4 of our party decided to finish the walk with tea and ginger beer at the Pavilion leaving five of us to continue on to Bolton Priory. Apparently in 1539, when the dissolution of the monasteries stripped the Priory of its assets, Prior Moone negotiated with Cromwell to secure the nave as a place of worship for the local community, and it continues to thrive to this day. Although four of us sensibly took the bridge across the river for our

return journey, one of our party decided to cross via the 62 stepping stones, only to find that there was one missing, involving quite a jump to reach the shore! We were quite impressed with all the challenges set up for the children's "Welly Walk" on our return journey and were even quite tempted to try some out. We arrived back at the Cavendish Pavilion to join our companions basking in the sun outside the tea room.



Medium Walk led by Ann T

14 walkers set off from the Riverside Car park at Bolton Abbey in rather overcast weather and most decided to put on a waterproof jacket. These soon came off as we ascended the Valley of Desolation onto Barden moor. Leaving the wooded valley, the mist came down and it looked as if the climb to Simon's Seat (485m) would not give any worthwhile views. However, by midday when we arrived, the mist had lifted and the sun was nearly out. The rocky grit outcrop to the trig point was achieved by most and the views were good, if not as far as Sutton Bank in North Yorkshire.

The descent was steeper, but a reasonable gradient down to Howgill where some ice creams were purchased. We then followed the Dales Way back alongside the river Wharfe. Barden Bridge was crossed (the ice cream van bypassed), the aqueduct admired for its Victorian architecture and then the Strid explored. The tumbling water, circular hollows and narrow water passage were photographed. Returning to the carpark we stopped at the Cavendish Pavilion for drinks and some cakes, beating a hasty retreat when the first real rain of the day occurred.

A 9 mile walk with plenty of interest enjoyed by the group.



Long Walk led by John G

On the Saturday of our Ilkley weekend, a group of six of us drove from the Craiglands Hotel in Ilkley to the Riverside Car Park at Bolton Abbey. The route was two classic walks joined together – an ascent of Simon's Seat, the highest peak in lower Wharfedale followed by an ascent of Trollers Gill, a miniature version of Gordale Scar often walked from Burnsall.

Starting out from the car park at 9.30, we crossed the River Wharfe steadily ascending through the exotically named Valley of Desolation onto the open moorland of Barden Fell. A mile along an easy-to-follow gravel track gradually brought us to the craggy pinnacle of Simon's Seat, a millstone grit outcrop standing at 485m (1591ft).

Weather forecasts in the preceding week had warned of thundery showers during the day. It had been dry but a bit muggy at the start. By the time we reached the summit hill mist was turning into light drizzle. Not a serious shower by any means, but enough for waterproof jackets to be hastily donned. More crucially any hope of seeing the fine view across to Trollers Gill and Grimwith Reservoir beyond was dashed. The intended morning break was also put back as we started the rather tricky rock path down towards Dalehead and Skyreholme. Fortunately, the mist lifted on our descent so that we were able to enjoy our belated morning break as the view started to appear.

Once we reached Dalehead and the end of the Barden Fell estate, we crossed to the small settlement of High Skyreholme and after a short road section reached the entrance to

Parceval Hall and Gardens, next to which lay the path up to Trollers Gill. The initial path towards the Gill looked like a typical Derbyshire dale. The Gill itself was a narrow ravine with boulders strewn along its length that were easy to navigate. The lower part of the gill was dry, but a burbling beck appeared as we reached the upper part. This provided a relaxing point to stop and enjoy our lunch accompanied by the restful sound of a mountain stream.

After lunch we climbed the last bit of ascent to Gill Heads before reaching a narrow road and then beginning the gradual descent towards Hartlington and Burnsall beyond. A magnificent view of lower Wharfedale with Simon's Seat high on our left accompanied our descent. After a mile or so, we turned off the route to Burnsall to follow a separate path down to the village of Appletreewick (pronounced "Apptrick") emerging next to the Craven Arms Pub. As the day was now warm and we had made good time, we took our afternoon break with some well-earned refreshment.

The final section of our walk took us past the Campsite outside the village and down to the river where we joined the Dales Way path. This well-known trail follows the river downstream for about five miles passing Barden Bridge, then crossing the stone bridge onto the opposite bank and continuing past the rapids in the river called the Strid before emerging at the Cavendish Pavilion and the car park shortly after 4pm.



Sunday 15 June 2025

Short Walk led by Martin D

There was a small but enthusiastic group of 6 that started the short walk on Sunday. One of our party only joined us for a short while as still suffering from a foot condition. We started from the Craiglands Hotel and climbed to the Ilkley Tarn and started the ascent to the top of the moor. Banana break was taken at the Cow and Calf rocks then a trek across the moor in a SE direction past Woofs bank. The wind was very strong at this point as we climbed in a westerly direction over Burley Moor and had lunch in the welcome shelter of an outcrop of rocks. The views across the valley were spectacular and the radar station at Menwith Hill was very clear in the sunlight. After visiting the 12 Apostles stone circle we returned via the very long and steep steps down to White Wells for a welcome cup of tea and a chat about the history of Ilkley with the warden.



Medium Walk led by Ann T

17 walkers joined this 10 mile group walk setting off from the Craiglands Hotel and making their way to the Cow and Calf rocks. The quarry was viewed from the bottom and top and the folklore of the rocks discussed. The next feature of Ilkley Moor was White Wells where the morning break was taken, so that we could read the information about the 'spa' which may have Roman origins and some could purchase coffee. From there the walk followed the edge of the moorland as it rises to Black Hill. We passed the Swastika stone, which dates from the Bronze age, looking at the cup design. After lunch, conveniently out of the strong wind, we descended Addingham Moorside and headed over to the Wharfe on little used paths. After a short section along the river on the Dales way the path headed into Ilkley past the Tennis club, which was holding the men's final of its tennis week. We enjoyed a view of the old bridge before heading up through the park into the town centre where most stopped for refreshment.



Long Walk led by Steve R

The Sunday long walk of around 12 miles was based on a chance viewing of a Countryfile programme about the Stanza Stones (six stones on a trail between Marsden and Ilkley, inscribed with water-themed, free verse poems written by Simon Armitage), and the realisation that three of the Stones - Beck, Dew and Puddle - could be linked in a longish walk starting from Ilkley. Supplementary interest could be added by visiting some of the cup and ring-marked rocks peppering Ilkley Moor.

And so it came to pass, for a select group of four, on a dry, bright and breezy day that had threatened rain. Highlights were a 'Solsbury Hill' moment as we visited the Puddle Stone, when a red kite swooped low over us; and the sight of a bob-tailed deer bounding across

Rombalds Moor. The photo shows three of our group 'linking' the curiously shaped Doubler stones.

