

COFFEE & AMBLE

River Wear Circular Walk - Distance & Time 3.3 miles 1 hours 15 mins (approx)

Start and Finish Point – Worm Hill / Fatfield Bridge

The River Wear rises in the Pennines and flows eastwards, mostly through County Durham to the North Sea in the City of Sunderland. At 60 miles long, it is one of the region's longest rivers. The amble starts at Worm Hill following the north bank of the river, walking east towards the Sea, crossing the river at Cox Green and returning along the south bank through the Wildlife Corridor finishing at Fatfield Bridge.

Worm Hill

According to local legend this is the hill which the Lambton Worm wrapped itself around after roaming the surrounding countryside, terrorising the locals and devouring the cows and sheep.

View across the River Wear as we start our amble



GIRDLE CAKE COTTAGE

The Pumping Station stands on the site of Girdle Cake Cottage. This quaintly named dwelling was reputedly the refuge of the Earl of Perth, James Drummond. The Earl is said to have taken sanctuary here after the Jacobite Army was defeated by the Duke of Cumberland's Government forces at the Battle of Culloden in 1746

Trees and Flowers along the way



The Remarkable Arches of the Victoria Viaduct, boasting spans of 160 feet (over the river) at a height of 156 feet.



Victoria Viaduct

The Bridge is one of the most impressive stone viaducts in Britain. The design is said to have been inspired by the Alcantara Bridge a 2nd century Roman bridge in Spain. Named after Queen Victoria, the Bridge (later renamed the Victoria Viaduct) was constructed as part of the Durham Junction Railway, the final stone of the bridge was laid on Victoria's Coronation Day 28th June 1838. Regular passenger services succumbed to the Beeching cuts in May 1964, and in 1991 the line was mothballed due to the Durham Coal traffic dwindling. By then, the structure had received its Grade II listing.

Points of Interest



Cox Green Footbridge is a footbridge spanning the River Wear. The bridge opened in 1958 replacing a former ferry route

Cox Green Footbridge



The view from the Bridge



Turning right at the end of the footbridge, we continue west along the Wildlife Corridor:

Wildlife Corridor

Here, in the heart of the riverside woodland, tower mature Oak, Ash, Wych Elm and Sycamore, with shrub layer of Hazel, Hawthorn and Bramble beneath. There are many wild flowers too: Bluebells early in the spring and later Wood Aven, Red Campion and Hedge Woundwort. The nettles are food for the caterpillars of some of our most beautiful butterflies: look out for the Small Tortoiseshell and Red Admiral.

As industry has disappeared from the riverbank the countryside now reaches into the centre of Sunderland itself. It is an important "wildlife corridor" a link for plants and animals between other areas of countryside nearby. It is vital that these corridors are maintained for without such links, wildlife would become isolated into small pockets and the populations of some plants and animals may become so small that they can no longer sustain themselves, this would mean the extinction for some species.



Fatfield Bridge: Designed by D Balfour of Houghton le Spring, this bridge was built in 1889 at a cost of £8000. It was officially opened by the 3rd Earl of Durham.



Fatfield Bridge in Washington is to become awash with the poppies as July 1 marks the anniversary of the day the bloodiest battle in World War One began.

To mark the occasion 2016 poppies will cascade from the side of the Washington bridge until the end of October.

The idea is the brainchild of Wessington U3A where members have spent several years researching the 383 men and one woman who are named on the village war memorials in Fatfield, Washington and Usworth.

