

Where to find the South Shields urban health walks



Key to map symbols

-  Access Barrier
-  Bus stop
-  Car parking
-  Cross slope
-  Hazard
-  Information
-  Metro station
-  Public house
-  Public telephone
-  Seat
-  Shops
-  Slope up/down
-  Steps up/down
-  Stile
-  Toilets

Walk your way to better health

Half an hour of brisk walking on most days can:

Improve - weight control, stamina, confidence, community spirit, life expectancy, posture, energy and self-esteem.

Reduce - heart disease, stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure, bowel cancer, arthritis, anxiety and osteoporosis.

Furthermore, almost everyone can do it, you don't need any special equipment, it's easy and it's free! So why not take the first steps along the urban history walks, but remember not to overdo it.

Start slowly and build up gradually. Aim to walk for half an hour on most days, at a pace that makes you breathe a little faster, feel a little warmer and have a slightly faster heart beat. Walking doesn't have to be 'hard' - you should be able to carry out a conversation quite easily as you go, so why not go with a friend or your family?

The potential benefits of walking are far greater than any risks but if you haven't been active for some time, or are concerned about your health, check with your doctor before you begin.

Getting to the Health Walks

The Urban History Walks all start at Metro Stations where frequent bus services connect, making access to the walks easy. Contact North East Travel Line on 0870 608 2608 for more information or obtain a bus timetable from Nexus Travel Shops.

Getting around the Health Walks

The walks have been designed with everyone in mind, including people with pushchairs and wheelchair users. Each route has been fully surveyed to identify surface types, slopes and location of steps - all of which are indicated on the maps to help you decide if you can negotiate a particular walk before ever leaving home. Finding your way round is easy, as the Urban Walks use street names as a guide. At certain points, you will find markers fitted to lampposts and signposts to keep you on track.

Walking Works Wonders in South Tyneside

These Urban History Walks - in South Shields and in Jarrow and Hebburn - build on the success of the Monkton, Temple Park and Coastal Health Walks. As even more health walks are created around the Borough, each will be waymarked to a very high standard and have a self-guided booklet. The walks are being developed in partnership with the community - so why not take the first step towards a healthier lifestyle and walk your way to better health?

The project is also developing a network of volunteer walk leaders, to lead health walks throughout the year along the newly-established routes. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer walk leader, contact Ruth Nolan on (0191) 456 6903.

The project is a partnership between South Tyneside Council, South of Tyne and Wearside Mental Health Trust, South Tyneside Primary Care Trust, Age Concern, Health Action Zone and Groundwork South Tyneside.

Walk 2 - South Shields The Pitman's Path

Distance: 3km (2 miles)



Introduction

Coalmining has shaped the landscape and the lives of the people of South Shields. It brought prosperity for some, but for those who risked their lives to bring it to the surface it brought harsh working conditions, poor health and for many – death. The pits have all closed now and are being re-landscaped to create a healthier environment for everyone.

ROUTE

The walk starts and finishes at South Shields Metro Station. Proceed along King Street, passing under the Metro Bridge heading towards the **Old Town Hall** and **Market Place**.



MARKET PLACE c1898-1900
© South Shields Libraries and Museums

The Dean and Chapter of Durham created the Market Place and Old Town Hall in 1768 for the holding of fairs and markets. The Town Hall provided shelter for the market folk as well as official offices. It ceased to function as a Town Hall in 1910 but the market still thrives. The market place once boasted 13 public houses, many of which were destroyed during an air raid which hit the town on October 2nd, 1941.

As the pedestrian area comes to an end, take a left turn and cross Church Way at the crossing area next to **St. Hilda's Church**.

The first St. Hilda's Church was founded in 647 AD by St. Aiden and placed in the charge of the Northumbrian Princess Hilda. Abbess Hilda's early church was probably destroyed during the Danish invasions, although a church has remained on the site ever since. The church we see today is the result of much renovation and rebuilding work, mostly done in the 19th Century.

Enter the park, keeping St. Hilda's Church to your left. Take the left hand path to Coronation Street and cross over the road. Go down the steps into the car park and follow the cycle path signs for the sea front around the right hand perimeter of the car park and up the incline to **St Hilda's Colliery**.

The engine house of St. Hilda's Colliery is all that remains of this pit, which was worked from 1822 to 1940. A terrible disaster struck the pit on Friday June 28th 1839, when an explosion claimed the lives of 51 men and boys including one of the rescuers who had gone to search for his son. Following this disaster the South Shields Committee for the Prevention of Accidents in Mines was formed. It made many recommendations to the Government regarding increasing safety in coalmines.

Continue along the cycle path until you reach Westoe Road. Turn right, cross the road at the traffic island and continue along the cycle path.

ST HILDA'S COLLIERY
FROM AN ENGRAVING OF 1822-1850
© South Shields Libraries and Museums



The cycle path follows the route of the old **Westoe Mineral Line**, which would once have carried coals from Westoe Colliery to the river. Westoe Colliery was the last mine to close in South Tyneside in 1993. Look out for the woodcarvings by chainsaw artist Rodney Holland depicting the coalmining heritage of this area. The sculptures were carved into diseased trees, which had to be felled for safety reasons. New trees have been planted to replace them.



WESTOE CEMETERY
© South Tyneside Council

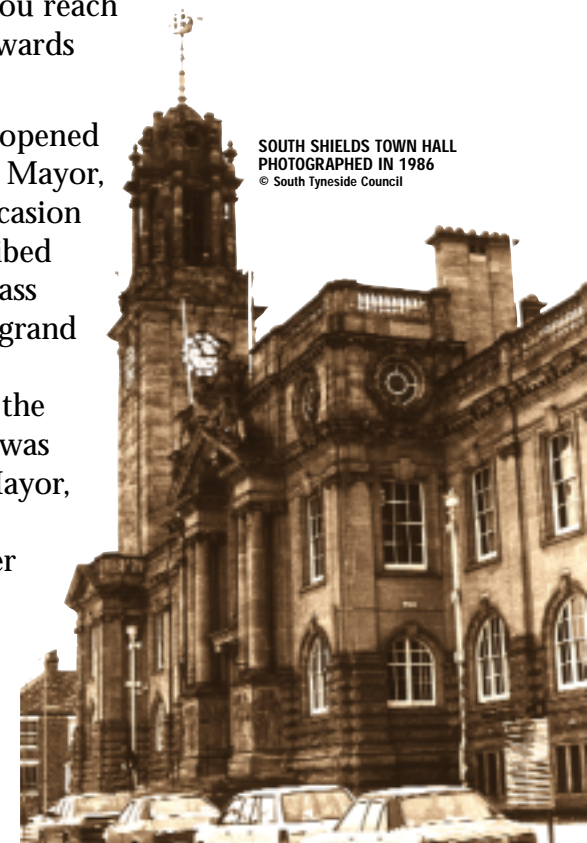
Follow the cycle path until you reach the entrance to **Westoe Cemetery** on your right.

As a result of a serious cholera outbreak which highlighted the need for a new cemetery, a Burial Board was set up in 1854 to control burials in South Tyneside. In 1855 land totalling 16 acres was obtained and Westoe Cemetery laid out, including the erection of two gothic style chapels. Due to poor drainage the cemetery was never fully utilised and a larger cemetery was subsequently created at Harton.

At the cemetery turn left and cross Erskine Road. Continue along Selbourne Street until you reach Broughton Road. Turn left towards the **Town Hall**.

The Town Hall was officially opened on October 19th 1910 by the Mayor, Councillor G T Grey. This occasion is commemorated by an inscribed tablet set below the stained glass window at the bottom of the grand staircase opposite the main entrance. A new extension to the north wing of the Town Hall was completed in 1960 and the Mayor, Alderman Jack Richardson, officially opened it on October 19th 1960 - the date being specially chosen as it marked the 50th anniversary of the 1910 opening ceremony.

SOUTH SHIELDS TOWN HALL
PHOTOGRAPHED IN 1986
© South Tyneside Council



Keeping the Town Hall to your right, walk past the front of the building until you reach the pedestrian crossing at Beach Road. Cross over and turn right, continuing along Beach Road to Anderson Street. Turn left and follow Anderson Street until you reach Ocean Road. Turn left and proceed along the pedestrianised area, passing Kirkpatrick's Public House and the Museum and Art Gallery.

In 1869 **Kirkpatrick's Public House** housed the Marine School. The School was founded in 1837 by Dr Thomas Winterbottom to train men for a sea-going life. Although the school is now closed

the marine training that began there still continues at South Tyneside College.

South Shields Museum and Art Gallery is housed in the old Mechanic's Institute, which became South Shields Library and Museum in 1873. The library was moved to a new building in 1976. Museum admission is free - for more information, contact the museum on (0191) 456 8740.

Continue along the pedestrianised area back to South Shields Metro Station.



THE LIBRARY
IN 1935
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