

Steel collier at Albert Edward Dock

Further down, at Whitehill Point, there were spouts where coal was unloaded from the Backworth Waggonway and four staiths further down at Northumberland Dock: the Seaton Burn, West Cramlington, Cramlington and the Blyth and Tyne Railway Staiths.

Turn right and head up the side of the marina. At the corner bear left up through the timber gates.

The large timbers used to form the carved columns were reclaimed from the redundant coal staiths nearby. Along with the large boulders, they form what is known as rugged landscape boulders, they form what is known as Rugged Landscape.

The footpath emerges in Redburn Dene Park, the former Backworth Waggonway. Cross the road and continue up on the red brick path.

On the left, on the brow of Flatworth Hill, is an orientation point which illustrates links between Royal Quays and Northern Europe.



On the right can be seen the Prophecy Monolith, a large rock surrounded by wooden fencing installed in 1996 with an engraving from Isaiah 55, Verse 13.

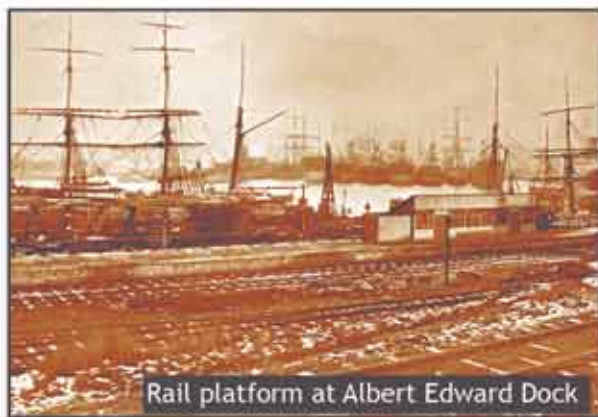
The walk continues between the replica groynes.



A groyne was a wall built out from the coast into the sea, to prevent the continual movement of the waves from eroding the land.

Follow the path straight up, with the Centre for Advanced Industry (CAI) building on the right. On the left can be seen the

Royal Quays shopping centre. Go under the subway at Howdon Road and bear left where the path forks. This is St John's Gardens. Continue up onto Route 10 of the national cycle network, part of the former Backworth Waggonway.



Rail platform at Albert Edward Dock

The Backworth Waggonway originated with the sinking of the Backworth A Pit and the transporting of the first Backworth coals on the Tyne in September 1818.

It was built originally as a horse-drawn waggonway and was gradually converted to rope-haulage in stages. It took coal down to the West Cramlington Staiths at Northumberland Dock and to the spouts at Whitehill Point.

Turn left at the top of the football ground on to the path by the road. Cross the road after the bend and turn right up another path (again part of the cycle route).

This path forms part of the old Seaton Burn Waggonway, formerly known as the Brunton and Shields Railroad. It was originally built to take coal from old Brunton Colliery to the Seaton Burn staiths at Northumberland Dock.



Whitehill Point

Continue along the path up to Percy Main Metro Station where the walk ends. Although this is now a residential area, to the left of the path is where the former Percy Main Colliery (also known as Howden Panns Colliery) was situated.



Design: Jennifer Kirkham

NORTH TYNESIDE WAGGONWAYS

ROYAL QUAYS WALK

Start: Meadow Well Metro Station
Distance: 3.9 km (2.4 miles)
Time: 1.5 hours
Terrain: Mainly tarmac/brick path

This pleasant walk, beginning at Chirton Dene Park, takes in the Albert Edward Dock, stretches of the Seaton Burn and Backworth Waggonways, and the Northumberland Dock staiths where coal was transferred from the waggons and shipped around the world. Look out for the interesting public art works along the way.



From Meadowell Metro Station, turn right down Bridge Road South and take the second opening left through Smith's Park, with allotments on the left.

Follow the path round, past the tennis courts on the right and turn right at the First World War Memorial. Follow the tarmac path south under the bridge at Howdon Road and alongside the stream on your left through Chirton Dene Park.

The dene was infilled when the Albert Edward Dock was constructed in the 1880s. Built on the site of a timber yard that once supplied all the pit props in Northumberland, the park has large grassed areas, trees, shrubs, a bandstand and a playground for small children. The 12-acre public park has water as its central theme appearing first as a mountain stream followed by reed beds, a central pool, a cadence and a boggy area before culminating in a series of cascades.



To the left, on a hill, is the statue of the Striding Child pointing in the direction of the River Tyne.



Go straight on and round to the right of the first circular paving, bearing right over the next bridge with the viewing platform to the left.

Bear left after the next bridge and pass the Water Landscape on the left.

Look for the text inscribed on stone tablets attached to the wall: If water were words, what would the Tyne say? The raised metal letters in the pond reply: The Tide is Turning.



Early colonisers of the cascade, stream and ponded areas include common spike rush, brooklime, marsh marigold, water cress and creeping buttercups.

At the end of the Water Landscape, head left across the bridge and continue down to the marina along the foot/cycle path passing a boat yard on the right.

The Burdon Main Colliery used to be sited on the left.



At the end of the boat yard, turn right and cross over onto the middle pier.

At each end of the island stands an original capstan, one with white feathers in the resin blocks and the other with clay pipes. Also note the men's rugged brogues at the seaward end and the ladies' stilettos at the marina end symbolising where people used to stand and dream.



This display was created by the artist Gilly Rogers



After crossing the second lock, cross the car park and turn left at the Royal Quays Marine Building towards the Earl of Zetland, now a floating bar restaurant.

To the left is a clock tower and in front Tyne Anew by Mark di Suvero, a 71ft high steel sculpture.

Continue to the Tyne Commission Quay, also known as Albert Edward Dock. In 1872, work commenced on the Dock within a large hollow of the river called Coble Dene.

Five million tonnes of material were excavated, most of it removed by dredgers and dumped at sea. The dock was opened in 1884 by the Prince and Princess of Wales. Millions of pit props were unloaded from Scandinavian ships here. In 1928, the deep water Tyne Commission Quay was constructed, improving ship and cargo handling facilities complementing a direct rail link to Newcastle.

Keep the Earl of Zetland on the right.

