

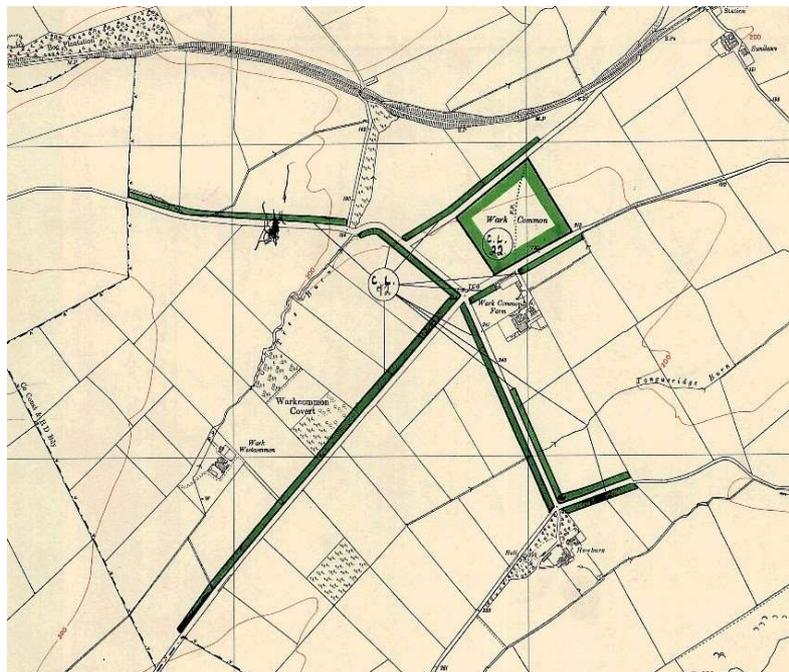
## 'Paths, Verges and Commons' - Carham Parish Walk 15<sup>TH</sup> June 2019

Thank you to those who attended our walk (14, including 'locals' and others from neighbouring parishes), which focussed on so-called common land and the wide verges bordering the lanes south of Wark village.

Starting out from the village our route took us up a short footpath past 'Goat Common', a grassy triangle of common land, to meet the lane south to Sunilaws. Further on the lanes circuted a large field which is still on the OS Map as 'Wark Common', but has been farmed for a good 80 years. A public footpath crossing from the north east to the south west corner was not available to us as it currently has a crop of potatoes – this path is usually open, and will be reinstated after harvesting.

Until the enclosure act of 1797, the 'common moor, or tract of waste ground... within the manor of Wark' was used by people in the village to graze livestock. When the land was hedged and divided up the cottagers of Wark were allotted an area to continue grazing their cattle, which also included the wide verges – this became known as the 'Cow Club'. Apparently, the cows were housed in the village at night and walked up to graze during the day. Wark Common was rented to Wark Common Farm at about the time of the 1939-45 war and it was likely that it was given up for cultivation at this time as part of the war effort, the members of the Cow Club being paid rent.

In a Hearing of 1975, it was disputed whether the members, as they claimed, actually owned equal portions of the land given to them and assumed by them 'to be forever after held and enjoyed' – I think this was overruled and so was registered as common land. The wide verges were still used for grazing sheep up to the 1980's, but the practice of common grazing gradually died out, and Wark common is now under permanent cultivation.



The verges, however, are still registered as common land – the image above shows the areas as seen on a map of 1950 held by the parish. They cover 3.5 miles in length, and are up to 50 feet wide! [See below](#) a list of the plants and other wildlife recorded on a recent survey of just a short stretch of verge!

These verges are an ideal wildlife habitat, and could be a valuable asset to the parish, benefitting wildlife, local people and visitors alike. Local councils and community groups elsewhere in the country have shown an enlightened approach in maintaining their verges as wildflower havens. Perhaps our parish could, too?



VERGES AT HOWBURN 28 May 2019

East side

from NT821360 to NT822358:

Horsetail	Meadow geranium	Dock
Greater plantain	Water avens	Broom
Meadowsweet	Hogweed	Gorse
Crosswort	Raspberry	Common knapweed
Common sorrel	Bramble	Rosebay willowherb
Wild rose	Creeping buttercup	Silverweed
Cow parsley	Reed canary grass	Garden daffodil
Ribwort plantain	White campion	Wood avens
Germander speedwell	Yarrow	Cocksfoot
Dandelion	Lesser stitchwort	Mouse ear
Bush vetch	Common nettle	Clover
Creeping thistle	White dead nettle	Groundsel

West side

from NT822358 to NT821360:

Goosegrass	Scented mayweed
Hawkbit	Bugloss
Shepherd's purse	

Other Wildlife

Sedge warbler	Dunnock	Large white and orange tip
Willow warbler	Lapwing	butterflies
Chiff-chaff	Grey partridge	Ladybird
Blackbird	Barn owl	Song thrush
Yellowhammer	Brown hare	Lots of bees and other insects!