

Directions (FP = footpath)

- 1 Set off up the road signed Alston, Nenthead & Coalcleugh. **A** Follow the road for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, past lime kilns and a quarry. At 'Scotchmeadows' (large green barn) take right turn signed 'Sparty Lea $1\frac{1}{2}$ '.
- 2 Stay on this road for $\frac{1}{2}$ mile **B** until a pair of FP signs on the left. Through the gate keep right (ignoring the main track) to follow the drystone wall. Keep this wall on your right until you reach a stile. Cross the stile and continue straight over the field to a metal gate (although you may wish to divert slightly to avoid the dip). Through the gate bear right to a ladder stile over a drystone wall. Cross this and a second stile in quick succession. Over stile turn left. **C**
- 3 Walk downhill to a stile in a fence. Cross this and bear right downhill to a footbridge. Cross the bridge, turn right in front of Swinhope Cottages and follow the track straight ahead. * At fork turn left, climbing steeply to join road and then keep uphill, past an old quarry. Just after two cottages go through a metal field gate on the right. **D** Follow the rough track, after 200m keep left at fork. You come onto the open fell. [*For a short cut to Sparty Lea Bridge, follow this track to the road, turn right and walk to the next junction where you turn left. Just before the bridge turn right (FP) and follow directions from **8**]
- 4 Stay on this main track for $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles across the fell, eventually descending gradually to a gate. Through the gate keep straight ahead, first on a rough track then a road, down to a bridge and a ford. Over the bridge turn right on FP signed 'Sipton Shield $\frac{3}{4}$ ' to follow a grassy path through pine woods. The path crosses a couple of stiles from the wood to the riverbank and back again.
- 5 Look out for a short flight of wooden steps up to a stile on the left. This takes you up through the wood to a ladder stile which leads out onto a field. Cross the field and through the gap in the wall ahead. Follow the waymarkers across the field to a tarmac drive. Turn left, through the gate and uphill to a track. Bear right and after a few yards (before reaching main road) take the path on the right. Keep straight on to cross a wider track. Cross a narrow stone bridge and then up to a tarmac lane. **E**
- 6 Turn right and follow the lane past cottages on the right. **F** The lane then follows the river to a cluster of cottages. Keep straight ahead through the field gate onto a wide grassy path to a footbridge.
- 7 Cross the bridge, turn left and keeping the fence on the left walk to a gate into a second field. Halfway across this field look for a stile on your left. Cross the stile, turn right and follow the riverside path to a lane. Keep left and follow the lane to a junction with stone bridge on your left. Keep straight ahead to cross the road and follow FP past the front of a cottage, with the river to your left. **G**
- 8 Follow the FP across a stile and rough pasture land. You need to bear right slightly to cross a second stile. From here the path bears left towards a farm (Corn Mill). Pass the farm buildings and just after St Peter's Church go through the gate on the right and continue along the riverside path. **H**
- 9 The path meanders over fields, keeping close to the river. When you meet a lane keep left and follow lane, with river still on your left. Where lane turns right uphill keep left on riverside path. You pass a cluster of buildings across the river on your left. **I**
- 10 Keep on with river on your left, and next to a weir cross a footbridge over a small burn. Where the wall on your right turns away from the river bear right to climb the bank. Follow the path along the top of this ridge back to the start. **J**

In the footsteps of the Allen Valley lead miners

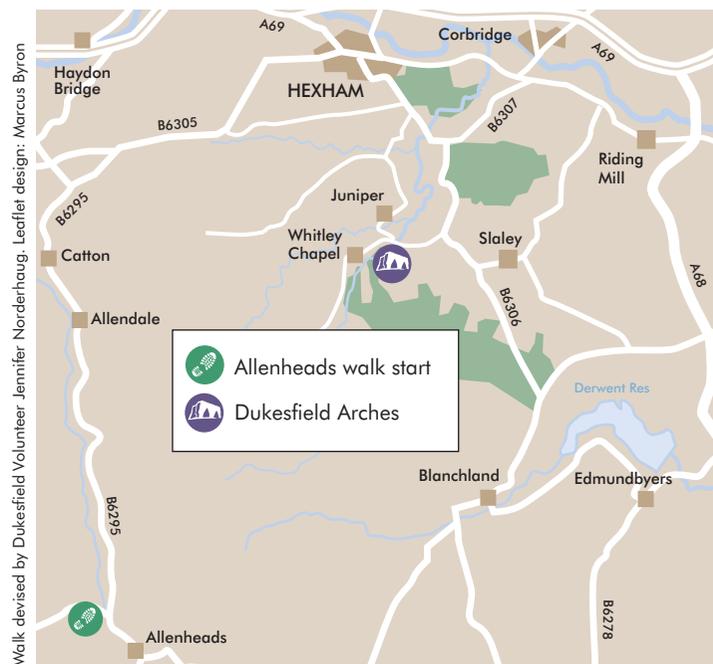
Walk length 8 miles/13km

Terrain Riverside path, moorland, boggy in places

OS maps Explorer OL31 & OL34

- P** Smelt Mill Bridge, nr Allenheads: GR NY852464
Nearest post code for Sat Navs NE47 9HG
- C** The Hemmel Cafe & Allenheads Inn (1 mile)
Various cafes & pubs in Allendale (7 miles)
- B** 688 Hexham-Allenheads www.simplygo.com
- I** Allenheads village

If you enjoy this walk there is another route exploring lead industry sites around Dukesfield Arches near Whitley Chapel.



Please ask us if you would like this leaflet summarised in another format.
Friends of the North Pennines 07935 337210

The Dukesfield Smelters and Carriers Project is led by the Friends of the North Pennines in partnership with Hexhamshire and Slaley Parish Councils and has the active support of the landowner, Allendale Estates. It is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the generous support of other sponsors.

The Friends – working to keep the North Pennines special for tomorrow.
www.friendsofthenorthpennines.org.uk Charity No:1137467



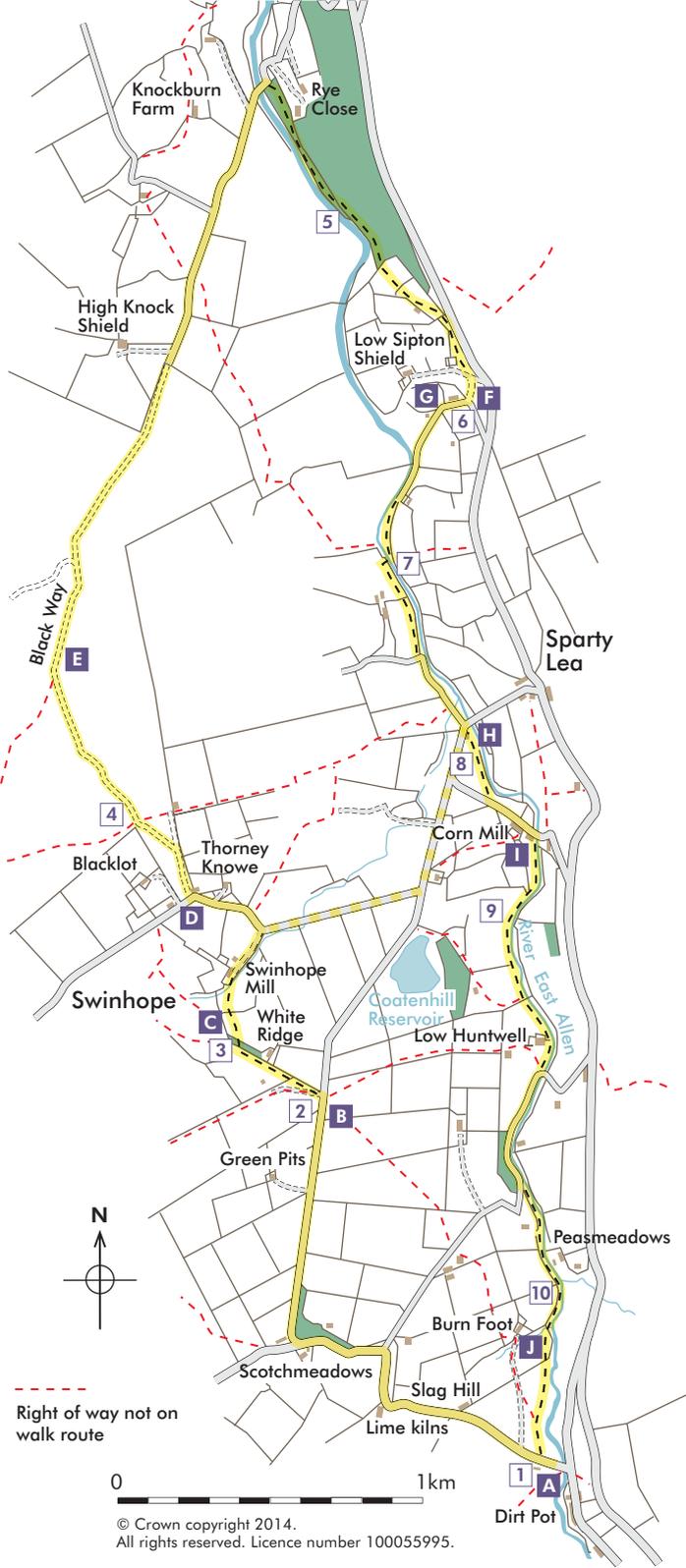
DUKESFIELD
Smelters and Carriers Project

In the footsteps of the Allen Valley lead miners



An 8-mile walk discovering the lead mining heritage of the beautiful East Allen Valley





A To your left are the ruins of the Allenheads Smelt Mill, built about 1700 and operational until 1869. Although today it's hard to imagine the scale of the operation, with its associated sounds and smells, you can still see a few remaining features. Further up the road is another example of past industry – the impressive limekilns at Thorn Green.



Smelters' cottages
Smelters were so highly valued a mining company would offer perks such as accommodation

Mill manager's house

Water race or leat
This carried water from the river to the smelt mill reservoir

Flue
This carried toxic fumes from the smelt mill to a distant chimney

Carriers' Way
Packhorses brought lead ore from Killhope Mine in Weardale

Reservoir

Peat store

Coal was expensive, so locally available peat was used as much as possible

B Looking ahead down the lane you can see Coatenhill Dam, one of seven dams in this area built to provide water to power machinery in the lead mines.

C To your left is the Swinhope Valley. The cottages here were once inhabited by large lead-mining families. To your left, at the head of the valley, were two lead mines. Both mines were busy until the start of the 19th century; one was still open as recently as 1960.

D Further along the road is Swinhope Chapel. This was the meeting place of striking miners in 1849. The miners objected to being made to work a strict eight-hour day, with clocking in and out; an idea put forward by the mine agent, Thomas Sopwith. The result was that many of the miners lost their jobs and were replaced by miners from Alston Moor. Over the next year many Allendale miners emigrated to America.



Swinhope Primitive Methodist Chapel. The vast majority of lead miners and their families were Methodists. Eleven Wesleyan and twelve Primitive Methodist Chapels were built in the East and West Allen Valleys alone.

E You are walking along the Black Way. In the summer months this route was alive with a constant stream of pack ponies carrying lead ore from North Pennine Lead Mines to the smelt mills.

F If you look to your left through the trees you can see Sipton Bridge, which is quite unusual for having double arches.

G Here on the site of Sipton Lead Mine you can still see many of the original buildings (see photo above right). Look for the capped shaft on the right of the track where there was a large waterwheel which remained

here until the 1960s (you can see a similar, working wheel at Killhope Museum in Weardale). In the field to your left the small square stone building was the gunpowder house – far away from the other buildings for a good reason!



19th century photo of Sipton from the main Allenheads road, showing the miners' cottages (right) mine manager's house (centre) and gunpowder house (below centre). The cluster of buildings on the left is the mine itself.

H The cottage on your right is Tilery Cottage where candles were made for the lead miners. Candles were supplied by the mine company WB Lead and paid for by the miners out of their wages. Consequently miners used them as little as possible, working in the pitch black darkness whenever they could.

I The Church was deconsecrated in the 1950s. Most of the Sparty Lea lead miners and valley folk made the graveyard here their last resting place.

J The cottage on your right is Burnfoot. The raised area in the field near the river was a cock fighting pit and one of the last in use in the area.