



# Great Aycliffe Way

The Countryside Code is dedicated to helping members of the public respect, protect and enjoy the countryside:



- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Consider other people



Part Funded by GAMP - Great Aycliffe & Middridge Partnership (GAMP) is your local Area Action Partnership (AAP) which aims to engage and involve local people in making improvements to the area. The GAMP Board consists of key statutory partners, Local Councillors and Public Representatives who deal with local issues. There is also a wider 'Forum' which any local people can join to get involved with the local decision making process.



This leaflet is a community project  
funded and supported by  
Great Aycliffe and Middridge Partnership  
and Great Aycliffe Town Council





## ROUTE 1 - NORTHERN ROUTE

1. Start at the marker stone opposite Stephenson Way School - this marker stone was designed for the opening of the original route in 1998. There is also an introductory information panel on the route here.

Most of the land in the area was farmland owned by the Eden family of Windlestone Hall. Stephenson Way marks the route of an old lane which took horse drawn traffic to Middridge passing several farms including Burn Hill and Greenfield. Livestock such as cattle and sheep would have used the burn as a watering source. Several hedgerows along the route mark old field boundaries along the burn. The thick undergrowth along the route of the burn makes this area a valuable home for many insects, birds and mammals such as the peacock butterfly, wren, kingfisher and water vole.

2. Just after the footbridge, during the summer a rich wildflower meadow can be found in this area with a vast array of colourful and interesting flowers including knapweed, orchids and ragged robin. During winter, ridge and furrows can still be seen in the area which indicates the land has been undisturbed since the land was worked by horse drawn plough prior to the 1920s.

3. Just after the underpass at Burn Lane, limestone quarries were dug here in the late 1880s on either side of the path. These were no longer used by the early 1900s. The limestone was probably used as a building material and in the production of early cement. In the same area you will come across a stand of very large coniferous trees. This species is called Wellingtonia and is a giant redwood from the Sierra Nevada mountain range in the United States of America. They are one of the largest and longest lived trees in the world.

4. As you pass Woodham Technology College (across the burn and uphill behind the railings) the northern route of the Great Aycliffe Way turns sharply to the left. While the Southern Route crosses the bridge and follows the path up the hill. The arms of the sunflower statue mark the various paths in the area.

5. **Northern route continued.** As you climb the incline there is a grassland area on your left. This was the site of Lancaster's Cottage, the gamekeepers house associated with the Windlestone Estate. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the countryside was private property owned by wealthy family estates. Game keepers were employed to keep out poachers, raise game birds and control vermin such as foxes and sparrow hawks which would prey on the birds.

6. Cross Woodham Way and Woodham Park to reach South Agnew Plantation. This woodland plantation was managed into the 1920s for the production of timber and as a hunting area. The area would have been criss-crossed with a series of glades and rides to allow the removal of timber by horse. These rides would have also been used to allow estate shoot beaters to flush out pheasants towards shooting parties.

7. Turn left at the edge of the wood when you reach the houses and follow a track for a short distance. This is Woodham Lane, an old bridle track.

8. Cross Woodham Way and Burnhill Way and enter Rope Moor Wood, which once formed part of the Agnew Plantation. This path loops around the northern part of the walk, passing a sculpture called 'bug and toadstool' which was created by local artist Graeme Hopper.

9. The woodland you will walk through now is called New Wood. Aycliffe Development Corporation planted this area with semi-mature trees which were collected from Hamsterley Forest.

10. Soon after crossing Burn Lane you will walk past the site of Cobblers Hall. Nothing remains of the old Hall which was finally demolished in the early 1980s.

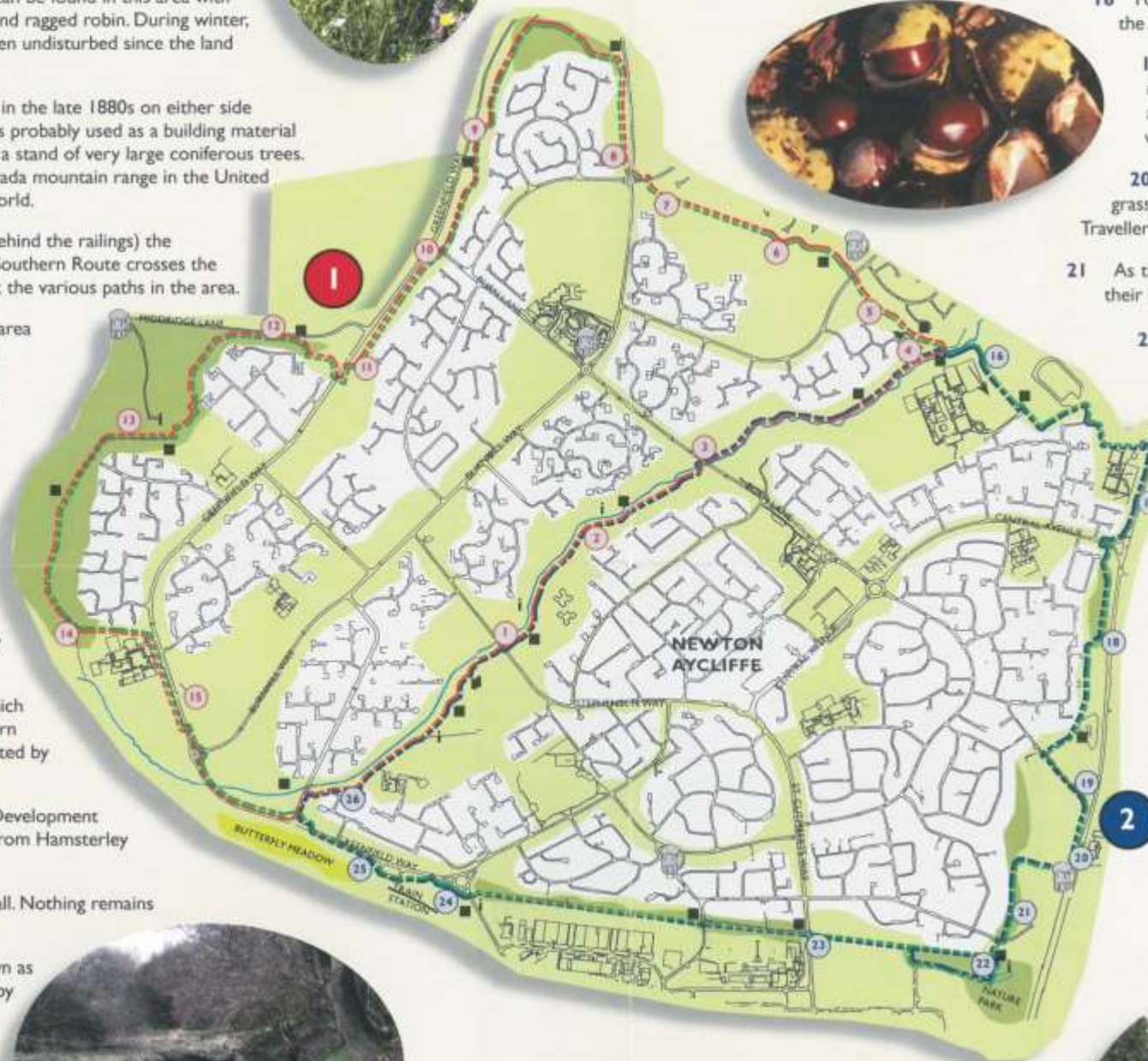
11. The path descends towards Greenfield Way underpass. This area is known as Bluebell Wood and was once a limestone quarry which had fallen into disuse by the 1930s.

12. After going through the underpass the Aycliffe Way runs parallel with Middridge Road and enters Byerley Park Local Nature Reserve.

13. You will pass through a small park with play equipment and then reach Blind Lane. This was the main access road for Greenfield Farm. Turn left down Blind Lane, but after only about 30m turn right. Middridge smallholdings were established in this area during the late 1930s to give unemployed people an opportunity to make a modest income. Later 20 cottages were built for the tenants. The four cottages on your right were part of this development.

14. Keep to the main path passing Greenfield College. This was formerly the site of Greenfield Farm.

15. Pass through the subway following the path which then crosses Alston Crescent. Walk through the parkland again going through a second subway under Burnhill Way. Soon after this there is a path junction at which you turn right leading down to Williamfield Way. Cross the road and continue along the burn through West Park. Pass by Stephenson Way School and this will return you to your starting point.



- - - ROUTE 1  
- - - ROUTE 2  
- - - COMBINED ROUTES

i Information Board  
 ■ Seat  
 ↗ Incline  
 🏠 Public Houses



## ROUTE 2 - SOUTHERN ROUTE

1-4 Follow the northern route from the start through Woodham Burn. At the Sunflower sculpture turn right crossing over the bridge.

16 Follow the path up the incline past Woodham Technology College, then at Wolsey Close follow the tree lined path around the edge of the houses. The path then passes St Oswald's Allotments and follows a track through trees at the side of St Oswald's Park. This brings you out at the A167, known historically as the Great North Road.

17 This road was originally the main road between Edinburgh and London and historically used by mail coaches prior to the A1 (m) being constructed in the mid 1960s. A tarmac footpath allows a safe route to Central Avenue. Cross the road at the island and continue parallel to the Great North Road through a small plantation and grassland.

18 Follow the path past the park and playing fields until you reach Moore Lane. Turn left towards the A167.

19 In the original plans for the new town this lane was to be one of the main new roads into town. However, this was later not required due to the new access created along Central Avenue. A row of houses lined Moore Lane and near the junction with the A167 stood a tanners yard and coaching inn called the Travellers Rest.

20 At the A167 turn right along the tarmac path and after about 30 metres turn right through grassland and enter a mature plantation. Turn left through the plantation until it emerges at Travellers Green.

21 As the name suggests this area was used by travellers as a winter base where they could park their homes and spend the winter months.

22 Cross the lane and continue a short distance where you will come to the entrance of Aycliffe Nature Park. This site was formerly railway sidings for the Simpasture railway line which travelled through the Nature Park under a now blocked tunnel that ran under the A167 toward Stockton. A series of information panels explains more about the history of the site and how it has now become a haven for wildlife including the protected Great Crested Newt.

23 At the entrance to the Nature Park turn right and follow the Simpasture Nature Line for approximately 1 mile. This line was built in 1833 with the aim of providing competition to the Darlington and Stockton line to transport coal from the South West Durham Coal field to the docks around Hartlepool. The route was one of the first in the area to be electrified in 1915. Due to stiff competition the fortunes of the line were greatly reduced. However a brief resurrection of fortune was seen in 1941 when Royal Ordnance Factory 59 was built at Aycliffe to serve the war effort. There was a gradual decline in the line after the war and it was eventually closed in 1963.

24 The tree lined route emerges at Horndale Avenue. Cross the road and follow the path up a slight incline towards a railway bridge. Just before the bridge bear right and drop down towards Newton Aycliffe Station which was opened on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 1978.

25 Follow the path past the entrance to the station passing a sculpture of an orchid with a common blue butterfly. This sculpture represents the wildflower meadow in which the structure is set. During summer this area is covered with many species including yellow rattle, orchids and butterflies.

26 The path crosses Greenfield Way and bears to the right. At this point the path joins the Northern route. Follow the path along the burn back to the start.

We hope that by completing the Great Aycliffe Way you will have discovered a little more about the town and the various changes the area has seen over the centuries. Fragments of the former landscape live on today and provide a fascinating combination of old and new.



## The Great Aycliffe Way

The original northern route of the Great Aycliffe Way was completed in 1998 to commemorate 50 years since the designation of the new town of Newton Aycliffe. A second route was added to the south of the original in 2008 to take in the rest of the residential area of the new town.

Altogether the route forms a figure of eight which allows the user various options for a pleasant walk in the countryside. The northern route is 5 ½ miles and the southern route is just over 4 miles. The outer ring route is 8 miles if the whole route is walked.

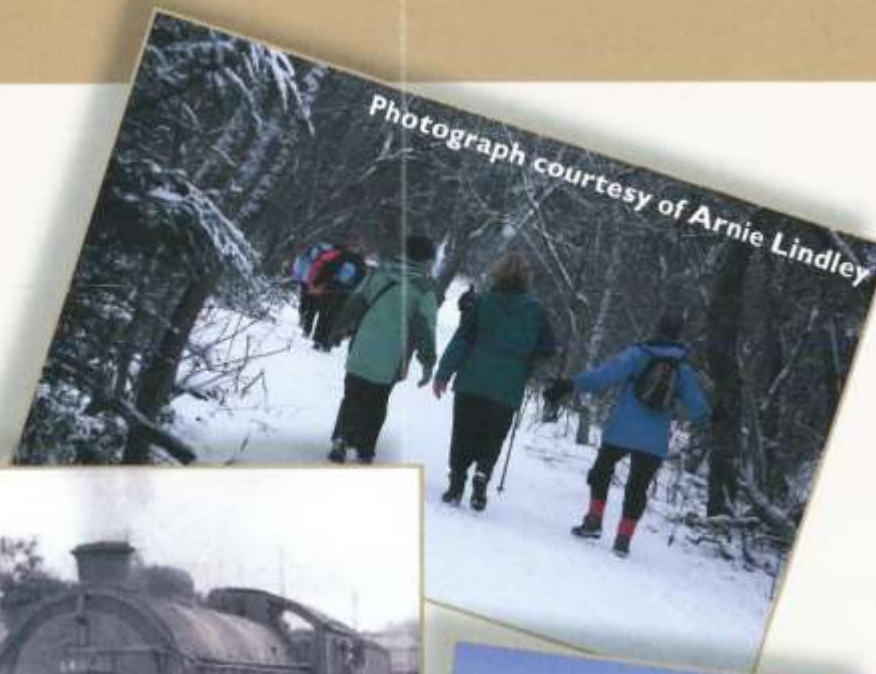
Most of the routes are accessible to both pushchairs and wheelchairs with only a few gentle slopes, although some areas can become slightly muddy after periods of heavy rain. Both routes are clearly marked with directional posts which are positioned wherever there may be a risk of confusion.

## Getting started

You can take up the route from any position on the map but the starting point for the purposes of this leaflet will be where Woodham Burn crosses Stephenson Way.

## Managed by

Great Aycliffe Town Council & Durham County Council



Photograph courtesy of Arnie Lindley



## How to Get There

### By Bus

Contact Travel line for up to date information on  
T: 0191 2020747 [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

### By Train

Accessible from the Darlington - Bishop line.  
The route can be joined at Williamfield Way.

### By Car

Parking is available in West Park and the Town Centre.



## Contact list

### Great Aycliffe Town Council

T: 01325 300700 [www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk](http://www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk)

### Durham County Council

T: 0300 123 7070 [www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk)

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