

## WALKING GROUP REPORT – JANUARY '19

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A large group of walkers met in the grounds of The Bowes Museum on a dry January morning with little wind and good visibility. Taking the perimeter path and exiting the grounds via the back gate, the group crossed the Kalafat playing field and followed a path adjacent to Barnard Castle School's playing fields. This gave us direct access to the Five Acres housing development. A large sign advertising for bricklayers was quietly ignored but a builder pointed to the Site Manager's office in case anyone changed their mind!

We left the activity of the building site via a stile directly onto Green Lane encountering the only mud of the entire walk. We immediately crossed the lane to another path, which, after five fields with new gates, took us to Darlington Road – the A67. After admiring the gardens at The Jersey Farm Hotel, the group turned left onto Town Pasture Lane (Gypsy Lane) and walked towards Stainton Grove. We crossed the A688 and followed field paths to the outskirts of Stainton Village, stopping for a banana break on a grassy bank in sunshine, facing south towards Barnard Castle with far reaching views up Teesdale to the west.

We wound our way round a former farm, West Farm now tastefully converted to modern living accommodation. After leaving Stainton Village by well grassed field paths we used a stone bridge to cross the former Barnard Castle/Bishop Auckland railway. A few fields later, most of the group detoured to visit the Red Well in an adjacent field – i.e. the actual well within its square walled enclosure, not the nearby pub! Several members remarked that they were sorry to miss Celia Chapple's recent talk presented to the Historic Environment Group.

Walking towards the vast Glaxo site on our right, we passed under a fine stone bridge which carried the railway from Barnard Castle to Bishop Auckland and another line to Darlington. The TCR Hub was on our left and also, further on, Teesdale School playing fields. We were now walking on a hard surface with Teesdale Sports Centre on our right. In the future this footpath may be re-routed as it passes very close to Teesdale School buildings and outdoor

facilities, thus raising security issues. However, it is a long-established footpath and discussions are ongoing amongst the various interested parties.

We emerged opposite the Co-op Garage and crossed the A67 returning to the Museum grounds, near the Emergency Services Hub after a five mile walk, relieved that we had not needed to trouble them!

If one of your New Year resolutions was to take more exercise, then may I recommend joining one (or more!) of the four walking groups on offer within Teesdale U3A.

Next walk for the Walking Group is on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> February. Meet 10 a.m. at The Hagg car park, Cotherstone, DL12 9NW      Leader Gillian 01833 650108

Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> March – in the Richmond area. Leader Phil Clarke 01325 718552