



Tyne and Wear Heritage Way

Section 4: Ponteland - Wylam (8.5 miles)



Heritage Information

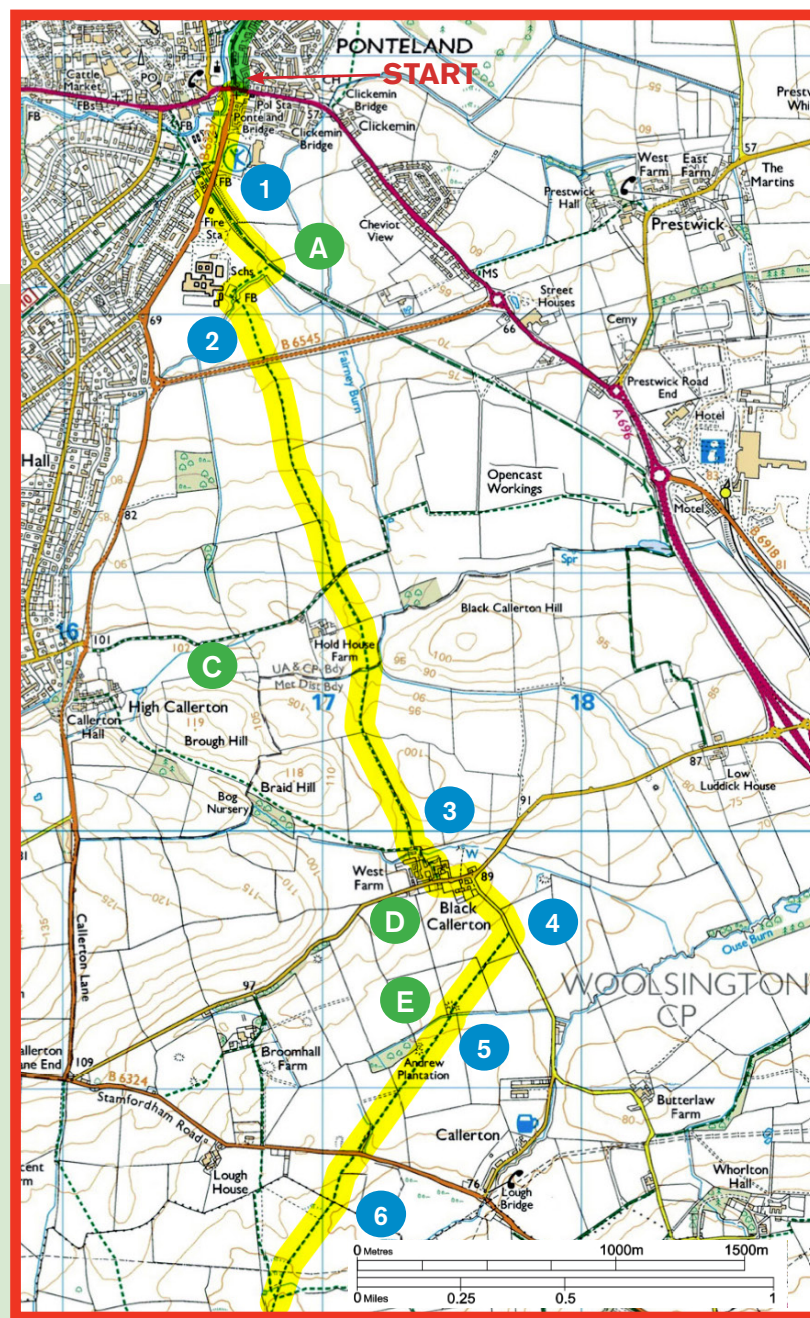
A The Gosforth and Ponteland light railway was opened in 1905. During the last war, prisoners-of-war were brought to Darras Hall Camp by train. The station in Ponteland was closed to passengers in 1929 but was not dismantled until the 1960s.

B Darras Hall started to develop in 1890 when the Northern Allotment Society set out to find land for city dwellers to grow food to sell in town and later to live on the allotments. In 1907, they bought three farms of poor land which were split into 197 plots of 5 acres each.

C To the west of Hold House Farm is the eighteenth century Callerton Hall. The farm track is believed to lie on the line of a Roman Road from St. Mary's Island to Corbridge.

D Black Callerton Farm bears a plaque about George Stephenson. He worked in the nearby Dolly Pit from 1801-1802.

E Brass Pit and Andrew Pit are marked only by the irregular mounds (spoil heaps) in the small wood and in the field beyond. There is still plenty of coal on the surface and under the soil as you cross the fields to Stamfordham Road.



The Walk: Section 4

Start: The Diamond Inn on the main road through Ponteland (NZ 167 728)

1 Cross the main road from the Diamond Inn and go straight ahead alongside the River Pont. Continue to a fingerpost on the left signposted Newcastle Airport 1¼ miles. Take the right hand track which is the old railway. After 400 yards, turn **R** onto the school playing field. Go straight ahead then bear **R** towards the tennis courts. Continue with the tennis courts on your right to a footbridge.

2 Cross the footbridge and follow the waymarks to a busy road. Cross over onto a broad track and continue straight ahead, following waymarks to Black Callerton.

3 On reaching Black Callerton Farm, go **L** through the gate, ignoring the finger post. Cross the muddy burn and bear **L** round the back of farm buildings. Go ahead under the gated archway and past the farm house to the road. Turn **L**, then **R** at the first road junction.

4 Go down the lane for about 300 yards to the fingerpost on the right saying Stamfordham Road. Go diagonally across the first two fields, heading for the wood. Enter the wood where there is evidence of the old Brass Pit and continue through the wood to open ground.

5 Take a diagonal path across the next field with some irregular, grassed mounds on your right. Continue to a stile beyond a ditch at the field edge and turn **L** to Stamfordham Road.

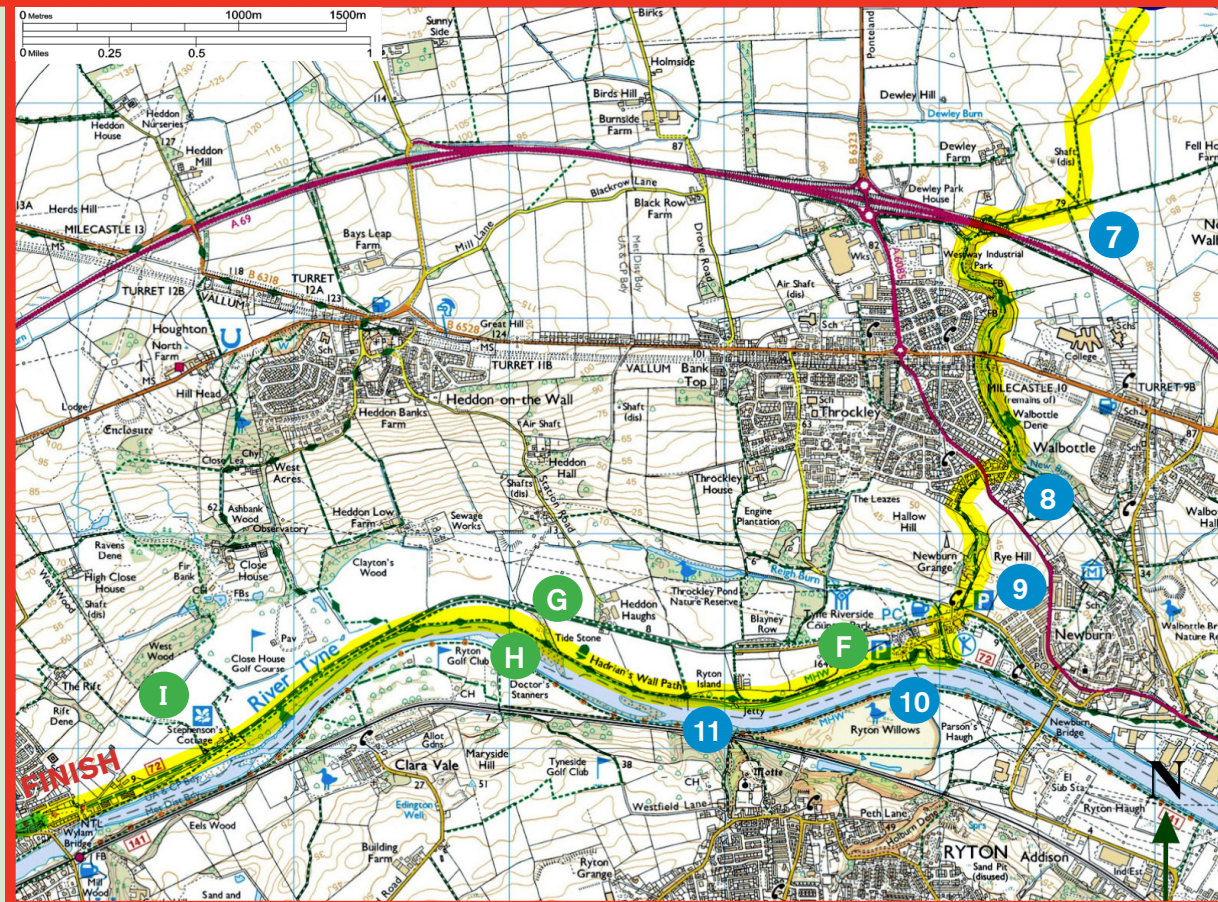
6 Cross the road and continue straight ahead along the line of an old waggonway to reach a track. Bear **L** and continue on the track to a stile with an open field ahead. Cross this field diagonally to the stile at the far corner. Walk down the next field with the hedge on your left.

F Newburn Country Park is largely laid out on the site of the old Isabella Colliery sunk in 1867. The pit was named after Isabella Stephenson, wife of one of the principal shareholders. In 1905 the colliery employed 944 men and Throckley village was built by the mining company for its workforce. Coal output reached 120,000 tons per year, some of it converted to coke in the beehive coke ovens (the partial remains of some of the ovens can still be seen nearby). The riverside path takes you past the site of the Battle of Newburn Ford. This took place in 1640 and the English army were soundly defeated by the Scottish Army who then went on to occupy Newcastle. At the time, the River Tyne was wider and shallower and this spot making it a suitable crossing place for a military onslaught.

G The Wylam waggonway was built around 1748 to transport coal the five miles from Wylam Colliery to Lemington Staithes. It would then be taken by keel boats to ships in the lower reaches of the Tyne. At first the coal waggons were drawn by horses along wooden rails, with one horse and one man to each waggon, making three trips a day. In 1808, the wooden rails were replaced with stronger cast-iron plate rails and in 1813, William Hedley, the colliery manager, took up Trevithick's idea of using a steam engine on smooth rails. By 1815, Hedley's steam engines were well established on the Wylam Waggonway, pulling eight loaded coal waggons at speeds of to 5 mph. The construction of a road bridge across the Tyne at Wylam in 1837 provided a link with the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway, resulting in coal being transported by train direct to ships at the mouth of the Tyne.

H If walking on the riverside path, look out for the Tide Stone. This marked the original tidal limit of the river. It stands about a metre high and is engraved with three castles, the Arms of Newcastle and the date 1783 when it was erected.

I Near Wylam, the route goes past High Street House, which is the birthplace of George Stephenson. A plaque here commemorates the achievement of his locomotive The Rocket in 1829 at the famous Rainhill Trials.



7 Turn **R** on the metalled track and continue under the A69 then bear **R** to go down into Throckley Dene. Keep to the main track with the stream on your right for about ½ mile to the Old Hexham Road. Cross the road to enter Wallbottle Dene and continue for a further 600 yards until the path crosses the stream by a metal bridge.

8 Bear **R** on a path which rises steeply to a road in a housing estate. Turn **L**, then take the first **R** (Briar Lane) and continue to reach Newburn Road. Cross the road, turn **R** to go uphill for a short distance then turn **L** into Hallow Drive. Take the first **L** into Fosse Law and at the far end bear **R** onto a rough track.

9 Continue downhill passing Newburn Grange Farm on the right to emerge opposite Newburn Leisure Centre. Cross the road, bear **R**, take the first lane on the left and continue towards the river. Cross a foot bridge on the right signed Tyne Riverside Country Park.

10 Follow the footpath along the riverside. (It is also possible to take the easier tarmac road to the Wylam Waggonway which goes straight ahead to Wylam.) If walking along the riverside, continue to an information board and a signpost indicating Riverside footpath to Wylam. This path continues beside the river to a gate. Go through, keeping alongside the river. It is also another chance to join the waggonway route.

11 The next section of the riverside path is sometimes very close to the river so care must be taken especially in wet or icy weather. Follow the path, eventually passing the Tide Stone just before an unfenced field on the right. At the end of the field turn **R** to join the waggonway. Turn **L** and continue straight ahead, passing George Stephenson's birthplace on the right and into the car park at Wylam old Station Yard.



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