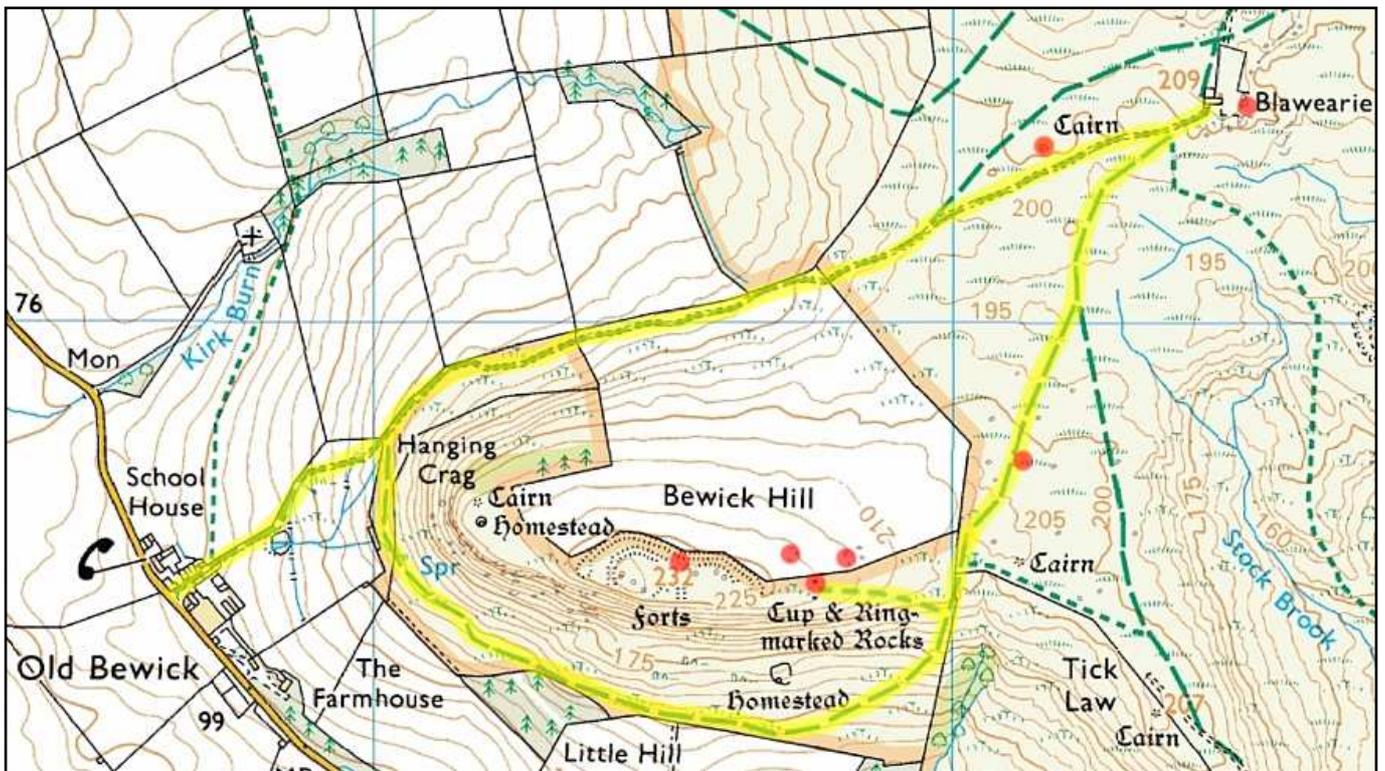


The Jan Brouwer Trail Old Bewick & Blawearie



A short 2.5 mile walk around Bewick Hill, taking in the ancient hilltop earthworks and nearby Cup and Ring marked rocks. The route leads on to the Blawearie cairn circle and the picturesque ruins of Blawearie farmstead with its 'rock' garden.

On the outcrop next to the farmstead, a new Cup and Ring carving has recently been created to commemorate Jan Brouwer, who passed away in April 2011. Although Jan lived in the Netherlands, he made many friends in the UK through his keen interest in rock art, especially in Scotland and the north of England. His annual summer field trips to visit numerous rock art sites also brought together other people with an interest in these ancient carvings.

The creation of a new piece of rock art seems a fitting way to mark Jan Brouwer's contribution to this subject and also as a memorial to a good friend. The carvings location overlooks the Old Bewick rock art site, which was a favorite of Jan's and also one of the first sites where these ancient carvings were recorded in the early 1800's. Old Bewick has been described as the birthplace of British rock art studies and the spiritual home of the rock art enthusiast. This new carving - the 'Brouwer Stone' reflects this tradition.

The Route

Park by the road at Old Bewick and take the footpath past the farm, up towards Bewick Hill. At the foot of the hill take the footpath on the right, which follows the southern side of the hill and then climbs up to the top.

On top of the hill are two well preserved, semi-circular enclosures, which are thought to date from the Iron Age - 2000 years ago, and although described as hill forts, their function or purpose is unclear. There may be some connection or continuity with the much earlier cluster of Cup and Ring marked rocks also located on the hilltop. These carved rocks could be 1000 years older, but perhaps still held a use or significance when the enclosures were built -hence their survival.

The best examples are

Old Bewick 1a (NU 07820 21579) Large block of stone with many cup and rings on upper surface.

Old Bewick 2 (NU 07764 21547) Large stone block with several cup and rings.

Old Bewick 3a (NU 07718 21580) low boulder with cup and rings on sloping side.

Old Bewick 1h (NU 07818 21775) flat rock with linked 'occulus' cup and rings.

After exploring the enclosures and rock carvings, return to the footpath and continue northward, heading towards Blawearie farmstead on the horizon. (On the way, another isolated Cup and Ring marked rock can be found on a low earthwork at NU 08062 21715). The Blawearie cairn circle can be seen on the left side of the footpath approaching the farmstead. This large Bronze Age cairn was excavated in the 1980's by Stan Beckensall (a good friend of Jan's and another well known figure in British rock art studies). The cairn was restored to its present form to show the cist burial chambers and the stones encircling the cairn.

Continue along the footpath to the tumbled remains of Blawearie cottage, which has a picturesque and quiet tranquility about the place. A romantic account of a visit here in the 1940's called it 'the promised land', describing its neat garden on top of the crag next to the house, and set around with large trees, Scots pine and silver birch. A deep cleft or passage through the outcrop has also been put to some use in the past, but now the tumbled stone walls and vegetation give it an old world charm and atmosphere.

On top of this outcrop, on its southern edge, can also be found the 'Brouwer stone' - the new Cup and Ring carving created in 2012 to commemorate Jan Brouwer. This location was carefully chosen by the carver for its outlook towards the Old Bewick rock art site and the symbolism represented in the crags. The carving took several hours to create by hand - a multiple concentric ring motif with a channel leading eastwards - in the direction of Jan's homeland.

It is worth taking some time to enjoy the atmosphere of this place and the rock carvings seen on route. When its time for home, head back along the footpath and onto the track around the north side of the hill, which leads back to Old Bewick and the starting point of the walk.