

# Derwent Walk Country Park and Derwenthaugh Park



## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Thornley Woodlands Centre

Rowlands Gill, Tyne and Wear, NE39 1AU  
Telephone: 01207 545212  
Email: [countryside@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:countryside@gateshead.gov.uk)  
[www.gateshead.gov.uk](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk)

### Swalwell Visitor Centre

Swalwell, Tyne and Wear, NE16 3BN  
Tel: 0191 414 2106

### Durham County Council

Countryside Group  
Tel: 0191 383 3594  
For queries about the Derwent Walk  
between Rowlands Gill and Consett

### Gibside - National Trust

Tel: 01207 541 820

### Fishing in the Country Park

Fishing rights in the Derwent Walk Country  
Park are leased to the Axwell Park and  
Derwent Valley Angling Association.  
For more information Tel: 01207 543426  
Email: [alandodd@apdvaa.co.uk](mailto:alandodd@apdvaa.co.uk)  
or visit [www.apdvaa.co.uk](http://www.apdvaa.co.uk)

### Bus Routes:

The 48, 49 and 49a from Gateshead and the  
45, 46, 46a and 47 from Newcastle all serve  
the Gateshead Section of the Derwent Walk  
Country Park. Please contact the Nexus  
Traveline for other Journey options.  
Telephone 0871 200 2233



Sep 2009



Maps

Information

History Trail

Walking, Cycling and Horse Trails



# DERWENT WALK COUNTRY PARK AND DERWENTHAUGH PARK



The Derwent Walk Country Park is a mixture of woodlands, meadows, wetlands, riverside and reclaimed industrial sites all linked by the Derwent Walk. The Derwent Walk is the track-bed of the old Derwent Valley Railway. It is 11 miles (18 km) long and follows the Derwent Valley between Swalwell in the north and Consett in the south.

Derwenthaugh Park is a reclaimed site that was once a coke works, and is now a great addition to the area. The two parks are now managed as one and there is no boundary between them.

This leaflet has been produced to make sure you get the most out of this beautiful area!

Walking routes from Thornley Woodlands Centre are shown in detail. The middle of the leaflet opens into a map of the whole Park, where easy access walking, cycling and horse riding trails are shown. It also has detailed information about visitor centres, observation hides, cycle links and disabled access.

The History Trail is described at the back of the leaflet. Information is given about the major features of industrial and historic interest which can be seen whilst walking this trail.

## Wildlife

The ancient woodlands of the Derwent Valley hold a wide variety of wildlife - carpets of springtime wood anemones and celandines, many birds including green and great spotted woodpecker, nuthatch and sparrowhawk and the occasional glimpse of animals such as, fox, badger and roe deer. The flowers found in the hay meadows support butterflies like the common blue and meadow brown.

The Derwent Walk is home to blackcap and whitethroat, heard singing in summer, and bullfinches and flocks of siskins seen feeding in the winter.

The River Derwent supports a wide range of wildlife including kingfisher, dipper and otter.



## Hollinside Manor

Hollinside Manor is a 13th century manor house situated east of the Nine Arches Viaduct. From the Manor there are commanding views of the Country Park and surrounding countryside. It was the home of the Harding family for two centuries during which time the manor became known as the 'Giant's Castle' since the men folk were very tall. The estate passed on to George Bowes of Gibside in 1730 for the sum of £10,000. Today the Manor is an Ancient Monument.

## Derwenthaugh Park

Until 1986, Derwenthaugh Park was the site of the Derwenthaugh Coke Works. Opened in 1928 it took coal from the Chopwell colliery and the resulting coke was shipped from the staithes on the River Tyne at Derwenthaugh. In the 18th and 19th centuries Crowley's Ironworks dominated the site. These were the largest ironworks in Europe at the time. The workers lived in old Winlaton Mill which was situated along the lane beside the Golden Lion Inn. The village was demolished and re-built on its present site in 1937.

## Axwell Hall

The Hall was built in 1758 by James Paine for Sir Thomas Clavering, an eminent politician who represented County Durham in four Parliaments.

## High Forge and Swalwell Visitor Centre

The Swalwell Visitor Centre is built on the site of an old iron/steel forge which was powered by water from the River Derwent. The power for the mill came from a race, which drew water from the weir at Dam Head. The weir, known as 'The Lady's Steps', was a popular picnic spot in Victorian times. Part of the race can still be seen in Swalwell Village, but most of it has been covered over.

## Clockburn Lonnen

Although it is difficult to imagine now, Clockburn Lonnen was once the main highway from the north to Durham. It crossed the River Tyne at Newburn then passed to Winlaton via Blaydon Burn and from there to old Winlaton Mill, crossing the Derwent and following Clockburn Lonnen to Durham. Cromwell's army of 16,000 men passed this way on the 15th July 1650 on their way to the Battle of Dunbar.

## WALKING TRAILS



## A HISTORY TRAIL IN THE DERWENT WALK COUNTRY PARK

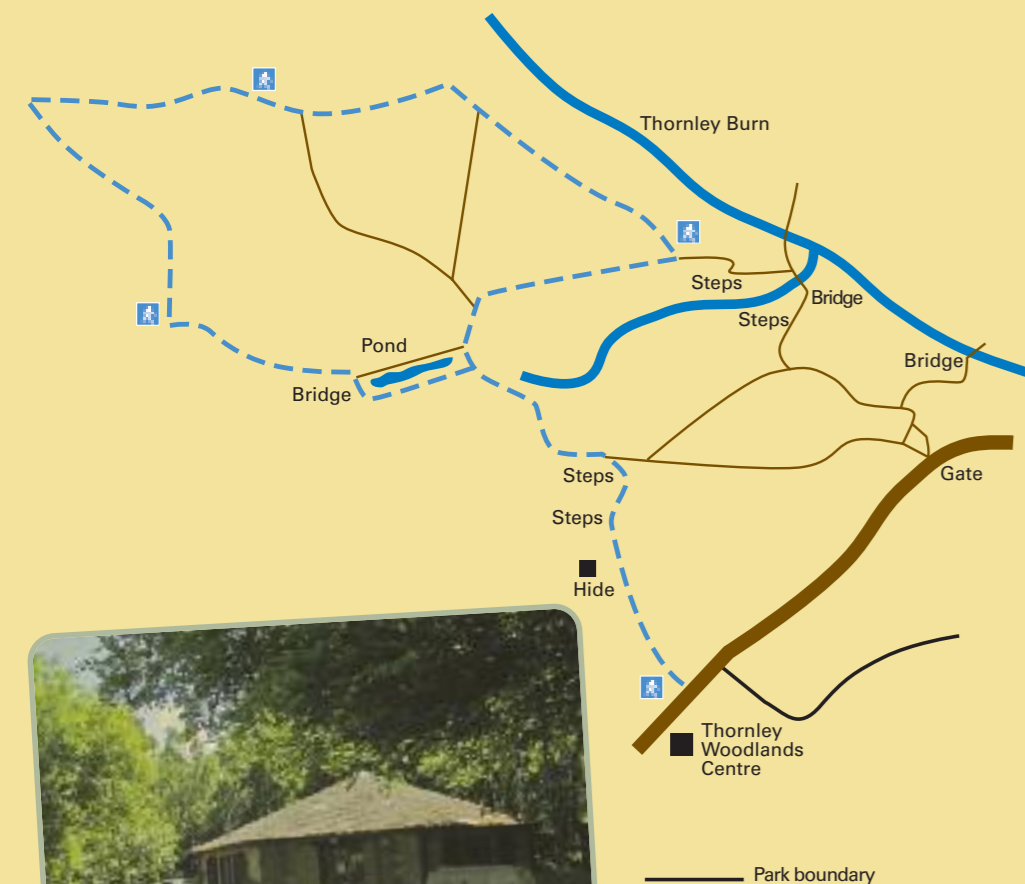


## WALKING TRAILS



### Marked circular trail from Thornley Woodlands Centre

1 mile walk through Thornley Wood, an ancient woodland with observation hide and wildlife rich pond. Steps, undulating gradients and rough in places.



A historical walking trail from the Swalwell Visitor Centre or any of the Derwenthaugh car parks is also indicated on the map. Follow this symbol:

The following historical sights can be seen along the way.

#### Derwent Valley Railway

The Derwent Valley Railway was opened in 1867 after three years hard building work. Four viaducts were constructed and a deep, 800 metres long cutting was dug near Rowlands Gill. Stations were built at Shotley Bridge, Ebchester, High Westwood, Lintz Green, Rowlands Gill and Swalwell. At its peak the railway was carrying over half a million passengers a year with regular goods traffic of timber, bricks and coal to Newcastle and iron ore to Consett. As road traffic became more efficient the service declined until the line finally closed in 1962. The railway is commemorated in the Geordie folk song about an ill-fated train journey from Rowlands Gill, 'Wor Nanny's a Mazer'.

#### Nine Arches Viaduct

The Nine Arches Viaduct was one of the major engineering feats of the railway. It is five hundred feet long and was built because the Earl of Strathmore would not allow the railway to pass through the Gibside Estate. From underneath the viaduct a line can be seen where a second bridge was built and joined onto the first. This was because a second line was added to the railway

#### Gibside

From the Derwent Walk near Rowlands Gill there are panoramic views across to the Gibside Estate. The hall was completed in 1620 but the estate was not landscaped until the 18th century. The Column of Liberty, Orangery, Banqueting Hall and Chapel were all built during the landscaping period. The Estate is now owned by the National Trust and is open to the public.

#### The Butterfly Bridge and Winlaton Mill

The old Butterfly Bridge was originally built in 1842 by local stone mason John English. Lang Jack, as he was known, stood 6ft 4ins tall and worked on the original Scotswood Bridge before he built the Butterfly Bridge. The original stone bridge was replaced by a steel and timber decked bridge in 1950 which lasted until the floods of September 2008 when it was destroyed. A new bridge will replace this one in 2010. Near to the bridge are the remains of George Eavan's house where he once lived as the local flour miller. This ruin is all that remains of Winlaton Mill village. The village was very attractive with white-washed cottages and a stream running through the centre. Winlaton Mill was founded by Saxon families who chose to settle there after the Romans left the area.

#### Red Kites in the Derwent Valley

Between 2004 and 2006 ninety four red kites were released into the lower Derwent Valley as part of the Northern Kites Project. Kites began to breed in the north east in 2006 after an absence of 170 years.

Follow the Kite Hill Viewpoint waymarkers from the Winlaton Mill car park for the best chances of sightings. This is a short walk taking about 20 minutes.

The Red Kite Trail also starts in the Winlaton Mill car park. This is an 11 mile (18km) circular walking route starting in the Derwent Valley and taking in the wider countryside. A separate leaflet on this walk is available.

#### Please Follow the Countryside Code and...

- Be considerate to all other users of the Country Park
- Cyclists must slow down and give way to walkers and horse riders
- Horse riders must give way to pedestrians
- Dog owners must keep their dogs under close control and 'scoop the poop'!
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Be aware that horses graze in the meadows during the summer
- No camping
- No fires

#### Water Safety - Be Aware Of The Dangers!

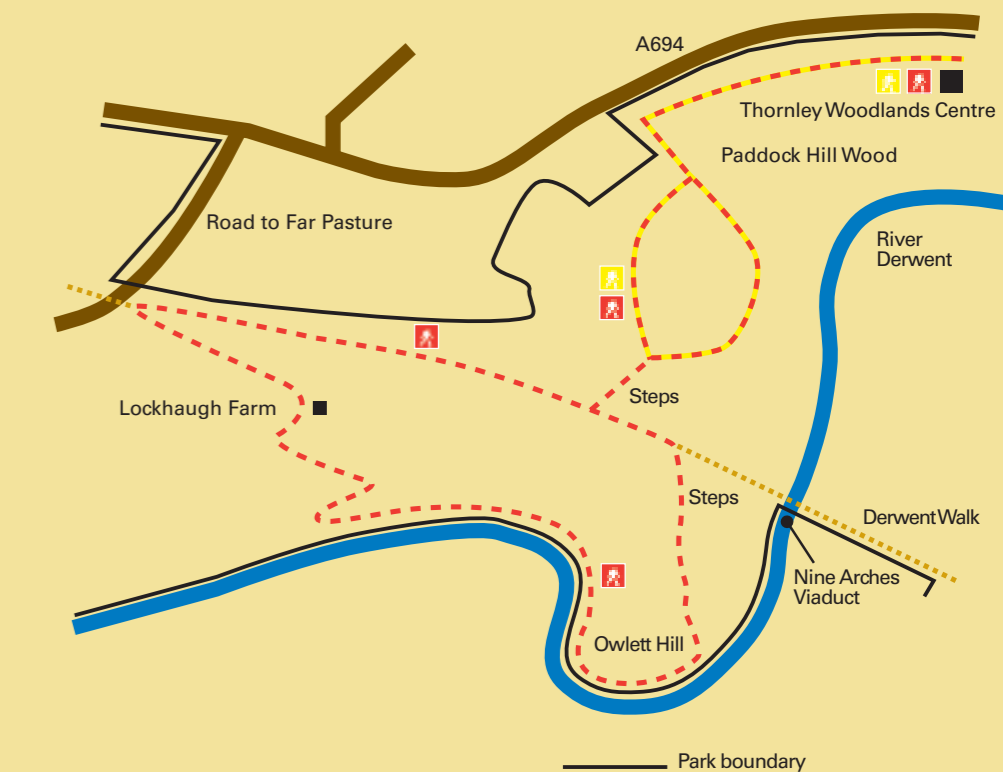
Rivers and ponds may look safe but they can be dangerous. Hazards like hidden currents, deep water, sudden drops, rubbish, reeds and thin ice on water can cause serious accidents. The best way to keep out of trouble is not to enter the water at all.



### Marked Circular Trails From Thornley Woodlands Centre

1 mile walk around Paddock Hill Wood through varied woodland with glimpses of the Derwent Valley. No steps and undulating gradient.

2.5 mile walk taking in Paddock Hill Wood, the River Derwent and the wildflower rich Riverside Meadows. With views of the Nine Arches Viaduct and Gibside. Several flights of steps and steep gradients, rough in places..



See inside for full comprehensive map of area

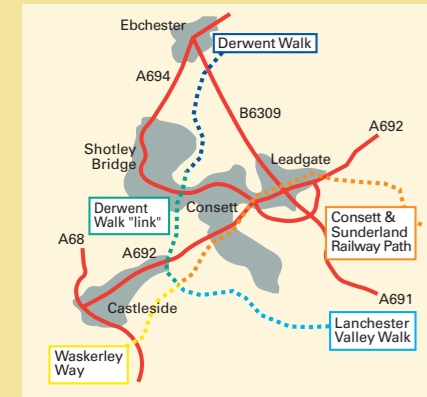
## Visitor Centres

**Thornley Woodlands Centre** - on the A694 near Rowlands Gill. Toilets, parking and information available. Open to the public from 10am to 2pm during the week and 12 noon to 5pm at weekends and spring and summer Bank Holidays. Cyclists and horse riders please note - there is pedestrian access only at the Thornley Woodlands Centre.

**Swalwell Visitor Centre** - at the Swalwell end of the Derwent Walk. Toilets, parking and information are available. There is direct access for cyclists and horse riders to the Derwent Walk and the Derwenthaugh Park multi-user route. Information centre and toilets open daily.

## Cycle Way Links From Consett

At Consett the Derwent Walk joins the Consett and Sunderland Railway Path, Waskerley Way and Lanchester Valley Walk at Lydgetts Junction. (See inset map).



## Disabled Access and Gateshead Countryside Mobility

The Derwent Walk is wheelchair accessible at Swalwell Visitor Centre. Derwenthaugh Park is wheelchair accessible from Swalwell Visitor Centre and all three car parks along the A694, linking with the Derwent Walk near the Nine Arches Viaduct. A short circular boardwalk gives limited access to the woodland around Thornley Woodlands Centre. Both observation hides are wheelchair accessible. A 'Breakfree' leaflet pack is available free of charge, giving detailed access guidance.

Scooters are available for hire under the Gateshead Countryside Mobility scheme. Scooters are based at the Swalwell Visitor Centre and can be hired on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, 10am to 3pm. The scheme is only open to members of Gateshead Shopmobility (membership £5 per year). To find out more and to book the scooters telephone Gateshead Shopmobility, 0191 477 9888.

## Cycling / horse riding trail/ wheelchair route

From the Swalwell Visitor Centre or all Derwenthaugh car parks:

These symbols on the map indicate a 4 mile route through Derwenthaugh Park and along the Derwent Walk. With undulating gradients and smooth surfaces.

## Observation Hides

Thornley Wood - overlooks a bird feeding station. Car park at the Thornley Woodlands Centre.

Far Pasture Ponds and Shibdon Pond - overlook wetland areas. Far Pasture - car park beside the hide. Shibdon Pond - car park at Blaydon Swimming Pool.

All hides are kept locked and keys are available for purchase from the Thornley Woodlands Centre.

The hides are wheelchair accessible.

## Cycle Way links from Swalwell

From Swalwell you can follow the Sustrans C2C long distance cycle route beside the River Derwent to join the Keelman's Way which runs along the south bank of the River Tyne between Wylam and Hebburn.

