

## Get involved!

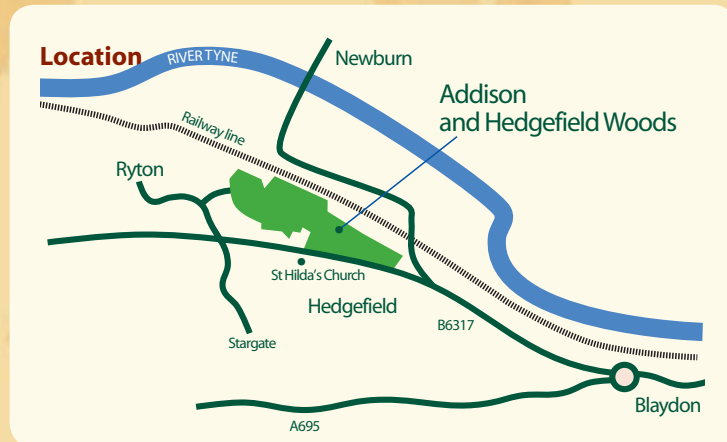
There are a number of ways you can get involved in the countryside around you. You can:

- Come along to our organised events - see the Council's Countryside web pages
- Become a Gateshead Countryside Volunteer
- Arrange a visit/activities for your school or community group

### Interested?

For more information on countryside events or to get an educational factsheet about this and other sites, please phone the Countryside Projects Team.

**0191 433 3443**



This area is covered by Ordnance Survey 'Explorer' map 316, 'Newcastle'. There are bus stops near St Hilda's Church.

For public transport information contact Traveline North East

**0870 608 2 608**

When walking in the countryside we suggest that you wear appropriate footwear and outdoor clothing and tell someone where you are going.

**Enjoy your visit to Addison and Hedgefield Woods**

# Addison and Hedgefield Woods



# Welcome

It's hard to believe that as late as the 1950s and 60s this place was a working pit and a home to hundreds of people. Gateshead Council now cares for these woodlands for the enjoyment of people and the benefit of wildlife.



Addison Wood



Tawny Owl



Great Spotted Woodpecker



Bluebell

## Wildlife

This place is a beautiful example of how nature reclaims land when people move on. From the woodland at Addison, to the scrub and grasslands at Hedgefield, this place is a thriving wildlife refuge, and a site of Nature Conservation Importance.

After **Addison Village** was demolished Sycamore and Beech trees were planted on the site. Some coppicing will be carried out in this young woodland – this is where trees are cut down to allow regrowth from the stumps. This lets light onto the woodland floor which benefits woodland flowers. Look out in spring for woodland wildflowers like Bluebell. These were all planted here by local schoolchildren and volunteers.

There are also areas of much older woodland. Here the trees will be left to grow. You might see Foxes or hear in Spring the drumming of the Great Spotted Woodpecker. Stay in the woods until dusk and you may hear Tawny Owls calling.

The wet grasslands at **Hedgefield Quarry** support colourful plants like Northern Marsh Orchid and Ragged Robin while Devil's-bit Scabious and Betony grow on the drier slopes. The scrub at Hedgefield provides cover and food for many birds like Whitethroat, Willow Warbler and Yellowhammer, while Foxes and Roe Deer also make the site their home.

Paths and seats have been installed at Addison to make access easier for everyone. A footpath, with steps, has been created from Hedgefield Quarry to Reedside in Ryton which allows you to make an attractive circular walk.



Red Fox



Ragged Robin



Roe Deer



Hedgefield Wood

## The Pit

This area has probably been mined since Roman times. In the 16th Century the Bishop of Durham granted mining rights to Queen Elizabeth I. This 'Grand Lease' was eventually taken up by the Stella Coal Company.



Screening Shed



Addison School, about 1890

Mrs Addison Potter cut the 'first sod' at Addison Pit on the 26th January 1863 in an impressive ceremony before a large crowd. The name Addison was chosen in honour of Mr Addison Potter whose family had a long connection with Townley Colliery.

The shafts were sunk in 1865 to a depth of 68 Fathoms (124 meters - this is equal to five Angels of the North on top of each other!) Two drift mines, Kitty and Atkinson also operated. The former was used as an air raid shelter during World War II.

The pit closed in December 1963, and today only one of the pit buildings survives on Addison Industrial Estate. This was the Waggonshop, Joiner's Shop and Blacksmith's Shop. An entrance to a waggonway tunnel also survives.

## The First Telephone

In 1877, the inventor of the telephone, Professor Graham Bell, performed the first experiment using a telephone underground. Professor Bell speaking from within the mine was heard on the surface at Hedgefield House singing 'God save the Queen' and 'Auld Lang Syne'. This probably makes Hedgefield House the first in the UK to have a telephone installed.

## The Village

Addison Village was a close-knit community where neighbours had the reputation of being kind, respectful and caring of each other.

Most of the houses were 'back to back' having one room upstairs and one downstairs. If a miner died or was killed in the pit, his widow and family were given a few days to find another home, or they were evicted. The cottages in Low Row and High Row were stone built. Those in Cross Row, built slightly later, were a combination of stone, brick and cinder (giving rise to the nickname 'Cindy Ra'.)

The Coal Company built a Primitive Methodist Chapel in 1865. From here many social activities were organised, including Addison



Addison Colliery



Coke Works



Demolition of Addison Village, 1958



John Stewart, miner, 1921



The Jubilee Miners Institute, 1920



Male Voice Choir. Other activities included a Drum and Fife Band, Boy Scouts, St John's Ambulance Brigade and the women's Apron Club. The Miners Welfare Association provided a recreation ground and paddling pool.

The Jubilee Miners Institute contained a reading room with 1500 books and a billiards room. Wedding receptions and dances were held there although the Coal Company did not allow a licence for the sale of alcoholic drinks.

The Company also built Hedgefield School in 1866 which could take up to 180 children. It closed in 1907 with pupils transferring to Crookhill Primary School. Because of its poor prospects for future employment, Addison was given a 'Category D' status by the Old Durham County Council in 1951. Villages with this designation were starved of public money and allowed to die. In 1958 demolition of the homes began.

Today all that remains of a vibrant community are a few stones and bricks, the photographs in our archives and the memories of the people that lived and worked here.