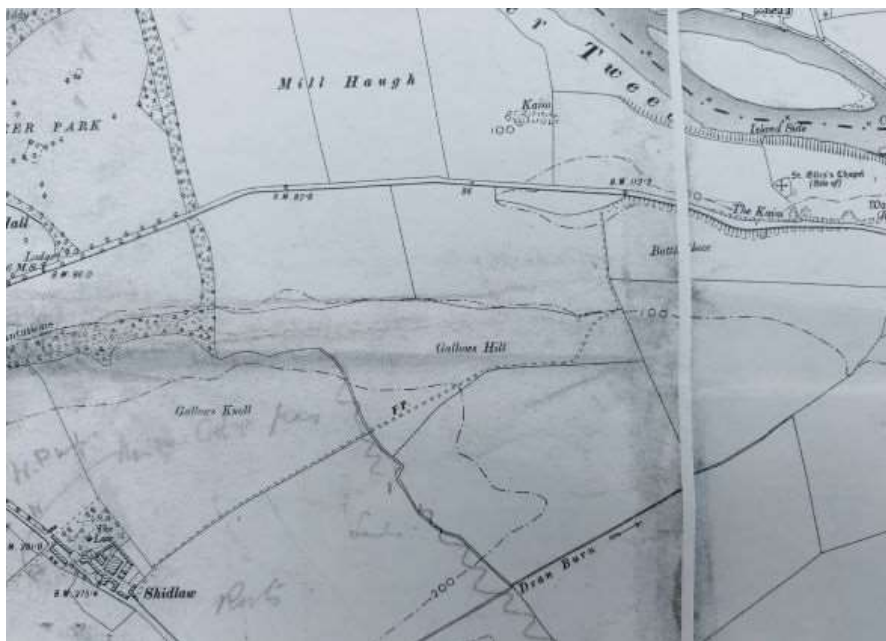


Carham Parish Walk 26th June 2021

On a day of fine rain and mist, 8 of us turned out for the 4 mile walk via Shidlaw and Carham, which had been postponed from March 2020.

Much of the route is not a public right of way, so it was with the kind permission of the landowners and farmers we were able to extend the route beyond the official public footpath as a 'one off' to make a varied and enjoyable walk.

The public footpath - the last of the footpaths in the parish to review and include in our walks – runs from the B 6350 to Shidlaw farm, and is typical of public paths that were originally created to enable parishioners to travel the easiest route from A to B - for example to school or church. See maps below.



This map of 1899 seems to show the footpath going to the right, arriving at the road nearer to Wark – much more sensible!



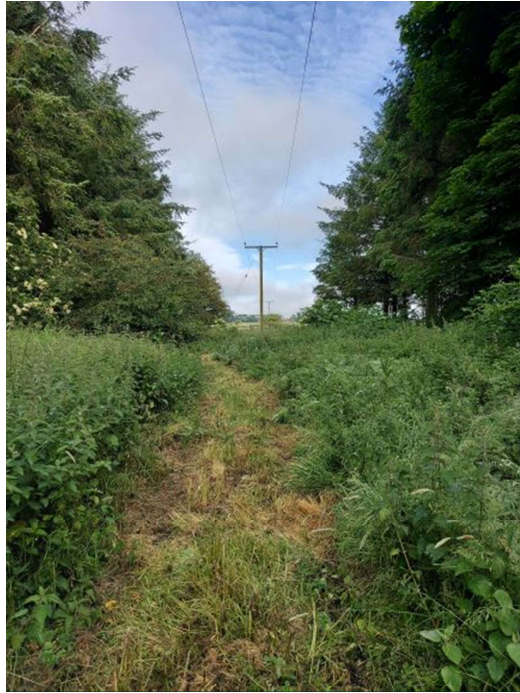


From the layby outside Wark we made our way west along the busy B 6350 to the start of the footpath, where a wicket gate accesses the path round the edge of the field. This, along with the signpost, was almost completely obscured by the hedge until I had done some trimming!



The path climbs up through the wood via the interestingly named Gallows Hill and Gallows Knoll to Shidlaw Farm, a high point in the landscape. The very overgrown path through the wood had been cut, allowing easier access – it would have been impossible otherwise! A powerline follows the route

though a wide opening between the trees – this allows the light in, encouraging more vigorous undergrowth. We noticed a spectacular clump of giant hogweed, at least 8 feet tall!



Over the stile at the end of the wood (the upright post is very loose) we followed the gap between the long grass on the field edge and the

crop to Shidlaw. This is where the public footpath ends.

After this we took the track leading west from the farm and made our way (more long grass!) down to the road and the riverbank.



(Thanks to Mick Plunkett for the group photos)



We passed behind Carham church and crossed The Holme, where the 1,000th anniversary of the battle of Carham was commemorated in 2018, and followed the river behind Carham Hall. We reached the end of the walk by following a field edge by a narrow wood or shaw to the road. To avoid walking the $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile back to the layby – the traffic is scarily, and dangerously, fast – we were taken by car (wearing masks, and with windows open). Two of our number decided to go by foot and run the gamut of the traffic, and survived!

Many thanks are due to Peter Straker-Smith and his family and Murray Potts of Shidlaw Farm for allowing us access to their land, Robin Mason of Wark Farms for cutting the footpath, and John McGregor for the taxi service!

Note – It is to be made clear that, apart from the path to Shidlaw, the rest of the walk is not a public right of way, and permission from the landholders would be needed to access it.