

Sherburn Hill Walks

All walks start and end at the stile by the Methodist Chapel.

Walk 1 Green (Approx. 1.2 miles) Moor Edge Walk

Cross the stile and follow the path ahead. After the next stile take the right hand path skirting the edge of Sherburn Hill Moor. As the vista opens up to glorious views across the valley, the path dips sharply as it meets a patch of scrub and woodland. Follow the path down the slope, with the wildflower meadow on your right, and turn sharp left onto a broad track. Continue along the track, under spreading trees, to a small well. Bear left up the steep 'Well Bank', over the stile and back to the chapel.

Walk 2 Blue (Approx. 2.2 miles) Shadforth Ponds

Cross the stile and follow the path ahead. After the next stile take the left hand path down the steep 'Well Bank'. At the bottom keep to the left, pass the well and follow the field edge path to the next stile. Climb the stile and go straight ahead over pastureland. Head for a footbridge situated in the left hand corner of the field where Shadforth Mill once stood. Cross the bridge and turn right along a muddy track. After some 30 metres turn left into an open field. Follow the faint track through a gap in the bushes to a narrow stream. Walk along the banks of the stream, taking care as the water is deep, and cross a stile into a marshy area where decaying willows dominate the landscape.* Keep to the boardwalk and take the right turn where it forks. At the end of the boardwalk bear left onto a field edge path. There is a pond on the left where ducks and coots can be spotted among the tall bullrushes. Yellow iris flower in early June.

Where the path meets a wider farm track turn right, and then almost immediately left to cross an arable field. Climb the stile and go right taking the path to a footbridge at the edge of 'Maggie's Wood'. Over the bridge turn left through the wood and take the raised field path to meet a major track that skirts the crumbling limestone heaps ahead. At the track, turn left and continue west for 100 metres before turning sharply in the opposite direction. Follow the track to the first bend. Leave the track here and proceed ahead angling left up a short scramble before following the path through shrubby woodland. Beyond this the path opens out onto the moor and leads back to the stile and chapel.

Walk 3 Purple (Approx. 3.2 miles) Running Waters

Start as for walk 2 until you reach *
Keep left after the boardwalk onto a raised path with arable fields on the right. After the hedge, at the end of the field, turn right and follow the field edge path into the village of Shadforth. Turn immediately right onto a track between houses and right again at Apple Tree House. Where the track forks, keep left up a steep incline and continue to the disused Running Waters Quarry. Before reaching the main road take a narrow path to the right, just in front of a fenced garden. Turn right again taking the track to a footbridge at the edge of 'Maggie's Wood'. Cross the bridge and turn left through the wood. Follow the path to meet a major track at the base of limestone spoil heaps, the debris that remains from past quarrying activities. Turn sharp right onto the track and follow it for about 50 metres. Turn left along a path that climbs steeply through open meadow, cross Sherburn Hill Moor and back to the stile and chapel.

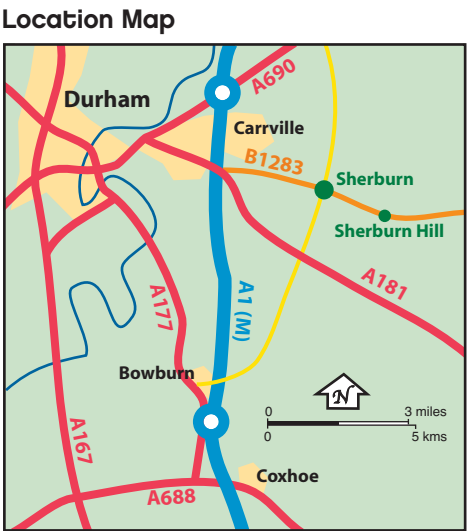
Walk 4 Red (Approx. 3.5 miles) St. Laurence Church & Sherburn

Cross the main road by the chapel and take the small lane past the concrete water tower and onto a tarmac path heading north. The path drops steeply at this point down the hillside, with a superb panoramic view extending as far as the Cheviot Hills. At the fork keep to the right then cross the road onto a rough track. The thriving sawmill on the left occupies the site of the former Sherburn Hill Colliery. At the wooden gate turn left onto the road and proceed to the junction of Cookshold Lane. Turn left onto the lane, taking care, as there is no footpath on this stretch of road. Just beyond Cook's Hold Farm turn right onto a farm track that leads to Littleton Farm some half a mile further on. At the farm keep to the left and pass through two small gates before turning left onto a field edge path. Cross the 'Coffin Bridge' over Coalford Beck, before ascending under overarching bushes to St. Laurence Church. This historic and beautiful church, built by the same architect as the Galilee Chapel at Durham Cathedral, deserves a visit. Turn left at the churchyard entrance onto a path that leads over fields, keep to the right and follow the path to Stand Bridge. Immediately after the bridge and partially obscured by the undergrowth beside the stream, are the foundation stones of a medieval mill. Continue along the path, bearing left to re-join Cookshold Lane at Sherburn Village. Turn right towards the village and take the first left, following the path through the housing estate to emerge onto the B1283. Turn left at the main road, cross carefully, and take a track on the right in front of the allotments. 'Quarry Cottages' once stood where the old railway line crosses the track. Continue ahead, taking the lower route, which circles the bottom of Sherburn Hill Moor, to the well. Climb the 'Well Bank' on the left, cross the stile at the top and follow the path ahead back to the chapel.

History of Sherburn Hill

Sherburn Hill commands the high ground in an area populated by several close knit communities. The village survived on agriculture and quarrying before the arrival of King Coal. By the mid 1800s the industrial age brought the railway and deep coal mining to Sherburn Hill and the village swelled to accommodate the changes, making it more like a small town than a rural village. Farming struggled to survive in the filthy world of coal, and agriculture suffered as the workers were tempted away by the benefits of mining the black gold. Within a few decades the village status had been transformed. Huge communities now populated the area of Sherburn Hill, which had a bustling high street bristling with shops, pubs and businesses. By the turn of the 20th century, the metamorphosis was complete and the former way of life had all but disappeared. Today, it has gone just about full circle. The mayhem of industrial Britain is now a ghost and the village has returned to its almost idyllic slumber of pre-coal days. Agriculture is once again dominant in the area and nature is slowly reclaiming everything that industry snatched from it.

Contributors & Sponsors:
Durham County Council
Parish Paths Partnership
Shadforth Parish Council
Sherburn Hill Environmental Action Group
Sherburn Hill History Club
Sherburn Hill Primary School



Inprint, DCC - IPD1146ir

Sherburn Hill WALKS



Four circular walks
From 1-3.5 miles long



Follow the Bee

Sherburn Hill WALKS



Northern Brown Argus Butterfly



Follow the Bee

Sherburn Hill stands on the edge of a magnesian limestone escarpment. This rock was formed in shallow seas some 250 million years ago. Magnesian limestone grassland supports scarce plant species including blue moor grass, small scabious, common rock rose and dark red helleborine. Many unusual insects are present including the glow worm and the Northern Brown Argus butterfly, whose caterpillar feeds on the rock rose. This area was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1985.

- Walk 1 Green (Approx. 1.2 miles) Moor Edge Walk
- Walk 2 Blue (Approx. 2.2 miles) Shadforth Ponds
- Walk 3 Purple (Approx. 3.2 miles) Running Waters
- Walk 4 Red (Approx. 3.5 miles) St. Laurence Church & Sherburn



Aquilegia



Robin



Bee Orchid



Medieval Mill



Site of Quarry Cottages



Chalk Hills



Site of Cold Knuckles Farm



Running Waters Quarry



St. Laurence Church



Coffin Bridge



Methodist Chapel 1851



Site of Shadforth Mill



Common Frog



Fox

Sherburn Hill Colliery was opened in 1835 by the Earl of Durham and in its heyday employed over 1000 men. It boasted the largest spoil heap in County Durham. The National Coal Board ran the colliery from 1947 to 1965 when it eventually closed. A sawmill now stands on the site of the former colliery. Limestone was quarried in the village. Lime kilns produced lime for agriculture and building. The white waste heaps can still be seen and are locally known as the 'Chalk Hills' or 'Lime Heaps'.

With the East Durham villages being so closely linked by the former coal industry, many of the paths that remain today were the routes taken by men, women and children in order to reach the collieries, schools and various other workplaces that once dominated daily life. The paths were more than just routes, they were a place to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, so much so that allotments developed. The flora found today on some sections of these paths, such as aquilegia, originate from the old gardens, dug into the limestone and carefully nurtured by tired men and women who created their own little havens away from the toil and stress of industrial Britain.

Gardening was only one of a variety of pastimes and games for which the residents used the paths. During the Great War, gambling on games such as quoits was banned and carried severe penalties, so the secluded paths became popular places to play these games away from prying eyes. During the latter part of World War One, a searchlight was installed on the moor to detect Zeppelin raids. The site was used as an observation post during World War Two.

Areas of poor infertile soils support a wealth of rare wild flowers including bee orchids, field gentians, hawkbits and rock rose. The damper marshy areas have water-avens, cranesbill, herb robert and marsh orchids. Beside the streams are marsh valerian, great burnet, marsh marigolds and marsh woundwort. In spring, cowslips, bluebells and violets can be seen. This wide variety of plants supports a host of insects, butterflies and larger animals such as the rabbit, hare, fox and deer.



Scale

1/2 mile

0.8 kms