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We have a number of village walks leaflets to download from our website. They are in PDF format but are also compatible to be read through the BLIO App on smartphones and tablets.



Heritage Coast  
— Durham



Monk Hesleden Parish Council

Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.

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Blackhall Local History Group



### Location...

Blackhall is situated on the A1086 coast road north of Hartlepool.

### Public Transport Information

For information on getting to the coast using public transport, please go to [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info), or telephone 0871 200 22 33.



## Blackhall



A walk of history...  
...rocks and seaside

Scan the code to find out more about Durham Heritage Coast.



DCC 32499



## The Countryside Code

### Respect, protect, enjoy!

#### Respect other people

- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors.
- Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available.

#### Protect the natural environment

- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home.
- Keep dogs under effective control

#### Enjoy the outdoors

- Plan ahead and be prepared.
- Follow advice and local signs.



## Introduction

Blackhall is a former coal mining village situated on the coast of County Durham, however people have lived in the area centuries before the colliery opened. There is evidence of Neolithic Stone Age settlements at Dene Holme to the north and Crimdon to the south and also in an area above the caves at Blackhall Rocks.

Before the coal industry dominated the village the area consisted of small estates run by local gentry. Under the Normans, Hardwick Hall was built and became a dispersal point for Catholic priests smuggled along the coastline at Blackhall Rocks, Blue House Gill and Dene Holme from seminaries in France. In 1758 Rowland Burdon III purchased Castle Eden, Hardwick Hall and the surrounding tenant farms. In 1910 the Hall became the home of the agent of Horden Collieries Limited before becoming a hotel and restaurant.

Blackhall Colliery opened in 1909 with the first coal drawn in 1913. The sinkers and their families had to live in huts and caves on the beach. The colliery closed

## Preparing for the walk

Please take care on this walk. It is advisable to wear walking shoes/boots as the routes could become muddy in places. Be prepared for changing weather conditions and wear or carry appropriate clothing and a map.

Our coastal village walk leaflets have been designed as a guide to help you in your discovery and exploration of the Durham Coast with routes linked to the England Coast Path National Trail.

in 1981, and at its peak it employed over 2000 people. Like Horden and other neighbouring colliery villages, the rows of terraced houses built for the miners and their families were called First, Second, Third Streets, etc with the officials living in East Street. The pit wheel located in the village is dedicated to those miners who worked and died in Blackhall Pit.

Although there were no disasters at the pit 69 miners lost their lives throughout the collieries duration. A poignant memorial plaque is held in Blackhall Community Centre unveiled by local school children in 2015.

The walk and map highlights some of the most interesting points which has formed Blackhall into the village we see today. The route links to the England Coast Path National Trail with its stunning views and impressive Magnesian Limestone cliffs and grasslands.



## Starting point

**Start/finish:** Car park, Blackhall Community Centre, Hesleden Road, TS27 4LG

**Grid reference:** NZ445539

**Length:** 3½ miles / 6 kms

**Time:** Approximately 2½ hours



## The walk

- S** Parking is available at Blackhall Community Centre on Hesleden Road. The Community Centre, originally built as the Miners Welfare Hall has a community café which is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday serving food from 12noon. Opposite the Community Centre is St Andrews Church built from red brick and known locally as the inside out church. The church was actually purchased second hand from Stockton at a cost of £300, because the exterior was so dirty, it was rebuilt inside out at a cost of £6,000 and renamed St Andrews in 1930. Leaving the Community Centre we turn right heading towards the Coast Road, passing the library on the right.
- 1** The Coast Road (A1086) has a selection of shops and some cafés. As we reach the Coast Road the walk turns left and continues past the shops to the Welfare Park. On the opposite side of the road we pass Blackhall Methodist Church founded in 1928 and the pit wheel, a lasting reminder of the coal mining heritage. The rows of numbered streets can be seen behind the pit wheel and beyond.
- 2** The Welfare Park was opened in 1929, and at this time it was managed and funded by the Miners Welfare Scheme. Following the closure of Blackhall Colliery in 1981 and the subsequent demise of the mining industry, the Park was transferred to the ownership of Monk Hesleden Parish Council in 1989 where it is well maintained and used by local sports clubs. A memorial stands in the Welfare Park in remembrance of those who died in conflict during the First and Second World Wars and the Korean War. There is another memorial in the park dedicated to the memory of the

- members of the Veteran Bowls Club, their wives and friends who died in a bus crash in 1969. The bus crashed on Crawleyside Bank, near Stanhope, on 14 August 1969 and 18 elderly people died along with the bus driver's 12-year-old daughter. The crash devastated the community of Blackhall and a memorial garden was created in Welfare Park. Leaving the Welfare Park cross the Coast Road turning right then left into Tenth Street.
- 3** Continue down the street to the end bearing left over the railway bridge. Follow the tarmac road for approximately 400m and turn right at the public footpath sign (just before the road descends steeply). Pass the allotments towards the sea and onto the England Coast Path, where we turn right and continue walking south.
- 4** Most of the land to the right was the site of Blackhall Colliery. Coal waste was dumped along this stretch of coastline by conveyor belt making the beaches unrecognisable. The beach at Blackhall was made famous by Michael Caine in the closing shots of the film Get Carter. The beach and seas are returning to their former glory after the impacts of heavy industry along this stretch of coastline.
- 5** The grasslands here are some of the rarest in the country. The Magnesian Limestone geology supports an array of wild flowers and invertebrates, including orchids and the Northern Brown Argus butterfly. Skylarks can be heard during the summer months as they nest on the grasslands.
- 6** Approaching Blue House Gill we turn inland for a short time before heading back towards the sea skirting the Gill. The Denes and Gills on the coast were formed by retreating ice sheets during the last ice age. They are commonplace along the coast and provide rare and valuable habitats to a wide range of species.
- 7** The rocks and caves that form the Durham



- coast are Magnesian Limestone laid down in the Permian period around 5 million years ago. The distinctive yellow/orange rock can be seen in all its glory at Blackhall Rocks.
- 8** Blackhall Rocks picnic area and car park are owned and managed by Durham County Council's Countryside Team. There are some excellent interpretation panels here which are well worth reading before heading on to the final stretch of the walk. On a clear day views of the North Yorkshire coast can be seen to the south and Tyneside to the north.
- 9** Leave the car park at Blackhall Rocks following the road out of the site heading away from the sea (Station Road). Heading under the railway line to the right are Station Cottages built for railway workers and their families. In the mid-19th century this area was a popular tourist destination with visitors often arriving by train to stay in a cliff top hotel (demolished 1970's). The station here has long since gone.
- 10** At the top of Station Road we come, once again to the Coast Road. This is known as Pieronis Corner, named after

- the original owner of the corner shop from the 1950's I. Pieroni, who owned a café, grocers and ice cream shop on this site. Turn right here and continue back along the coast road. Along the way we pass St Joseph's Catholic Church and the Aged Miner's homes. A small weekly levy voluntarily donated from miners' wages, plus donations of land and materials from mine owners and others, allowed the aged miners homes to be constructed and let free of charge. The vision and commitment of Joseph Hopper, a miner and lay preacher, believed that a man who had served in the coal mines all his life deserved better than to be evicted from his tied colliery home when he retired. As a result, aged miners' homes can be found in most colliery villages.
- 11** The walk carries along the Coast Road past the Cooperative building which was built in the early part of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Continue to the junction of Hesleden Road, turn left here and continue back to the Community Centre.