

An Exploration of Barnard Castle, County Durham

Saturday, 26th July 2025, 2.00pm

A town walk led by Martin Roberts, our recently-elected vice-president




Butter Market (Market Cross), Barnard Castle (photo © Will Roberts)

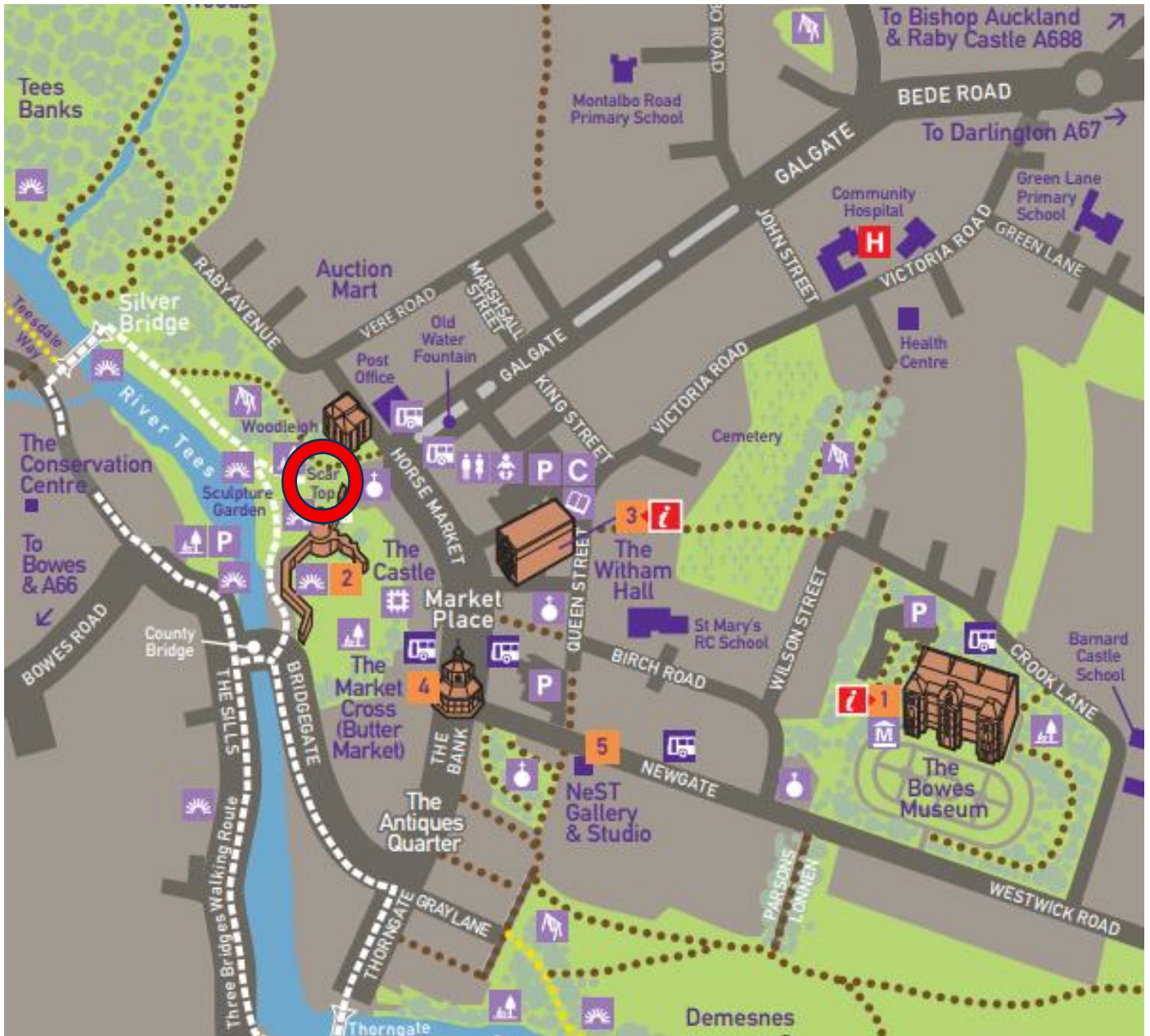
Barnard Castle is, head and shoulders, the best market town in historic County Durham. It plays all the right notes. Topography first: A gradually sloping site steepens then ends in cliffs and a perilous drop to the River Tees. Not that you would know it if you enter gently from the east, as from there even the castle that dominates from the west is quite invisible.

The medieval town was laid out around the castle walls, east and south, with curving, rising streets of stone buildings widening into the Market Place, using all the classic townscape tricks that contain, entice and funnel space. There are little visual surprises round every corner, down many of its narrow alleys or yards...and one very big one on the edge of the town.

If all that visual delight wasn't enough, its individual buildings are sufficiently interesting, or so little understood, as to make the town fascinating for the architectural historian. Besides its well-known major monuments, the wide range of vernacular buildings includes 16th and 17th century town houses, polite high-status 18th century mansions, and the legacy of an early 19th century building boom with an unusual take on the Greek Revival.

Transport to and from Barnard Castle is to be by public transport or members' own means. We shall meet at 2.00pm at Scar Top, the open green space at the west end of Galgate, next to the castle entrance, as shown on the map below by 

Amongst other places to leave your vehicle there is a large car park behind Galgate and Market Place. Members are encouraged to make a day of it and perhaps visit the castle and/or The Bowes Museum in the morning (neither of which will be included in the walking tour). Either bring a picnic lunch or be prepared to fight for a place in one of the town's several excellent eating places, all likely to be busy on a Saturday.



Those able to offer - and those needing - lifts to and/or from Barnard Castle are asked to indicate this on the booking form - please.

There will be a charge of £2.00 per head for this tour to cover the cost of organisation and of the tour guide notes which will be handed out on arrival.