

Prudhoe Castle

The present stone castle was built by the Umfraville family before 1173 but a timber structure existed in the eleventh century. It was never captured in siege warfare. The castle now belongs to the Duke of Northumberland and is in the care of English Heritage. (01661 833459 for opening times)

The Spetchells

An old name of uncertain origin. The three mounds are the spoil-heaps left from the manufacture of ammonia for fertiliser and explosives in the mid 20th century. The chalk is now an important habitat, unique in Northumberland, for chalk-loving plants such as majoram and mignonette and the butterflies and moths that thrive on them.



Tyne Riverside Country Park

The Country Park stretches east along the river bank from Prudhoe to Newburn. It is a popular area for walking, cycling, horse-riding and canoeing as well as being important in the history of the railway age, with George Stephenson's birthplace and the Wylam Wagonway.



Cockshot Dene

Now an area of community woodland with a children's play area, but was formerly part of the extensive mineworkings of West Wylam Colliery.

Walk 1. Tyne Riverside Country Park, Hagg Bank and Prudhoe Castle
A circular walk of 3½ miles (6km)

Allow 1½ - 2 hours

A fairly easy walk with Panoramic views of the Tyne Valley and the river, with

a more strenuous option involving 3 ascents.

Bus Train Food Parking at TRCP

Walk 2. Prudhoe Castle and Cockshot Dene

Distance 2 miles (3¼ km)

Allow 1 hour

An easy walk from the Castle, through woodland and back along the edge of Castlefields Estate.

Bus Parking at Castle

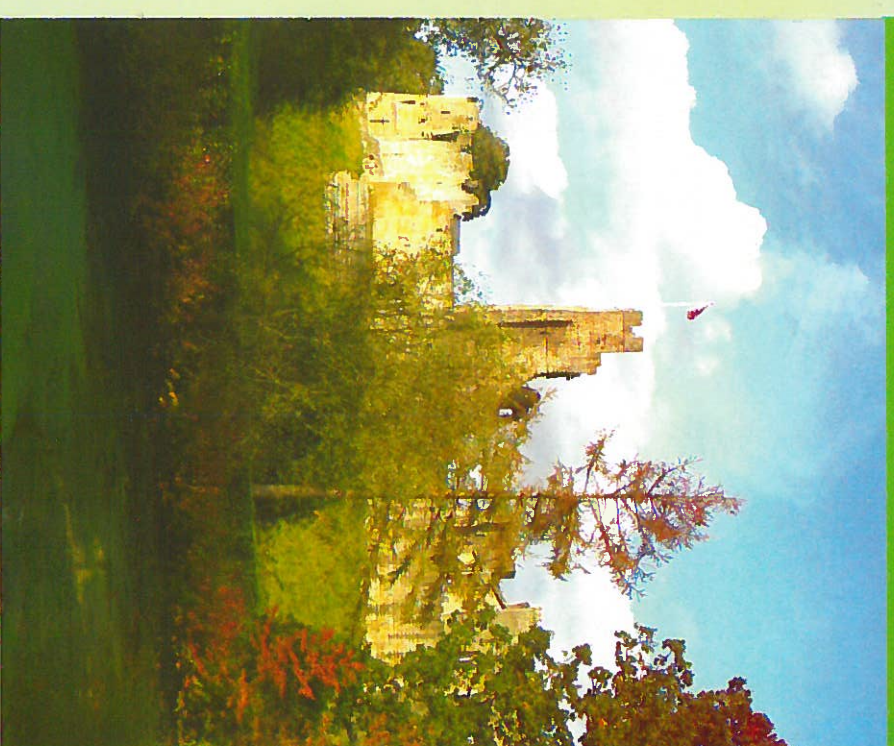
For buses and trains from Newcastle and Hexham contact **0871 200 22 33** or www.traveline.info

Please follow the Countryside Code.

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals
- Take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people
- Respect livestock by keeping dogs on a lead and taking extra care not to approach lambs or calves
- Good footwear is recommended



Paths Around Prudhoe



Castle, Woods and River.

Two short walks near Prudhoe Castle and the River Tyne.

Walk 1. Tyne Riverside Country Park, Hagg Bank and Prudhoe Castle.

- 1** From the Visitor Centre, originally a Co-op Store, walk towards the river and turn right onto the tarmac path along the river for 1½ miles to the small hamlet of Hagg Bank, passing the Spetchells and Hagg Farm on the way. *Look out for kingfishers and other water birds near the river and sand martins nesting in the Spetchells.*
- 2** At Hagg Bank continue on the road over the railway and the Prudhoe by-pass and turn right **3** down through the wood to where another path joins from the right.
- 4** Keep left and continue ahead with the hedge to your right, finally bearing left onto the road to Castletfields Estate. **5** Cross the road and bear right on the path that goes through the wood, keeping to the main path following the way-marks. At times the path is quite close to the buildings along the bypass. Beyond the footbridge go down and keep right at the next junction. The path finally bears left up the slope with the Castle looming up on the right. At the top turn right **6** over the medieval bridge and pass the Castle entrance to reach Station Bank.
- 7** Turn right down towards the bypass. Go down the steps on the right. Cross the bypass and go straight ahead on the slip road. Turn right at the Adam and Eve. Cross the level crossing and turn left into the Country Park.

Alternative more strenuous option.

- Follow Walk 1 to the beginning of the Spetchells **A**.
Go right through a kissing gate, bear left and then go up the long flight of steps on your left onto the top of the first Spetchell.
Take care on all the chalk surfaces as they can be slippery when wet.
Walk across the top of the Spetchell and at the far end, go down steps to cross paths and then up the slope onto the second Spetchell.

From here there are fine views of the valley.

Bear left after the trees to a seat facing the river and go down the broad path on the left.

Look out for the sandmartins nesting in holes in the chalk bank.

- B** At the bottom, turn right on to the wide track, bearing left at the fork continuing to the Kissing Gate on your left at **C**.
- C** Go through the kissing gate and across the field to a broad path along a slight embankment. *This was an area of considerable mining activity in the past.*
- D** Turn right on this broader path through a kissing gate in the trees and down to a pond. Continue over the board walk at the end of the pond and then climb up the flights of steps and past the allotments into Hagg Bank. Turn right and continue on Walk 1 from Point **2**.



Walk 2.

Prudhoe Castle and Cockshot Dene.

- 1** From outside the Castle go down the track, cross over the medieval bridge and turn left **2** down the path through the woods, following the waymarks. At times the path is close to the bypass, then it bears right to reach the road into the Castletfields Estate.
- 3** Cross the road to the signpost at the bottom of Cockshot Dene where there is a choice of 2 paths going up the Dene on your right. The one to the left is stone based, the other may be muddy.
- 4** At the road turn right, following the pavement past the school on your left. At the junction **5** go straight ahead on a tarmac path between the houses with a stone cottage on the right. The path finally comes out near the road junction with Station Bank.
- 6** Turn right onto Station Bank and either continue down to the Castle access road **or** after 100m, **7** turn right down some steps and follow the path through the copse to reach the Castle entrance.