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NEWBURN TYNE COUNTRY PARK APRIL 2023

The group met at the car park for an almost on time start at 11:05 a.m. A little cool, but ideal for an amble around this park.

Constructed in 1855 for the Whittle Dene Water Company to extract river water, using a pumping engine of c.1832 previously used in Newcastle for the same purpose. This engine, probably a modified Cornish type by Robert Hawthorn and Company, was replaced by two new Barclay 'grasshopper' engines in 1866 although by 1884 these seem to have been on standby to supplement the delivery from Wylam Station.



The sinking of Isabella Colliery near Throckley started on the 25th of April 1867, under the ownership of Throckley Coal Co. The main drawing shaft was named 'Isabella' after the wife of the company director. Production began in 1869. The colliery closed on the 29th January 1954.

A 5-mile waggonway built in 1748 to transport coal from Wylam Colliery to staithes at Lemington for shipping down the Tyne. It was originally built with timber rails, which were replaced with iron plate rails in 1808. The wagons were pulled by oxen until replaced by some of the earliest steam locomotives, including Puffing Billy in 1813. After the closure of Wylam Colliery in 1868, there was little use of the waggonway, until 1875 when it was incorporated into the Scotswood, Newburn and Wylam Railway. This railway was in use until March 1968, and in April 1972 the tracks were removed for the route to become a public bridleway.

The planned walking route led directly to the riverside, and the next scheduled point of interest at the monument commemorating the Battle of Newburn Ford in 1640. The Scottish Covenanter army, with overwhelming numerical superiority, defeated the English army. The Scots eventually occupied large parts of northern England. The Treaty of Ripon ended hostilities, but the Scots had to be paid £850 per day (over £100,000 in today's money). Charles 1 couldn't afford it, attempted to recall Parliament thus triggering the chain of events encompassed in the term "The English Civil War". As we know, it didn't end too well for King Charles 1!



At that time, as the Tyne was wider and shallower than now, there were several fords/crossing points between Newburn and Newcastle.

Following the river upstream, the 19th century work to strengthen the river banks was evidenced by the amount of ships ballast used in many places. Dredging work edged the tidal reach further west from Ryton Willows to Wylam Bridge. There are rumours, alas unsubstantiated, that the Romans canalised the River Tyne as far west as Corbridge, but the stone works found there could either be evidence of a lock, or equally a bridge.

The terraced houses of Blayney Row were built for the employees of Heddon Brickworks by Bates of Heddon Hall in 1889 and sold to the Throckley Coal Company in 1895. It was not unusual for brickworks to be close to iron works and mines, both having a great demand for bricks of varying types.



Following old tracks that were presumed to be road ways or rail way routes around the original Isabella colliery (sunk in 1867, never modernised during the tenure of the National Coal Board, and ceased production in 1954!) a sign pointed to Coke Ovens. If anyone pictured the likes of Derwenthaugh, Norwood or Monkton you're wrong! At one time there were 62 of these small coke works in use, proving coke for the Newburn Steel works.



Heading back towards the car park, we followed a stream that had a very definite tinge of rust red, this usually being the result of discharge from abandoned mineworkings.

As these things go, there's always an end point and the groups were at Hedley's Coffee Shop, which was obviously VERY dog friendly (free dog biscuits on the café counter!).

