



Hagg Bank Bridge after restoration

### Access

Good cycle and walking routes exist on both the north and south banks of the River Tyne from Tyneside. On the south bank the route follows the Keelman's Way and on the north bank the route is the Wylam Waggonway.

### Be a Welcome Visitor

Whilst visiting the Country Park and surrounding countryside take care not to disturb wildlife. Remember that the countryside is where farmers earn their living, please respect their life and work. Leave no litter.

### Dog Walkers

Please keep your dog under control and be considerate of other park users by not letting your dog foul on the paths or areas of mown grass. Clear up after your dog - Bag it & Bin it. If you are walking in an area of the park which contains livestock or on the rights of way outside the park, please keep your dog on a lead to avoid worrying farm stock.

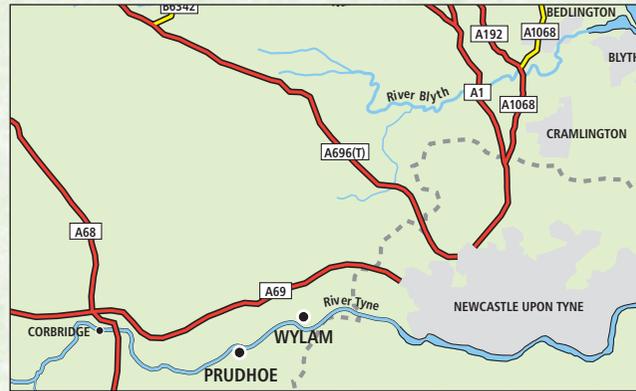
### Services

Wylam, Prudhoe and Ovingham all have a range of pubs, shops and local services. Public toilets are situated at the Country Park visitor centre at Low Prudhoe and at the entrance to the playing field at Wylam opposite The Fox and Hounds.



### Safety on the Water

- Swimming in the river is not advisable as it is cold and the flow can change rapidly. Always wear British Standard buoyancy aids or life jackets when boating.
- Note the location of the life belt before going on the water.
- Keep away from the river when it is in flood.



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### General

A walk with either a short or long route. The short route is 4 km (2.5 miles) and the longer route is 8 km (5 miles). Both routes are mainly on level tracks and paths but may be wet in places. There is a short but steep series of steps to climb on the return to Hagg Bank. This part is not accessible to pushchairs, wheelchairs or those with restricted mobility. It is possible to walk between the bridges on the level and return the same way!

### Public Transport

Prudhoe and Wylam both have stations on the Tyne Valley Railway and can be reached by bus from Hexham and Newcastle. Details from the Public Transport Team of Northumberland County Council, (01670) 533128.

### Car Parking

Cars can be parked in Tyne Riverside Country Park car parks at Low Prudhoe (NZ 087635) or Wylam (NZ 119647). Both stations have car parks for rail users.

### Start/Finish

The walk can be done in either direction by starting from Wylam or Low Prudhoe.

### With thanks to:

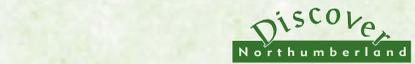
Wylam Parish Council, Robert Forsythe and Philip Brooks

### Northumberland Countryside Service

This leaflet is produced by Northumberland Countryside Service, part of Northumberland County Council. We work to protect Northumberland's countryside as a living and working environment that can be enjoyed and appreciated both now and in the future.

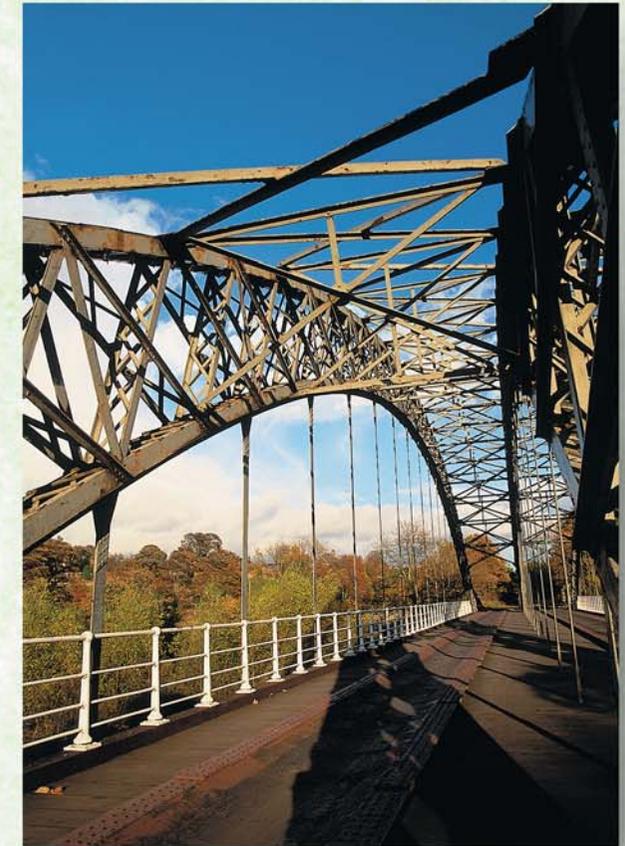
If you would like to know more about our work send an A5 SAE to the address below:

Northumberland Countryside Service, Northumberland County Council,  
County Hall, Morpeth,  
Northumberland, NE61 2EF.



# The Three Bridges Walk

A circular walk introducing Tyne Riverside Country Park between Wylam Bridge and Ovingham Bridge.



**NORTHUMBERLAND**  
COUNTY COUNCIL



Supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund

# Welcome to Tyne Riverside Country Park

*- the countryside on your doorstep*

For many years Tyne Riverside Country Park has been a popular place for walking, cycling, horse riding, fishing or just having a lazy day by the river. We have 200 acres of open space within a short distance of the urban areas of Northumberland and Tyneside.



Ken Dawson

By following the network of paths you can discover the park's diverse range of habitats and the rich variety of plants and animals they support. Take a leisurely stroll to enjoy the scenery along the banks of the river or blow away the cobwebs and cycle along the track to Wylam and Newburn.

You can also find out more about the history of the park and its plants and animals by following this or other trails that use the park.

Come and join us for the events we organise in and around the park or simply use the park as a centre to explore the surrounding countryside.



◀ Dipper

Eric Bird

*So much to do...*

## Orienteering

There is a permanent orienteering course in the park. Why not give this exciting outdoor pursuit a try. Packs are available at the Visitor Centre at Low Prudhoe.



## Countryside Classroom

Many educational visits are made to the park throughout the year. The Countryside Officers can help teachers and group leaders plan their visit.

## Fishing

Fishing rights within the country park are private, details from the Visitor Centre.



## Horse Riders and Cyclists

You are welcome in the park. Please use the main track which runs all the way to Newburn and beyond. Give way to visitors on foot. Cyclists please give way to horse riders and walkers.



# HAGG BANK BRIDGE

Hagg Bank Bridge (known locally as The Points Bridge) is an early example of an arch suspension bridge.



When it was built in 1876 by the Scotswood, Newburn and Wylam Railway Company its design was ahead of its time. The bridge allowed trains to cross the river from North Wylam

Station to join the Newcastle to Carlisle line at the West Wylam Junction.

Hagg Bank Bridge was the first railway bridge to cross the Tyne in a single span. It has a wrought iron arch from which the deck is suspended. The cost of building the bridge was £16,000.

The railway line closed in 1968 and Northumberland County Council bought the bridge and the trackbed a few years later. In 1997 Hagg Bank Bridge was restored with financial help from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The bridge had to be closed for several weeks while the contractors were at work. They had to wrap the bridge in plastic to stop the Victorian lead based paint polluting the river.

The future of Hagg Bank Bridge is now secure and it will be cherished for many years to come.



Newcastle City Council

# The Three Bridges Walk

A circular walk introducing Tyne Riverside Country Park between Wylam Bridge and Ovingham Bridge.



## 1 Start your walk at Wylam Station.

The station was built in 1835. It is one of Britain's oldest surviving country stations and is located on what was Britain's first cross country railway. The present signalbox was built in 1897 and is unusual because of its gantry style construction across the tracks. Few now survive. It contrasts with the mock Tudor style architecture of the station.



Wylam Station

## 2 Cross Wylam Bridge and then pass to the right of the war memorial.

Wylam Bridge was built in 1836 soon after the railway opened. In addition to road traffic, the bridge carried coal wagons. Rails linked the centre of the bridge with the railway for many years. Only the piers remain from the bridge's original construction. At the north end of the bridge is the former toll cottage of 1899. The bridge was freed from tolls in 1936.

## 3 Take the entrance into the Country Park car park. Keep the red brick wall on your left, walk straight ahead to the interpretation board.

Wylam is now a pleasant village. During the Industrial Revolution (1760 - 1840) it was a thriving community from which a stream of world class pioneers came. Wylam Ironworks once stood on the site of the former school (now the library and museum), ahead of you.

## 4 From the board turn left onto the path of the old railway line which runs along the tree lined cutting and tunnels under the road.

You are now on part of the former Scotswood, Newburn and Wylam Railway which worked between 1876 and 1968. The line behind you which leads past George Stephenson's birthplace (800 m east and cared for by the National Trust) was previously the route of the Wylam Waggonway. An early railway for which the world's oldest surviving railway engines, Puffing Billy and Wylam Dilly were built around 1813.



Puffing Billy

## 5 After 800 metres you reach the impressive former railway bridge across the Tyne at Hagg Bank. Cross the bridge and go up the ramped path to meet the roadway by the cottages of Hagg Bank, turn right onto the tarmac road and follow it alongside the river.



Hagg Bank Bridge during restoration

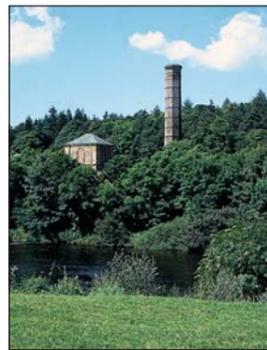
## 6 Walk for 1km to the gate beyond the former Hagg Farm. 100 metres past the gate, a smaller path leaves to the left. On the opposite bank above the Tyne is the exposed sandstone of Wylam Scar.

## 7 There is now a choice, a short route back to Wylam, or a longer route on to Ovingham Bridge and Low Prudhoe before returning along the south side of the Spetchells.



The Spetchells

Whilst you make your choice, you can admire the old steam pumping station on the opposite bank. This was built in 1874 for the Newcastle and Gateshead Water Company to extract water from the river.



Old Steam Pumping Station

## 8 The Short Route. The short route takes the left hand path which leads along an old railway trackbed beneath Hagg Bank. Continue on the old trackbed passing through two gates. Look out for the old railway sleepers under foot. The path veers left beneath the embankment of the present railway to cross the boardwalk over a small stream and up a series of steep steps to Hagg Bank. (These steps are inaccessible to pushchairs, wheelchairs and those with restricted mobility).

This trackbed linked a short lived colliery behind Hagg Farm to the Newcastle & Carlisle Railway. The branch railway was later used in connection with an aerial ropeway across the Tyne associated with the construction of the Whittle Dene reservoirs north of the river. (Go to Point A)

## 9 The Long Route.

The longer route follows the main track which runs between the river and the Spetchells (the white chalk heaps). This length of the Tyne is favoured by salmon fishermen. The Tyne has the most dramatic flood regime of any English river and when in spate it can be very dangerous.

## 10 Ovingham Bridge comes into sight soon after passing the end of the Spetchells. Walk under the bridge and bear left to the Tyne Riverside Country Park Centre. You can start the walk here if you wish to begin from Low Prudhoe. Ovingham Bridge is a former toll bridge of 1883. It replaced the ford over the river. From the bridge the Saxon church of Ovingham and the Norman castle of Prudhoe can be seen.

## 11 If returning to Wylam, retrace your steps until you reach the first Spetchell. Then follow the path through the gate on the right which leads you behind the Spetchells. The Spetchells are chalk waste tips from an ICI factory that functioned until the mid 1960s on the site where the papermill is now. Although not natural, they provide Northumberland's largest chalk habitat. The wide range of nectar rich flowers attract many species of butterfly including Peacock, Red Admiral, Blues and Skippers.



Red Admiral

## 12 Whilst walking this path with the Spetchells to your left and the railway to your right, you can at one or two spots climb to the top of the mounds for a magnificent view. The top of the Spetchells give fine views along the valley and of the town of Prudhoe (meaning Proud Height) on its hill above the Tyne. The growing industrial area of Low Prudhoe can also be seen.

## 13 Continue along the path which eventually runs alongside the small stream between the two Spetchells. Leave the stream and bear left to the gate on the main track then turn right. Pass under the electricity poles and turn right onto the grass path to rejoin the short route at (8). (Point A) Stop at the top of the steps to admire the view. The pond in the foreground is a haven for wildlife whilst the background is dominated by the Spetchells and Prudhoe.

## 14 Pass the edge of the allotments and onto the tarmac road. You should recognise that you have been here earlier. Retrace your steps by turning left briefly then immediately right at the telephone box to descend and cross the former railway bridge over the Tyne. You can at this point simply return to Wylam the way you came or alternatively at the end of the bridge, turn right, down the steps onto the riverside path. On the opposite bank the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway's 1835 route is dramatically located on a massive stone retaining wall beneath Wylam Scars. This is typical of the bold civil engineering that sections of the railway required between Blaydon and Mickley.



Hagg Bank Bridge

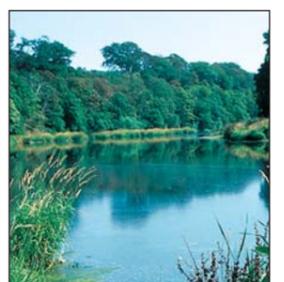
## 15 Following the riverside path towards Wylam, an old pit heap, now well-wooded, comes into view. Skirt around three sides of the mound and on the far side keep the Recreation Ground on your left to ensure that you return to the riverside path beyond. This was the Wylam Colliery Haugh Pit to which Wylam Waggonway came. The Waggonway was constructed around 1748 to transport coal to the navigable water at Lemington. From there it was taken by Keel boats to ships at the mouth of the Tyne. The colliery closed in 1868.



Wylam Colliery Haugh Pitt

## 16 Continue on the riverside path to the houses on the left. Carry on to the far end of the two terraces until their access road heads to the left. In the 1800's this area was occupied by the colliery workshops where pioneering work in designing and building the early Wylam locomotives was probably carried out.

## 17 This brings you back to the main road in Wylam from where you can catch your train, bus or return to your car.



Tyne riverside