



Tyne and Wear Heritage Way

Section 6: Thornley Woodland Centre to Beamish (8.5 miles)



The Walk: Section 6

Start: Thornley Woodland Centre car park. (NZ 177 603)

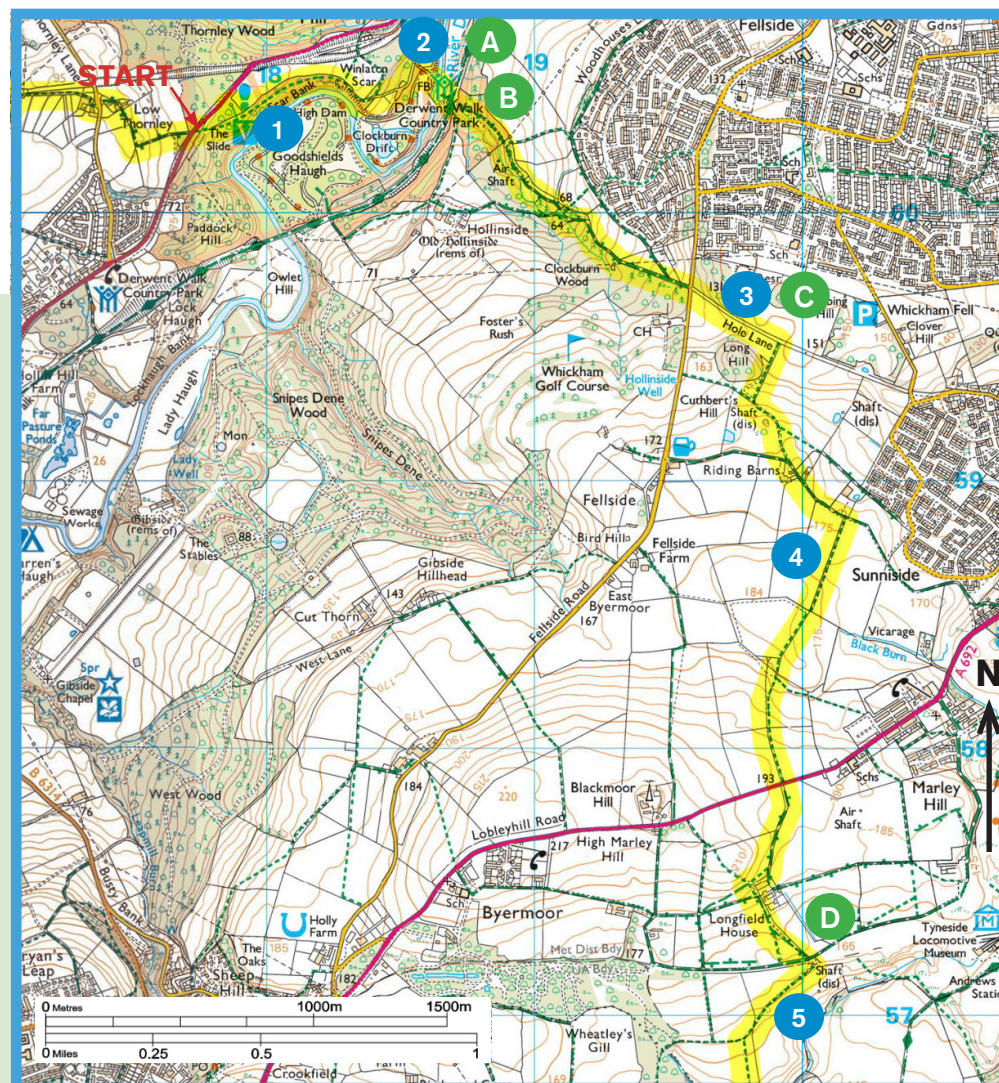
Heritage Information

A The Derwent valley was a busy industrial area. Waggonways used to carry coal to the staithes on the Tyne as long ago as 1645. Crowley's ironworks were located here in the 18th and 19th centuries, the largest ironworks in Europe at the time.

The Derwent Valley Railway opened in 1867 to link Newcastle and Consett. It took three years to build and involved four viaducts and a long, deep cutting near Rowlands Gill. The railway carried half a million passengers a year at its peak. It also took goods such as timber, bricks and coal to Newcastle and iron ore to Consett. Competition from road traffic led to closure in 1962, although railways continued to serve the nearby Derwenthaugh Coke Works until 1986.

B The original Butterfly Bridge was built in 1842 by John English. He was 6' 4" tall and was known as 'Lang Jack'. A new bridge was erected in 1950.

Clockburn Lonnen is part of an ancient drove road between England and Scotland. It was used for driving cattle for sale in the south. In 1650, Oliver Cromwell used this route to send his baggage



and artillery to the Battle of Dunbar. Clockburn Colliery was assessed for £5 'ship money' at about this time by the Government of Charles 1st.

C The Tanfield Waggonway, which opened in 1724-25, extended south over Causey Arch to Tanfield and other pits. It was compared by George Bowes to the greatest Roman Road of Italy.

1 Leave on the path behind the Centre. After a few yards, turn **L** along a path sign posted to Derwenthaugh Park. Go through Paddock Wood and along the edge of a field before bearing **L** down a sunken lane.

2 Turn **R** and head towards the Butterfly Bridge. Cross and turn **R** then bear round to the left to enter Clockburn Lonnen. Pass under the bridge and continue uphill for 3/4 of a mile to Fellside Road.

3 Cross and go straight ahead along a lane signposted to Tanfield Railway. Cross the first stile on the right and follow the track up hill, keeping the fence on the left. At a corner in the fence, turn **L** and after about 100 yards, bear **R** towards Riding Barns Farm. Cross the stile and go **L** along the farm track.

4 After passing 2 fields turn sharp **R** onto a footpath with the hedge on the right. Continue, with the hedge on your right, heading uphill to the A692. Cross the road and go straight ahead to Longfield House Farm. Turn **R** through a gateway just before the farm buildings, then **L** down the side of the buildings. This leads to a track down a field with the fence on the left to reach the disused Bowes railway.

5 Turn **R** and immediately **L** down to a track over a field, bearing **L** near the end to a stile. Cross and turn **L** along the edge of the field.

D The Bowes Railway (called the Pontop and Jarrow railway until 1932), developed much later than the early wooden railways. The rule that one waggon should be pulled by one horse, with one man in attendance was no longer required by the time that the Bowes Railway was established.

E Causey Arch was completed in 1727 to carry one branch of the Tanfield Waggonway over the Causey Burn. The arch was the first single span, stone built railway bridge. It took more than a year to build and cost over £6,000. An explosion and fire at Tanfield Pit meant that the Arch was disused from the 1780s.

Ralph Wood, a local master-mason, designed and built the arch, basing the work on Roman technology. Local tradition has it that he committed suicide by throwing himself from the completed arch because he feared it would collapse like a previous wooden bridge had done. There is no evidence that this is true.

F The Tanfield Railway closed in 1962. Today, The Tanfield Railway Company, based in the locomotive shed at Marley Hill, operates steam locomotives hauling passenger trains on Summer Sundays and Bank Holidays.

G Beamish Hall was built in its present form in the mid-18th century but its history goes back as far as 1268 when a Manor House was erected on the site. It has been in continuous occupation for centuries and is now used as a hotel.

H The 12th century Flint Mill is the earliest recorded building in the valley.

I The lead figures above the door of The Shepherd and Shepherdess were imported during the Napoleonic Wars.



Turn **R** at the corner then **L** to enter a wood. Bear **R** immediately and follow the waymarked path through the wood. Eventually a footbridge over Bobgins Burn leads onto a minor road.

6 Turn **R** along the road and then **L** along a track signed to Causey Arch. Follow the signs to Causey Arch, frequently crossing the Bobgins Burn and the Causey Burn by footbridges. At the foot of Causey Arch, take the steps up to the top.

7 Cross over Causey Arch and follow the path to the car park. Pass the vehicle exit on the **R** and shortly afterwards take the pedestrian tunnel under the Tanfield Railway. Cross directly over the main road to a footpath leading to a stile. Cross and go straight ahead to another stile.

8 Turn **L** along the road and after 100 yards, turn **R** onto a public footpath. Continue straight ahead after the wide track becomes a narrow path. On reaching a field, turn **R** along a clear track (Copp Lane), with the hedge on your right, to Coppy and Beamish Hall.

9 Go **L** and follow the road round to the main gates of Beamish Hall. Just before a bridge, turn **L** along a rough road signposted 'Bowes Railway Path'. After about ½ mile, fork **R** at a large stone block on the track and follow the waymark with the Beamish Burn on the right, until reaching a bridge over the burn. Cross, and after a few yards, turn **L** over a stile, with the burn now on your left. Continue to an old building which is Flint Mill.

10 Turn **R** at Flint Mill then, after a few yards, fork **L** onto a footpath with the burn still on your left. Continue to a road. Cross to enter Ousbrough Wood Nature Reserve. Cross a footbridge over the burn and walk with the burn on your right until reaching two bee-hive shaped stones. A few yards further on, turn sharp **R** down some steps to a footbridge.

11 Cross the footbridge and continue straight ahead uphill. The path bears to the right and rises steadily. Where it levels off, take some steeply ascending steps on the left. At the top, take the path which bears slightly to the left and soon joins a main track. Go **L** on this track, take the first turning **R** to reach a road. Turn **L** for 150 yards to arrive at the Shepherd and Shepherdess Inn.