



# A walk in the park

**active** Sunderland



Sunderland  
City Council



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# Introduction

We have fantastic historical parks and beautiful picturesque walks in and around Sunderland which are all free to enjoy. Walking is beneficial for both our physical and mental wellbeing and is a great way to take in our natural surroundings.

We have chosen six parks and one walking route from across the city and have set up a challenge in each area. Simply take your booklet to the parks, from there the challenge is to find each picture that is displayed for each landmark in that park. Once found you may wish to take your own photograph or simply tick each landmark off.

The parks and routes included are:

- Barnes Park
- Herrington Country Park
- Hetton Lyons Country Park
- Mowbray Park
- Roker Park
- Silksworth Sports Complex
- Washington Wetland Centre



# Barnes Park

The land for Barnes Park was bought in 1904 by the Borough of Sunderland for £8,500. Work commenced on the site in 1907 and it was officially opened on 6 August 1909. The park and its extension (opened in the 1950s) follows the length of the Barnes Burn. Barnes Park was restored as part of a regeneration project funded by the Heritage Lottery Parks for People Fund, Sunderland City Council and CDENT

## What to see?

### **Bandstand**

When the park opened in 1909 the original bandstand was a timber structure, but it was later replaced with the current bandstand. In 2009 as part of the park's restoration, the bandstand was fully restored utilising the original blueprints.

### **General Leslie Cannon**

The cannon has been a popular attraction in the park since its installation in 1909. The cannon's original plaque stated that it had been "dredged from the River Wear near the spot where the Scottish Army of General Leslie crossed in February 1644."

### **Time Capsule**

A time capsule was placed in 2010 to commemorate the centenary and regeneration of the park. Inside there are thought to be coins, newspapers, photographs, plans of the park and a DVD of the regeneration of the park. This is located at the top of the hill.

### **Wildlife**

The park is home to a wide range of wildlife and with nesting boxes being provided, breeding birds have regularly returned to the park over the years. Water hens, starlings, linnets, snipes, blue tits, diving ducks, and chaffinches can be frequently observed.

We have listed 11 landmarks below. Each landmark has a photo so you can travel around the park to find these points of interest, you could even take a selfie!



Bandstand



Wooden Sculpture 1



General Leslie Cannon



Activity Play Area



Duck Pond



Time Capsule



Bowling Green



Wooden Sculpture 2



The Grand Staircase and bridge



Park Tunnel



Park Tennis Courts

# Herrington Country Park

Herrington Country Park is located on Chester Road, opposite Penshaw Monument. The park was developed from a former colliery site, and many of the art and sculpture pieces represent the link to its mining history.

Since opening in 2002 the park has been identified in the Great North Forest Plan as a 'Gateway Site' and provides a major link between the community and the countryside.

## What to see?

### Sculpture Village

The sculpture village was inspired by Durham Cathedral as well as local church spires in Newbottle, Great Lumley and West Rainton.

### 'Wind' Seat

This seat is part of a group of seats based on the elements that were commissioned by Sunderland City Council and constructed by a group of artists named 'strata'. The seat is dedicated to the memory of Laura Kane.

### 'Lions' Seat

This seat was commissioned and installed by Washington Lions in May 2001, before the park officially opened in 2002.

### John's Rock

John's Rock is named after John Leathley, general foreman of Crouch mining. He brought the 40 tonne rock from 70 metres below ground to the top of the hill. The rock has the faces of 'ten men' from the areas mining past etched onto steel plates.

### Miners Memorial Garden

The memorial garden was officially opened with a dedication ceremony on 11 July 2004. The concept guides the visitor through the pit wheel,

which took workers down to the mine and then through the garden space which shows 'fingers' made from sandstone.

### **Sight Lines**

On the central hill of the park is a stone circle with seven steel sighting boxes strung between the stones, one for each line of sight. The name of each point is etched onto a steel plate on the boulders next to each sighting box along with the distance you are away from it.

### **'Greenheart' Bridge**

Designed by William Pym and commissioned by the Great North Forest, the 'Greenheart Bridge' was designed to show how reclaimed land could be developed and would breathe new air into the environment.

We have listed 12 landmarks below. Each landmark has a photo so you can travel around the park to find these points of interest, you could even get a selfie!



Amphitheatre



Green Heart Bridge



The Lions Seat



Herrington Pond



Penshaw Monument



Miners Memorial Garden



Skate Park



Sight Lines Sculpture



Woodland Rocks



Park Wildlife



Park Map



Activity Play Area



# Hetton Lyons Country Park

Hetton Lyons helped pioneer deep mining in Britain with the sinking of shafts to coal seams under the magnesium limestone. It operated for almost 130 years, producing 300,000 tonnes of coal per year at its peak. The colliery closed in 1950 and reclamation of the site started in 1986.

## What to see?

### The Lakes

There are several ponds and lakes within the park. Lyons Lake is used for water sports while Stephenson Lake is stocked with coarse fish and provides the perfect site for angling. The wetland areas provide a valuable wildlife habitat and are managed for both wildlife and people. New benches and picnic tables have recently been installed in the park around Lyons Lake.

### Woodland

The main planting of the woodlands took place in 1993 and has been planted up with a range of conifers and broad-leaved trees and shrubs. The woodlands provide valuable feeding and nesting habitats for resident and visiting wildlife in the park.

### Grassland

The meadow areas within the park are managed in a way to encourage wildlife and wildflowers. The Eppleton Grassland Site of Special Scientific Interest is adjacent to Hetton Lyons Country Park which provides additional important habitats for wildlife.

## Cycle Track

The park has specialist cycling facilities for those who are keen cyclists. There is also a purpose-built BMX course. Cyclists can choose to ride further afield by taking one of the routes that lead off the site and into the bridleway network.

## Children's Play Park

There is an enclosed children's play park for the use of younger children.

## Horse Riding

There is a bridleway on the outer edge of the park, horse jumps within the park and an event field for equestrian events.

We have listed 5 landmarks below. Each landmark has a photo so you can travel around the park to find these points of interest, you could even take a selfie!



Outdoor Activity Area



Activity Play Park



Hetton Park Lake



Park Sculpture



Conservation and Swamp Area

# Mowbray Park

Mowbray Park first opened in 1857 following a public health enquiry into the cholera epidemic of the 1840s. The enquiry recommended that a park should be built so that people in Sunderland could get more fresh air and exercise. Parliament gave the city £750 to purchase the land.

## What to see?

### The Entrance Gates and Lake

Sunderland born jewellery designer Wendy Ramshaw designed the gates for the restored park. The lake was returned to its original shape during restoration work and a new water cascade, fountain and swan house, designed by Roger Dickinson, were added. New stone lions replaced the originals on the North Terrace, and the Friends of Sunderland Museum erected a sundial. A life size bronze walrus, designed and cast by Andrew Burton, sits near the lake. Lewis Carroll was thought to have written his poem 'The Walrus & the Carpenter' after seeing the stuffed walrus in Sunderland Museum. However, the walrus had not been given to the Museum when the poem was written.

### The Drinking Fountain

The drinking fountain was erected in 1878 by the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows. It is a memorial to William Hall, who was the oldest Oddfellow in the North of England when he died aged 75 in 1876.

### The Railway Bridge and Bandstand

The restored and painted bridge crosses the old Penshaw Railway. The railway opened in 1852 to link the collieries of Durham with the South Dock. The bandstand is a replica of the Victorian original, opened in 1883.

## Memorials and Statues

The War Memorial, a winged victory on a granite column, was dedicated on 26 December 1922 and now commemorates the fallen of both World Wars.

The Victoria Hall Disaster Memorial was erected after the disaster in 1883 when 183 children died as they rushed to receive toys at the hall. The hall used to be opposite the park. In 1934 the statue was moved to Bishopwearmouth cemetery. It was restored and returned to the park in 2000.

The Havelock Memorial stands on Building Hill alongside two replica Sebastopol cannons (the originals were used to make weapons during World War II). In 1795 Sir Henry Havelock was at Ford Hall. He was the son of a shipbuilder and became an outstanding soldier and successfully relieved Lucknow during the Indian Mutiny of 1857-58. Sadly, he died of dysentery shortly afterwards. This memorial was erected by public subscription in 1861.

John Candlish was a successful businessman and Mayor of Sunderland before he became a Member of Parliament. He was a deeply religious man and supported radical reform, working hard for the people of the city as their MP. He died in 1874 and his funeral was a day of great public mourning in Sunderland. His statue was unveiled in the park in 1875.

Jack Crawford served on HMS Venerable during the Battle of Camperdown.

He was honoured for his bravery when he climbed the mast to nail the British flag back in place while under heavy fire. His actions were said to have raised the morale of the men and spurred them on to victory. He died in 1831 and his statue was unveiled in 1890 by the Earl of Camperdown.

## Public Art in the Park

Six stone carvings were designed and created for the restored park by artist Alec Peever and poet Linda France. Linda France also worked with local people to produce 80 brass plaques on the benches, reflecting people's thoughts about the park.

Richard Caink used elm trees, felled during the redevelopment, to carve sculptures to decorate the children's play area. While craftsman, Karl Fisher created a new oak door for the medieval arch at the foot of Building Hill.

We have listed 12 landmarks below. Each landmark has a photo so you can travel around the park to find these points of interest, you could even take a selfie!



Bandstand



Sebastapol Cannon



Medieval Studded Door



Memorial Bench



Mowbray Park Pond



William Hall Water Fountain



Bronze Walrus



Henry Havelock Statue



Jack Crawford Statue



John Candish Statue



Victoria Hall Disaster Memorial



War Memorial

# Roker Park

Roker Park is registered as a Historic Park and Garden, this is in recognition of its special historic interest. It displays all the characteristics of a typical Victorian Municipal Park and is the centrepiece of the Conservation Area.

The Park has largely retained its original layout which is simple but unusual in that it is built within a ravine, Roker Gill, which leads down to the beach at Roker Rocks. Its range of features, both natural and man-made, give it a stamp of local identity which enhances its popularity and provides the area with many of its distinctive qualities.

## What to see?

### Mature Trees and Garden

The Park enjoys a generous cover of mature trees and shrubs, many were planted deliberately around the boundary to ensure that visitors' attention was not distracted by features outside the park. The trees also provided shade, an important requirement for Victorians who shunned direct sunlight.

The space around the lake is generally broken up into lawns with particularly attractive floral displays, intersected by serpentine paths.

### Built Features

The bandstand is one of the park's most popular features. Its characteristic shape was influenced by Chinese style garden buildings popular in Europe in the mid 18th century. The present structure replaced the original uncovered stand in 1904.

The drinking fountain was erected in 1880 to commemorate the opening of the park. Both structures are listed buildings. Other important features, such as the 'babbies' sculptures, have long been lost.

## **Formal Sports and Play Facilities**

Formal leisure activities have always been a feature of the park. The first bowling green was completed in 1902 and the tennis courts a few years later. Additional sports pitches have since been laid out to the south and a play park and miniature railway at the northern end, enhancing the park's popularity with all ages.

## **Water Features**

The Park contains an impressive range of water features. The lake is the central feature of the park and is a focal point for visitors, especially miniature boat enthusiasts, as well as varied bird populations.

The Park also features a stream and a small waterfall in a grotto. These add considerably to the Park's character and interest.

## **Spottee's Cave**

This cave is named after a French vagrant sailor who supposedly lived in the cave in the eighteenth century. Legend has it that Spottee lured ships on to the rocks at Roker by lighting fires and fooling sailors into believing they were heading towards Harbour lights, then looting the wrecked vessels.

The cave is reputed to extend hundreds of metres along a system of underground tunnels (legend has it) all the way to St Peter's Church and Wearmouth Monastery - the candidate World Heritage Site that is of outstanding universal cultural and heritage value - and even possibly to Hylton Castle. It is rumoured that the tunnels were used by fishermen, keelmen and bargemen to smuggle illegal goods ashore in the 17th and 18th Centuries.

We have listed 9 landmarks below. Each landmark has a photo so you can travel around the park to find these points of interest, you could even take a selfie!



Bandstand



Roker Pod's



The Fairy Grotto



Lighthouse



Park Pond and Waterfall



Activity Play Area



Wildlife Habitat



Duck Pond



Smugglers Cave

# Silksworth Sports Complex

Completed in late 2010, this adventure play park is part of a wider sports complex and is associated with pool and leisure facilities adjacent to an existing dry ski slope in Sunderland. Adventure Play for the whole family was the driving force behind the design, with exploration and inviting installations being the lever to promote activity.

The site was historically used as part of a colliery which in turn provided some inspiration for the design. There is also a recreational boating lake near Gilley Law which is home to a variety of waterfowl, ducks and swans and near the boating lake is a freshwater fishing lake.

## What to see?

### **The Pit Track**

This runs down the steep slope towards the quarry. The concept for this area was loosely based on the idea of an old pit track broken to create an 'Indiana Jones' style adventure experience with a series of long slides providing races down the hill.

A large climbing boulder balances precariously at the top of the hill. Each slide and the boulders provide a play destination in their own right.

### **The Quarry**

This is located adjacent to the swimming pool and tennis centre, creating a family base to the park with picnic maze, wigwam structures, and fire pit. A large sand pit forms the quarry floor with the old blacksmith climbing hut and diggers to move the sand around.

Elevated walkways over the grassland swamp enhance the sense of adventure, and a variety of swings cater for all users. Adjacent to this is the large stage and arena for larger organized events such as den building.

## The Forest

This is positioned beyond the quarry arena within a grid of trees. This area includes a 7m high swing rope, children swings and a large timber and rope climbing structure.

## Sports Facilities

Surrounding this park are the previously mentioned sports facilities. There is the Ski Slope which is the only one in the North East of England at 160m in length, all weather football pitches, a tennis centre/gym facility and running track.

Below we have listed 5 landmarks in this park. Each landmark has a photograph so you can travel around the park to find these points of interest, you could even take a selfie!



Flowers



Football Pitches



Activity Play Park



Silksworth Lake



The Pit Track

# Washington Wetland Centre



## Washington Wetland Centre

The centre lies on the banks of the River Wear and provides an inspirational example of how sound conservation management allows wildlife to thrive in the midst of a largely urban landscape. Here members of the public can get close to nature and learn more about wetland habitats and the wildlife they support.

## Low Barmston Farm

This was built in 1840 as a wedding gift for the eldest daughter of John Lambton, the 1st Earl of Durham. Penshaw Monument dominates the skyline above the River Wear to the south west.

## Woodhouse Farm

From the mid to late 19th century a quarry operated from the site of Woodhouse Farm. Sandstone from the quarry was taken to barges on the river to be transported to Sunderland and the river mouth for building purposes.

## Hylton A19 Bridge

This bridge was built between 1970 and 1974.

## Manor House Farm

Blessed with rich clay deposits, Sunderland developed a thriving pottery industry, particularly in the early 19th century. This site dates from an earlier period and was the home of the North Hylton Pot Works which was founded by William Maling in 1762. The products of the Maling Pottery span 200 years and they were exported worldwide.

## High Wood:

Rests on the north bank of a large loop in the River Wear. It is ancient woodland consisting of hawthorn, oak, beech and ash. It is home to a rich variety of bird life including great spotted woodpecker, bullfinch and sparrow hawk. Fungi and woodland flowers thrive here and hidden glades and ponds offer a chance to glimpse dragonflies and butterflies.

Start at Washington Wetland Centre and finish at car park.

Take the path to the left of the Wetlands Centre entrance - this is the coast to coast path. Continue on this path, passing a small pond on the left until reaching a road. At the road turn right. On the left appears Low Barmston Farm.

Just before the farm, take the public footpath to High Wood. Follow the path, keeping to the right down the bank and cross the footbridge. Turn left over the style marked 'Wearside Walks'. Keep to the side of the field and follow the line of the hedge. Fine views of Offerton and Penshaw Monument can be seen to the right. Keep on the path with the hedge to the right. Continue straight ahead following the line of the hedge towards

Woodhouse Farm, passing through the farm complex until reaching the green public footpath sign to High Wood and Toby Gill.

Take this route through a hedge lined path. Passing a pond and stone wall on the left, keep to the path on the right following the signs marked 'High Wood circular walk'.

Below to the left can be seen Manor House Farm and the A19 bridge beyond. This path now passes through High Wood. This path can be narrow and steep. Take care!

Stay on this riverside path, crossing a green footbridge and up a steep set of steps, finally crossing a footbridge before turning left and re-joining the original C2C path and back to the Wetlands Centre.

The walk itself is approximately 3.1 miles or 5km and take around 1½ hours to complete.

# Active Sunderland 321 routes

The Active Sunderland 321 routes are three separate and enjoyable circular routes of varying distances which can be either walked, jogged or run.

They aim to make it easier for anyone to get active by providing a range of permanently marked out routes across the city, that anyone can use.

The circular routes:

- are marked in 3, 2 and 1 kilometre distances at each location
- are suitable target distances for the beginner
- can be combined for those who have a little more experience
- give you the opportunity to have a go

It's a way of providing a meaningful challenge to help more people to get active when it best suits them.

Locations are:

Backhouse Park, Hetton Lyons Country Park, Barnes Park, Holley Park, Marine Walk, Doxford Park, Princess Anne Park, Herrington Country Park and Silksworth Sports Complex

Further route details can be found at:

[www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/12692/Active-Sunderland-321-Routes-](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/12692/Active-Sunderland-321-Routes-)



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## active Sunderland

Active Sunderland's aim is to develop an 'All together an Active Sunderland a city where everyone is as active as they can be'.

We are passionate about getting more people active. If you want to burn calories, get some fresh air, and make new friends the Active Sunderland Wellness Walking Programme is perfect. The programme consists of a series of walks that take place every week at various locations across Sunderland.

Launched in 2010, it has helped thousands of residents to get outdoors and walking in some of the city's most attractive green spaces, parks and locations.

For more information contact Active Sunderland:

Email: [active@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:active@sunderland.gov.uk)



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