

Branch

out from **Brockley**



South Tyneside Council

Branch out from Brockley

A three mile brass rubbing trail around Station Burn and Colliery Wood, starting and finishing at Brockley Whins Station.

A three mile trail

Whether you are looking for somewhere to go for a wildlife ramble, walk your dog, or just while away an afternoon, the three mile trail across Station Burn and Colliery Wood is perfect for you. There are twelve sculptures on this circular walk, and if you wish you can use this leaflet to take a rubbing from them.

Getting there

The Metro runs regularly to the start at Brockley Whins Station from Newcastle and Heworth to the west, and Sunderland, Seaburn and East Boldon to the South. You can also access the site from Cotswold Lane, just a five minute walk from Boldon Asda. Regular bus services run from South Shields, Jarrow, Newcastle and Sunderland to the junction of New Road and Cotswold Lane at Asda.

Getting around the trail

The majority of paths are fairly flat, but the section near the River Don at Station Burn has some steep slopes. There are no steps on the trail. The surface is mostly tarmac or loose rolled stone, but in part it is simply grass/earth. There are four kissing gates around the tenth sculpture, before you re-join the River Don, which are not suitable for wheelchair use. However, it is possible to make an alternative "figure of eight" route around Colliery Wood, which has no access restrictions and still features six of the sculptures.

The sculptures

The sculptures were designed and created by local artist Jim Roberts with the help of pupils from Boldon Church of England School and East Boldon Junior School. The children were asked to create carved clay tiles of the things that can be found on Station Burn and Colliery Wood site. They carved birds, flowers, insect, and even a Viking long boat. The artist then used these tiles to give him ideas for the steel sculptures that you see on site today.

Make your own rubbings

Each sculpture looks like the trunk of a tree, with a steel leaf mounted on the top. For inspiration the artist has used the shape of leaves from trees that can be found along the Trail, such as oak, hawthorn, beech and sycamore. Look a little closer and you will see an engraving of perhaps an insect or flower. Closer still you will see a smaller picture inside a circle.



Station Burn and Colliery Wood

Station Burn and Colliery Wood have a fascinating history and some very interesting wildlife, so there are lots of things to see along the route of the trail.

At the northern end of the trail you will encounter the River Don. Several of the sculptures feature pictures of wildlife that can be seen near the river. One of them has a picture of a Viking long boat, and some people believe that Vikings dragged their boats up the river to reach places like the church further upstream at West Boldon. The walk also passes under the Pontop Crossing railway bridge. This formed part of the Stanhope and Tyne railway line and dates back to 1839. When walking along the trail keep an eye out for birds, such as grey wagtail and heron, and wildflowers, such as field scabious and knapweed.

The southern part of the trail crosses a former coal mine at Boldon Colliery. The first shaft was sunk here in 1866 and in its hey day the pit produced over 2,000 tonnes of coal per day. The pit closed in 1982 as the coal seams became exhausted. Until 1996 the area was still used as a coal stacking yard and was then reclaimed by South Tyneside Council. The area was transformed by returning the natural contours of the site, then planting 53,000 trees during the winter 1999/2000. The local community have planted many of the trees and wildflowers that you can see on the site, including oak and alder, and flowers such as St John's wort and red campion.

To start the trail from Brockley Whins Station

There is a dropping off point behind the platform for Newcastle bound trains. From here facing away from the station, you should turn right and walk a short way before turning left on to the first path. The starting point for the Trail is through the gate.

Alternative start from Asda via Cotswold Lane

From Asda walk up Cotswold Lane, passing the cricket ground on your right. Turn right at the Hutton Street roundabout and enter Colliery Wood. You have now joined the Trail at sculpture five.



The route

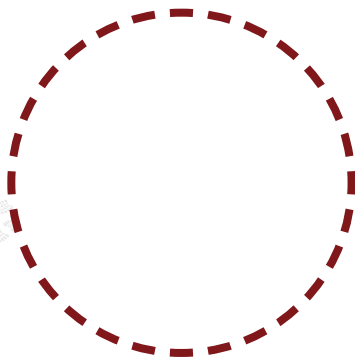
Starting at Brockley Whins station turn right and walk a short way before turning left on to the first path. Walk through the gate and you will encounter the first sculpture almost immediately on your left **1**. The sculpture is the shape of an oak leaf with pictures of plants engraved on it. The picture of an insect inside the small circle can be used for taking rubbings.

From here follow the footpath down to the riverside where you will see the next sculpture **2**. This is the shape of a beech leaf with a fish picture inside it and a smaller tadpole image.

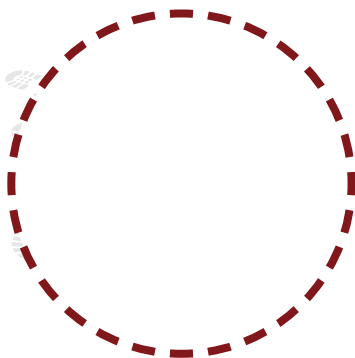
Cross the footbridge and follow the footpath straight ahead up the slope. Walk along this path for about 100 metres and look to your right towards the houses. Here you will come across the third sculpture: a sycamore leaf shape with a picture of a butterfly and the sun **3**. The smaller image features a caterpillar.

Look at for the butterflies as you walk the route. You can often see them on thistles and other wildflowers.

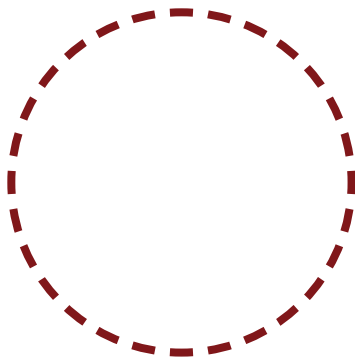
Proceed up the slope and go straight ahead at a crossroads into a wooded area. As you walk back down the slope you will see Colliery Wood, with its plantations of trees, before you. At the foot of the slope, turn left at the T-junction and walk for 100 metres along the disused railway and double back on yourself.



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2



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The route

At this point you will see the fourth sculpture, a beech leaf shape with a snake and bat etched upon it **4**.

On summer evenings you may, if you are lucky, see a bat hunting for insects here, but unfortunately there are no wild snakes in this area.

Follow the footpath until it reaches a junction at which you turn sharp left. **If you are joining the Trail from Cotswold Lane, this is where you start.**

Follow the path and on your right you should see the next sculpture: a sycamore leaf shape with pictures of a mushroom, a butterfly, the sun and a small rabbit **5**.

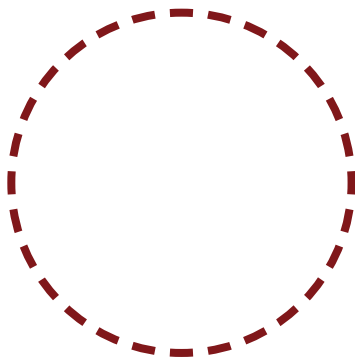
When woodlands are mature you should be able to see several types of "fungi" and these will help keep the soil fertile.

Please note that many fungi are poisonous and you should never eat one unless you are with an expert.

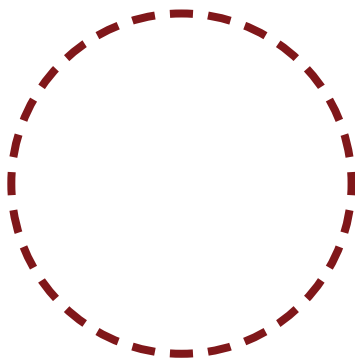
To your left you can see a woodland plantation that was planted by the local community. If you look at the trees you can see many different species, including willow and alder with their catkins in early Spring.

Follow the footpath between the plantations and you will reach a "crossroads". Turn right and after 60 metres you will discover the sixth sculpture **6**. This is shaped like an oak leaf and contains a picture of a flower and a spider.

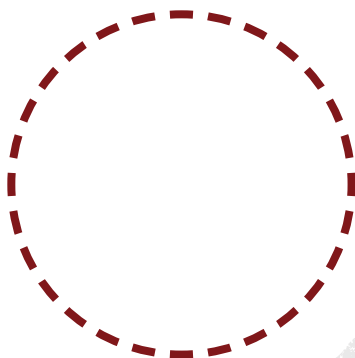
Underneath the trees you may see wildflowers such as primrose and red campion that have been planted by local people, alongside many other types of wildflowers that have colonised the site naturally.



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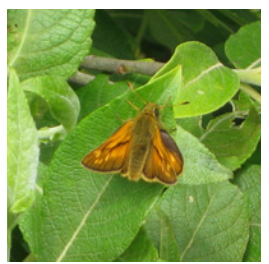
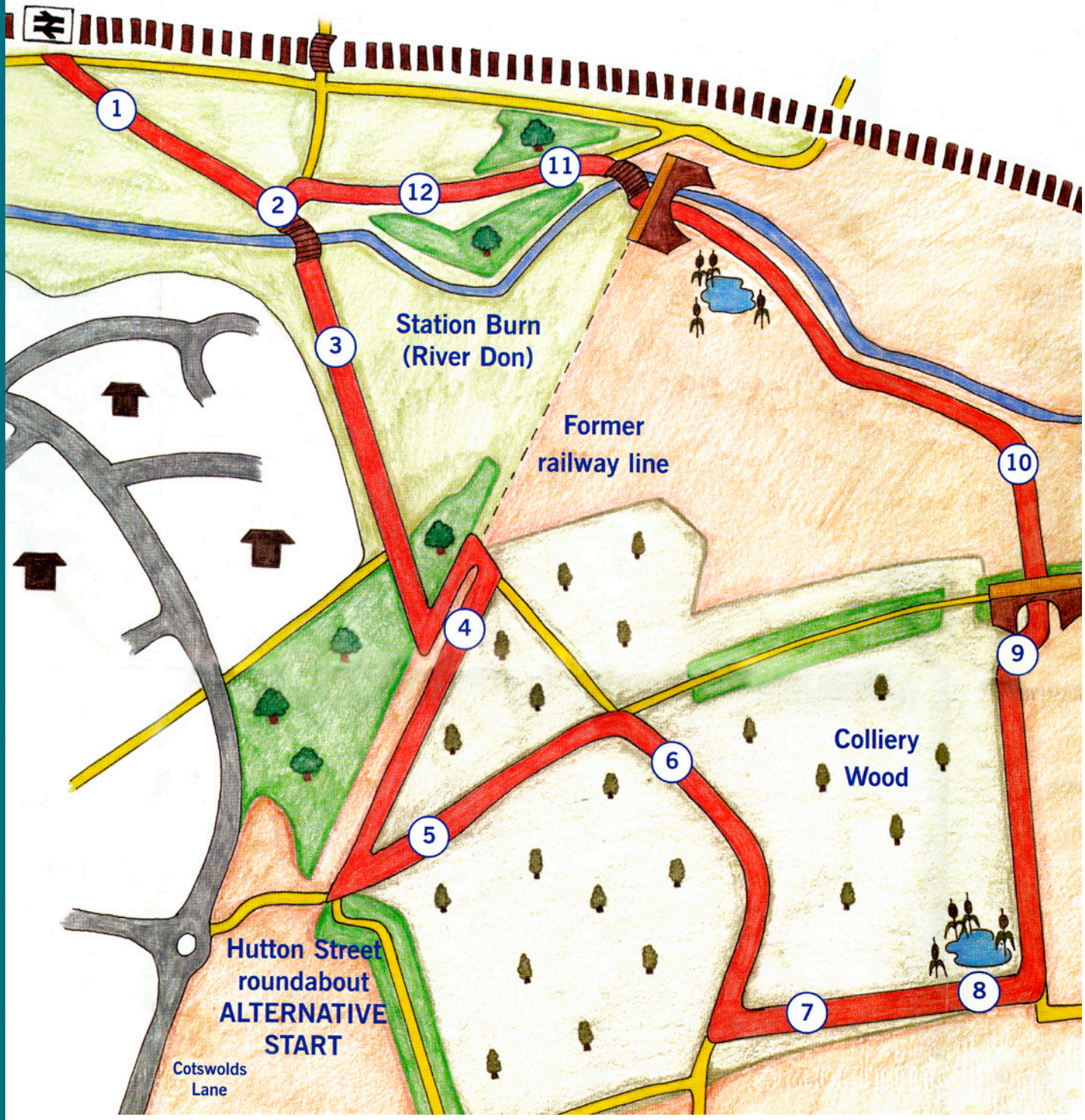


To make your own rubbings

You can use the spaces provided in the leaflet by placing the paper over the circle on the sculpture.

Hold the paper firmly then rub it over back and forth with a crayon or soft pencil.

There are twelve rubbings to collect.



The route

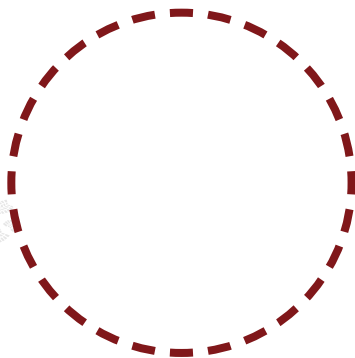
Keep going until you see a path off to the left. Take this and look to right where you will see a sculpted leaf with a hedgehog and snail image **7**.

Looking south you can see the village of Boldon with the historic St. Nicholas's Church perched on top of a hill. To the east you can see Cleadon Water Tower and the remains of a windmill on top of Cleadon Hills.

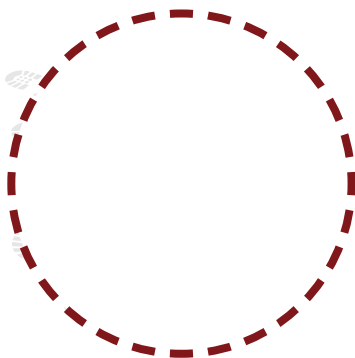
Further along you will notice a pond to your left. Just beyond is the next sculpture, featuring a fish and a dragonfly **8**.

Remember that ponds can be very dangerous, so be careful!

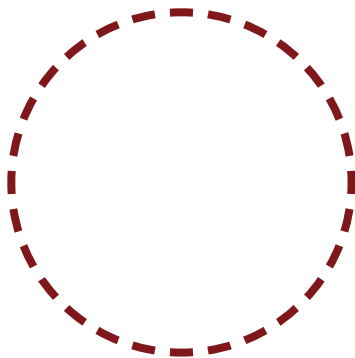
At the junction turn left and walk along the edge of the plantation for 280 metres. Ignore an earth path on your right, but take the next one, a wide stone path down to your right. The next sculpture is of a birch leaf with a spider along with a smaller picture of a fly **9**. Turn left at the bottom of the slope and walk through the tunnel, which, as the sculpture suggests, is an ideal habitat for spiders and other creepy crawlies. As you emerge the landscape changes to an area of fields and hedgerows. The trees are mainly hawthorn and elder. Follow the path through two kissing gates. As it reaches the river and turns left you will see the tenth sculpture: a sycamore leaf featuring a



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The route

Viking long boat and an axe **10**. Walk through the next two kissing gates and follow the footpath downstream along the riverside.

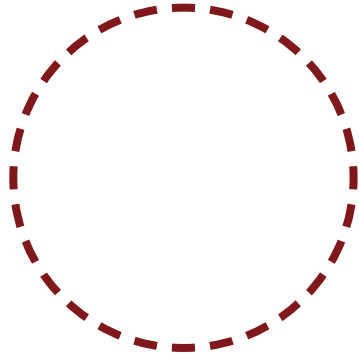
You will notice trees such as willow, and herons and kingfishers can also be seen. Continuing along the path, you will see a reed bed on your left.

Walk under the large Pontop Crossing former railway bridge, turn right and cross the footbridge. To your left you will see a boardwalk. Walk along this and onto the open field. Here you will notice an oak leaf shaped sculpture with a squirrel and acorn image **11**. Looking at the plantations to your left and right you will see many oak trees in this area.

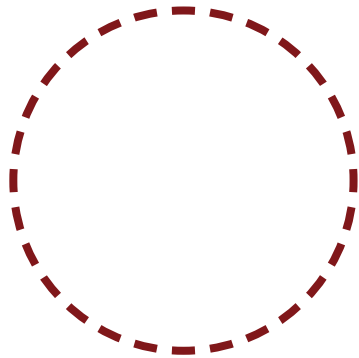
Follow the path down the slope towards a woodland plantation where you will encounter the final sculpture **12**. This features a water vole and a newt on an oak leaf shape.

Sadly, the once common water vole has become rather rare. But with the involvement of local people it has become a common sight in the River Don.

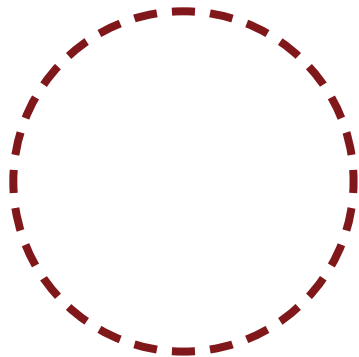
To get back to Brockley Whins station simply walk down to the footbridge next to the second sculpture. Turn right and walk back up to the top of the bank to your starting point.



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Countryside Code

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



Contacts for further information

Countryside Officer/ Public Rights of Way Officer

South Tyneside Council
Town Hall and Civic Offices
Westoe Road,
South Shields
NE33 2RL
Telephone (0191) 427 7000

Additional countryside information

For further information and leaflets please see
www.southtyneside.info

Visitor Information Centre South Shields

Telephone (0191) 424 7788

Public transport information – Travel Line

Telephone 0871 200 2233 for all local public transport enquiries.