

Recross Silver Fox Way and continue along this broad track. Pass the wetland habitat on the left hand side and turn left keeping the pylon on the right. Continue straight over the junction of paths and pass three ponds on the left.

Take the right fork immediately after the third pond. Pass a fourth pond and at the crossroads take the path to the right up a flight of steps made with former railway sleepers, to the sundial, made from the same steel as that used for the 'Angel of the North'.



Yellow rattle

The oldest areas of grassland occur between this central mound and the waggonway on the eastern boundary of the site. These predate the 1996 reclamation and survived as areas of open, rough grassland when the area was used as a rubbish tip during the 1980s and 1990s.

Typical grasses include red fescue, Yorkshire fog and yellow rattle.



Meadowsweet

From here take time to enjoy the panoramic views with Cheviot and Simonside Hills to the North, the coast and St. Mary's Lighthouse to the East, the City of Newcastle and North Pennines to the West, with Durham and Penshaw Monument to the South.

Take the sloping path directly opposite the steps and follow it around the hill and down the slope to the pond.

Turn right and then take the left fork which returns to the car park.

Backworth 'C' Pit



Front cover design: Man-Ying Yue

## NORTH TYNESIDE Waggonways

### BIODIVERSITY PARK WALK

Start: Car park on Silver Fox Way,  
opposite front of the Village Hotel

Distance: 1.9 miles (3.2 km)

Time: 1.5 hours

Terrain: Easy, optional steep climb

The walk is easy apart from an optional steep climb to the sundial at the end – well worth it for the views as it is the highest point in North Tyneside, with added interest provided by extensive wetland habitats.

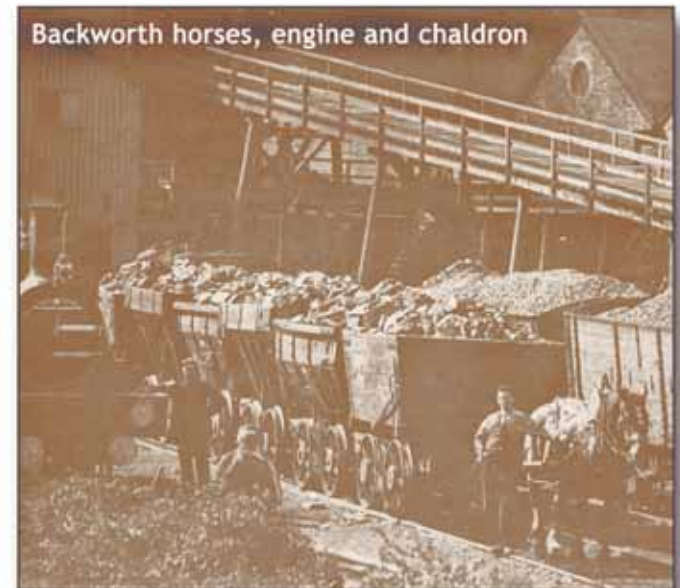


In 1996 work began on reclaiming the West Allotment tip and the remains of the spoil from the former Backworth Colliery. 350,000 square metres of clay subsoils from adjacent development sites, including the Siemens microchip plant, were used to convert this 15ha site into Britain's first purpose built biodiversity park. The site now contains a variety of different habitats for some of North Tyneside's most threatened species.



On the first part of the track are two grassland areas on the left worth exploring. The first has tall grasses, Yorkshire fog and Timothy, interspersed with patches of low growing flowers where the soil has insufficient nutrients to support tall grasses. The second area appears bare in comparison where the soil is poorer and wetter and favours the growth of sedge.

Cross the road (Silver Fox Way) to enter the bridleway, taking an immediate right turn on to a narrower path, and then first left, back onto the Backworth Waggonway where the track crosses through wetland areas. Turn left at the junction just before the electricity pylon, alongside a Hazel hedge ('the zigzag tree' so named because of the shape of its branches), then left, back onto the Blyth & Tyne line, walking to the left of the tarmac cycle path.



Walk through the metal barrier and turn left. Take the path on the right, up a slope with a copse on the right. Turn right to join the line of the former Backworth Waggonway noticing the pond on the left resulting from mining subsidence. Continue along this path and straight over a junction of paths, bearing left after a large boulder on the right, onto a wider track along which ran the old Blyth & Tyne Line, the Cramlington Waggonway and the Seghill Waggonway.

These routes were independently developed by individual coal companies and were never actually shared.

