

GUIDED TOUR of GUNNERSIDE GILL

ON BEHALF OF THE SWALEDALE MUSEUM

SATURDAY 16th JULY 2022



This all-day tour is designed to introduce the topography and former industries of this northern tributary of the River Swale to those up for a challenge. It encompasses walking mainly on public footpaths, which can be pretty uneven, through some very narrow stiles, both up- and downhill, although avoids crossing the Gill unless water levels are sufficiently low. Briefly, we will climb from the village up to *Potting*, pass below *Whin Hall* and above *Winterings* before dropping down into the valley to see the workings at Sir Francis Level including the introduction of the then latest technology. Continuing upstream we come to Bunton Level with its smithy, bouse teams (ore storage bins) and ore dressing equipment including a waterwheel-driven crusher, a most convenient place to have lunch. Further up we come to Blakethwaite smelting mill, the only survivor of two mills, displaying an unusual method of furnace arch support, and a truly incredible flue arrangement. From here the intrepid can explore higher up to examine the two Blakethwaite Dams, the upper showing the curious mode of construction revealed after

the 2019 flood damage. The return journey is, after a gentle rise, downhill and provides an excellent vantage point to overlook the morning's perambulations. *En route* features of interest will be pointed out and explained by the acknowledged specialists Shaun Richardson and Richard Lamb, who will be happy to answer any questions. The route has been chosen particularly to allow spectacular viewpoints over the valley giving comprehension of the landscape and its former mineral exploitation.



Please note that there are strenuous parts to this walk and if damp, certain areas may be slippery. In the event of a poor weather forecast, this tour may either be postponed or rescheduled for next year. The organizers cannot accept responsibility for any mishaps howsoever occasioned, all participants do so entirely at their own risk.

Alternatives include following the well-trodden footpath alongside the Gill to Sir Francis Level if steep ascents are not for you, &/or opting out of the visit to the Dams by remaining at the smelting mill. Bring lunch and drinks, and don't forget cameras or binoculars. Dogs are welcome but please bear in mind that the paths are rather narrow particularly on steep hillsides, sheep are grazing in some areas and the dogs will have to be lifted over the very narrow stiles.

BOOKING ESSENTIAL Friends of the Museum £25, Others £30
Please contact Helen Bainbridge: e-mail helen@swaledalemuseum.org or via 07969823232

Please meet in Gunnerside car park at 9.00 am on Saturday, July 16th, car sharing where possible. In the event of the car park being full, it is suggested that cars are parked on the grass verge of the minor road running west from Gunnerside towards Ivelet.

