

Carham Parish Footpaths Walk 9th April 2022



Map – Elizabeth Devon

On a day of sun and light cloud, with a cold North-west breeze, six of us (most of whom were from the neighbouring parish of Cornhill) met at Pressen Farm for our latest walk in the parish.

Our walk followed the route completed in 2018 – (see report and update on the Carham Parish website, www.carhamparish.org/walks) - with an extension taking in quiet lanes and footpaths. Although the timing of the walk clashed, for some, with the start of the Easter holidays, I wished to complete this walk when growth underfoot was still short and more easily negotiated.

We set off following a good track south through the very tidy and well-manicured farm, and past fields of flowering oil-seed rape to the wicket gate and along a rough grass margin to reach the 'duck pond' area, where stiles guide the way past the pond – this bit is very wet and boggy (See 1 on map) being on a stream, or drain, running north-east.



After climbing the steep hill up from the pond, we stopped to enjoy the views to the east and to the south over the Cheviots, and watched a group of seven hares chasing each other, below in a field hollow.

Not quite 'Running up that Hill'!
(Kate Bush song)



Looking towards the
Cheviots

Photos – Mick Plunkett

Over a stile and through the wood, skirting a fallen tree, we reached Piperdean Lane, or the 'Lonnen'. This track can be seen on old maps as a road – the original metalled, or stone surface can be discerned by pushing a stick through the existing soft soil cover! We turned left downhill on a very rutted section, to where the north-east flowing drain that we had passed earlier, crosses - causing another boggy patch (2). Further along the attractively undulating track the old thorns and crab-apple trees flanking the route are sadly depleted, especially the hawthorns – more were dislodged in storm 'Arwen'. (We had cleared a couple earlier where they had blocked the path).

'The Lonnen', looking north

At the end of Piperdean Lane we turned right for a few hundred yards to a gap in the hedge on the left, and a wide grass field margin (I wish all official footpaths on farmland were as pleasant to walk along as this!) leading to a nice wetland area where the path crosses Willow Burn, and continues on to meet the lane going west towards Sunilaws. This path (A to B) is part of West Learmouth Farm's permissive paths access under the Countryside Stewardship scheme running until 2024, which will then be superseded by the Environmental Land Management Scheme.



We turned left at the lane, and continued past verges spangled with celandine, for about three-quarters of a mile to the footpath opposite the junction to Sunilaws. Although the official footpath is on the west side of the hedgerow, we found it easier to walk on the east side (3) to reach a wicket gate, then pass through a double gate to the west side of the hedge (4), and continue along the field edge, as there is little room on the narrow and uneven grass margin! At the end of the field a good track leads to the road, and turning right we walked up the hill back to Pressen.

It was a pleasant and varied walk with lovely views and some wildlife - hares, buzzards, and chiff-chaff and yellowhammer in the hedgerows. I had warned two of our group new to the paths about the boggy and uneven terrain, but they said that it wasn't as bad as I had made out!

Many thanks to those who attended, and to West Learmouth Farm for allowing us access to the permissive path.