



Tyne and Wear Heritage Way

Section 5: Wylam - Thornley Woodlands Centre (9 miles)



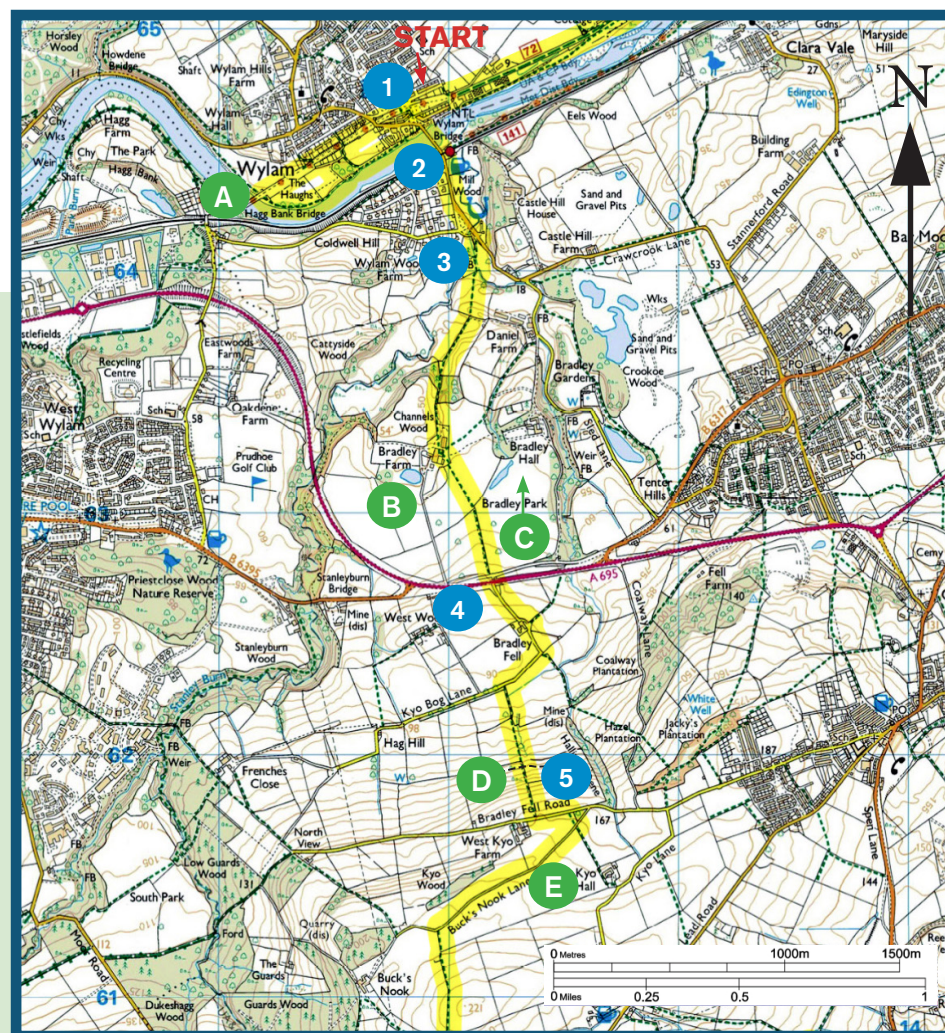
Heritage Information

This section of the Heritage Way encounters many of the early waggonways which were used to bring coal from the numerous pits in North Durham down to the Tyne for transport to large ships nearer to Newcastle. The first waggonway was built in 1603, the year when Queen Elizabeth I died. The earliest waggonways had wooden rails. Horses pulled loaded waggons or chauldrons along the rails which allowed heavy loads to be transported more easily. Each waggon was accompanied by one man.

Wylam was at one time the home of four of the world's early locomotive pioneers, George Stephenson, William Hedley, Timothy Hackworth and Nicholas Wood.

A Hagg Bank Bridge was built in 1876 to carry the former Scotswood-Newburn-Wylam railway over the Tyne. The design was very advanced at the time. The river is wide at this point, but the need for piers set in the riverbed was avoided by using three curved metal spans with drop bars which hold the twin tracks.

B In Bradley Hall Farm, Nicholas Wood, one of the railway pioneers, was born in 1795.



C Bradley Hall was built about 1750. The architect was probably Thomas Paine who also designed Gibside Chapel.

D The Stella and Crawcrook waggonway was in existence by 1663. A 1665 lawsuit refers to a bond which promised delivery from Crawcrook Colliery of "20 tenns of good merchantable ship coles,

Continue to a green lane, signposted "Bradley Fell Road 500 metres". Turn **L** here and continue over several stiles, then steeply uphill to a hedge on your left, leading to a stile in the wall near West Kyo Farm.

5 Turn **L** for 150 yards then **R** over a stile across a small field and **R** again onto Bucks Nook Lane. After ½ mile, turn **L** (signposted "Lead Road 750 metres"). Soon veer **L** through the hedge and continue with the hedge/fence on the right to a stile onto a farm track.

The Walk: Section 5

Start: Tyne Riverside Country Park, Wylam CP (formerly the Old North Station yard). (NZ 118 647)

1 Take the track signposted Ovingham. Just before Hagg Bank Bridge, go down the steps on the **L**. The path now leads back towards Wylam, with the river on your **R**. After a short distance, the path curves round high ground with allotments followed by playing fields on your **L** before returning to the river. Continue under Wylam Bridge and climb the steps on the **L**.

2 Turn **L** and cross the river and the railway line. Continue straight ahead. Pass a grassed area then a bridge. Immediately after the bridge, take the steps on the **R** down to a stile.

3 Cross and follow the fenced path through a deer park to a small wood. Go through the wood to reach open ground. Bear **L** uphill to a kissing gate and continue towards Bradley Hall Farm. Bear **L** diagonally across a field, towards a large tree. From here, go uphill with the fence on your left. Looking back, there are views of Bradley Hall and the lake. Continue to the busy A695.

4 Cross to a lane and continue past Bradley Fell Farm and round a sharp bend.

20 waggons to a tenn, every waggon to contain 15 bowles usual coal measure". Tenns, waggons and bowles were all measures of coal.

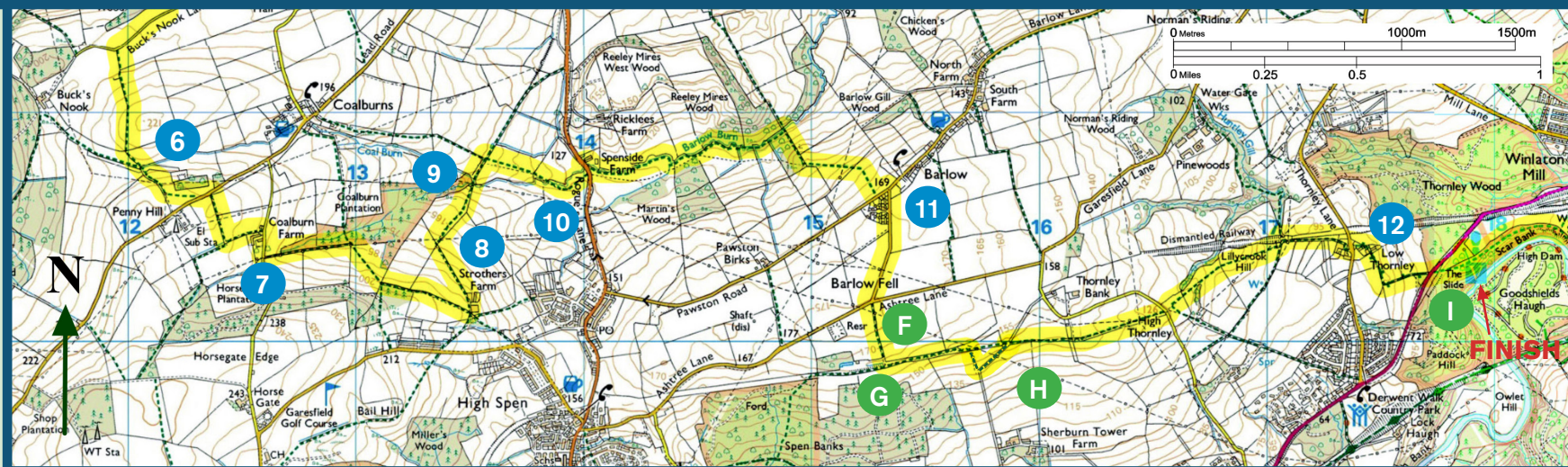
E Buck's Nook Lane follows the line of the old waggonway, which closed in 1726 when the Grand Alliance, a powerful partnership of colliery owners, took control of production in the area.

F Red Kite Trail. (2004-2005) 94 Red Kites were released into the Derwent Valley as part of the Northern Kites project after an absence of 150 years. They began to breed in 2006 and now there is a healthy colony of these elegant birds of prey.

G Garesfield Waggonway began as a wooden waggonway down to Derwent Haugh. It is thought that the route was in use for 200 years. The incline up to High Thornley was so steep that later the route was diverted to Winlaton Mill.

H From the high ground along the waggonway, there are good views of the Gibside Estate, especially the 40 metre tall Statue to British Liberty, completed in 1757. The Hall was built between 1603 and 1620 and the estate was landscaped in the 18th century by the owner, George Bowes.

I Thornley Woodland Centre is the starting point for interesting woodland trails with information about wild life, a bird hide and local arts and crafts.



6 Turn **L** towards the pylons on Penny Hill. At the first pylon, bear **L** towards a wood. Continue with the wood on your left for about 100 yards, then bear **R** over the field to a stile that goes onto a road. Bear slightly **L** to cross another stile. Continue with the hedge on your **R**. Before the next stile, turn **L** to Coalburn Farm, crossing stiles between buildings to reach a road.

7 Turn **R** to go downhill for 100 yards, then turn **L** into a lane. Continue to a stile on the **R**. Cross the field diagonally to a gate into a plantation. Keep on the path along the edge of the plantation and continue to Strother's Farm bearing **R** to a stile beside metal gates.

8 Turn **L** onto the farm track, pass farm buildings and continue to a pair of stiles, the second stile leading into the corner of a field. Follow the right-hand field boundary downhill towards the far corner of the wood to a stile.

9 Cross the stile then the burn and head uphill over another stile with a fence on the right. Near the top of the hill, turn **R** over another stile and head across the field to a gate.

10 Keep close to the right-hand edge of the next field, to a stile in a corner by holly bushes, leading down to stepping stones over the Coal Burn. Keep to the left-hand edge of the next field to a stile onto the B6315. Cross the road and go straight ahead with the Barlow Burn always on your left. Continue over stiles and a footbridge to reach a wood. Keep going to a fork in the path. Bear **R** here to go uphill through woods to an open area. Cross more stiles to continue towards a pylon and a road near Barlow.

11 Turn **L** on the road then take the first **R** along Barlow Fell Road. At the T-junction, go straight ahead. (From here, this is also the Red Kite Trail.) Follow a clear path which becomes the disused Garesfield Waggonway. Continue for ¼ mile, bearing **R** down to a lane. Turn sharp **L** and proceed up to trees on the right. Turn **R** over the stile and follow the path to reach Holinhill Lane. Cross and continue straight ahead. This path crosses two fields to a corner near the old waggonway. Turn **L** then **R** in front of an old railway bridge, and continue to Low Thornley.

12 Cross Thornley Lane to houses and a footpath sign to Scar Bank Wood. The path turns **R** between houses to go along a hedge, before bearing **L** down a sunken lane to the A694. Cross over to take the footpath to Thornley Woodland Centre.