



Backworth Pit

The path enters a plantation that was planted as a reclamation scheme in the late 1970s on the site of the Hotspur Brick Works on the left of the path and Backworth "C" Pit on the right side of the path.

The plantation is made up of pioneer woodland, including silver birch, oaks and young elms. Notice the change in colour of the path where it becomes red as a result of the brick dust from the Brick Works.

Return along this path back to the crossroads.

From the original path take a sharp left turn, (from the extended route take the narrow, second track on the left) and join the waggonway.

This was the line of the Backworth Colliery Railway. Notice the wooden sleepers where the path nears Backworth village.

In spring and early summer listen for skylarks.

Follow the waggonway and at the crossroads carry straight ahead and take the narrow path along the side of the football pitch. When the path joins up to the road in the village (Church Lane) turn right. Pass the community centre and at the roundabout turn left and continue down Backworth Lane/Station Road. You will see Backworth Hall on the right-hand side of the road.

The former Backworth Hall, on the right, was built in 1780 by Ralph Grey, a merchant from Newcastle, who first investigated the potential for mining in the Backworth area. The hall is now Backworth Miners' Welfare and is used as a social club and recreation ground for the local community.

Continue down the road, and just past the Backworth Institute Club, turn left onto Claverley Drive and take the footpath immediately to the right, and head towards the old brick buildings on the right.

These buildings are all that remain of the Backworth Colliery complex. The raised concrete "caps" of the old pit shafts of the former Eccles Colliery and the Maude and Backworth "A" pits can be seen in the field to the rear of the buildings.

Follow the road running along the rear of the Backworth Colliery buildings and rejoin Station Road.



Wren

Turn left and continue down Station Road to where the route joins back up at the bypass and return to Northumberland Park Metro Station.



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North Tyneside  
Waggonways

## BACKWORTH WALK



Orange Tip

Start: Northumberland Park Metro Station  
Distance: 5.1 km (3.1 miles)  
Time: 1.5 hours  
Terrain: easy

The walk is along the waggonways associated with the Backworth mining industry and takes in a substantial part of the Northumberland Dock to Seghill local wildlife corridor.



Leave Northumberland Park Metro Station (which is on the site of the old Backworth Station of the Blyth and Tyne Railway) from the platform 2 exit and take the footbridge over the Metro line. Turn left onto the former Backworth Waggonway and follow the path until it joins Station Road.

The Backworth Waggonway crossed Station Road just opposite the Moorside estate, then it branched off with one line going north-west through the Eccles and Maude complex to Seghill and Cramlington, while the other line went north and branched off again, with one line north-west to the Fenwick and Delaval pits and the other going north-east to Church Pit.

Cross the road and continue left up Station Road to the large roundabout. Cross the dual carriageway and turn right down the gravel path marked "Public Footpath". Follow this path to the clearing where the pylon stands.

This is the site of the former Eccles Colliery, which was the deepest pit in the district. It was in operation from 1905 until 1980. The closure of Eccles brought 168 years of mining in Backworth to an end. It was the last pit in operation in North Tyneside.



Thistle

Cross the clearing (keeping the pylon on your right) and head for the far right hand corner. Look for the waymarker post at the right corner of the clearing, join the path here and turn immediate left to rejoin the Backworth Waggonway (West Holywell branch).

This line was abandoned after the West Holywell pit closed in 1861. Some of the old winding cables can still be seen running along the right hand side of the path if you look beneath the undergrowth.

Follow the waggonway path under the old, brick bridge. The bridge was originally built for a narrow gauge railway and is consequently very low and narrow. (So watch your head!)

The bridge was strengthened and extended later (probably during the 1860s when the Blyth and Tyne Railway track was doubled) as can be seen from the wider sandstone section at the rear of the tunnel.

The blackened stone on the older part of the tunnel roof is due to the soot from the steam engines that used the original railway.

Immediately upon leaving the tunnel a group of teasel can be seen on the left. These plants played an important role in the early cotton industry, as the spikey, thistle-like heads were used for teasing cotton, hence their name.

If you look carefully at the leaves you will see that they are well-adapted for holding rain water.

Continue to follow this path to the end, cross the low stile and turn sharp left to double back along the road heading towards Backworth village.



NCB Locomotive

On the right hand side of the road, just before the level crossing, stood Holywell Square, a group of miners' cottages. These houses were known locally as the "Dardanelles" after the disastrous landings at Gallipoli in World War I, because like its namesake, there was only one way in and out.

Continue along the road to the level crossing, which marks the site of the former Holywell Station. Cross the level crossing (take care as trains do still run regularly on this line) and turn immediately right, through the gate and follow the track alongside the railway line.

The hedgerow immediately after the gate has a particularly dense bramble thicket which is very attractive to honeybees and bumblebees.

Follow the path and go left at the fork following the raised embankment that was once the Burradon and Holywell Waggonway. During springtime look out for Gorse, Dyer's rocket and a particularly colourful broom along this stretch of the path.

The path comes to a crossroads.

Those that wish to follow the extended route turn right along Fisher Road. A short way down the track there is an area of trees on both sides of the road. This marks the site of the former gardens of the lost village of Havelock Place.

The village comprised around 100 houses built around two sides of a triangular village green (now a field). Most of the residents here would have been employed at Hotspur Brick Works, which was situated further up the track.

Ignore the signed footpath to the right (this leads to Seghill level crossing) and instead take the left hand path which skirts along one side of what was once Havelock Place.

The hedgerows and ditches along the path are good spots for sighting butterflies (including meadow brown, large skipper, common blue, red admiral and large white). The ditches also contain large spikes of both common spotted and northern marsh orchids.



Common Spotted Orchid