

## 7 to 9 miles walking group

Report by Nicky Grace

On Wednesday 16 August we gathered at the base of Copley chimney. The effect of saying that there was very limited parking was that everyone arrived early! We just fitted all our cars into the space. On a dry day following heavy rain, I led the group of 12 up the hill and ended up walking up a stream rather than a path! Just below the River Gaunless was rushing past belying its supposed derivation ie gormless for not having enough power to drive mills. South of Woodland, after crossing Foul Sike, we came upon evidence of the considerable coal mining in the area- waste heaps, the brick lining of one of the shafts and the concrete base of the steam engine.

After negotiating a muddy gate and inquisitive cattle, we stopped for coffee by Hindon Beck. We reached Hill house farm and walked along to the road to Hindon edge and descended to Arn Gill. En route we were concerned to find a buzzard caught in a ladder trap. We crossed tramways which used to serve the collieries and ascended the south side of the Gill. Aiming for Beckside we found a broken down stile – however one of our number had experienced this before and we managed to get round this. We turned away from our furthest point and found a peaceful pastoral spot for our lunch with a fine view of Langley Viaduct which served the Bishop Auckland to Barnard Castle railway. We descended into Arn Gill where a buzzard circled overhead and returned to Hill House farm. From there we walked along the Steele Road back to Copley. This was the route that linked Eggleston and the smelt mill at Copley bringing ore payable to the Raby estate to be smelted, named for the silver colour of the track due to dropped lead ore.

It was a day of kindnesses, from those who offered lifts, to the participant who secured the release of the trapped buzzard, to our cow whisperer, and to all of you for tolerating the walk leader.



On Wednesday 20 September Phil Clarke will lead a c8 mile walk from Muker via Keld and Kisdon waterfall with fine views. Please contact Phil direct if you are interested in coming along [philclarke51@outlook.com](mailto:philclarke51@outlook.com) 07748018692

On Wednesday 18 October Lynda will lead a walk from Hanging Shaw. Please contact [nickygrace729@gmail.com](mailto:nickygrace729@gmail.com)