

Peterborough Walkers New Year Away

HARROGATE

2025-2026

Wednesday 31st December 2025

Fifteen members of the group met at the Blues Café Bar in Harrogate for dinner described as Yorkshire Tapas. This included tatties bravas, macaroni cheese, red cabbage slaw, glazed sticky pigs and filled Yorkshire puddings. All very tasty and filling. Very wise decision by Sara to insist we pre-order meant we were all fed by 8.30pm.

The venue was very keen to usher us downstairs at 8.45pm to allow them to get ready for a second sitting. The eagle-eyed Debbie spotted on the CCTV that a table in the bar downstairs had become vacant. A land grab meant we had 6 seats we could share during the course of the night.

The band were excellent if some-what loud playing lots of crowd pleasers like “Park Life.” Our group (including Amy who arrived after dinner) dominated the dance floor – well rather more like we stood in the bar area and swayed, tapped our feet and sang loudly. A chalkboard advertised the availability of ear plugs which our most senior group member took advantage of.

A few of the group left before midnight for a nice cup of tea whilst the majority saw in the New Year in the bar.

The group spent New Year in Harrogate in 2006/7. Three long serving members had an enormous sense of Déjà vu believing that we visited the Blues Café Bar back then. Handwritten diaries produced by the Secretary confirmed this was the case.

Thursday 1st January 2026 – Brimham Rocks – 8 miles

Walk start time was 11am to allow people to travel up that morning. We also had a guest from a neighbouring group meaning a total of 19 people set off. The walk leader's assertiveness was immediately put to the test when one public toilet was spotted. Instructions quickly issued that to only be used if absolutely necessary – otherwise we would be getting back in the dark.



Heading off into beautiful countryside we soon came to obstacle number one: a stream running across a field. Various crossing points were taken with all the group getting across without a dunking.

The route described following the river but we soon encountered obstacle two: a blocked path. Our leader was determined to take the route that was on the digital map. A third of the group followed despite it requiring something of a scramble around a fence/stile. A third of the group took an alternative, heavily used, obvious path. The remaining third hedged their bets waiting to see which route was better. Eventually the leader abandoned the planned route and everyone reconvened along the heavily used path.

A beautiful walk following rivers and streams upwards brought us up to Brimham Rocks. A great spot for photos and lunch and a slice of Colin the Caterpillar Christmas cake!



In view of the time, walk leader decided to adjust the route so we could spend time admiring the rock formations returning via the woods to our starting point before dark.

Walk completed, the majority of the group made their way to the local pub where beer had to be drunk as no hot drinks available. We commandeered the snug where the banter flowed. A couple offered to take our photo asking if we were a group or all from the same family. The answer: we are a family.

A feature of this New Year away was the weather. Dry with lots of sunshine and blue skies but CHUFFING COLD. Temperatures hovering around freezing felt colder due to wind chill factor. Great for walking but definitely thermals, gloves, and hat weather.

Dinner was in a Turkish restaurant where we had our own indoor area. Lovely food and great company a fitting way to end the day.

Friday 2nd January – Skipton to Fountains Abbey – nearly 10 miles

Our numbers reduced due to two members flying off to somewhere warmer. It was so cold the author of this report hung around in the ladies' toilet until kick-off.

Walk to views of Fountains Abbey via excellent paths passing by some very cute Shetland ponies. Cake stop number one was care of Eleanor's Waitrose purchase – Yorkshire tea loaf. Very tasty but Eleanor was horrified to find the Best Before Date exceeded. Fortunately, our in-house environmental health expert assured us this was OK.

The group's resolve was tested when we found out that the Fountains Abbey café was shut but fortunately the one at Studely Royal Park was open. Due to the cold (have I mentioned it was cold?) the consensus was it was OK to eat own food at café tables overlooking lake before going inside for a drink.



Post lunch walk back via deer park but they were hiding. Cake stop number two was care of Amy who was leaving the group today for birthday celebrations over the weekend.

The final leg of the walk was via Hell Wath nature reserve along the tranquil river edge.

Arriving back at Ripton the group separated with some venturing into the stunning cathedral.

Dinner was at an Italian restaurant where service was exceptional. We were each handed a place setting that not only had our name on it but what we ordered.

Several of the group found the New Year sale in Wetherspoons directly opposite hard to resist before the meal and after. To be fair, the Winter Gardens was of historic interest so worth popping inside.

A big thank you to meal organisers Sara and Sarah D. It's not an easy task finding somewhere in a town you don't know that will take a large group. We had three evenings of varied dining all very good.

Saturday 3rd January – Knaresborough loop – 5.6 miles

The meeting point for today's walk was also the start point of a Park Run which 3 hardy members took part in. They were found in the car park café enjoying breakfast.

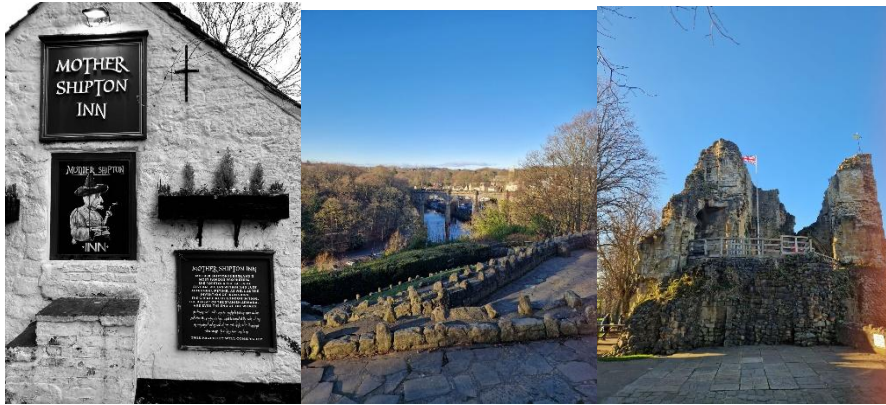


The first half of the walk was at a brisk pace as along a tarmac path passing by houses of varying designs with glimpses of the river. Lots of history along the way too including a detour to St Roberts Cave

We were held up at the bridge crossing the river as eagle eyed Dean had spotted a kingfisher but it flew off by the time the majority of the group arrived on scene.

Although a bit early for a lunch, we had a stop at the café in the caravan park overlooking the river. Popping in to use toilets several of the group were enticed by the aroma of freshly baked scones just out of the oven resulting in a challenge for the walk leader to balance the needs of those getting cold outside versus those enjoying cake in the warm.

The second half of the walk was up and around the caravan park to avoid a potentially tricky section of the river bank. We passed by Mother Shipton Inn before tackling a steepish hill to arrive in the market square and then on to the Castle where the walk and the weekend officially ended.



A big thank you to walk leaders Debbie, Dean, Stephen A and Sarah A. It is not easy finding and leading a walk in an unknown area with limited opportunity to check it out

Finally, a thank you to everyone for great company, fun and laughter - a great way to start the New Year.