

Our first talk, by Gerald Blake, was about maps of Teesdale. Thousands have been produced over the centuries, whether paper or digital, flat or folded, small scale or large. Many will have been lost.

Early maps are often found in atlases, for example, that published by Christopher Saxton, in 1579. Later, individual “county maps” were printed. Mapping stopped abruptly at the boundary so parts of Teesdale often appeared on maps of North Yorkshire. The idea of a “road map” was first popularised by John Ogilby and widely copied. His atlas, “Britannia”, published in 1675, showed the route from Ferrybridge to Barnard Castle. Many early maps often highlighted influential landowners and their estates. Richard Blome’s map from the 1670s (see photograph) shows the Bishopric of Durham.



Over the centuries surveying and cartographic techniques improved. The creation of the Ordnance Survey in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century saw an explosion in map making. The earliest ones of Teesdale were large-scale maps of Barnard Castle, at a scale of 120 inches to the mile. By the 1860s maps of Teesdale, at more manageable scales, were available to buy. The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the mass production of leisure maps for the area.

As well as topographic maps, there are many thematic maps of Teesdale. These show subjects ranging from geology to turnpike roads and air crash sites. There are also research or working maps, such as those produced by Dr Margaret Bradshaw to show endangered flora and those by Professor David Evans showing glacial geomorphology.

Tim Meacham continued the Teesdale theme, talking about the railway line from Barnard Castle to Middleton-in-Teesdale. This eight mile line opened in 1868 and finally closed to freight in 1966, two years after it closed to passengers.

The line had three intermediate stations at Cotherstone, Romaldkirk and Mickleton and ran across spectacular viaducts at Baldersdale and Lunedale. It had seven branch lines which Tim had researched, explored and photographed. These included Scott’s siding, near Cotherstone, approved in 1884 to serve the construction sites at Hury and Blackton reservoirs. The engine was gradually moved forward on four pieces of track by transferring one section from the back to the front of the train! Several branch lines served stone quarries, such as those at Middleton, Park End, and Crossthwaite. Two narrow gauge tramways ran to the Lunedale and Greengates quarries from an exchange siding near Lonton.

It was originally proposed to extend the line to Alston, with a station at High Force, but in 1872 the bill was (thankfully) withdrawn by the promoter.

Next meeting: Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> October. The Witham, at 2pm. Professor Sarah Woodroffe. Sea level change.