

SHORTER WALKS GROUP
January Report by Liz Colley

A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

The group were fortunate that the walk fell on the Monday between Storm Isha and Storm Jocelyn. Our intrepid group gathered to complete a circuit of Barnard Castle and Startforth. despite the still strong winds and the threat of rain

Fifteen of us met in the Garden of Remembrance on Galgate for a walk taking in the local memorials, starting with The Boer War memorial and the Teesdale Aviation Memorial Garden. Heading to the Bowes Museum we walked past the town cemeteries, unfortunately due to the high winds the Bowes Museum gardens were shut so we couldn't visit the town War Memorial or the Durham Light Infantry Memorial. Instead, we headed down Wilson Street where we took note of the entrance gate to what was the Durham Militia Barracks.

We continued onto St Marys parish Church to view the flags of the Durham Militia and 3rd/4th Battalion Durham Light Infantry. The church website has good information on local military history if you are interested. Outside in the graveyard we found the memorial to the cholera epidemic in which 143 people lost their lives in a few weeks in 1849. Godfrey was able to tell us about the siting of the memorial which is over the plague pit that was dug for the burials of the departed. Next to it is a tree which was planted to remember those who lost their lives to Covid.

Our route took us down to the river, swollen with the heavy rains from Storm Isha and across the green bridge. In Startforth we stopped at the Parish Church graveyard to view their memorial, interestingly the dates of the first world war on the memorial are 1914-1919. This being a u3a walk Ian was able to tell us this is because although the Armistice was in 1918, the treaty of Versailles which was the peace treaty which ended the state of war between Germany and the Allied Powers wasn't signed until 1919.

Our return to Barnard Castle was over the silver bridge and back up to the mini golf and our last memorial, a tree planted in memory of Princess Diane in 1998 by the town council.

Our next walk will be on February 26th.

