

Fellwalking Report September 2022 by Annie Clouston, photo by Judith Coleman

It was with some trepidation, invoked by a ferocious looking frontal system ahead of us as we travelled over the Stang, that we embarked on our 10-mile circular walk from Surrender Bridge. At the outset I realised that an earlier debacle, due to my abject map-reading skill, that I never quite figured out at the time, was the result of my setting off from the wrong bridge. Mistaking the first bridge I came to for Surrender bridge and thereafter railing at how wrong an ordnance survey map can be, my long-suffering companion and I, on the hottest day of the year found ourselves wandering pathetically in search of waymarks we were never going to find. We both survived, but I think trust will be forever an issue in our relationship!

Q: Why is it called Surrender bridge? A: I give in! (Thanks to James Dykes for that). A more sober answer came from Judith, who did some research and found that it is not the site of military capitulation as myth would have it. The most likely explanation is that it is named after the adjacent Surrender Moss, a peaty expanse whose name derives from the old English **sur**, meaning 'sour, damp, course'.

In the capable hands of John Peat, and the weather being altogether better than our expectations, we had an absolutely brilliant walk with gorgeous views of Swaledale and Gunnerside Gill. Interesting pun in the name – we were delayed for some minutes, anxious not to be made colanders by gunshot, by shooters up on the moorland. The grouse population that had cackled away companionably as we walked was sadly reduced that day.

The fells are hummocked with spoil from old mines and it was interesting to see that while there cannot have been any disturbance in the topography for well over a hundred years, the spoil was completely unrehabilitated and bare of vegetation.

Our day, but not our spirits, was slightly dampened by rainfall in the last half-mile. It was a great walk, among good companions, and as always - for me at any rate - boosted my feel-good hormones a treat.

Our next walk will be led by Lynda Bares a ten-mile circular from Bowes onto Gilmonby Moor to Citron Seat to meet the Pennine Way and back down vis God's Bridge to Bowes. Please contact me if you would like to join the group in any of our walks.

