

7- 9 Mile walking group Walk report for November walk by Judith Coleman

We were to meet by the River Tees below Cotherstone Castle. Snow had fallen overnight, so much so that some would-be walkers encountered roads blocked by accidents and weren't able to get through. Fifteen of us made it though. The steep road down to the river would be icy, we thought, so most of us parked up in the village. But actually Cotherstone had no snow! And all along the walk we were to have glimpses of the very white landscape on the other side of the Tees whilst encountering hardly any on our route. Remarkable – which is why I'm remarking on it!

We began by following the Teesdale Way on the south side of the river as far as Romaldkirk. Some of this was a muddy path which climbed steeply above the river over rocks and tree roots - a bit tricky but sunshine was reaching through the bare trees and it was a lovely time of year to be in the woods.



View across Romaldkirk by Ian Royston

From Romaldkirk the route followed the Tees Railway Path southwards for several miles. In the year of the 200th anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway it seemed fitting that one of our walks should include the old railway line. This branch line from Barnard Castle to Middleton-in-Teesdale operated 1867-1964. It transported rocks and minerals from the quarries, materials for building of the dams and, later, passengers. Notable features we passed on this stretch were the Baldersdale viaduct and Cotherstone station (now a private house, the owner of which aims to restore the platform).



On the Railway Path by Ian Royston

Leaving the railway path just before Lartington Hall, we made our way back towards the River Tees and rejoined the Teesdale Way, which runs from Dufton to Teesmouth and came into existence a mere 45 years ago. Though not of the same national, or even worldwide, impact as the S&DR, it is, nevertheless, of great local value and interest. This last section of our route, heading back north-westwards towards Cotherstone, with the sun still shining, was a pleasant conclusion to the walk.

Many of us enjoyed a cuppa in Cotherstone Old Chapel Community café before heading for home.