

# A hazard I hadn't envisaged

Where could they be? Jackie Hooley and I, stewards on the sponsored walk, were getting a little anxious. We had seen our happy band march off from Appleby High Cross and past the 'Primrose Stone', one of ten Eden Benchmark sculptures, had walked to meet them in sight of the ten-arched Settle to Carlisle Railway viaduct at the ancient Viking settlement of Great Ormside and counted them all through as they headed for Little Ormside and Warcop Old Bridge. Now we were waiting anxiously at the bridge with not a single member of the group in sight. We had anticipated some loss of mobile phone contact en route but did it have to be now?

The day was Saturday, 28 September 2013 when various charities and organisations were walking sections of the



recently waymarked Pennine Journey from Settle to Hadrian's Wall and back to Settle following in the footsteps of Alfred Wainwright, who made this solitary walk through the Pennines in Sep-

tember 1938. The following year he wrote an account of his walk, eventually published in 1986, entitled *A Pennine Journey* and in 2010 a pictorial guide of the same name was published by Frances Lincoln. This followed work done by members of the Wainwright Society to re-create his walk

and update it for today's roads and rights of way. The route is a 247 miles (398 km) long and the section allocated to us, members of the Cumbria Wildlife

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*Starting point: the Primrose Stone at Appleby*



*Warcop Old Bridge, above, and right, journey's end at Brough Castle*

Trust, was approximately nine miles (14.5 km) long from the ancient town of Appleby-in-Westmorland to the even more historic Brough Castle.

The day started well in glorious sunshine (AW reported appalling weather) with the prompt departure of the party with their canine companions in tow (or in some cases vice versa). The twelfth-century Appleby Castle, the home of Lady Anne Clifford in the seventeenth century, was an imposing backdrop. Their route would follow the River Eden through meadows and woodlands and the going was designated as easy, so where were they all? Could there be some sort of mystical black hole in this land of ancient settlements? An Ormside triangle perhaps?

Why were we here at all? The Pennine Journey project moved up a gear in 2011 when a development plan was

submitted to the relevant highway authorities in support of an application to waymark the route and just before our walk the waymarking was completed. The Pennine Journey Supporters Club took over from the Wainwright Society the role of a 'responsible organisation' to carry the project forward and have the support of all the parish/town councils along the route.

A walking festival, opened by local MPs Rory Stewart and Guy Opperman at Epiacum, was held between 28 September and 5 October last year in partnership with the North Pennines AONB, Friends of the North Pennines and other regional agencies and organisations, timed to coincide with the seventy-fifth anniversary of Alfred Wainwright's original Pennine Journey. The opening day became the "Pennine Journey in a Day" with several charities set

to benefit from sponsored walks along allocated sections of the route.

Meanwhile, back at the bridge we had time to explore our surroundings. The sandstone, three-arched Warcop Old Bridge is the only remaining medieval bridge over the Eden and at only ten feet (3m) wide can prove tricky for modern vehicles. I offered to go ahead to the next meeting point at Great Musgrave to see if any of our group had strayed from the designated route with images of lurid headlines beginning to form in my imagination. Then, at last, communication! It seemed that on leaving Little Ormside along a high-hedged farm track the group had been thwarted by a large tractor set across the lane with a herd of very unhappy steers penned in behind – but with no sign of a farmer. Eventually he returned and kindly assisted the party, some not perhaps in the first flush of youth, to climb up and through the tractor cabin while he helped them push and struggle past the cattle. Dogs had to be carried adding to the adventure. Unfortunately all were too preoccupied to take a photograph which truly would have been one for the archives. My mandatory risk assessment efforts had not envisaged this particular hazard but happily all escaped unscathed.

Even happier was the distant view of Brough Castle, so, confident that all were accounted for, we stewards headed for the castle to await their arrival. This site is well worth exploring. The castle was built alongside the site of the Roman fort of Venteris on the road



from Carlisle to Ermine Street. The impressive but very neglected edifice was restored by Lady Anne after she inherited it in 1643. Sadly in 1666, after a particularly merry Christmas feast the castle burnt down with much stone later ‘recycled’ to help reconstruct Appleby Castle.

Our sponsored walkers, all counted back in, gradually arrived pleased to rest their weary legs at the ice cream parlour and café conveniently placed alongside the ruined twelfth-century remains. The walk had proved to be delightful through green and luscious country with clear way marking and memories of tractors and cows were soon forgotten.

Much-needed funds had been raised for the Cumbria Wildlife Trust and we are very grateful to the organisers for giving us the opportunity to take part. All of the Pennine Journey had indeed been walked on the day and a new long distance walk tried and very satisfactorily tested. ■

A Pennine Journey from Settle to Hadrian’s Wall in Wainwright’s Footsteps., *Edited by David Pitt.* £13.99 hardback. [www.franceslincoln.com](http://www.franceslincoln.com). ISBN 9780711230835