

HERITAGE TRAILS GUIDE

Stockton-on-Tees

Explore the natural
and built heritage
of the Tees Valley

River Tees
Rediscovered 

THE TRAILS



Trail 1
Thornaby Trail
Page 4

Trail 2
Ingleby Trail
Page 6



Trail 3
Egglescliffe &
Aislaby Trail
Page 8

Trail 5
Eight Bridges
Way – Tees
Barrage to
Transporter
Bridge
Page 12

Trail 6
North Tees Trail
Part 1
Page 14



Trail 4
Eight Bridges
Way – Victoria
Bridge to Tees
Barrage
Page 10

Trail 7
North Tees Trail
Part 2
Page 16



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WELCOME

The Borough of Stockton-on-Tees owes much of its development to the River Tees.

In the early 13th Century, Yarm was the most prosperous port on the river. Sailing ships brought wine and flax to the town and sheepskins for the tanneries along the river banks. On the return journey, salt, agricultural produce and lead from the mines in Swaledale were transported by sea to London and to the North East coastal ports.

With the expansion of the coal trade in the 17th Century, Stockton became the major river port when coal was carried to the docks from the Durham coalfield by horse and cart to be shipped to London and overseas. Originally Stockton-on-Tees was a rural community, but with the Industrial Revolution came huge developments in heavy industry and massive expansion downstream to the estuary.

The river previously meandered first south and then north of its current channel. In the early 19th Century the River Tees was altered between Stockton-on-Tees and Middlesbrough. Later, the river was straightened, thus saving money and time in navigation.

Once heavily industrialised, the river at Stockton and Thornaby has been transformed over the past few decades, not least of all through the construction of the Tees Barrage in the 1990s. With water held at a constant level this urban section of the river is now used for all kinds of sport and recreation. Meanwhile the tranquil countryside upstream, and the open landscapes of the estuary downstream, offer some great opportunities for walking and wildlife watching.

These trails enable you to explore our exciting mix of built, natural and industrial heritage.

THE NATURAL HERITAGE OF THE TEES VALLEY

The River Tees is barely wider than a jump from one bank to the other at its source. Yet in less than 30 miles it widens, maturing and meandering, through the lowlands between Darlington and the North Sea. The river and its surrounding landscape provide a varied natural habitat for a wide variety of animals and plant life.

Rural farmland and woodland

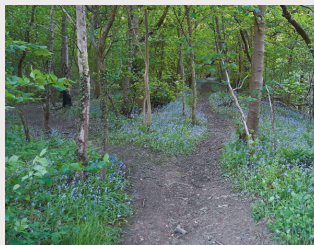
The open countryside around Darlington and to the west of Stockton-on-Tees has rich alluvial soils and so is largely farmed, mainly for crops, but some pastures too. Wildlife benefits from a good network of hedgerows between fields and alongside country lanes. Broad and mixed leaf woodland is found in places on the steep-sided banks of the River Tees.

Hedges, small woodlands and rough pastures are important for a number of bird species which are declining across the UK. These include yellow-hammer, cuckoo, green woodpecker and bullfinch.

Ancient and semi-natural woodland survives along the banks of the River Tees and its tributaries, especially the steep Leven valley. Woodland is generally restricted to the steeper slopes which have no value for agriculture. Ancient woodland is a precious habitat. It is scarce, irreplaceable and supports

a vast diversity of wildlife including many rare and declining species.

To be classified as ancient, woodland must have been present since 1600. Before that, planting was uncommon so these woodlands can be assumed to date back to the ice age.



Urban wildlife

The major towns of the Tees Valley are inevitably the sites where most changes have taken place that affect the natural landscape.

Remnant habitats, such as small meadows and woodlands, survived agricultural improvement only to be surrounded by the spread of housing. There are ponds which were created as

a result of human activity; old brick pits, gravel quarries and even fire-ponds for a small airfield support toads, frogs and sometimes the nationally protected great crested newt.

Other abandoned industrial sites support an open mosaic of grassland where wildflowers persist. Elsewhere, dense scrub proliferates with deep thickets of hawthorn, blackthorn and dog rose.

The river

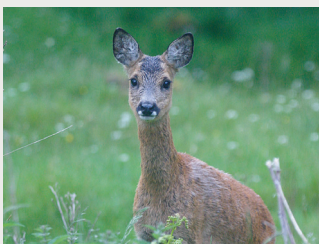
The waters of the Tees are rich in wildlife. Salmon is distributed throughout the river, while the numbers of brown trout have declined, as a result of the degraded and fragmented habitat. Brook lamprey can be found in the Rivers Leven and Tees.





Otters are spotted with remarkable regularity along the Tees throughout Stockton and around the North Tees marshes.

Roe deer are not often thought of as a urban mammals yet are regular visitors to woodlands and pastures on the edge of towns in the Tees Valley.



Bowesfield and Preston Farm

Three large reed-filled pools create a sizeable undisturbed wetland that supports a number of ducks and wading birds such as teal, curlew, gadwall, ruff and golden plover. This is also an excellent place to spot dragonflies and damselflies.

Coatham Marsh

A series of pools and reed swamps, this is the last remaining wildlife habitat to have survived the almost entire urban reclamation of the south Tees. Bordered by Redcar's blast furnace, the site is sanctuary for more than 200 species of wild birds and

wildflowers as well as mammals such as fox and stoats. Smaller mammals must also be present as the site is regularly visited by birds of prey including barn owls.

Maze Park

Visitors can climb one of its landscaped mounds to enjoy panoramic views of the conurbation. Glades and open grassland attract scarce butterfly species such as grayling and speckled wood. The steep banks provide nesting for sand martins and give excellent views of common and grey seals preying on salmon negotiating the Tees Barrage.

Portrack Marsh

This wetland nature reserve attracts hundreds of birds each year and is home to a wide variety of mammals, amphibians and insects.

Winter sees redshank and lapwing, shoveler, pochard, tufted duck and teal frequenting the pools. While kingfisher and grey wagtail are easy to spot.

Spring is the time for wheatear, whinchat and warblers. And Summer little grebe, moorhen, swans and Canada goose. By late summer, the exposed mud flats are home to waders such as dunlin, black tailed godwit, greenshank and ruff.



Saltholme

A flagship site for the RSPB, Saltholme's wetlands are home to large numbers of wildfowl and wading birds. In the spring and summer many birds breed here including shoveler and gadwall and common terns. The reed beds are home to water rails, reed bunting and reed warblers.



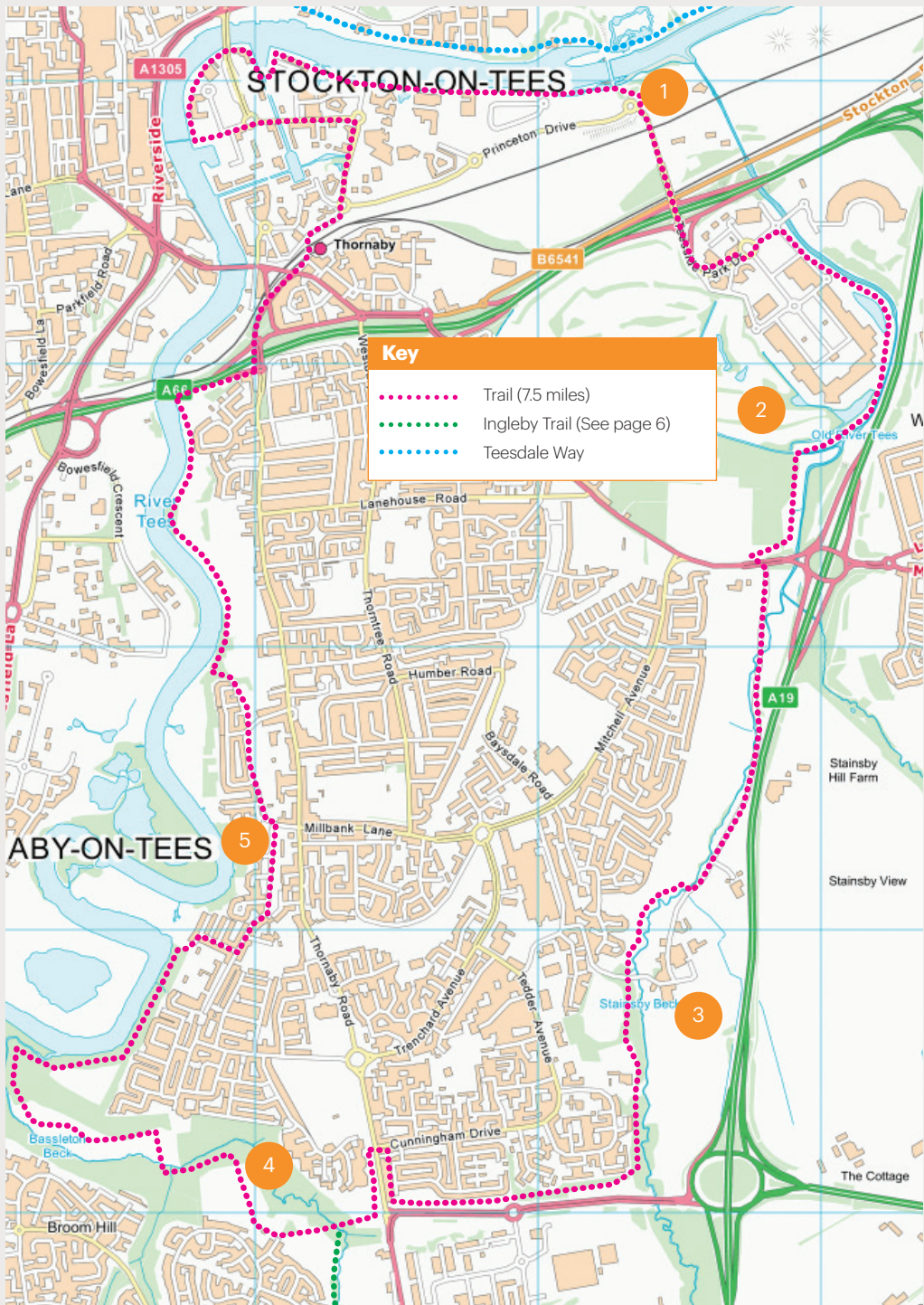
Seaton Common, Seaton Sands and North Gare

Among the relics of a once thriving salt industry lies a network of ditches and wet grassland that attracts vast numbers of over-wintering migrating birds.



South Gare and Coatham Sands

Fresh water marshes, lagoons, dunes and golden sandy beaches are designated as internationally important for wild birds. Species such as bar-tailed godwit, curlew, redshank and grey plover make their winter homes here. While the dune slacks support large stands of northern marsh and fragrant orchids.



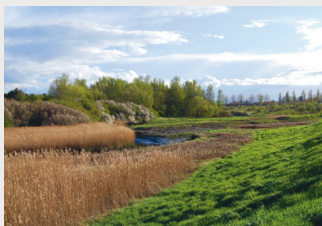
THORNABY TRAIL

1

A circular walk through the woodlands and countryside of Thornaby. Including some delightful paths along the Thornaby bank of the River Tees.



▲ St. Peter's Church, Thornaby Green



▲ Old River Tees

Highlights

1. Completed in 1995, the **Tees Barrage** was built to control the flow of the river and protect the surrounding areas from flooding. The water above the barrage is permanently held at high tide making the river perfect for canoeing, paddle boarding and rowing.

2. The trail runs alongside the Old River Tees. This was the former **Mandale loop**; one of two large meanders which restricted navigation up the river. Both this and the Portrack loop to the north were bypassed by two 'cuts' constructed in the 1800s.

The area is now a tidal fragment of saltmarsh and a rare habitat which includes plants such as sea aster, sea plantain and common glasswort.

3. To the north-east of Stainsby Wood lie the deserted remains of the **medieval village of Stainsby** and part of its surviving open field system. The village survives as a series of earthworks and buried remains in the fields south and east of Stainsby Grange Farm.

4. A beautiful oak and ash woodland, **Thornaby Wood** separates Thornaby and Ingleby Barwick. Two WWII pill-boxes located here, acted as an infantry post for up to five riflemen who helped defend the nearby Thornaby Airfield.

5. **Thornaby Green** is a beautiful, tranquil spot a short distance away from the river and provides the setting for St Peter's Church that dates from the 12th Century. Thornaby Green is a designated Conservation Area.

Distance

7.5 miles

Estimated walk time

4 hours

Suggested start/finish

Tees Barrage or any other location within Thornaby

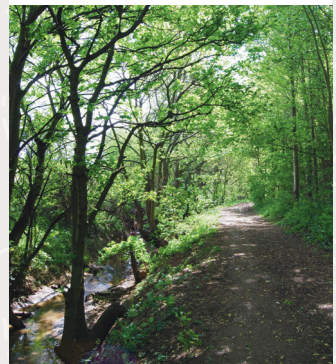
Route Information

Surfaces – All on all-weather surfaced paths between Victoria Bridge, Tees Barrage and Teesside Park. Remainder of route mainly on roughly surfaced and unsurfaced paths, including woodland tracks and grass.

Facilities – Café and pub at Tees Barrage.

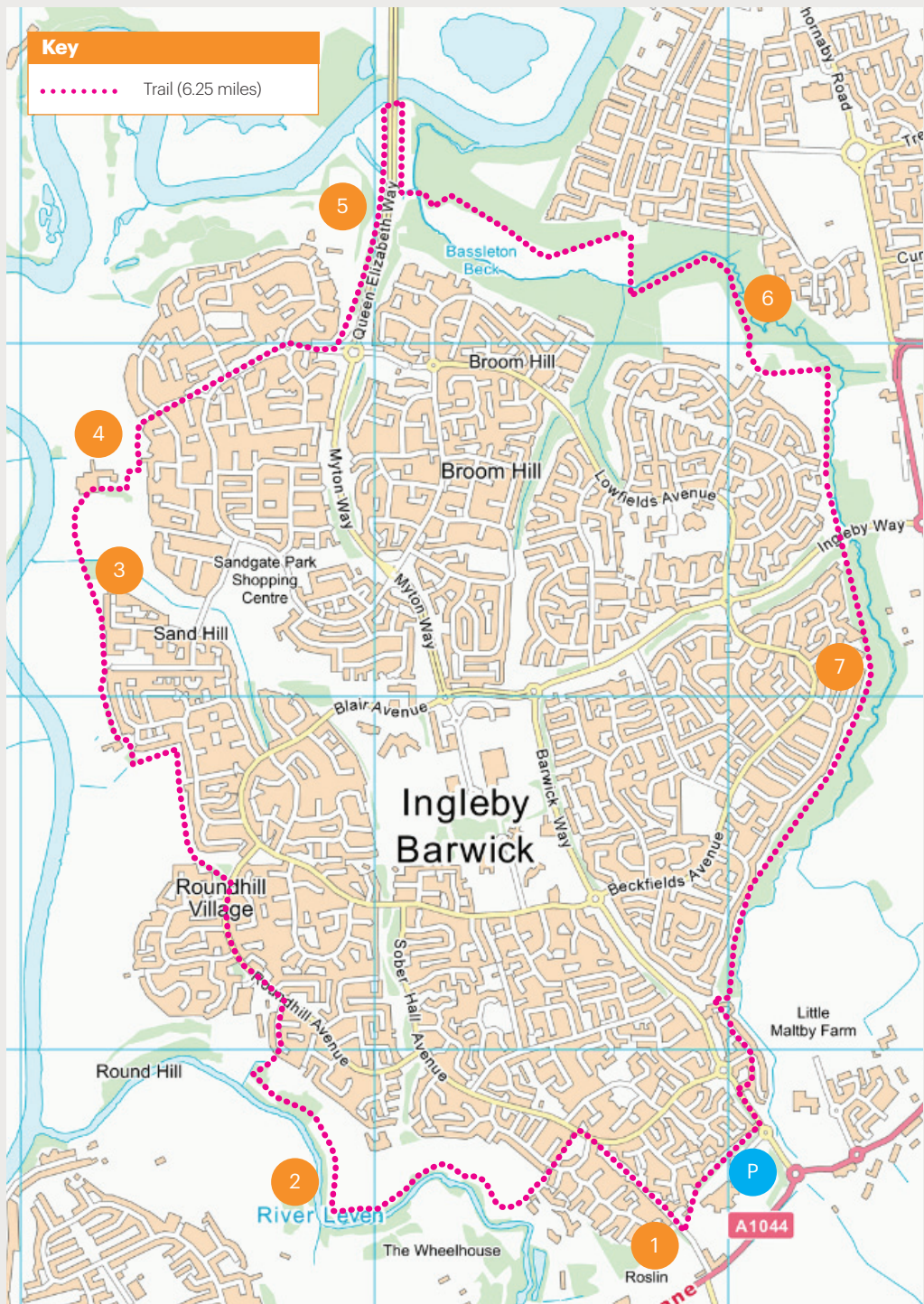
Other cafés, pubs and shops a short distance off the route in Teesside Park, Thornaby and Stockton.

▼ Near Stainsby Beck



Key

..... Trail (6.25 miles)



INGLEBY TRAIL

2

Ingleby Barwick now has over 8,300 houses and is home to some 23,000 people. This trail follows the waterways that circle it. Revealing the area's rural heritage.



▲ River Tees at Barwick Farm



▲ River Leven, Ingleby Barwick

Highlights

1. Windmill Way – a marker indicates the crash site of a WWII aircraft that attempted to land at Thornaby Airfield. The road, school and park are named after the 18th Century (c1750) High Leven Windmill that was converted into a residential dwelling in 1968.

2. The River Leven runs from the edge of the North Yorkshire Moors, through Great Ayton, Stokesley and Hutton Rudby before joining the River Tees near Roundhill, a short way downstream.

3. The trail follows an old bridleway between White House Farm and Barwick Farm. **Sand Hill** to the east has lovely views towards the River Tees and Eaglescliffe to the west.

4. Barwick Farm lies on the east bank of the River Tees. The

remains of the medieval hamlet surround the present farm buildings. Earthworks define plots of medieval farms.

5. The trail crosses **Bassleton Beck**, which runs around the northern and eastern edge of Ingleby Barwick. Between here and the River Tees is Bassleton Wood, a beautiful stretch of ancient deciduous woodland.

6. Thornaby Woods are ancient woodlands (over 400 years old) comprising of mainly oak and ash. Roe deer are seen here. Within the woods are two WWII pill-boxes constructed to defend the nearby Thornaby Airfield.

7. Thornaby Plantation and Ingleby Woods were extended in 1990. Trees planted comprise of English deciduous, such as oak, ash, birch and rowan.

Distance
6.25 miles

Estimated walk time
3 hours 30 minutes

Suggested start/finish
Anywhere in Ingleby Barwick

Route Information

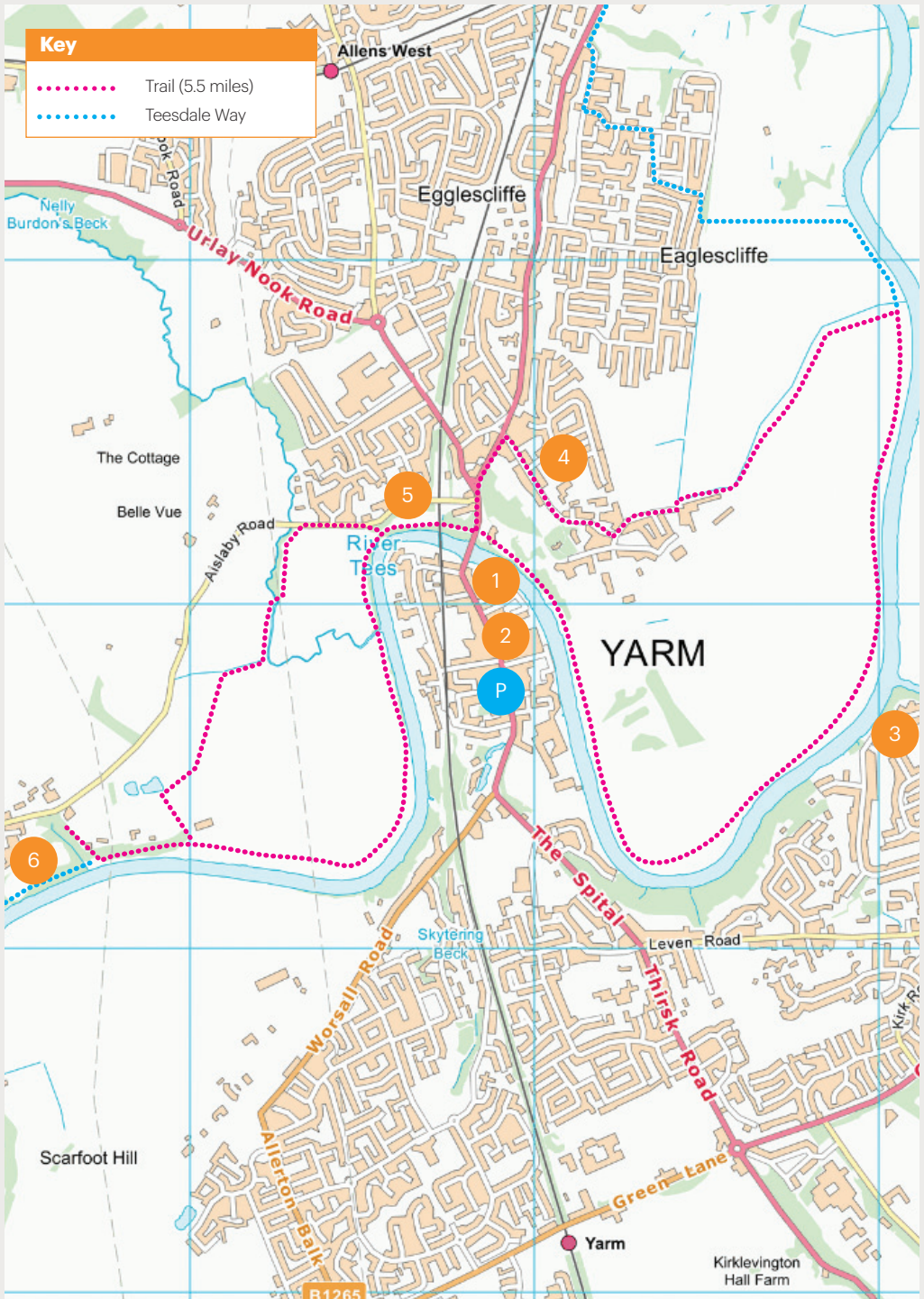
Parking – Windmill Park car park, Windmill Way.

Surfaces – A mix of surfaced and unsurfaced paths (including some potentially muddy sections through woodlands and fields), with some on-road sections.

Facilities – No facilities along the trail itself, but pubs and shops a short distance away from the main route at various locations in Ingleby Barwick.

▼ Wild marsh orchids





EGGESCLIFFE & AISLABY TRAIL

3

A figure-of-eight following the loop of the Tees near Yarm and exploring the beautiful villages and countryside north of the river.



▲ Eggescliffe and the Tees



▲ Teesdale Way at Eggescliffe

Highlights

1. Originally built on the orders of Bishop Skirlaw of Durham around 1400, **Yarm Bridge** has been altered many times over the centuries. During the English Civil War **Eggescliffe** was heavily involved in guarding the bridge on behalf of the Royalists, while Parliamentarian forces occupied Yarm leading to a battle on 1 February 1643.

2. **Yarm** was the first port to develop on the River Tees. Wharves once occupied the riverbank, and back as far as the 12th and 13th Centuries, farmers in the surrounding area brought their wool to Yarm where it was loaded on ships and sent to Scotland, France and Flanders.

3. The **River Leven** joins the Tees at this point. The high land at the confluence is **Round Hill**

the site of a former Norman castle.

4. Today's **Eggescliffe village** mainly dates from medieval times, although the village was mentioned in the 11th Century Domesday Book. Eggescliffe Village has 28 Grade 2 listed buildings, the Church of St. John The Baptist is listed Grade 1.

5. Half a mile long and some 22m above the river, the **Yarm Railway Viaduct** was completed in 1851 at a cost of £44,500. It has 43 arches and is constructed with around seven million bricks!

6. In the 1700s, a mile upstream from **Aislaby** a small quay was built at Low Worsall. Lead and other goods were loaded onto horse drawn boats as the river here was tidal.

Distance

Entire Trail: 5.5 miles
Eggescliffe Loop: 3 miles
Aislaby Loop: 2.4 miles

Estimated walk time

Entire Trail: 3 hours
Eggescliffe Loop: 1 hour 45 minutes
Aislaby Loop: 1 hour 15 minutes

Suggested start/finish

Yarm Bridge

Route information

Parking – Yarm High St.

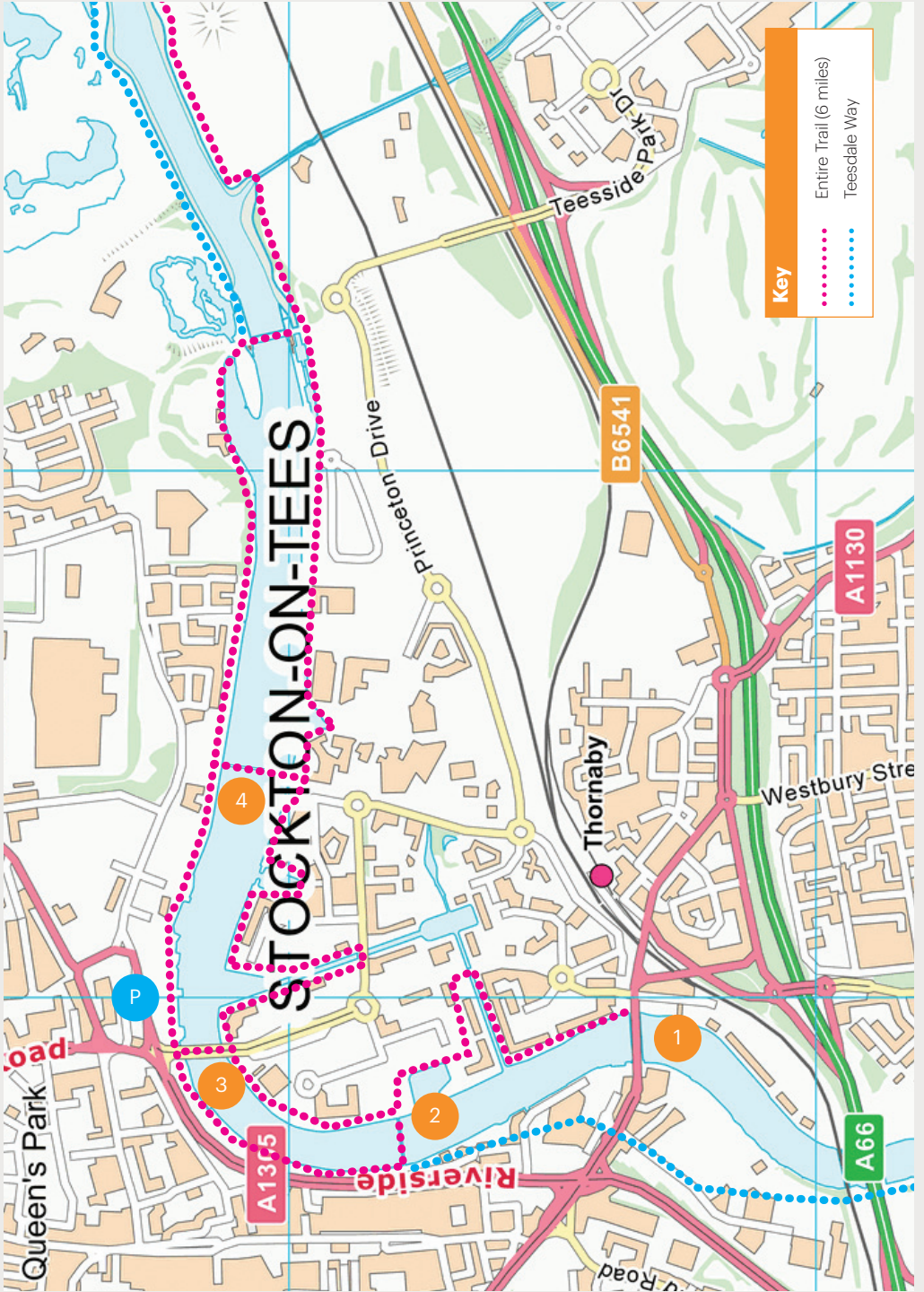
Buses – Bus times can be obtained by calling Traveline 0871 200 2233 or visiting www.traveline.info

Surfaces – mainly grass and field-edge footpaths.

Refreshments – Pubs and cafés in Yarm. Pub in Eggescliffe Village.

▼ Yarm Railway Viaduct





EIGHT BRIDGES WAY

VICTORIA BRIDGE TO TEES BARRAGE

4

Following part of the Eight Bridges Way this trail allows great access to the River Tees Corridor and provides differing views of the bridges and surrounding landscape along the way.



▲ Victoria Bridge



▲ Millennium Bridge

Highlights

1. Designated as Grade II listed, the **Victoria Bridge** was built between 1882 and 1887, replacing an old masonry bridge built in 1769. It has three parabolic arches each consisting of eight ribs of wrought iron. Designed by Harrison Haytor and Charles Neate and built by Whitaker Brothers of Leeds. The bridge was formally opened in 1887 and was named to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.

2. The **Millennium Bridge** is a result of a competition that was won by a team from Ove Arup and Birse Construction. The bridge is a cable-stayed design. It has a 40m (131 ft) 'A' frame pylon/mast with fanned cables and has a total span of 153m (502 ft). Fabricated in Spain and constructed on site by Birse

Construction North East, the bridge was completed in December 2000 at a cost of £1.4m.

3. The **Princess of Wales Bridge** was opened on 23 September 1992 to give access to the reclaimed industrial area of Thornaby. Built by Tarmac Construction at a cost of £3m, it has a central span of some 40m.

4. This footbridge was built at a cost of £15m, was opened on 14 May 2009 and named the **Infinity Bridge** because its shape, when reflected in the river, resembles the mathematical symbol for infinity. The design, by Expedition Engineering and architect Spence Associates, was chosen from a RIBA design competition in 2003.

Distance

6 miles

Estimated walk time

3.5 hours (one way)

Suggested start/finish

Tees Barrage or Stockton Town Centre

Route information

Parking – Stockton Town Centre or Tees Barrage.

Buses – Bus times can be obtained by calling Traveline 0871 200 2233 or visiting www.traveline.info

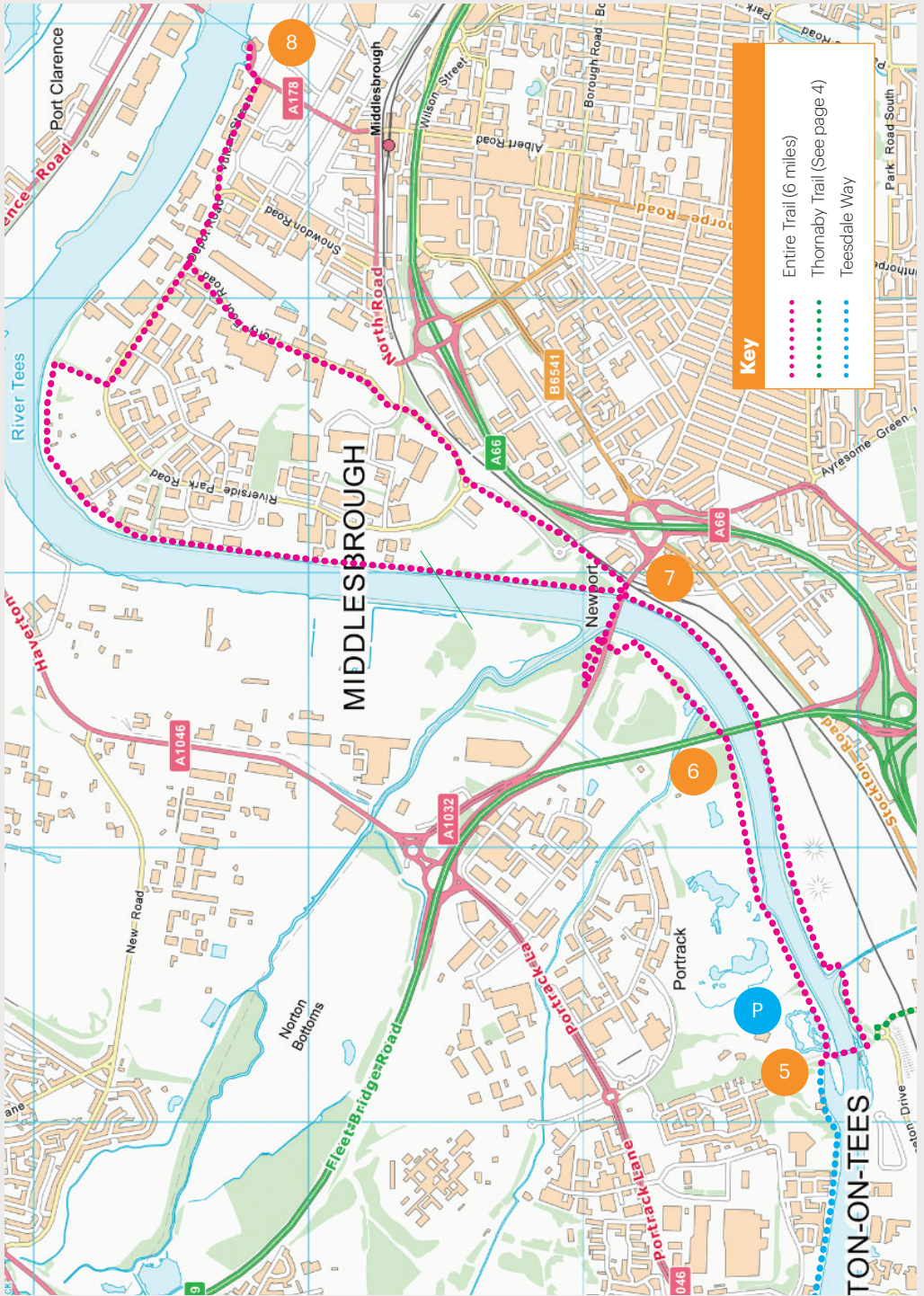
Surfaces – All surfaced paths. Route suitable for cycling and walking. The various bridges make it easy to modify the route.

▼ Infinity Bridge



WILDLIFE WATCH TUFTED DUCK





EIGHT BRIDGES WAY

TEES BARRAGE TO TRANSPORTER BRIDGE

5

This section of the Eight Bridges Way takes in more important crossing points of the River Tees. An urban trail that includes the Tees Barrage, Newport Bridge, and ends at the iconic Tees Transporter Bridge.



▲ Tees Barrage



▲ Newport Bridge

Highlights

5. Completed in 1995, the **Tees Barrage** was built to control the flow of the river and protect the surrounding areas from flooding. The water above the barrage is permanently held at high tide making the river perfect for canoeing, paddle boarding and rowing. There is plenty of wildlife to spot in and around the river; from mute swans and cormorants to salmon and crowd favourites, the entertaining seals that can often be seen bobbing up and down in the river. It has even been known that dolphins travel down as far as the Tees Barrage from the North Sea!

6. The **A19 Tees Viaduct** is 2.9km long with 68 spans. The nine spans over the river have a clearance of 20.73m and it carries around 115,000 vehicles per day.

7. Built by Dorman Long & Co Ltd, the **Newport Bridge** provided 36.6m headroom and 76.2m clear width of water when raised. The machinery for raising and lowering the bridge was located at the centre of the 2,876 tonnes lifting span. The decline in shipping led to the lifting span being permanently fixed down in 1990.

8. Opened on 17 October 1911, the **Transporter Bridge** was designed by GC Imbault of Cleveland Bridge Engineering Co., Darlington and was built by Sir William Arrol and Co. Vehicles and foot passengers are carried by means of a suspended gondola. It remains the largest of the transporter bridges operating worldwide and represents an elegant solution to providing headroom for the sailing ships that used the river.

Distance

6 miles (entire trail)

Estimated walk time

1 hour 50 minutes

Suggested start/finish

Tees Barrage or Stockton Town Centre

Route information

Parking – Stockton Town Centre or Tees Barrage.

Buses – Bus times can be obtained by calling Traveline 0871 200 2233 or visiting www.traveline.info

Train to Thornaby Station.

Surfaces – All surfaced paths. Route suitable for cycling and walking.

▼ Transporter Bridge



WILDLIFE WATCH GREY SEAL





NORTH TEES TRAIL PART 1

6

Seal Sands is of international importance due to it being the only significant area of inter-tidal mud flats between Holy Island to the north and the Humber to the south.



▲ Knot Feeding



▲ North Gare Sands

Highlights

1. Gaining its name from the large number of seals that populate its banks, **Teessmouth National Nature Reserve** is tucked neatly next to North Tees and is home to large multi-national companies, central to the region's prosperity. More than 1,700 people are employed on Seal Sands by companies with an aggregate turnover of more than £900m each year. Today, oil importing and exporting remains one of Teesside's most important industries utilising six jetties at Seal Sands.

The mud flats at Seal Sands are areas where sedimentation has occurred due to the decreasing energy of the River Tees as it reaches its mouth, thus making it rich in organic content. Despite the presence of

industry and heavy traffic, the location provides a sense of isolation, with the security fences surrounding the works creating a place with little human disturbance, allowing birds and mammals to flourish.

Today the area is home to in excess of 30,000 ducks and waders during the colder months, with industry lighting allowing wading birds to feed around the clock. Sadly, due to the results of heavy pollution and dredging, by the 1930s the sight of a seal was very rare. By 1960 the grey seal had returned, followed by the rarer common seal in the 1980s, and today around 100 seals can be found lounging on the sandbanks. The viewing hide overlooking Greatham Creek provides an opportunity to observe the seals.

Distance

3.5 miles

Estimated walk time

1 hour 20 minutes

Suggested start/finish

North Gare car park/
Teessmouth (National Nature Reserve) car park

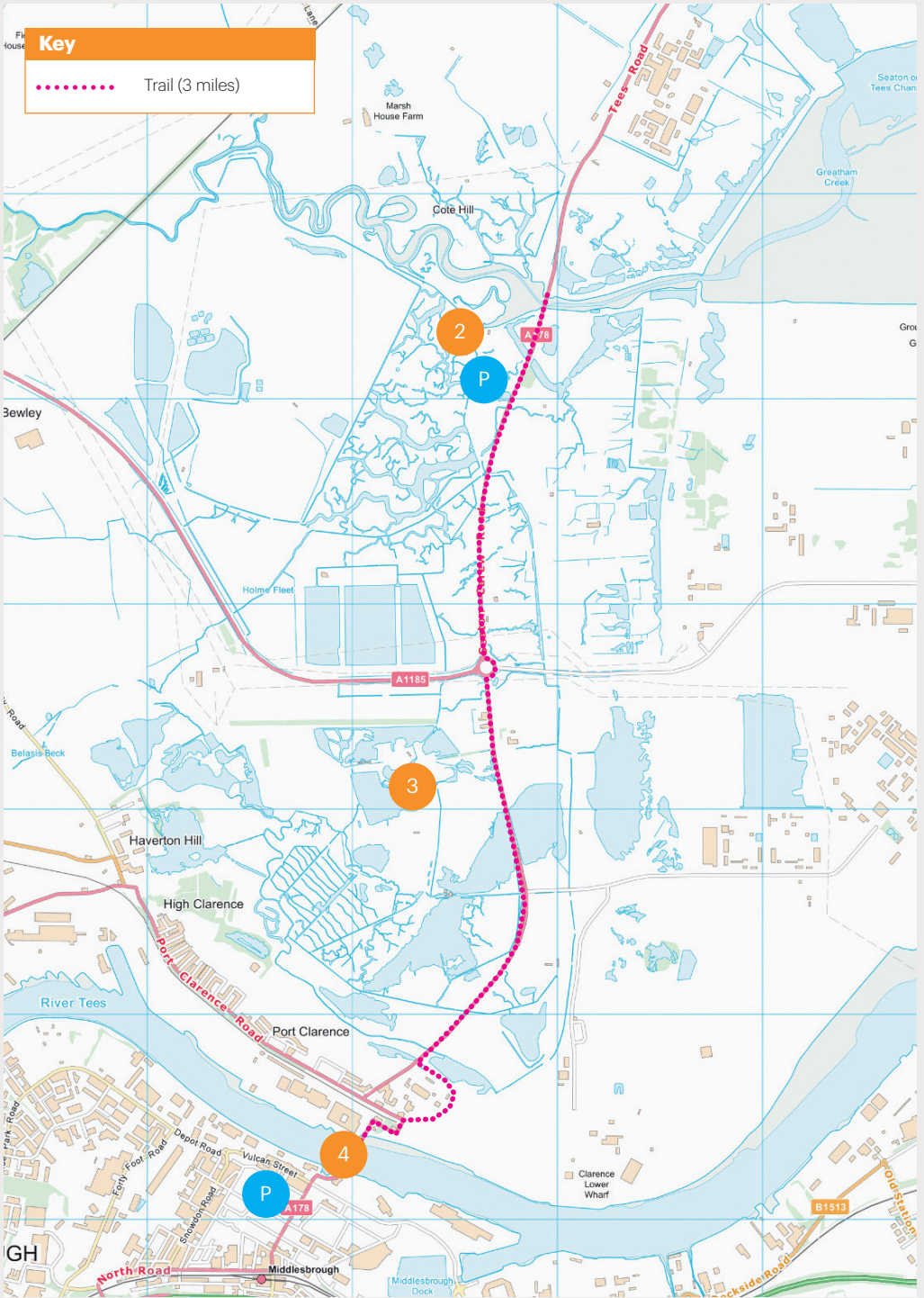
Route information

Parking – The North Gare car park (accessed via a minor road) is well signposted from the main road to the north of the Hartlepool Power Station. Seal Sands can be accessed from the car park at Cowpen Marsh just south of the bridge over Greatham Creek.

Buses – Bus times can be obtained by calling Traveline 0871 200 2233 or visiting www.traveline.info

WILDLIFE WATCH COMMON SEAL





NORTH TEES TRAIL PART 2

7

A popular walk through the spectacular, open wetlands and saltmarshes of Hartlepool and the industrial landscapes of Port Clarence and Middlesbrough.



▲ RSPB Saltholme



▲ Seal Viewing Hide

Highlights

2. To the south of **Greatham Creek** a large area of inter-tidal habitat has been created. A cut made in the old embankment alongside Greatham Creek, allows this area to flood at high tide. You may see wading birds such as curlew and redshank feeding and grey and common seals hauled out along the Creek when the tide is low.

3. **RSPB Saltholme** is a 660 hectare wetland nature reserve, often described as an oasis in the heart of industrial Teesside. The reserve provides a mixture of lowland wet grassland, reed bed, open pools and meadow habitats. Seasonal wildlife include great crested grebe, gadwall and tufted duck. The visitor centre has a café serving hot food, a shop and toilet facilities. See www.rspb.org.uk

4. Opened on the 17 October 1911, the **Transporter Bridge** was designed by GC Imbault of Cleveland Bridge Engineering Co., Darlington and was built by Sir William Arrol and Co. Vehicles and foot passengers are carried by means of a suspended gondola. It remains the largest of the transporter bridges operating worldwide.

This route forms part of England Coast Path, a 2,700 mile continuous footpath around the entirety of England – the longest footpath in the world

Distance

3 miles

Estimated walk time

1 hour 45 minutes

Suggested start/finish

Greatham Creek/
Transporter Bridge

Route information

This walk is on tarmac.

Start the walk at Teesmouth National Nature Reserve car park south of Greatham Creek and head south along A178.

Parking – There is a car park located at Cowpen Marsh just south of the bridge over Greatham Creek.

Buses – Bus times can be obtained by calling Traveline 0871 200 2233 or visiting www.traveline.info

WILDLIFE WATCH SHELL DUCK



River Tees Rediscovered

Further information about these and other walking and cycling trails in Stockton Borough can be found at; www.stockton.gov.uk/arts-culture-and-leisure/walking-in-the-borough/

Route timings based on a walking pace of 3km/hour

Bus times can be obtained by calling Traveline 0871 200 2233 or visiting www.traveline.info

This guide has been supported by the River Tees Rediscovered Landscape Partnership, thanks to money raised by National Lottery players and awarded through The National Lottery Heritage Fund.



TEES VALLEY MAYOR

For more inspiration on great things to do in the Tees Valley visit: www.enjoyteesvalley.com



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