

## **Carham Parish Footpaths Walk Report – Cornhill to Barley Hill, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

Eight walkers, comprising locals, residents, friends and members of Four Border Abbeys U3A, completed this linear route, which we had previously covered in part in March 2019 and July 2022. Please see reports, maps and information on the various landmarks along the route on the website - <https://carhamparish.org/walks/> Walk 3 - 'East Learmouth to Barley Hill', and Walk 9 - 'By Station, Farm and Footpath'.



This time we walked from Cornhill, taking the well-used footpath along the railway line and taking the left fork towards East Learmouth. At the boundary between Cornhill and Carham parishes on the C21 road a fingerpost marks the path back to Cornhill, while we continued along the 'unofficial' stretch to East Learmouth, permission having been granted by the farmer - a wicket gate in the hedge now makes access easier to this section.

Walkers on the East Learmouth section of the railway



At the C23 road near East Learmouth Farm, the old fingerpost and stile marking the footpath to Tithe Hill Farm\* is almost completely hidden under shrubby vegetation, as are the remains of the bridge abutments which were dismantled in 2017. Access to the footpath is now through an open gateway, **but there is no fingerpost marking it.**

As on previous walks we made our way in single file across the field through an emerging crop to the stile in the farm boundary fence. (A corner telegraph pole by the stile is a useful landmark to aim for). This path has never been marked or reinstated through the crop. The stile, though stable, has no top bar, so we had to take care not to become snagged on the barbed wire.

From here the path across to Tithe Hill is at least marked on the ground, but **there are no signs through or past the farm, and some of the walkers admitted that the 'No Public Access' signs would deter them.** We followed the very tidy track lined on one side by a scant and hard-cut hedge, with a view ahead of Moneylaws Hill. The section of the byway (from The Hagg Farm to East Moneylaws) which runs over a hill past the Erskine Monument (see Walks 3 and 9) is in complete contrast; bordered by an old wall and uncut hedges with rough grass underfoot, is much more pleasant, as long as it's not too overgrown!



There are roughly-tied farm gates (one unhinged) at either end, **with no waymarks indicating the route.** The footpath rises steeply uphill from the byway and the track to West Moneylaws – from here there are several waymarks along the way to Barley Hill, and the view from the top was worth the climb!

Passing the hillfort over to the left, we saw several deer running across the hill (disturbed by the unusual sight of walkers on this route?) The path continues straight ahead, but we followed a wide grass margin round the edge to a gate, marking the parish boundary. Crossing the ditch on the other side was slightly awkward as it was full of water.



Again, we walked in single file through young crops to reach a stile in the fence bordering the 'shaw', most of which had been felled, **leaving rough grass with hidden branches and tree stumps, with no sign of the path.**

The stile into the field towards Barley Hill Cottage is firm but has narrow planks. We paused to appreciate the view ahead over the Cheviots before following the grass margin down to the cars and transport back to Cornhill.

**Paths not marked or re-instated across fields and missing or poor signage was still apparent on the route, as on many of our rights of way; but by walking these paths and encouraging their use may help to bring attention to areas needing improvement!**

Note - Is there a historical connection between the names of Tithe Hill and Moneylaws? (Tithes were controversial, especially to dissenters like the Erskines). If anyone can throw some light on this, please let me know!

\*A tithe is a tax of one tenth of annual produce or earnings formerly taken from the landholder for the support of the church and clergy. Tithe Maps were later produced when tithes were paid in cash, to show parishes and land ownerships, and to establish what tithes were payable and to whom.

