





(א ברמנו of three tails!) Along the river bank

supporting our landscape together













Welcome to

Blanchland!

This short walk takes you from the village of Blanchland along the River Derwent to the hamlet of Baybridge. You walk back to Blanchland through lovely mixed woodlands. The path may be wet and muddy in places and tree roots are exposed. 🔨

Look for the START on the directions overleaf and follow the footsteps of the river's residents.

Walk Distance: Approx 2km (1.25 miles)

Walk Length: 1 hour

Start/Finish: Blanchland car park (donations welcome)

Grid Reference NY964505

Public Transport: For journey and timetable information

freephone 0871 200 2233

Facilities: Blanchland has public toilets, a post office,

shops, a hotel and a tea room

Please follow the Countryside Code: Leave gates as you find them and keep your dog under close control

(and on a lead on farmland)



Supported by Natural England through West Durham Rural Pathfinder.





Working together for the North Pennines

NORTH PENNINES AOUB PARTNERSHIP

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Printed on 130gsm Greencoat 80% recycled: please re-use and recycle

corporate office and tourism activities. The North Pennines AONB Partnership holds a Gold GTBS Award for its

on request. Please call 01388 528801. different formats and other languages contained in this leaflet in large print, We can provide the information

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To find out more, contact:

the North Pennines AONB. Why not try one of the others? This is one of a series of walks leaflets to help you discover



How to get there







three minutes.

This can allow them to stay underwater for more than inngs, and just before they dive they take a deep breath. Offers hunt for their prey underwater. They have large

They have a long body, a powerful tail and webbed feet. Otters are well equipped for swimming rapidly through water.

have all contributed to the decline of our otters. Loss of habitat, pollution, hunting and other human activities thanks to protective legislation and conservation programmes. has been making a return to the river bank only recently Another character in our river bank story is the otter, which

Tail 2: The Otter

@ Darin Smith



Tail 1: The Water Vole

"As mole sat on the grass and looked across the river, a dark hole in the bank opposite, just above the water's edge, caught his eye, and dreamily he fell to considering what a nice snug dwelling-place it would make for an animal with few wants and fond of a bijou riverside residence, above flood level and remote from noise and dust. As he gazed, something bright and small seemed to twinkle down in the heart of it, vanished, then twinkled once more like a tiny star. But it could hardly be a star in such an unlikely situation; and it was too glittering and small for a glow-worm. Then, as he looked, it winked at him, and so declared itself to be an eye; and a small face began gradually to grow up round it, like a frame round a picture.

A brown little face, with whiskers.

A grave round face, with the same twinkle in its eye that had first attracted his notice.

Small neat ears and thick silky hair.

It was the Water Rat!"

The Wind in the Willows, Kenneth Grahame

You'd have to be lucky to get a view of Ratty like this, but there are signs that water voles (the more usual name for a water rat - not a rat at all) are present nearby.

Water voles eat plants such as rough grasses and rushes along the riverside. Unfortunately if these plants are grazed by farm animals, water voles can find it difficult to find food.

Sadly Ratty is having a hard time along British waterways. Whilst stoats and weasels are the villains in The Wind in the Willows, a new and more deadly





Water vole

predator has entered the story. The North American mink has joined native predators herons, pike and otters. Its introduction has spelled disaster for the water vole, as the size of the female means it is able to fit into the water voles' underground tunnels, meaning that they no longer have a safe haven from predators.



Mink

Along the river

Dipper

Tail 3: The Dipper

Baybridge

Something you're much more likely to see on the banks of the River Derwent is a dipper: a short-tailed, plump bird with a low, whirring flight. When perched on a rock it bobs up and down and frequently cocks its tail. Its white throat and breast contrasts with its dark body plumage.

Amazingly, dippers walk into and under water in search of food. They feed mostly whilst underwater, picking food (insects and small fish) from the bottom of the river bed, using their wings to move around in fast flowing water.

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1 Route description - start here!

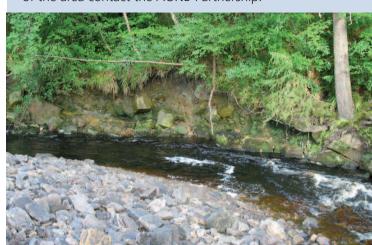
Starting from the car park turn right, and go south into the village along the footpath on the right hand side of the road. Walk towards the archway and the Lord Crewe Arms Hotel. As you go through the arch you enter the village square formed by buildings that were part of Blanchland Abbey in the past.

⚠ When the river is high follow the path from the car park along the north side of the playing field and meadows to Baybridge.

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A natural bounty

Alongside the river you can see a fairly large shingle bank. Search amongst the shingle and you may find minerals such as galena and fluorspar which give clues to the mining heritage of the area. For more information on the geology of the area contact the AONB Partnership.



2 Continue towards the bridge and, just before it, turn right into a side road, and then left through a small opening in a stone wall. Cross the little footbridge over the Shildon Burn. The path now follows the river to the Hamlet of Baybridge. The river sometimes floods. You can see and smell plenty of wild garlic in these woods in late spring.

Look out for the meadows on your right after the playing field. A visit in late August sees these fields being used to host the Blanchland and Hunstanworth Show.







A mix of woodlands

The woodlands you pass through on this walk are varied. The conifers (including Scots pine, Douglas fir and larch) have been planted because the land is too steep to farm. As you pass into a darker area of the woodland, you'll see Sitka spruce is the dominant species here. These North American trees grow very well in Britain and planted close together they grow tall and straight. It is now an attractive part of the landscape and provides habitat for many woodland creatures, possibly even the rare red squirrel.

Other trees, including birch, rowan and alder grow freely and naturally. Some of the trees are very old and established. Younger trees, especially the rowan, show signs of browsing by roe deer and rabbits. Where this damage is severe the trees may die.



3 When you reach the public road you are almost at the half-way point. Turn left and cross the bridge over the river. After a short distance turn left again into the woodland. Follow the woodland track, this time higher above the river, until you reach the road. In between the densely planted conifer plantations you can see a lovely birch wood with bushes dripping with bilberries in the late summer/early autumn. Look out for a picturesque waterfall near the end of this section.

At the road, turn left and retrace your steps through Blanchland to the car park.



Grey wagtail