Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society

Registered Charity no. 227786

Alston and environs May walk



Courtesy of: visitcumbria.com/evnp/alston/

Saturday 16 May 2026 11.00 am
Organiser: Mark Blackett-Ord

No charge: turn up on the day.
Please notify the organiser of any group numbering 6 or more.

Meet: St. Augustine's Church, in the churchyard. (Sat Nav. CA9 3HS; Grid ref. NY7184 4654)
Parking: There is parking in Front Street, and higher up in town at Top Car Park.

Alston is a tough little market town, the highest in England, with picturesque traces of its wealth as a Georgian and early Victorian lead-mining centre. We will meet in the churchyard of St Augustine of Canterbury's parish church (1870-86) halfway up Front Street, then descend to the bridge to join a section of the Pennine Way. It rises gradually to reach the well-preserved ramparts of the Roman fort of Epiacum, known to us as Whitley Castle.

We pass under the South Tynedale Railway and over the South Tyne to Kirkhaugh parish church. The Rev Octavus James, the incumbent for 43 years, rebuilt it to his own design in 1869 with a curiously thin spire and a dedication to the Holy Paraclete. We follow the river southward to the peel tower at Randalholme, remodelled in 1746, then climb gently to the hamlet of Ayle and on to Clarghyll Hall. This was an old house to which Rev James attached a sort of peel tower in continental style, and he died there in a fire in his library. From it we descend gently to re-enter Alston from the north end and find tea.

Distance and Terrain: The walk is 8 miles on minor roads, and footpaths. The terrain is generally level, with gentle gradients.
Please be aware that members and guests are only invited on condition that they take care to avoid damage or injury to themselves, others or others' property. By accepting the invitation to come on this event members and guests agree that neither the Society nor any of its officers will be liable to them for any loss, however it may be caused.

Clothing and footwear: please wear walking boots or stout shoes, warm clothing, waterproofs and also sunscreen if appropriate.

Directions: to St. Augustine's Church, Alston. Alston is reached either from the north via the A69 and A689, or from Penrith via the A686 and Hartside Pass.

Refreshments: there is a café at Epiacum, and cafes and a pub in Alston. You may wish to bring a packed lunch.
Toilets: at Alston town Hall and at Epiacum café**.**
Dogs: well-behaved dogs on short fixed leads are welcome.
For further information please contact the organiser:- Mark Blackett-Ord on tel. 07377 926 447 or Email:- mblackettord@5sblaw.com