

## **April Fellwalking Report by Annie Clouston**

On a deceptively mild day, with clouds that didn't threaten imminent rain, nine of us set off from Muker just after 10am. We walked along the Pennine Way up out of the village then leaving it to track North to Keld where we descended the steep stone path down into the valley, crossing the river by footbridge to follow a course downstream to Kisdon Force. Sadly I wimped out of what last summer had been irresistible, and did not take a leap on the wild side into the fabulous plunge pool below one of a series of beautiful waterfalls. Why? At a conservative estimate the water was 8C and the air temperature about the same, so I may have my eccentricities but there is a kernel of self-preservation somewhere within. Besides I hadn't incorporated impromptu baptism in the risk assessment. Here we stopped for a snack in glorious surroundings, and some of my fellow walkers arranged themselves like Magistrates at the Bench – the boss and the bookends!

From Kisdon the path alongside the Swale affords a steady undulating walk across Swinners Gill towards Muker. However, deferring the crossing of Ramsholme Bridge, and the stone pathway across fields back to Muker we continued along the valley side eventually climbing to walk along the edge of an escarpment to reach Shore Gill and descend to Ivelet Bridge – an absolute treasure with seemingly disproportionately high arches built to withstand being swept away by floodwaters - and from there follow the valley bottom back to Ramsholme Bridge and thence to Muker. All in all, a walk of 11 miles during which, for the most part, the weather was kind.

Refreshment was taken at the fortuitously open Farmers Arms. This pub has been on the market for two years, so the potential for community ownership is now being investigated. This could secure its future and ensure it is run for the benefit of the Upper Swaledale community. The pub needs support from all who value its welcoming atmosphere, as we did, after a splendid walk. Thank you to Phil who led the walk and my companions for an excellent day's exercise and companionship.



