

### **Short Walks group report by Hilary Dunnighan**

On one of the warmest days of the year, 6 of us set off from Headlam Hall for a 3½ mile circular walk. Headlam's village green was previously a neatly mown swathe of grass, but now there are footpaths cut through a knee-high meadow, presumably a re-wilding effort to encourage insects and wildlife.

The back lane behind a field of horses led onto a well-used bridleway, which in turn led to farmers' fields. There was a healthy crop of broad beans in the first field followed by wheat and cereals in subsequent fields.

The footpath towards the gate for Hollin Hall was extremely overgrown, but the sheep and cows were making a valiant effort to eat as much of the grass as they could. Hollin Hall West is at one corner of Gainford Great Wood, with a commanding view over the countryside. Just adjacent is Hollin Hall East – a set of old barns and a granary that have been converted into very enviable, luxury residential houses and are accessed by Ford Dyke Lane.

Having stopped to pet the 2 horses in the field behind the barns, we made our way towards a short stretch of road, then set off across 3 more fields full of wheat. Each of the 9 fields we traversed had a stile, plus another 3 just for good measure! Luckily, they were all well maintained and relatively easy to cross.

On reaching Rigg Head Road, we walked the short distance back to our cars at Headlam Hall.

Thank you to Ian Royston for the accompanying photograph.