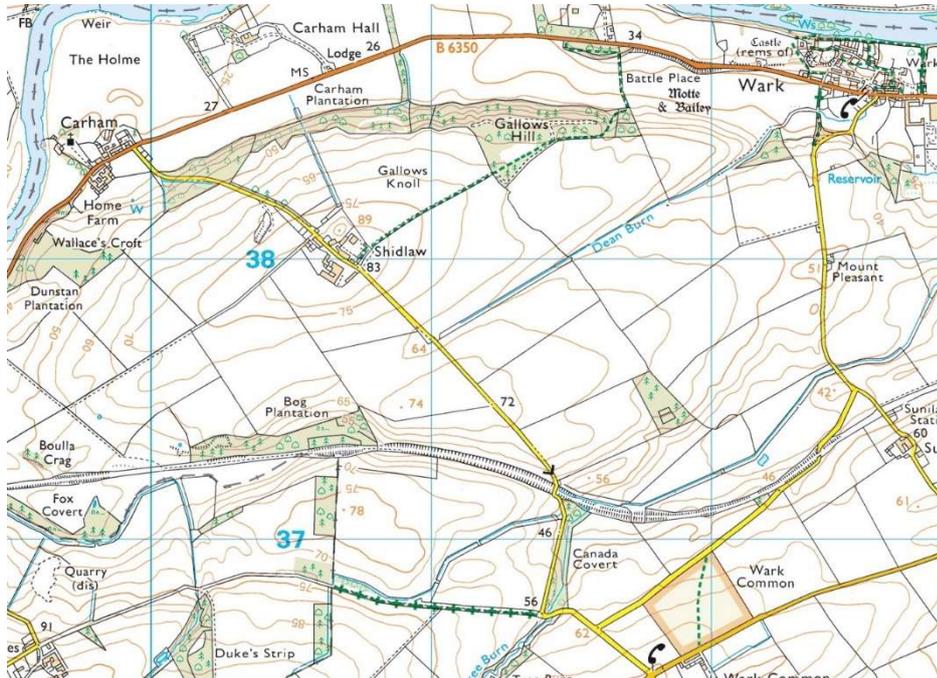


**'By Footpath, Farm and Byway' – Carham Parish Footpath Walks 5<sup>th</sup> February 2022**



Paths in green are public rights of way (England) - the route is not marked as the greater part is on private farmland

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In spite of very strong winds and the threat of rain, 13 of us turned out for our 5½ mile parish walk. Starting at Wark, we joined the footpath to Shidlaw Farm - the way through the plantation on Gallows Hill was made easier by the fact that the area had been cleared to allow access for replacing one of the poles on the power line that follows the path. This wood was relatively unscathed by storm Arwen, apart from a large tree blocking the path which we managed to skirt around.



Emerging from the shelter of the trees to head west, we were unfortunately facing the full force of the 40mph wind for the next mile on exposed farm tracks, until we turned left downhill towards the disused railway line.

Walkers at Shidlaw Farm (Thanks to Mick Plunkett for photo)



Map of 1860 showing the Tileworks

Next to the line, a large fenced area of humps and bumps are all that can be seen of the Shidlaw Brick and Tile Works, which manufactured a wide range of bricks and tiles from the 1840's to the 1880's - the railway being central in sending their products out to the stations along the line, and onwards - 'free of carriage at all stations on the North British Railways' ([See link below](#)).



Above – Remains of Brick and Tile Works



I wondered if the bricks in an old brick wall forming the side of a building at Shidlaw farm, 'English garden wall' bond - had come from this site?

The disused railway is now well-used by farm traffic; this is a continuation of the Berwick to Kelso line – Carham station was about half a mile further west, just over the

Scottish border ([See link below](#)). Crossing the railway line, we also crossed the Scottish border - in this area the border takes several, seemingly unaccountable, twists and turns - we carried on for a few hundred yards and reached the track that runs west to Nottylees and on to the back lane to Sprouston, and east towards Wark.

This track is an 'unclassified road', actually an unmaintained public road on both sides of the border and known locally as 'Mugger's Loaning' – a 'mugger' being a traveller dealing in crockery, a gypsy, or an itinerant tinker selling mugs and similar vessels. A 'loaning or lonin' is an enclosed track for animals, a grassy strip or milking place, or a common green road or drove road ([see links below](#)). There is also a track called Mugger's Loan in Cornhill Parish.



Byway, looking east, with wide 'grazing verge' on the left

We turned left and continued in an easterly direction, relieved to have the wind behind us, and soon crossed the border back into England. The byway is a good track, firm underfoot, but again is well-used by farm traffic, so can become wet and muddy. On the left of the track a wide strip called a 'grazing verge' can be seen, one of the several wide verges along the lanes in this area. ([See Carham Parish website link below](#)) We joined the road at the end of the byway (most of the group going on ahead to get back for lunch!) and continued along the lane back to Wark, passing a particularly wide verge on the left. Coming down the hill to Wark village, in the field on the left, remains of medieval field terraces can be seen.

Thank you to those who braved the wind to attend, and also many thanks to Murray Potts and Peter Straker-Smith for allowing access to their land, and so enabling us to make an interesting circular walk in Carham Parish.

**Note: It is to be made clear that paths and areas other than Rights of Way (see those marked in green on map) are only accessible with the landowners' permission.**

<https://www.scottishbrickhistory.co.uk/shidlaw-tileworks-nr-carham-northumberland-england/>

<http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/c/carham/index.shtml>

<https://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/mugger>

<https://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/dost/loning>

<https://carhamparish.files.wordpress.com/2022/02/walk-4-report-20190615.pdf>