

Tyne and Wear Heritage Way

Section 7: Beamish - Washington Village (9.5 miles)



Heritage Information

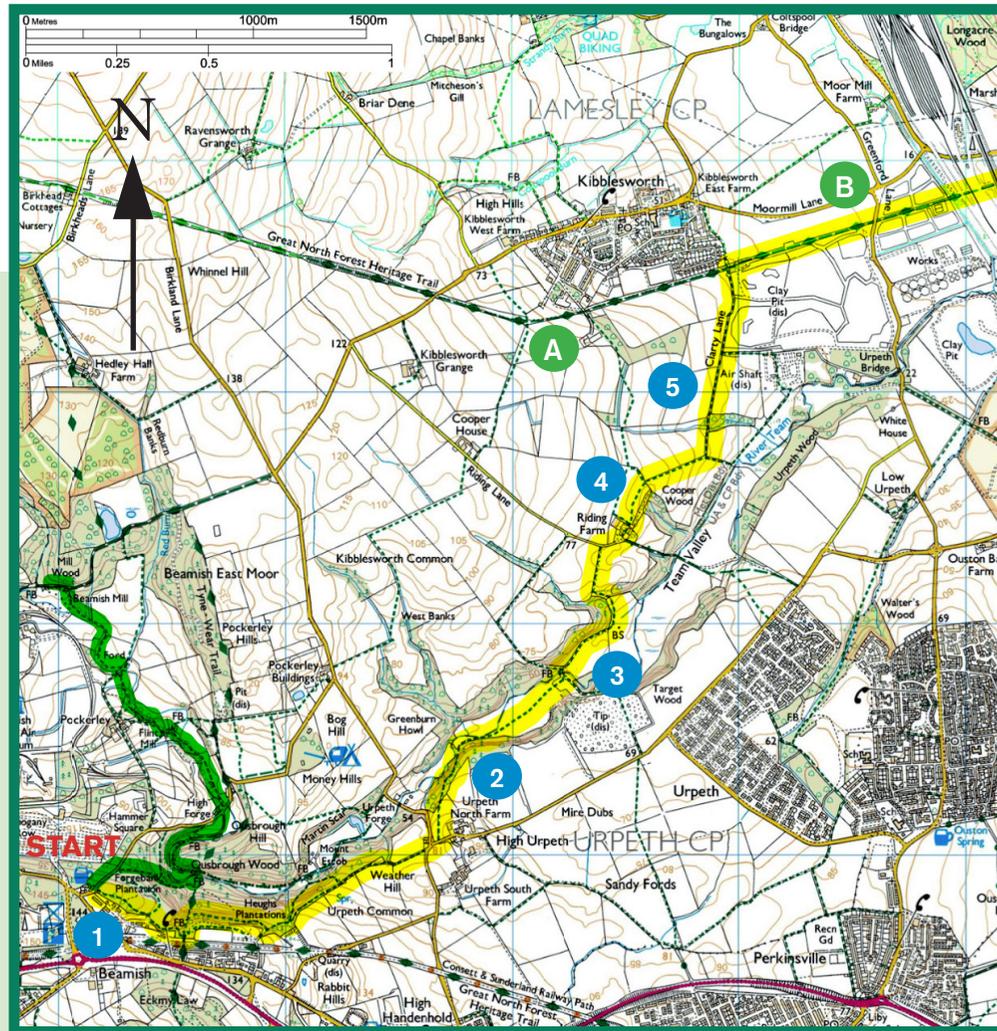
A Kibblesworth colliery opened in 1842. The Bowes line was then extended to serve the pit. The new line had two incline sections. The Kibblesworth engine would lower the waggons down the hill to Long Acre from where the Black Fell engine would haul them up to Mount Moor.

B The Bowes Railway was originally a colliery railway built to carry coal to the Tyne. The earliest section which was built by George Stephenson opened on 17th January, 1826. At its peak, it handled over one million tons of coal per year.

C Note the old crossing keeper's cottage on the right.

D This railway is a branch of the Pelaw Main Railway and is older than both the Bowes railway and the Eighton Banks incline. The remains of a kip (or hump) can be seen at the top of the incline.

E This preserved section of the Bowes Railway (originally part of Springwell Colliery Railway) is now the world's only standard gauge rope hauled railway and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.



The Walk: Section 7

Start: The Shepherd and Shepherdes Inn near the main entrance to Beamish Museum. (NZ 220 536)

- 1** Begin at the original door of the inn which has the lead figurines of the Shepherd and Shepherdes above the door. Facing away from the door, bear **L** for a short distance to take the first path on the right. Continue on this path until it goes downhill to a fork. Bear **R** and go uphill to a junction of paths. Go past the footbridge on the right and take the central path of the three ahead. Follow this path, turning sharp **L** just before another bridge. The path goes downhill and leads to the road junction at High Urpeth.
- 2** Cross the junction towards the farm and take the stile on the left. Go straight ahead to the wood. Cross the stile to take the narrow path which winds down to the River Team. Keeping the river on the left, continue to open fields. Go straight ahead, bearing **L** to cross a bridge.
- 3** Keeping the wood on your **L**, bear **L** at the end to go uphill to a stile. Cross and continue uphill to the left before bearing round to the **R** on a track towards Riding Farm.
- 4** Go through the farmyard to the gate at the far end, cross the field ahead using the waymarks to reach a hedge. Turn **L** immediately beyond the hedge, then **R** at the first corner. Turn **L** at the gap in the hedge, crossing the field towards the wood to join the clear track (Clarty Lane) to Kibblesworth.
- 5** Keep straight ahead, ignoring side paths, until reaching the disused railway known as The Old Bowes Line. Turn **R** and go straight ahead, crossing a road and passing through several tunnels. After about 2 miles, the route goes uphill to pass a farm on the left at Dunkirk.

F Peareth Hall Farmhouse is a listed building. It is the remaining wing of the late 18th century Usworth House which was a handsome stone building built for William Peareth. The wing was used originally as the coach house. The house was demolished in about 1900.

G Usworth Colliery Disaster. On the 22nd March 1885, an underground explosion caused the death of 42 miners. The oldest was 75, the youngest was 14. A memorial to the miners is in the churchyard of Usworth Parish Church which can be visited by going straight ahead at the roundabout and entering the churchyard on the right. Return to the roundabout and continue the walk.

H The Aged Miners' Houses bear a plaque to Thomas Henry Cann who was born in Cornwall and was a tin miner before coming north looking for work. He became a staunch trade unionist, acting tirelessly on behalf of miners.

I Washington 'F' Pit probably dates back to 1777. It was one of 8 pits sunk on the Washington Estate, starting in 1775. An explosion and flooding in the pit stopped production in 1796 but work began again in 1821. For many years, it was the most successful pit in the area, employing over 1,500 men and producing 486,000 tons of coal per year.

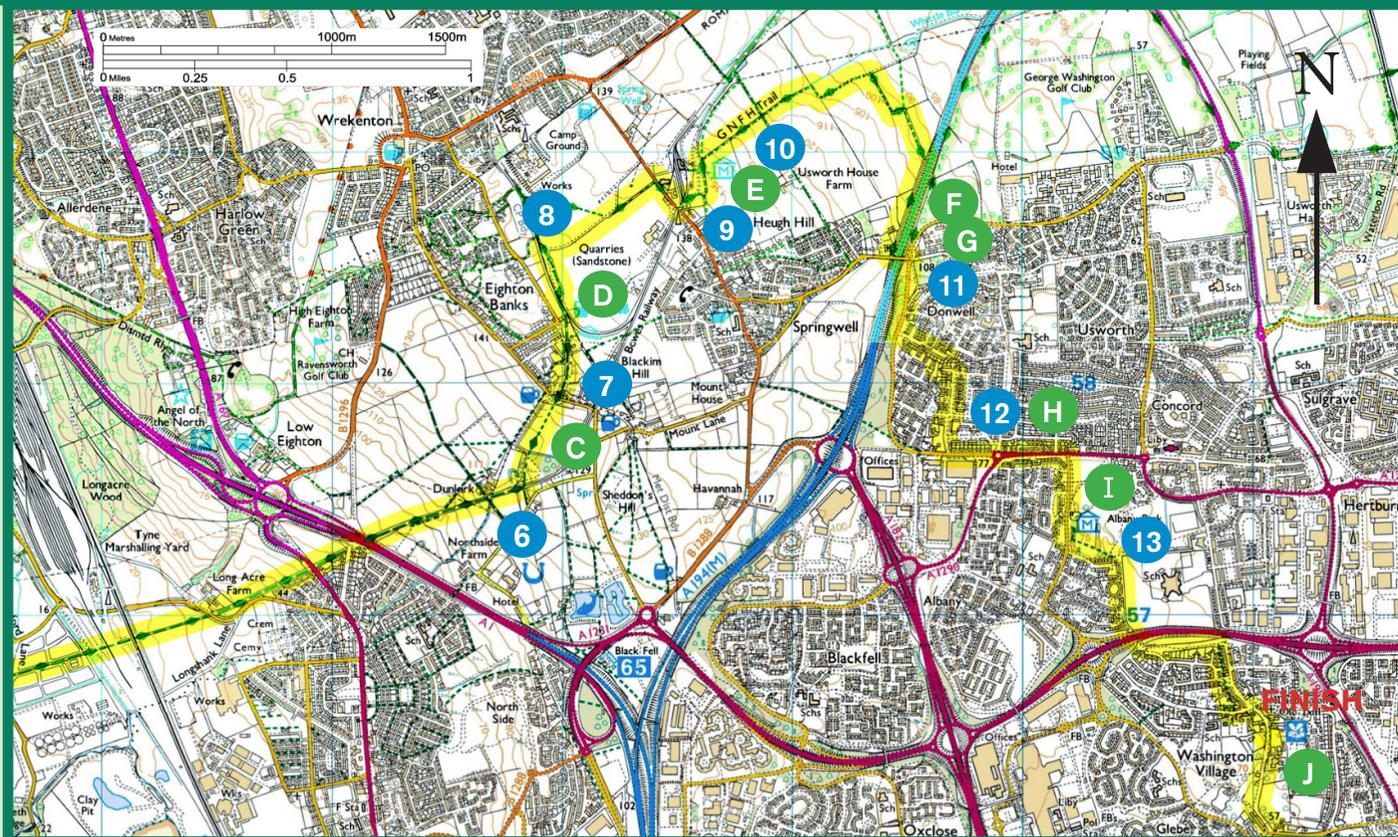
J Washington Old Hall was the family home of the ancestors of George Washington, first president of the US. The present building dates from the early 17th century but the original house may be as early as 1183.

6 Continue uphill to where railway lines are visible. Take a path veering down to the **L**. Join a clear track winding up to a road.

7 Cross the road and continue straight ahead up a lane. On reaching open ground, take the path which goes off diagonally in front of the isolated Community Centre building. Continue alongside the railway to The Waggon pub. Cross the railway line and continue with the railway now on the left.

8 After a short distance, take a sharp turn **R** to follow a good track. Follow this to reach a road. Turn **R** along the road to a level crossing.

9 Immediately after the level crossing, turn **L** through a



pedestrian gate. Follow the path, pass the Bowes Railway museum and after 100 yards take the track to the right. Follow this path as it bears round to the left.

10 After 100 yards, turn **R** onto good field tracks, moving towards the motorway ahead. Turn **R** at a T-junction to keep by the motorway, passing Peareth Hall farmhouse, to reach a roundabout. Turn **L** over the motorway to reach a roundabout.

11 Turn **R** with the cemetery wall of Usworth Parish Church on your left. Continue, eventually using a grass verge, to the second turn on the left (Donvale Road). At the end, continue on a pedestrian path for about 20 yards. Bear **R** past some trees through an arch between two houses. Follow this path to arrive at a corner of old walls with a castellated tower.

12 Carry straight on, turning **L** before the underpass to join Blue House Lane. Go down the road, keeping straight ahead at a roundabout to pass the Aged Miners' Houses. Cross the main road and continue to a road junction on the right. Cross the junction and take a path leading into an open grassed area (Albany Park). Stay on the path with the hedge on your right to reach Washington F pit museum.

13 Continue along the road, turning **L** at the first junction. Keep on the path, passing behind some houses with a high wooden fence on your right. Stay on this path as it bears **R** and continues, past a school playing field, to an underpass. Go through and turn **L** onto a path running parallel to the main road. On reaching some older houses (Musgrave Terrace), turn **R**, pass The Steps pub then turn **L** into Washington Old Village. Continue past the war memorial to Washington Old Hall.

