

GEOGRAPHY GROUP MAP READING ON THURSDAY 17 FEBRUARY

David Ewart led an unforgettable afternoon of map reading at our February meeting. As might be expected from a former head of Barnard Castle School and legendary geography teacher, his approach was original and ingenious. The result was entertainment, inspiration and instruction.

David had painstakingly prepared sketch maps of his favourite walk (14.5 km) in the Yorkshire Dales following Swaledale from Surrender Bridge to Reeth, and then along the Arkle Beck river and back to the start. He showed us how a route card of bearings, distances, timings, and details of the footpaths can be prepared. His schedule allowed time for an ice cream in Reeth and a visit to the Lead Mining Museum there. Timings were calculated on the basis of 20 to 25 minutes per km, and five minutes for every 100 metres climbed. Some of us wondered how much time to add for every year of age.

Next, using 1:25,000 OS map OL 30 we were invited to prepare our own route cards for another wonderful walk from Keld along the Swale past Muker to Gunnerside. Most of us mastered the six figure map references ("along the corridor and up the stairs") but struggled rather more with the compass bearings which had to be read using those brilliant little Silva compasses, all provided for our use by our tutor. By the end of the afternoon members had been enthused by the potential of simple map reading skills to unlock some of the superb landscapes we can enjoy not very far from Barnard Castle.



Swaledale (photo: David Ewart)

Gerald Blake (Geography Group Co-Ordinator)

GEOGRAPHY GROUP NEXT MEETING THURSDAY MARCH 17: Professor Mattias Green, renowned oceanographer, on “Sea level change” (by big screen Zoom in the Witham Room)