



Butterbur

This can be crossed by going underneath or up and down the steep slopes. Z This railway extension from the line to Broadway on Darras Hall was built to bring coal from Kirkheaton colliery. It opened in 1921 but flooding was a problem at the pit and the line soon closed. This section is adopted as a bridleway.

The path continues along the river and then bears left and through a small mixed wood. On the right across the Pont are the houses on the edge of the Darras Hall estate. The estate was started in 1907 by the purchase of more than 1000 acres by the Northern Allotment Society led by Joseph Wakinshaw. Plots were originally 5 acres. Today a house must have a minimum 1/4 acre plot and the estate is a very desirable place to live.



Ladder Stile and Railway Bridge

In 1913 the railway to Ponteland was extended to the Darras Hall estate where development was just beginning. A station was built at what is now the Broadway. This extension was not a success as the estate growth was scattered and slow.

The Darras Hall station at Broadway was timber built with a single platform. The passenger service was closed in 1929 and the goods in 1954. The buildings were left empty until the Presbyterians took the lease and opened their first church in Ponteland in 1963.



The Darras Hall Station Buildings  
(courtesy of Alan Young)

The station master's house became the manse and the first minister was appointed in 1967. A new church was built in 1973 and is now the United Reformed Church. Station Court housing is built on old railway land.



A Pair of Pheasants

The BW, on the track of the old railway, is well maintained with a good surface and leads for over 2 miles to Western Way. The track is signed at the Broadway shops and passes between the car showroom and Café 21.

Keep SO and pass through a broken fence by the riverside next to a ladder stile. In this field access can be gained to the estate by a ladder stile R. This path crosses the Pont between houses and emerges between nos. 18 & 19 Richmond Way.

It seems hard to believe now but this path and bridge were impassable during the floods of November 2000. Richmond Way leads onto Western Way.

The walk goes SO and over a ladder stile and then the path bears L and crosses the field towards Coat Hill Farm on the right, now cleared of any sign of farming and awaiting the developers.

Keep the buildings on the R and bear L heading for the metal field gate. Go straight ahead to the next gate, turn L and then R along the field edge and follow the arrows and obvious path along the field edges. Do not follow the track which goes SO to the farm. The walk leaves the fields and comes out between the houses at The Beeches.



Looking back at Dissington Bridge

The SP confirms that 2 3/4 miles have been walked since Dissington Bridge.

Turn R and R again into Fox Covert Lane and then through a wicket on the L into Ponteland Park. Cross the Pont by the Millennium Bridge, follow the path, crossing the Pont twice more and under the road bridge to exit at the Memorial Hall car park.

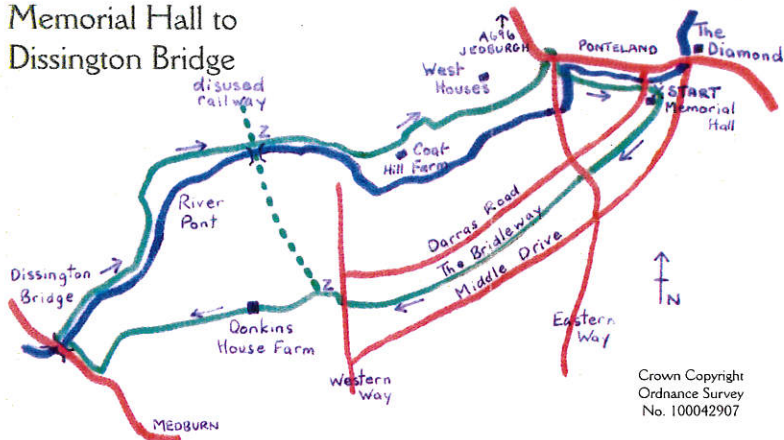


The Bridleway in winter

On reaching Western Way turn R and then L into The Crescent and open fields are quickly reached. There is a choice of routes here. For the shorter walk TR on a broad track till it crosses the river Pont. Descend via steps to the river on R and continue along the footpath to Ponteland picking up the route from Z.

The main walk continues straight ahead through Donkins House Farm and follows the double track as it crosses the Med burn and along the field edge to exit on the Medburn road. A local landmark, tree-topped Penny Hill, is seen on the left. Spot the mobile phone mast!

## Memorial Hall to Dissington Bridge



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## Walk 4

# Memorial Hall to Dissington Bridge

(about 6 miles)

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



The Cenotaph and Memorial Hall

After rain the path near the river can be muddy and slippery but this is an interesting walk in all seasons.

START from the Memorial Hall car park on Darras Road. Walk away from the road and bear R behind the tennis courts to the BVV on the track of the old railway.

Funds were raised after the Great War to commemorate men from Ponteland who had died for their country. An obelisk, called the cenotaph, with their names inscribed was erected in 1920, the Memorial Hall was opened in 1922 and a bowling green and two tennis courts quickly followed.

Turn R and walk along the road for a short distance to reach Dissington Bridge.

The FP descends on stone steps to the north side of The Pont and the walk follows the course of the river back into Ponteland.

In spring the pinkish flower heads of Butterbur are found in and along the river. The leaves later grow to over 2 feet wide! Pheasants are heard in the woods and partridge coveys feed in the rough grass. Ducks rise from the water and dippers can be seen flying low down the river. The heron may be disturbed and rises with slow flapping wings to clear the water and circle out of sight. Follow the field edges with the river R and cross a stream coming into the Pont. Bear L at the end of a rough pasture to a ladder stile and again follow the field edge with a wood on the R making towards a red metal gate where there is another ladder stile.



Heron waiting for prey

Follow the track bearing R. Ignore the large plank bridge to the R and cross the smaller plank bridge with a handrail just ahead. Traverse the side of a slope, between gorse, hawthorn and mature trees until a stile is reached. Cross a narrow field to reach a bridge which was built to carry a railway track up to Kirkheaton.