

Boundary Heritage Walk

1. Start of the walk.

The walk starts at Hetton Centre (GR 350 475)

Directions

Leave the Centre (Point A) by the main gate and then turn left and walk down the hill into Hetton Park. (Point B). Walk past the bowling green and tennis courts and continue along the main path via the children's playground for 300 metres towards the point where the path starts to go uphill towards the main Houghton Road. At the bottom of the hill branch right along a small path heading into woodland. Continue on the path running close to the Hetton Beck until you come to a well-made footbridge. Cross the footbridge and keeping to the main footpath you will eventually emerge from the wood. (Point C)

Point A. Hetton Centre is built upon the site of the original Hetton Hall. Built around the date of 1720 it is believed to be on the site of an earlier building which was owned by a merchant called John Spearman who owned properties in Durham and Sunderland. Soon after he had the Hall built he sold it in 1725 to the Dowager Countess of Strathmore who used it as a family home. The house over the next 100 years was extended and went through a series of changes, taking on a more classical Palladian style.

At some point the house was not used by the Strathmore family but was rented out to a number of reputable people including doctors, vicars and Nicholas Wood and his family, the famous colliery owner and great friend of George Stephenson the railway engineer.

By the end of the 19th century it began to deteriorate and by the end of World War I was so dilapidated that it was demolished by the local Council in 1923.

Point B The grounds of Hetton Hall were extensive. There were formal gardens just below the house together with Hetton Beck running through them and forming a water feature. The beck flowed along the valley in a northerly direction and into woodland before emerging into a boggy area later to be known as Hetton Bogs. In 1923/4 following the purchase of the property and land by Hetton Council a park was formed and renamed Hetton Welfare Park. Tennis courts and a bowling green were installed and these continue to exist today. The Welfare park was funded to a large degree with money supplied by miners who worked at the Lyons and Eppleton collieries.

Point C. Now a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Hetton Bogs is purely a man-made feature in spite of the fact that it looks natural. Within the last 50 years the boggy area has increased in size but initially it was formed from water backing up from two mills which used the beck water to drive machinery. Once the mills closed, the water no longer flowed along the mill races but allowed stagnant pools to form which have grown into the marshy area we see today. Willow trees now populate much of the bog whereas years ago the whole area was open country.

2. Continue along the path leaving the wood behind you. On your right you will see a ditch parallel to the path. This is part of the mill race or leat which formed part of the mill system at Rainton Bridge more than a quarter of a mile away to the west. After going through a gate there is a wooden seat and information board. At this point walk to the metal gate and stile close by. At the gate look to the north in the direction of a large tree. Point D

Point D. Next to the tree stood a house in which a miller lived; for a number of years the Scott family lived here before they moved to the larger mill at Rainton Bridge. It is difficult to ascertain whether the actual mill building straddled the stream some 40 metres to the left of the gate, since it has long since been demolished along with the house. We know that the buildings were removed in the late 1950s by the Council as they were unsafe and in poor condition. Very little remains of the mill apart from a few large blocks of sandstone which originally formed part of the structure and now lie in the stream, too large and too heavy to remove.

It is difficult to say when the mill would have been built but probably late in the 18th century. It was a corn mill and would have served the isolated farms and hamlets in the area. We know from a map of Hetton of 1776 that the mill was there. The reason for its location is easy to establish since it lies downstream from the junction of two streams, the Hetton Beck and the Rough Dene stream coming off the limestone escarpment to the east near to the Seven Sisters tumulus.

3. Continue along the path to the west walking close to a small pond on the right. This pond was once a mill pond held there by a brick dam with sluice gates. This structure was also part of the second later mill at Rainton Bridge. The path skirts the dam and drops to a lower level again running alongside a mill race for about 100metres near to Hetton House Woods. This race ran into a series of large ponds to the right through which the stream now flows. It is possible to see the bowl shape of the ponds. The water was then led through another mill race at the downstream end which crossed the path and then ran parallel to the path but some 30metres away to the left of the path. Keep walking through the kissing gate close to the stream which has steep eroded banks for some distance.. After about 250 metres the path meets up with a stream on the left. This is part of the mill race from the area we have just passed through as well as a supply of water coming down in a stream from the village of Hetton to the south. Just before the path reaches the main road (B1284) look at the stream bed and it is possible to see that at one time it has been lined with stone blocks. **(Point E)**

Point E. This stream is the main intake mill race (leat) into the mill and brewery at Rainton Bridge. This corn mill and brewery were in full operation throughout most of the 19th century and continued in use until the 1920s. The closure of the mill occurred because bigger and more efficient mills were in operation at this time and cheap corn was being imported from Canada and the USA. Some of the buildings existed until the early 1960s but by the end of that decade, houses were built on the site. A small street sign indicates where the mill was positioned. (It is worth looking at the map to understand how the mill was positioned. The public house called “The Mill”, still stands on the old Durham Road close by. Rainton Mill was built by the Scott family and used for the grinding of grain for local farmers. Later it

was owned by Mr William Scott's family. Rainton Brewery was owned by the Legg family for the bottling of beer and later by the Lamb family who brewed beer and stout there until the special spring water dried up and the brewery had to close. Lamb's brewery was also based in Hetton for a number of years and employed about 20 people.

4. Once on the main road turn right and walk along past the houses at Rainton Bridge towards the roundabout. Cross over the road before the roundabout turning left up the hill in the direction of East Rainton. The road system here has changed drastically with the dualling of the A690 but this old road was the main road between Houghton-le-Spring and Durham.. It was, during the eighteenth century, a turnpike road running between Durham and the port of Sunderland. Walk up the hill for about 250 metres to a point where there are some water troughs set back off the roadside. These troughs have an interesting story connected with them.

Point F. A spring by the roadside near the bottom of Rainton bank, once saved the life of a former Rector of Houghton-le-Spring. In 1558 Bernard Gilpin was appointed Rector of a much wider parish of Houghton than it is today. He determined then that his life's work was to care for the people of the north, whether the church was under Protestantism or under Papal Authority. The time came when he had to declare his religion, and since he preferred the reformed church he was summoned to go to London to face trial and almost certain execution. Accordingly he dressed himself in a suitable outfit for such a long journey and set out. He decided to water his horse at the well by the roadside and, when dismounting fell and broke his leg. This was to him a terrible tragedy and he was forced to return to his own rectory. Before his leg was reset and healed, Queen Mary, who was a Roman Catholic, had died and Queen Elizabeth, who was a Protestant was acclaimed Queen of England and his life was saved. So he continued to save souls, and to eliminate the evil from their souls. He was a man of wealth much of which he gave to the poor of a wide area in the north.

Some years later, Lord Burghley, the Lord Treasurer, called personally upon Gilpin to offer him the Bishopric of Carlisle. Lord Burghley and his staff were entertained in a fitting manner by Bernard Gilpin, but he refused the Bishopric offered to him because of his attachment to his work in the northern parishes. After taking their leave of him Burghley and his staff rode as far as the top of Rainton bank then looked back towards Houghton, and remarked, "There is the enjoyment of life indeed. Who can blame that man for not accepting the Bishopric. What more doth he want to make him greater or happier or more useful to mankind."

5. After pausing at the spring continue up the hill and take the first turning on the left into the village of East Rainton. This is the older village which originally was built around a small village green. Continue walking towards the small chapel at the far end.

Point G. In April 1747 John Wesley came to preach at Rainton, where there were many collieries and an abundance of people. After his discourse of proclaiming the Lord God, gracious and merciful, the people declared that Wesley had been too long in coming. They were carried away with his preaching – when he knelt down they knelt down, they sang when he sang and Methodism was established in the village. The Wesleyan chapel was erected in 1823, but was rebuilt of stone and enlarged to hold 130 people in 1889 at a cost of £400. Still operating, it must be one of the smallest chapels still in existence. At the time of Wesley’s visit to the village in 1747 the area must have been thriving based largely upon employment at collieries situated in the valley to the north of the village. The population figures are much larger than would have been the case if the only form of employment had been in agriculture. The figures for population are as follows:-

1801 - 294, 1811 - 455, 1821 - 671, 1831 - 1600, 1841 - 1441, 1851 - 1695, 1861 - 1505, 1871 - 1611, 1881 - 1680, 1891 - 1510. By 1810, within the village were two collieries, the Pontop Pit whose shaft was positioned where the village school is now located and the Dunwell Pit located about 200metres to the east of the village green. Following the opening of the Hazard Colliery by the North Hetton Coal Company in 1824 the population jumped by almost 1000 souls.

6. Walk up North Street, the hill between new properties on the left and established bungalows on the right. To the junction with South Street. Turn left at the junction then immediately left again. On the right is the village hall and the church of St. Cuthbert

Point H. The church dedicated to St. Cuthbert in East Rainton was erected in 1866. It is a stone building built in the English style, and has a nave, a chancel and south porch and will seat 150 people. There is a burial ground attached. It was decided by order in council in the parish of West Rainton on the 10th November 1866, that the district be called “The perpetual Curacy of East Rainton”. The Bishop of Durham was invited to come to East Rainton to consecrate the church on the 19th December 1866 and thereupon the new parish of East Rainton comprising the townships of Moorsley and East Rainton was formed.

The church hall was built in 1882 by a Mr Jobling of Durham. The money was raised by sewing parties, and each member of the church and Mothers Union gave a chair for the hall.

7. Continue along the lane and then bear right as the path continues to a small copse of trees 250 metres downhill. The trees in this area were planted as part of a reclamation scheme which occurred during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The trees on the right mask the location of the Hazard Colliery, probably the largest and most important colliery in the locality of East Rainton.

Point I The Hazard Pit was sunk around 1816 and operated from 1818. It was owned initially by a group known as the North Hetton Coal Company. The owners included Lord Durham, Messrs Wood, Philipson, Burrell and others. In 1820 Lady Vane Tempest had shown an interest in owning the pit and within a few years her

husband Lord Londonderry had an interest in the pit. The pit was bought by the Hetton Coal Company during the 1840s. In 1915 it merged with Moorsley Colliery to become the North Hetton Colliery and in 1919 it belonged to the Lambton and Hetton Collieries, coal from the colliery was sent along the Londonderry Railway system and on to Seaham Harbour but when this closed in 1896 the coal was diverted to the Hetton Railway and the coal went to the staithes at Sunderland. The headgear for the colliery was originally built of wood and this was not changed to steel until during the first World War. The colliery shaft and engine house were still in evidence until about 1980 and they were removed as part of the reclamation scheme. At the start of the first World war the Hazard Colliery employed over 800 men and boys, probably the greatest level of employment. After this date amalgamation with Moorsley colliery and the joint number employed exceeded 1200 workers in 1921. The Hazard pit finally closed in 1934 along with Moorsley colliery.

Some 400 metres to the North of the hazard pit was the Dunwell pit. It appears that this pit may well have been in operation during the last decades of the 18th century and continued until possibly as late as 1830. It was in comparison to the Hazard pit, its close neighbour, a very small pit with most of its coal being sold by landsale via a coal depot half way up the Rainton Bank. It was part of the Londonderry Empire which by 1890 was all but finished in the Rainton area. By the late 1970s the last vestiges of the pit remained(a floor for a stationary engine which had been used to haul empty wagons up a small waggonway from the coal depot situated on the old Durham to Sunderland road.) All remains of the Dunwell pit were removed when the land was reclaimed at the same time as that of the Hazard pit and the railway to Moorsley in the early 1980s.

8. At the junction of the paths turn right to travel in a southerly direction towards the Hetton –East Rainton road which will come into view once you have walked up the slight rise. After 300 metres take care in crossing the road to continue down a straight track for about half a kilometre. After 150 metres there is an old pit heap on the left. (point I). Continue walking south in the direction of Moorsley until you reach a cross-roads of paths at which point there is a black seat and a fingerpost direction sign. Turn left at the cross-roads and walk along a broad made-up track.

Point J. This is the remains of the waste heap for Moorsley colliery and it has never been reclaimed although today it has in part reverted back to a more natural feature with trees and other plants growing on it.

Moorsley colliery was to be found about 800 metres directly to the south on the northern slopes of the hill in that direction. It was first opened in 1821 and known as North Hetton Colliery. It closed along with the Hazard Colliery in 1934/5 following a merger in 1915. A number of the miners working at the colliery lived in East Rainton while others lived in both High and Low Moorsley. At High Moorsley there were three rows of cottages as well as others in Low Moorsley. All of the cottages were demolished during the 1950s as part of a regeneration scheme

which replaced them where necessary with council properties. Initially, during the mid 19th century there were two chapels for Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists and a mission church associated with St. Cuthbert's church at East Rainton. In 1871 a school was built in the village and provided education for 320+ children. This building, still standing alongside the hill-side road, is now a private house. One of the chapels remains, also built alongside the road leading from Low Moorsley to High Moorsley.

The following list gives an indication of the number of men and boys working at the colliery:- 1858 — 287, 1896 — 302, 1902 — 408, 1915 — 808. The total related to 1915 was the highest the colliery reached since in the same year three of the five seams, the three quarter, the five quarter and the main seam were abandoned as being worked out. The colliery then lapsed into partial closure during the years of the depression with final closure in the mid 1930s when the Hazard Colliery reached the end of its working life. Any useful coal measures were then worked from Hetton Lyons Colliery. Council properties in Low Moorsley and Peat Carr now make up the housing for the two villages.

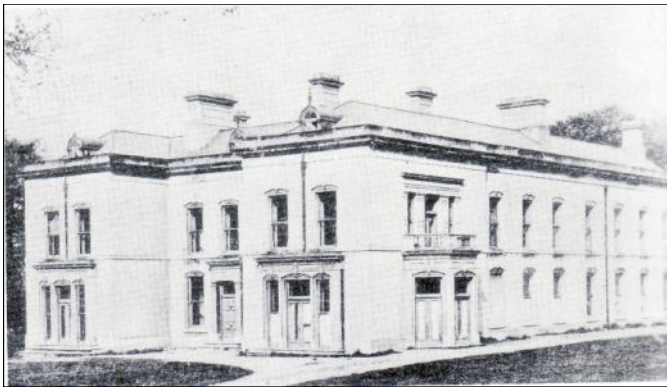
9. Having turned left along the broad track you should be travelling east in the direction of Hetton-le-Hole. You are now travelling along the track-bed of the old Durham to Sunderland Railway. Continue along this track for a kilometre walking under the Moorsley road at the start of Hetton then downhill for a short distance with the pub the Fox and Hounds on the left. When meeting the road (B1284) take care in crossing into a narrow tree-lined path gently rising to another main road. (A182).

Point K. The present station on the main line in Durham is not the first station to open for the city for in 1839, the Durham to Sunderland Railway opened with the first station for the city being at Shincliffe, about a kilometre south of the city. The railway ran from Shincliffe via Sherburn House, Pittington, Hetton, Murton and Ryhope before arriving at a station in the East End of Sunderland, a distance of about 15 miles (24 Km). Originally it was intended to have the station at Gilesgate on the east of the city of Durham but this plan fell through and the station at Shincliffe remained until 1893 when it was replaced by a station located at Elvet in the city.

Built as a line to carry mineral traffic (particularly coal) it seems that passenger traffic was initially of secondary consideration. Originally passenger carriages were attached to the rear of trains but this was not consistent in the early days. It is likely that with passenger trains the rope was detached from the train when descending a gradient and gravity took over. This fact has been mentioned in accident reports during the 1840s. However, passenger traffic ceased around 1931 and the last special passenger train carrying people to the Big Meeting (Miners' Gala) close to Elvet, the terminus, occurred in 1953. Goods traffic lasted until January

1960 then the line between Durham (Elvet) and Murton closed. Originally the line was worked by rope haulage with stationary engines located throughout its length and it wasn't until 1857 that locomotives were first used. At the head of the path where it meets the A182 stood Hetton Station. In 1858 after the application of locomotives trains for Shincliffe left Sunderland at 8.30 a.m., 1.00p.m. and 4. 30 p.m., taking about an hour for the whole journey. The three trains going in the opposite direction left Shincliffe at 6.50 a.m., 10.50 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. Timetable evidence however is sketchy but many of the older residents of Hetton remember going to and from Sunderland on the train. Once the trains used Elvet Station at Durham. This railway also made a connection at Murton with trains travelling from Sunderland to Hartlepool. The station at Hetton regularly handled goods traffic and parcels were taken and deposited at the station from wider afield.

Point A



Hetton Hall before it was demolished



Probably one of the last photos taken of Hetton Hall shows a gathering in the grounds of the hall about 1914. At this point the hall is uninhabited and was demolished in 1923 because of its dilapidated condition.

Point B



Hetton Colliery Welfare ground as it was in the 1930s. This photo concentrates on the bowling green which still exists today. In the background are houses on Houghton Road

Point C

An early photograph of Hetton beck as it approaches the Bogs area



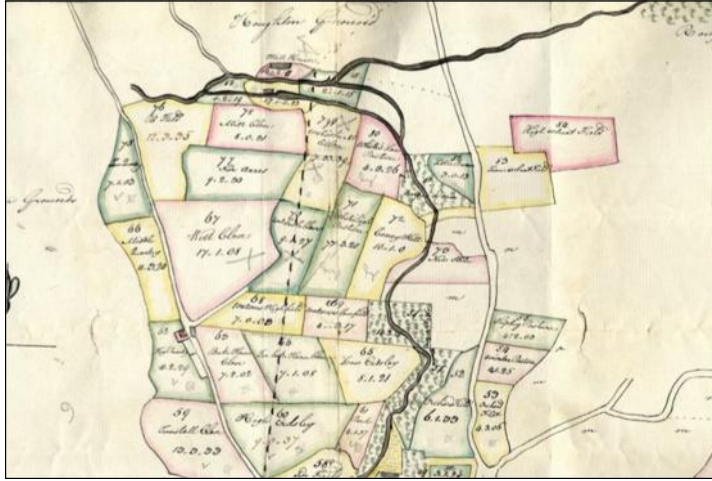
A modern photograph of the bogs area

Point D

Picture of Hetton Mill at Hetton House Wood taken about 1950 just before demolition

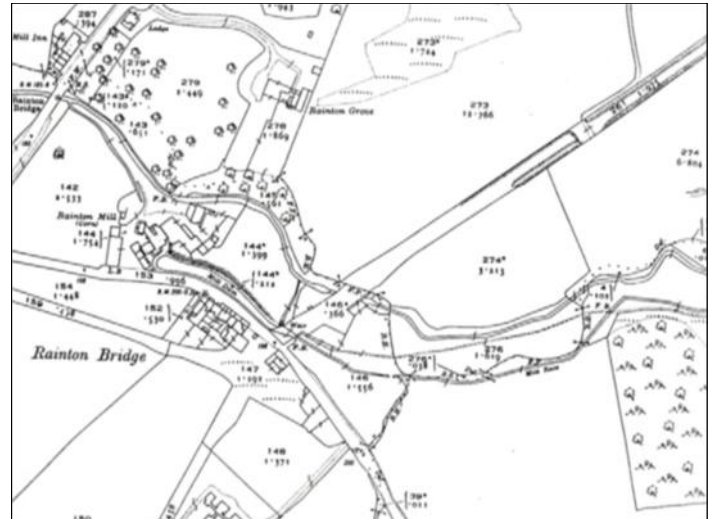


1776 map of John Lyon's property. The mill is shown centre top lying alongside the beckside.



Point E

O.S>Map 3rd series 1920 showing the Rainton Bridge Mill and Brewery together with the mill leats.



The present day mill pond which formed part of the water system for the Rainton Bridge Mill

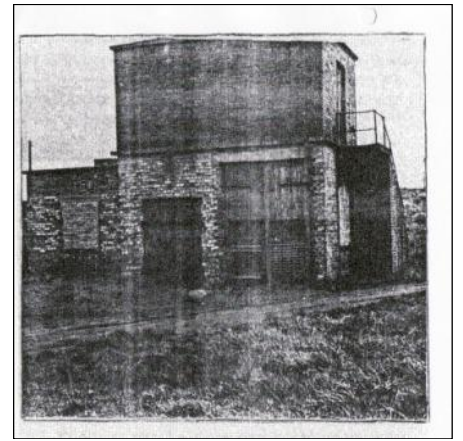
Point F

An old picture of the water troughs on Rainton Bank. It was here that Bernard Gilpin had his accident while watering his horse.



Point G

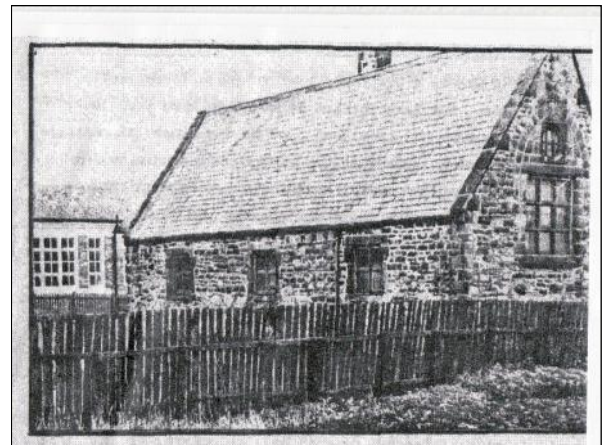
The only known picture of the old Dunwell Pit at East Rainton showing the remains of the Engine House



East Rainton green in 1910 with the chapel built 1823 to the left and the Public house on the right

Point H

The old church school built in 1868 just across the road from the church lasted until 1933 when it was replaced by the present school built next to it.



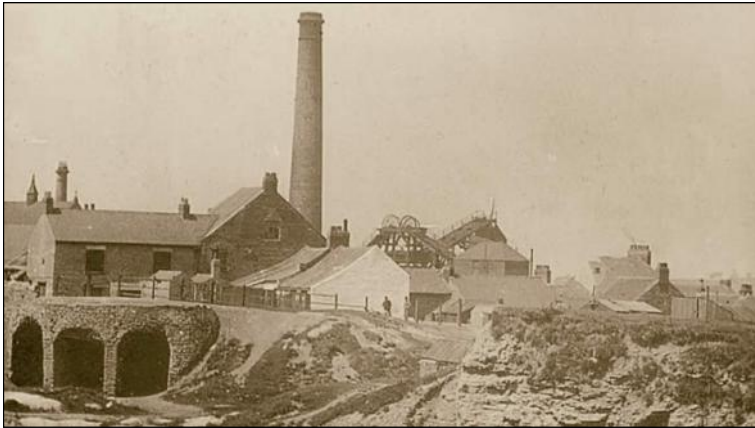
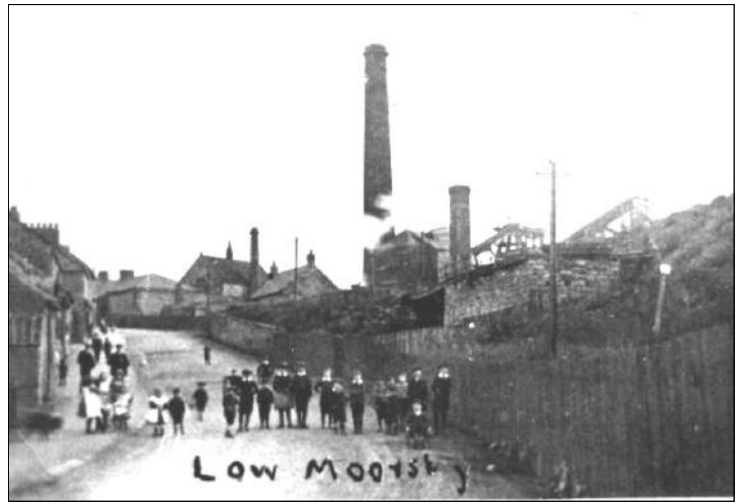
Point I

This picture of the Hazard Colliery at East Rainton was taken before 1915 and shows the old wooden headgear which was replaced by a steel structure in that year. This colliery provided the main place of employment for most of the men-folk of the village.



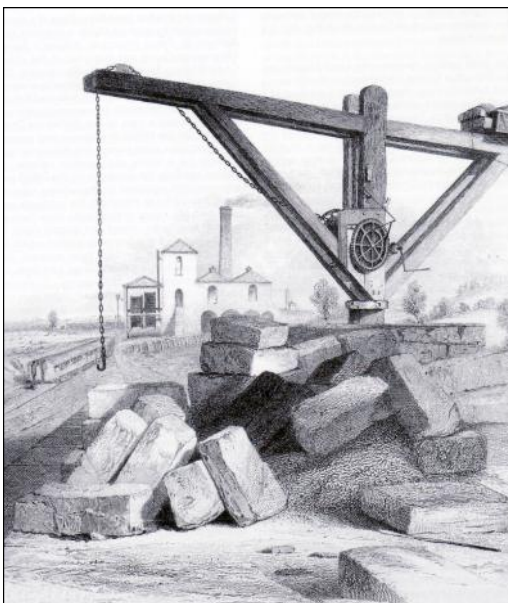
Point J

Taken on Low Moorsley bank the colliery at Moorsley can be seen on the right and in the far middle distance the roof of one of the two chapels.



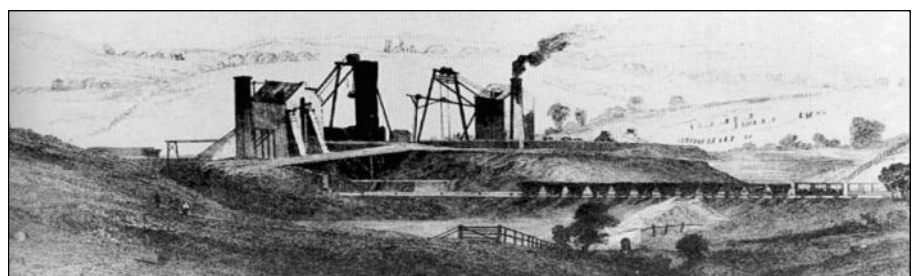
Another view of the colliery with the two shaft headgears middle right.

Point K



An etching by T H Hair in 1838 shows the standing engine in the building at Pittington together with a 5 carriage passenger train on the Durham to Sunderland railway. The stones in the foreground are to be used as sleepers for the tracks.

12 wagons and 2 passenger carriages on the D&S Railway as it passes by Broomside Colliery. Another etching by T.H.Hair.



Point K continued

Pittington Station after closure to passengers in 1953



Hetton Station in the 1950s



Hetton Station in the 1920s



Hetton Station c1900