

Rosedale Walk - Thursday 2nd March 2017



The 2nd March saw 13 walkers and four dogs heading over the moors for the monthly walk starting this month at the pretty village of Rosedale Abbey. The top of the moors had a very light dusting of snow but the temperature was a fairly mild 2 degC and up to 5 down in the village. The walkers set off across the River Seven towards the infamous chimney bank, but turned off down the valley before the steep climb, with a gentle stroll before climbing through jumble of paths onto the moor to be met by a stiff breeze. The breeze soon gave way and the clouds cleared to give a mainly sunny day. The first main point of interest was the curiously named Abraham's Hut, which is a scheduled monument consisting of a prehistoric round cairn dating to the Bronze Age (c2000-700 BC), covering a burial spot.

There was then a steady downhill walk followed by crossing a few fields into the moorland village of Lastingham for a refreshment stop and visit to the church of Saint Mary which was founded c.AD654 as a Celtic monastery by St Cedd of Lindisfarne, as a place of prayer and hospitality which it still is. In the crypt there was the top of the original Ana Cross and other artefacts dating back over 1000 years. Of more interest to some was the scaffolding being erected outside the church to assist in the removal of bees that had built a hive under the church roof.

It was then on to see the current Ana Cross and across the road to see lots of evidence of the old ironstone industry, the roasting kilns close to the road and the site of the now demolished chimney. Huge quantities of ore were tipped into the kilns from the railway line above them. The ore was mixed with coal and set alight. The process was known as calcination and the idea was to purify the iron, and reduce its weight, before it was carried by railway over the moors, initially to County Durham and later to Middlesbrough. At the row of terraced cottages built to house workers on the railway line, a steep path back down the start revealed stunning views of the upper dale lit by the afternoon sun.

All in all a good day with plenty of interest included in an 11 mile walk with 1600ft of climbing in just over 4.5 hours, rounded off with a visit to Castleton Tea Rooms.

Len Small