

From 1951 until 1990 an area near the railway was used as an explosives depot by ICI. Storage was in soil-covered bunkers on low-lying ground and the railway remained open for the trains carrying explosives. In 1995 Ward Bros took over the site of about 150 acres. The explosives depot was reclaimed and eventually the track of the railway was resurfaced and is now adopted as a bridleway. Since 1999 over 110 000 tons of coal have been extracted from the adjacent area and it is currently worked as a landfill site where material is screened and dumped.

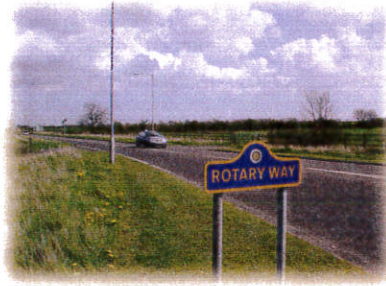


Blue Tit



Entrance to landfill operations

The entrance to the Holystone Prestwick Pit Restoration is open when the site is working, otherwise before the closed gate there is a gap in the fence L where the BW leads off. It then crosses the site road and continues as a broad well-surfaced track, back on the old railway line, to Rotary Way.



One afternoon there was a small commotion along here as a stoat caught a young rabbit. Many species of birds live in the hedgerows and can be observed by quiet walkers.

Cross the road again with care and continue on the old railway line back to the start.

Continue on the tarmac road in the same direction and when this bears L into the machinery yard look for a direction arrow on a post in the R corner of the fence. The path contours behind a spoil heap and exits through a broken wooden gate.

Turn L and pass piles of rubbish to the exit at the Airport roundabout. When the Bridleway is officially adopted this area is due for improvement and signs will be put up to help walkers.



Great Tit

Walk 2

Callerton Lane to Airport

(Just over 3 miles)

BW = bridle way SO = straight on FB = foot bridge
 FP = foot path TR = turn right TL = turn left
 SP = sign post



Start of the walk at Callerton Lane

START at the small car park at the Ponteland end of Callerton Lane, between the children's play area and the Fire Station. Exit the car park and follow the track of an old railway.

The railway was a branch line of the North Tyneside electric route from South Gosforth to Ponteland and opened in 1905. It did not last long closing to passengers in 1929 and the system was closed to all traffic in 1967. After this date there was a facility for ICI at Prestwick but this too closed in 1989. The Metro system opened in 1984 on the same route up Kenton Bank Foot and was extended to the airport in 1990.



Callerton Lane Doggy litter bins



Doggy Friendly Gate

The walk is doggy friendly. Litter bins are provided as well as the doggy gate and dogs are welcome if accompanied by well-behaved owners.

Look out for a stile and broken fence into school playing field R.

Cross the field to the corner of the tennis courts and continue along the fence till a stile is reached, with a special doggy gate, and the burn is crossed by a plank bridge. Make straight over the field to Rotary Way.

For a shorter walk TL onto a mown track on the wide verge of Rotary Way and continue till a gate is reached on the left and the old railway line returns to the start.



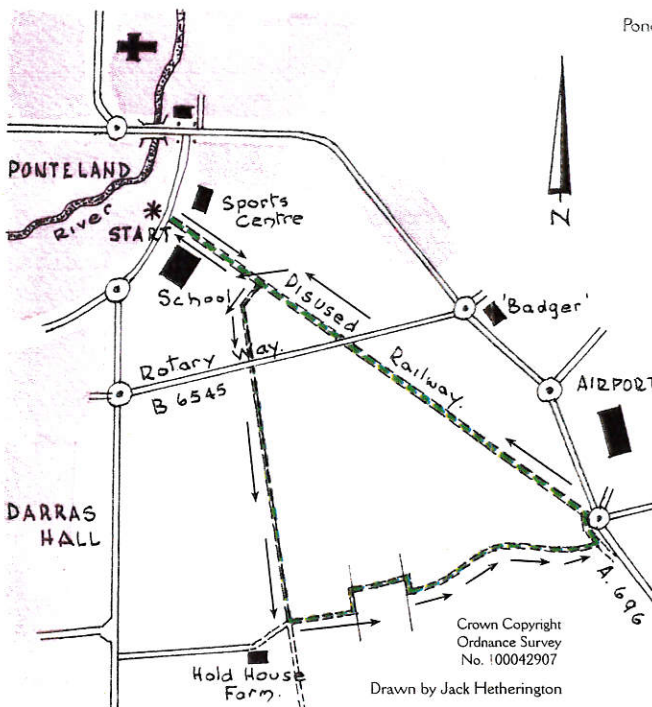
Path through crop of Oil Seed Rape

Take care crossing this busy road with cars going at speed. The footpath continues straight ahead up the field to meet a 4-way sign post. Turn L to the airport and take in the view to the north with the Rothbury hills on the horizon and Cheviot just appearing behind when visibility is good. It is 35 miles away as the crow flies. The track is wide and well surfaced and bends L and R. There are old mine workings of the former Prestwick Pit on the R where the land has been reclaimed and new drainage channels are very obvious. A pond has been created and is home to mallard ducks and moor hens.



Pond on reclaimed Prestwick Pit site

Callerton Lane to Airport



The flight path for the airport is on the right and planes can be observed at a fairly low level.

The broad track eventually turns left but the FP continues SO over a stile and when this is crossed the path continues in a fenced off strip till it reaches the tarmac road used for site traffic and care is needed here on working days.

The walk may change around here as the workings change but there will always be a right of way signposted.

There is the most immense hole in the ground L where there has been opencast coal extraction and presently there are huge machines engaged in landfill operations.

Mining around the Prestwick area has a long history as far back as the 13C with bell pits at first and deep mining from the 18C. There were offices, canteens and pithead baths when underground mining finished in 1966.