

Evening Walk [Monday 14th May 2018 @ 18:30] : Tanfield Railway - Meet at 6:30pm at the car park to the east on the A6076 opposite to the Tanfield Railway (not the actual Tanfield Railway car park) for the second Club evening walk. The post code is NE16 5ET. Grid Ref 209572. Note the A692 becomes busy with commuter traffic so allow plenty time. From Gateshead take the A692 to Sunniside and left at the 2nd traffic lights at the Potter's Wheel onto A6076 towards Stanley. The carpark is on the left about a mile from the lights. For bus detail : <http://www.gonortheast.co.uk/> Tanfield railway is a heritage line operated by volunteers at weekends and bank holidays. It is the home to a large collection of locomotives but many are unrestored. Tanfield Railway path was visited during the first evening walks of 2016 & 2017. The walk heads east from the car park along the former Bowes railway in the direction of Kibblesworth, the start point for the previous walk. Beware of cycles as this is a popular route. Look out for wild flowers which line the paths throughout the walk. Initially the concrete road is through the site of a former mine with an equestrian business to the right. Soon the path changes character through a cutting with heather either side. After a short distance steps are taken left through a gate. This path has recently been restored, there has been no sign of it for years. There is now a nature reserve with a couple of notices outlining the aims. The walk now follows the left fence line to another gate. Turn left after the gate, new duck boating avoids most of the wet ground. The path follows the field edge with fence on the left to another stile then diagonally across and up the field to a stile and road. Looking back on a clear day the Cleveland hills are visible 50 miles to the south. To the west the Durham moors around Stanhope can be seen. Our walk crosses the road, note the metal sculpture at another stile. Once over that stile the walk turns left over a further stile and follows the fenceline to yet another couple of stiles. On a clear day Simonside, Cheviot, Hedghope and Dunsmoor are visible some 50 miles to the north. For most of the walk there is a contrast between cityscape and distant mountains. This is horse country and the fields have been subdivided for grazing which makes navigation interesting. Generally the route heads north east diagonally down the slope, crossing a few stiles until a road is reached. Here the route crosses the road and takes a path following a field edge with a fence on the left, through a second field before bearing left at Penny Fine. From this point the bridges over the Tyne and The Sage can be seen. A wood is entered and almost immediately a path to the left is taken over a stile following the fence on left. When a fence ahead is reached turn right a short distance and over a stile on the left. The path follows the hedge across two fields and over a stile where the path turns right now with fence on the right. Part way down the path takes a diagonal line across a crop field to the opposite corner. Continue in same direction to the Tanfield rail path. The railway took coal to the staithes at Dunston and can still be followed as far as a footbridge over the A1 Western bypass. For cyclists it is a short cycle ride from the A1 through streets to the Keelmans Way which follows the south side of the Tyne. Our walk follows the line west over a road to the A6076 which is crossed and continues on the railway path but there is a change. This is now the Tanfield Heritage railway and has a single track railway with a station. The path runs alongside the railway, initially on the right then crosses to the left and undulates. Look out for the remains of a turntable from the days of the original railway. Soon the carpark for St Andrews House station is reached and the end of the walk. Care is required crossing the A6076 to the carpark and start point. Members can meet after the walk in the Potters Wheel which is located at the traffic lights at the junction of A692 and A6076.



