



Cyclists outing (Martin Avery)

Introduction

A unique partnership came together as a Millennium Project to enhance the East Durham Coast in the District of Easington. The 'Turning The Tide' project has improved the environment of what was once the East Durham Coalfield and helped the mining communities to create a new image.

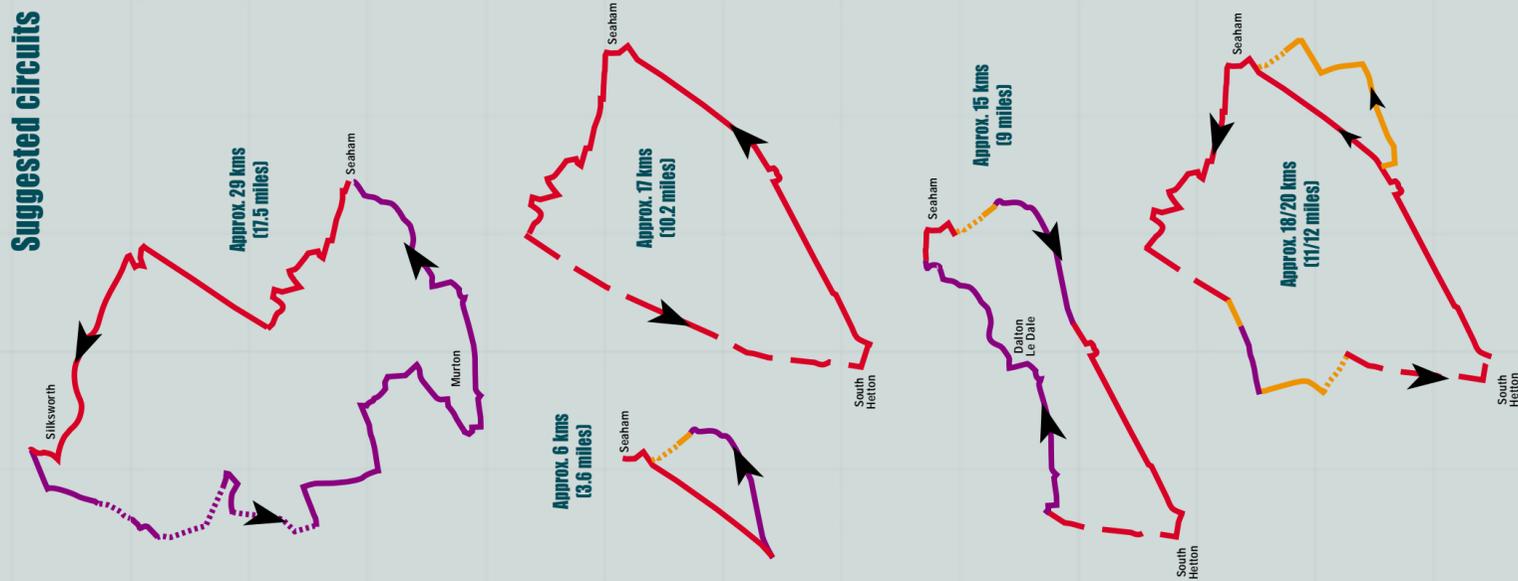
There has been a gradual transition in the area, from the environmental damage caused by the coal industry to the recreation of wildlife habitats and visitor facilities we see today.

This cycle routes map/guide is part of the transition process and shows how the conversion from 'rails to trails' can benefit local people, as well as visitors, who wish to walk and cycle or, where appropriate, travel on horseback around the East Durham countryside. The growing route network is a mixture of minor roads and bridleways which complement a number of converted colliery and quarry mineral lines and old wagonways. Together with the addition of new and/or improved cycle paths, the combined result is a resource which is available to everyone to use and enjoy.

Links - Loops - Circuits and Spurs ...

The area covered by this cycle routes map/guide is bounded by the North Sea on one side into which a number of remarkable dunes, both large and small, make their way. The totally traffic-free linear route which forms its inland perimeter arc is a clear north/south corridor route which links Ryhope at its northern end with the village of Hart to the south. These are 'Routes 1 & 14' of the National Cycle Network and, apart from being integral to the North Sea Cycle Route, they also form the key connection between Teesside and Wearside while its northward continuation connects with Tyne-side.

There are 4 categories of route: a) the main north/south linear corridor route, b) 5 signed coastal linking routes which connect the main route with local communities and the coast, c) a number of recommended 'feeder' routes, and d) ordinary streets and/or rural tracks which provide all-important connections between the other route sections.



KEY

- National Cycle Network (NCN)
- Linking Cycle Ways (signed)
- Circuit Links
- Off-road (muddy when wet)
- Feeder Routes
- Picnic Area
- Shop
- Pub
- Cafe
- Telephone
- Visitor Information
- Parking
- Tourist Information Centre
- Visitor Centre
- Toilets
- Cycle Shop
- Station
- Busy road crossing

Scale: 0 1 2 3 4 km / 0 1 2 3 4 miles

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A cycle routes map/guide mainly showing off-road cycle routes on converted railpaths, new and improved cycleways, bridleways, quiet roads and town streets.

How to use this map/guide

This cycle routes map/guide shows all principal cycle routes within the District of Easington and connections to the wider region. They are mainly for off-road cyclists because of the varied nature of surface but use of a specialist mountain bike is generally NOT essential.

Other maps that may be useful: O.S. 1:50,000 maps 88 & 93; Sustrans Three Rivers Cycle Route.

The identified routes use a combination of converted rail paths, new and improved cycleways, bridleways, quiet roads and town streets. Some surfaces will be muddy after rain.

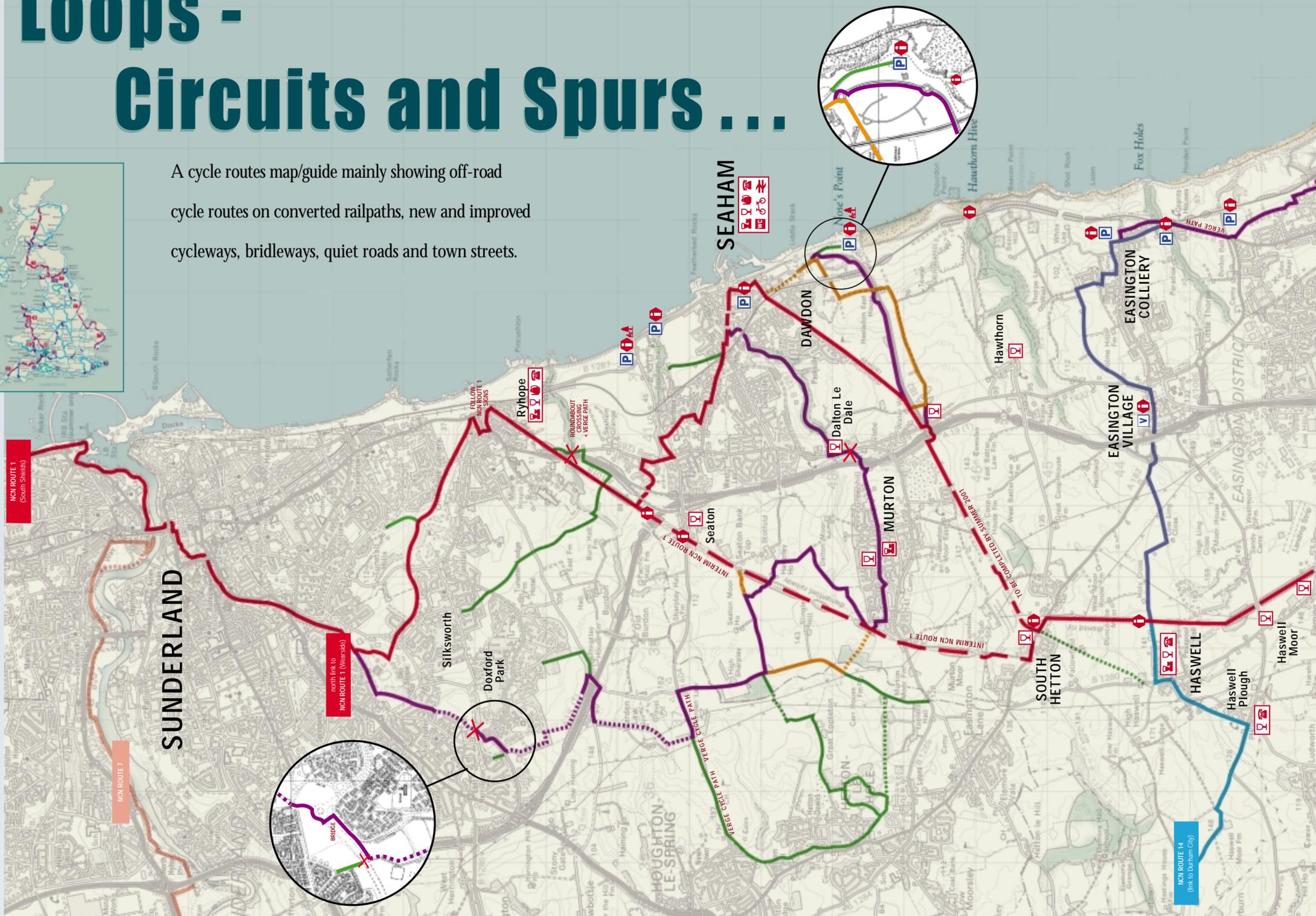
A number of circuits have been recommended which make best use of the main linear route (signed), the lateral spur routes (signed) and the feeder routes, some of which are way-marked though most of the minor road linkages are not as this is impractical.

The routes can be enjoyed in either direction or in any configuration - the arrows on the small insert context maps indicate the direction of travel which uses gradients to best advantage.

Use the small context map(s) to choose a circuit and then complete your cycle tour by following the on-route signage in conjunction with the map. Alternatively, follow the feeder routes to join the main route corridor and to access the coastal link routes.

The combined effects of topography and industrial history have always been major factors in deciding where footpaths, byways and roads have developed in this area. The lateral nature of the deep-cut dunes has been particularly influential and once again, they have played their part in limiting the ability of this guide to offer route suggestions which overcome these natural barriers.

Please respect these dunes and the flora and fauna they support. Do not cycle where you are not legally entitled to. This also includes ALL footpaths unless the map/guide or at-location information confirms permission has been agreed.



'Rails to Trails' ...

In the 17th century, a network of waggonways was created in this region. They were used to transport coal from the collieries inland to the rivers Tyne, Wear and Tees, then to be shipped elsewhere in the country.

These lines were constructed of wooden rails and sleepers and then gradually replaced by iron and stone sleepers. With no engines, these first railroads had to rely on gravity and the pulling power of horses.

Later, mineral railway lines developed. National Cycle Network Route 1 follows the mineral railway line which was built in 1835 linking collieries to the docks at Hartlepool, Seaham and Sunderland. The route was owned and constructed by the Hartlepool Dock and Railway Company.

The line was difficult to construct and the company incurred heavy financial debts. However, it developed to take passengers as did many other mineral railways at this time. It only began to decline when the coastal railway from Hartlepool to Sunderland was constructed in 1905. It continued to carry coal until the line was disbanded in 1980. Interpretive boards placed at intervals along this cycle route will give you more information about the area.

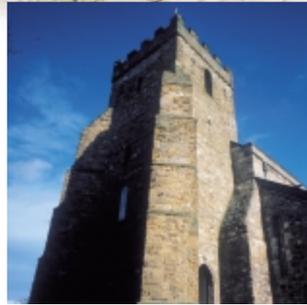
Many colliery owners built their own railway lines. Two of these now form part of this local cycle network: The Third Marquis of Londonderry was anxious to reduce the cost of transporting coal via Sunderland. He therefore built a harbour at Seaham and a railway line to connect his inland collieries to it. This Londonderry line forms part of the signed Linking Cycle Way. Colonel Braddyll, owner of the Hetton Coal Co., built another to the south. This is known locally as the Yellow Brick Road and connects South Hetton with Seaham.



Seaham Timeline



The South Hetton Railway to Seaham Harbour, from a woodcut of 1835.



St Mary's Church, Easington Village (Colin Cuthbert)



Easington Colliery Pit Cage, erected on the former colliery site (Darin Smith)

Places to visit ...

As well as the many villages you will pass through on these trails, here are some of the settlements on the coast which are well worth making a destination in themselves.

SEAHAM

Signed Linking Cycle Ways will bring you onto the seafront at Seaham. From here you can explore the 'Seaham Timeline' - a walking trail along the promenade which links a series of interpretive sculptures with information panels incorporated within them. Or you can explore the town centre by wandering along Church Street. Some interesting bike racks can be found here!

EASINGTON VILLAGE

This village goes back to Anglo-Saxon times but, essentially, was built in the 12th/13th centuries. Seaton Holme, a Medieval manor house was refurbished in 1249 for Bishop Farnham of Durham as a retirement home. It is well worth a visit and amongst other uses it also houses a Discovery Centre where more information about the area can be obtained. St Mary's Church, one of a series of churches in the area which form a Christian Heritage Trail, is also worth exploring.

EASINGTON COLLIERY

One of the last pits to close, the colliery site has now been reclaimed, leaving a landmark pit cage, a Timeline and a Memorial Garden as reminders of an industry which once dominated this area.

CRIMDON

Wide, sandy beaches can be found here as well as a walk through Crimdon Dene. The area was once a popular resort. Hundreds of people once came here for their annual holiday or for a day's visit, perhaps to see the Miss Crimdon competition! Now the area is more peaceful but just as attractive.

Good Cycling Code

Please follow this simple code to ensure enjoyable riding and the safety of others.

Obey the Rules of the Road:
Always follow the Highway Code.

Be Courteous:

Give way to horse riders and pedestrians, some of whom may be hard of hearing or visually impaired. Don't assume they can see or hear you.

Do not expect to travel quickly on shared-use cycle paths.

Ring a bell or politely call out to warn of your approach and acknowledge people who give way to you.

Respect countryside/farming activities.

Be courteous to anglers and boat users.

Care for the environment:

Can you reach the start of your journey by bike or public transport?

Follow the Country Code, in particular respect crops, livestock and wildlife and take litter home including orange and banana peel.

Look after yourself:

Take special care at junctions, when cycling downhill and on loose/wet surfaces.

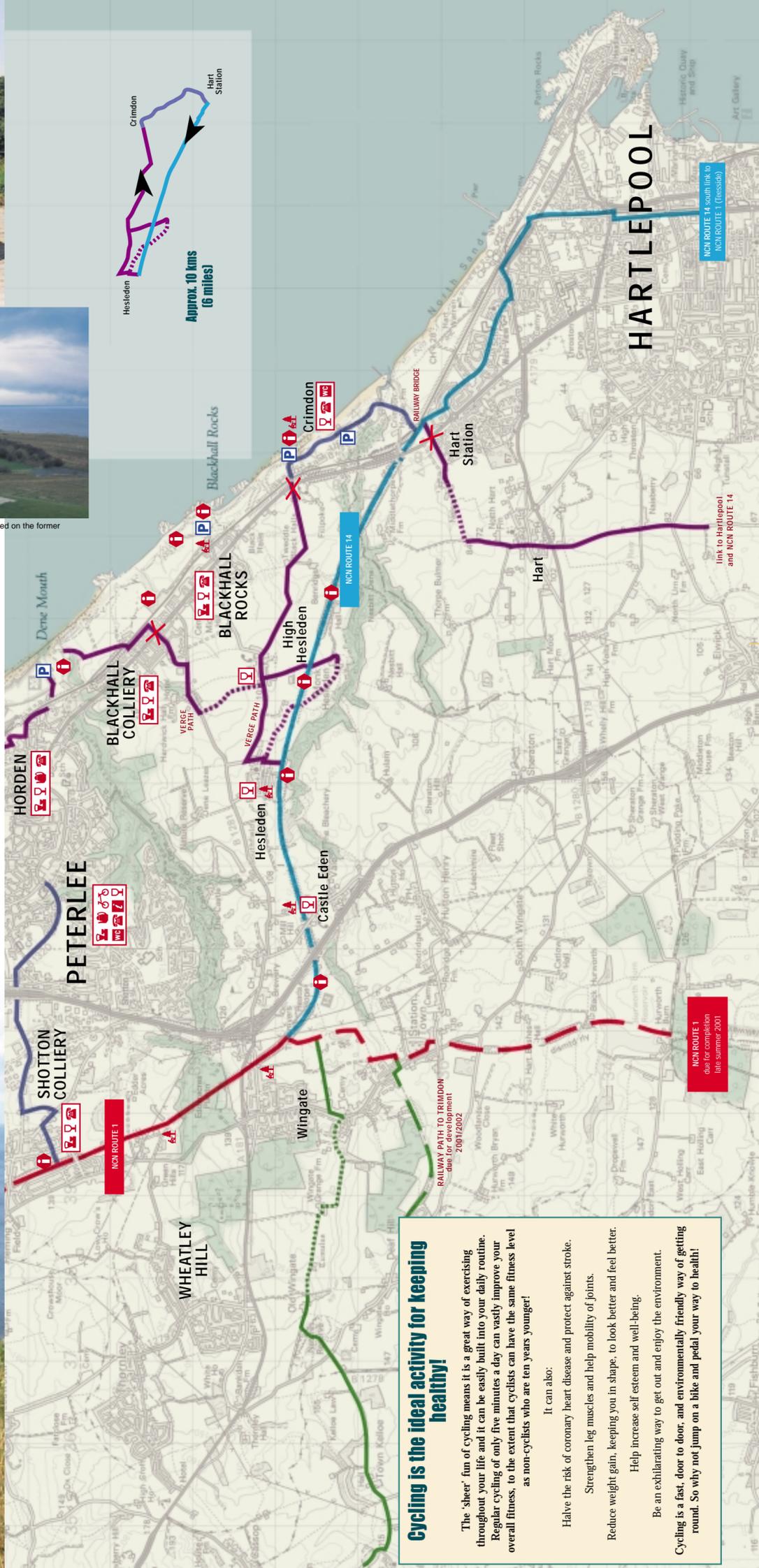
In remote areas carry food, repair kit, map, spare clothing and waterproofs.

Carry money, personal ID and plan your route, use sun-block when appropriate.

Keep your cycle roadworthy, use lights in poor visibility.

Consider wearing a helmet and conspicuous clothing.

Thank you for cycling! The bicycle is the most efficient and environmentally friendly form of transport ever invented.



Cycling is the ideal activity for keeping healthy!

The 'sheer' fun of cycling means it is a great way of exercising throughout your life and it can be easily built into your daily routine. Regular cycling of only five minutes a day can vastly improve your overall fitness, to the extent that cyclists can have the same fitness level as non-cyclists who are ten years younger!

It can also:

- Halve the risk of coronary heart disease and protect against stroke.
- Strengthen leg muscles and help mobility of joints.
- Reduce weight gain, keeping you in shape, to look better and feel better.
- Help increase self esteem and well-being.
- Be an exhilarating way to get out and enjoy the environment.
- Cycling is a fast, door to door, and environmentally friendly way of getting round. So why not jump on a bike and pedal your way to health!

Turning the Tide - A Millennium Project

Partners:

The Millennium Commission	English Nature
Durham County Council	Durham Wildlife Trust
District of Easington	Groundwork East Durham
The National Trust	The Environment Agency
One NorthEast	Northern Arts
The European Union	Seaham Harbour Dock Company
The Countryside Agency	
Northumbrian Water	

Following the success of the Turning The Tide project, The Countryside Agency designated the newly regenerated coastline as a Heritage Coast in April 2001.

Other leaflets in this series are:



As well as a selection of village walks leaflets.

Further Information

For further information about this area and things to see and do please contact:
Durham County Council
Tel. 0191 383 3354
(answering machine outside office hours)
District of Easington
Tel. 0191 527 0501 ext. 2238/2281

Nearest Tourist Information Centre is: PETERLEE TOWN CENTRE, 20 Upper Chare, Peterlee, County Durham SR8 1BW.
Telephone: 0191 586 4450.
email:touristinfo@peterlee.gov.uk

Route survey by Cycle Trax
Front cover photographs top and middle: Philip Nixon
bottom: Martin Avery



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Easington cycle ways



The East Durham link to the National Cycle Network