



EXPLORING

BARNARD CASTLE'S YARDS.

Walking In... **Teesdale**

START AT: BARNARD CASTLE
METHODIST CHURCH HALL,
SCAR TOP DL12 8PW

DISTANCE: 1.7 MILES (approx)

TIME: 1 HOUR

GRADE: EASY, ONE STEEP BUT SHORT
CLIMB TOWARDS THE END

This is a gentle, circular walk starting at Barnard Castle Methodist Church Hall, in and out of the 'yards', through the delightful St Mary's churchyard and the Demesnes, across the River Tees and back to the Castle.

Route Information

Turn right from the Methodist Church hall and and right again past the front of the church to continue along the pavement of Horsemarket. At the pedestrian crossing traffic lights, cross the road, turn right and almost immediately turn left into Star Yard, a well-used pedestrian route with shops ('yard' being the local name for these narrow, walled alleyways). Emerging into the car park, keep over to the right of the building ahead, which is the Working Men's Club and continue into Queen Street.

This was formerly Back Lane, connecting to the Town Fields and lined with medieval 'burgage' plots, which were narrow strips of agricultural land stretching all the way from the houses on Horsemarket and Market Place. Later it became a busy industrial area. Turn right along Queen Street and then first right into Ware Street, following this round past the library on your right and turn right into Hall Street. The houses here were purpose-built for workers in the Low Mill foundry, smithies and rope works, amongst other industries that grew up here. From Hall Street go through a wide archway into Market Place. Look up and across the road to take in the fine Georgian facades of the houses, the road curving slightly to follow the perimeter of the castle grounds behind.

Turn left along Market Place and then left through a narrow archway just before the Turk's Head pub into Waterloo Yard, with its terraced houses tucked away. At the end of Waterloo Yard, emerge into Queen Street at the junction with Birch Road. On the opposite corner is The Heckling Shop, once a workshop for 'heckling' or combing flax from Ullathorne's Mill, which stood across the river from the Castle. Turn right and continue to the entrance to a car park but instead of entering it, keep left to go through the Hole in the Wall yard. The building above the Hole in the Wall yard was the first Methodist meeting room in the town, where John Wesley preached and where the floor reputedly collapsed during a sermon being delivered by one William Darney. Continue along the path until you reach Newgate. Cross the road and



The Hole in the Wall

go straight ahead on a narrow path into St Mary's churchyard and along an avenue of lime trees. At the far end, before reaching some steps guarded by two metal bollards, turn right along another avenue of lime trees. On your left is a memorial cross commemorating the deaths of 143 people from an outbreak of cholera that devastated the town in 1849. To your right, high on the church wall, is the small raised figure of a boar, emblem of the Neville family of Raby.

Continue to the front of the church. St Mary's dates from 1130, has a beautiful Norman south doorway and inside a Teesdale Marble font from 1485. Leaving the churchyard, turn left down a cobbled path with the Buttermarket or Market Cross to your right in the middle of the road. The Market Cross dates from 1747 and has variously been used as a buttermarket, town hall, fire station and lock-up.

Bear left around Amen Corner, passing a blue plaque marking the site of premises belonging to clock-maker Thomas Humphrey, immortalised by Charles Dickens in 'Master Humphrey's Clock'. Walk a very short way down The Bank to turn left up three steps, under an archway, into another narrow yard, passing through a z-bend. At the far end descend by steps to the top end of the grassed area known as the Demesnes. *The Demesnes were originally kept for the lord of the manor's own use, although the town's people were required periodically to provide ploughing and harvesting services on the land.*

Turn right downhill and almost immediately turn right again, under the archway of a former chapel with Wesleyan connections, into Broadgates. *This was one of the entries into the town for cattle driven between the Demesnes and Castle farms.* Continue along Broadgates, which brings you back out onto The Bank. Turn left downhill past Blagraves House restaurant. *This was once the house of the keeper of Richard III's wardrobe and, in 1648, Oliver Cromwell dined here en route to Richmond.* Turn left again under an archway into Cleasby's Yard. *The houses here date back to the 15th century.*



Broadgates Yard

Turn right, following the road down the side of the Demesnes and round to the right along Gray Lane, coming out at the end into Thorngate. *This was once the site of an Augustinian friary, with its own burial ground and kitchen gardens.* Turn left for a short distance and then left again under an archway, adjacent to number

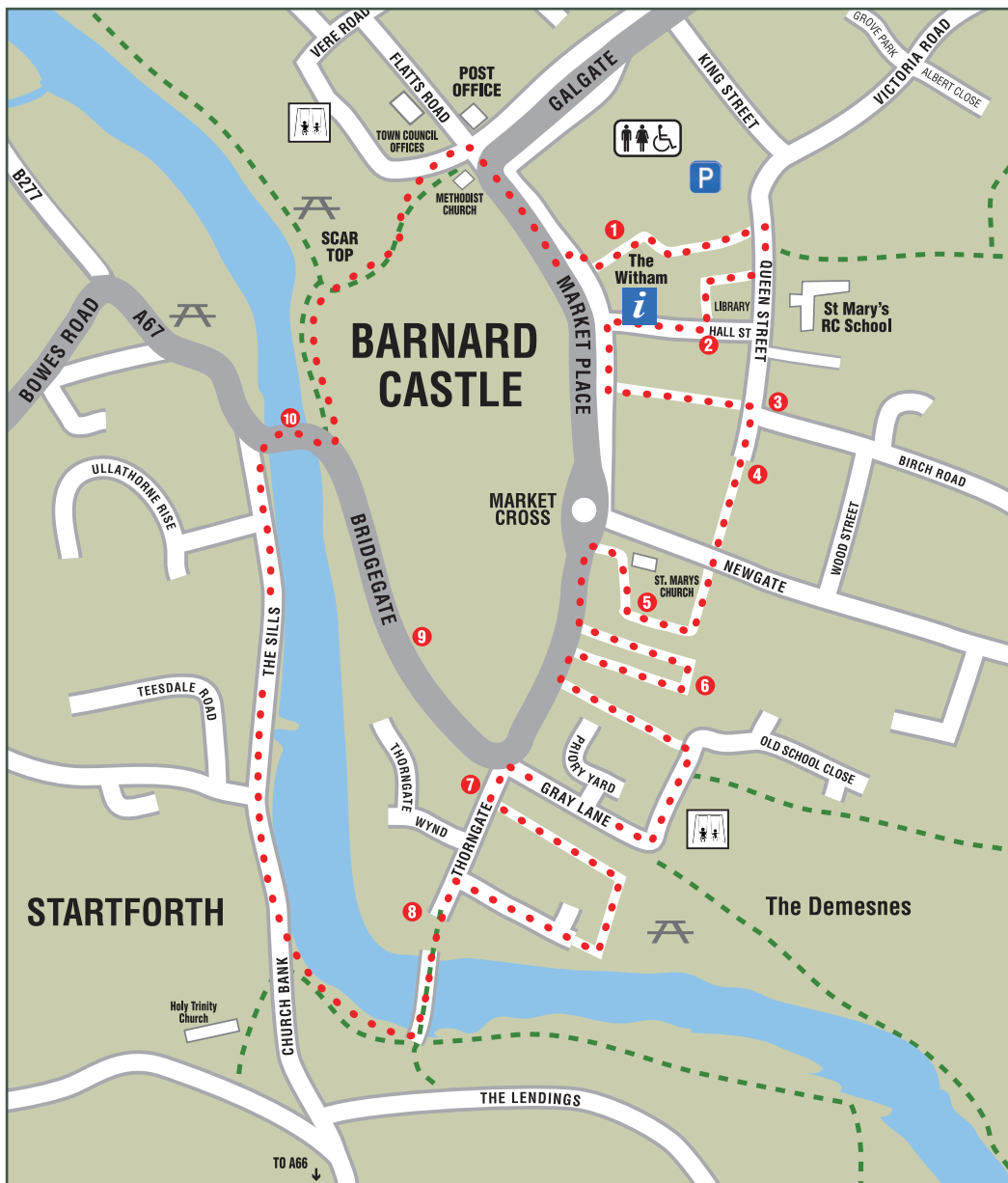
10B and with Thorngate Wynd on the opposite side of the road, into Bridge Inn Yard. Emerging once more into the Demesnes, turn right. *There is a good view down-stream of the River Tees and the former Mains corn mill, to which Gray Lane was once the principal access.* In the far right-hand corner of the Demesnes, turn right and proceed through Thorngate Place and back onto Thorngate. *Notice the small weavers' windows close together on the top floors of the houses opposite, particularly nos 19 and 21 'Weft House'.*



View of the River Tees

Turn left, passing between Mill Court on your left and Thorngate Mill on your right (former spinning and carpet weaving mills, now both converted into apartments), cross the green pedestrian bridge over the Tees and, at the other end, turn right along a footpath heading upstream beside the river. Where the footpath joins a main road, turn right along The Sills. *Across the river may be seen the former Bridgegate Mill which occupied an area notorious for its dense network of cramped and unhealthy yards and where the cholera epidemic was centred.*

Continue until you reach the County Bridge, with the former White Swan pub on the corner (also now apartments). *In the great flood of 1771, the County Bridge was inundated and badly damaged, with eight houses at Bridge End demolished.* Cross the road with care and turn right across County Bridge, then turn left and climb a steep path up to the entrance to the Castle (in the care of English Heritage) to return to the starting point.



MAP KEY:

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|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 STAR YARD | 6 BROADGATES CHAPEL |
| 2 LOW MILL | 7 WEAVERS' HOUSES |
| 3 HECKLING SHOP | 8 THORNGATE MILL |
| 4 HOLE IN THE WALL | 9 BRIDGEGATE MILL |
| 5 CHOLERA MEMORIAL | 10 COUNTY BRIDGE |

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Thanks to Walkers are Welcome, and Jo Bird for the original idea