

### 3-4 MILE WALKING GROUP – PECKNELL WOODS Report and photo by Ian Royston

The good news was that the weather was a little warmer and though it had rained intermittently during the morning all was set fair when fifteen of us set off for a circular(ish) walk of just over three miles, starting from Scar Top.

Having been involved in organising walks of a similar distance from the town it's inevitable there will never be a route which is unfamiliar to any more than a few of our regular walkers, but those who took part acknowledged that it was a change to go 'the other way around', that is anti-clockwise. I've noticed that a bit like Formula 1 all circular walks seem to be taken in a clockwise direction, perhaps it's built into our coding or something?

So, best feet forward we headed downhill (all walks in Barney seem to start downhill and end with a slog back up to the town centre) across the 1893 Tees or Deepdale Aqueduct and along the road to Pecknell Woods. Unlike Formula One however we had to leave the tarmac and progress uphill and through the mud to gain the west (or Yorkshire) end of the old 1863 Tees Bridge. From there we crossed a couple of sheep fields to our first and only real challenge: The arch bridge under the old Stainmore Railway was underwater. The earlier recce had revealed some ponding but now it was wall-to-wall and though it was not terribly deep, at least not quite boot height most of us looked in envy at the one member who had had the foresight to come in her wellingtons.



We all made it, nobody was drowned and very few of us actually got wet feet. In view of the mud, the slipperiness and the path crumbling back-wards the option of the narrow path along Scur Beck was not taken and we stuck instead to the metalled road back to Lartington Lane. Of course, we had to go back uphill to the start, though by this time a few who lived in Startforth had decided the extra few hundred metres were not necessary and a somewhat fragmented party made it all the way back to Scar Top.