

Fellwalking Report January 2024 by Annie Clouston

It was a touch and go affair with conversations and emails flying faster than the wind that was threatening to scupper our walk. Eventually, we decided to go for it, and didn't regret it, though in the teeth of a southwesterly gale and plodding through copious amounts of sog and mud made 10.5 miles seem much further.



Five of us arrived in Leyburn ready for a challenging walk. Phil, our walk leader, had wisely adapted our route to make it doable. As we walked along the Shawl – so called because legend has it that when Mary Queen of Scots escaped from Castle Bolton, where she had been imprisoned, she dropped her shawl on this pathway – we were relatively sheltered. However, leaving the woodland to walk south-west to Preston-under-Scar it was full exposure to a mercifully mild but stop-you-in-yourtracks hoolie. The day was clear and the views across the valley were delightful, though the ravages and deluges of Storms Isha and Jocelyn were laid out before us. The valley floor was significantly under water and the walk through the Bolton Estate found tree-fellers managing the fallen and injured.

Despite the impediments we managed a good time and returned to Leyburn via a stream that should have been a path to enjoy a very decent cuppa and cake (avoid the scones if you haven't got good teeth and some Rennies) at the pink café on the Square. Many thanks to my companions for a great walk and to Phil Clarke for leading it.



Devastation in Bolton Park following Storms Isha and Jocelyn