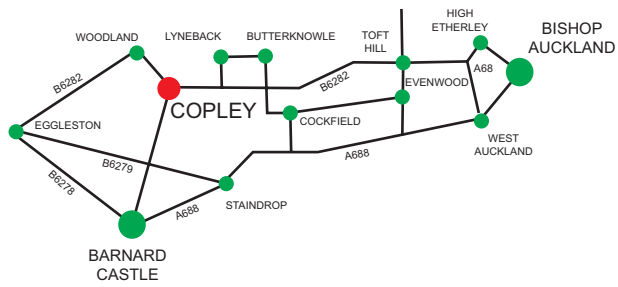


E The track crosses a former tramway, a feature consisting of bridges and embankments. This tramway linked mines within the area to Woodland Railway which lay to the north of the village of Woodland. Looking back behind the remains of Cowley Colliery you will notice irregular hedged boundaries. They may be the result of piecemeal enclosures of the moorland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As the population increased and landlords sought to increase their profits, improvements were made to the land, subsequently being rented out to farmers. In contrast, the straight stone boundaries were built in the nineteenth century when the remaining moorland was enclosed and improved to make farmland.

Pass through the field with a disused tip and then through a further field. Once through the last gate the path bears right. The path leads into Cowclose Wood; bear left and cross the bridge over Cowclose Beck, go through a gate and keep the fence to your right until a second gate is reached. Go through the gate and follow the waymarked path left to a bridle gate entering Cowclose Plantation. Proceed along this track which runs above the site of the Gaunless Smelt Mill and back to the starting point.



This three and a half mile walk travels in a clockwise direction, commencing from and returning to the Gaunless Smelt Mill Car Park. To enjoy this walk in comfort, boots are recommended and the route is way marked throughout with yellow 'Circular Walk' arrows.

Please observe the **Countryside Code:**

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals.
- Take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people.

We very much regret this walk is unsuitable for wheelchair users and the less ambulant.

For more information/advice regarding Public Rights of Way please contact Durham County Council's Access and Rights of Way Team on 0191 383 3452



Gaunless Valley Heritage Landscape

Steele Road



A view of Copley



A 3½ Mile Circular Walk that visits Copley's Coal Mining Heritage





Smelt Mill Manager's House

A Gaunless Smelt Mill operated for a hundred years, from 1790 to 1890, and was supplied with coal from local collieries. Lead ore was brought for smelting from the lead mines of Eggleston in Teesdale by packhorses travelling along what is locally called Steele Road. This walk explores part of this packhorse route and takes in some of the industrial remains that may be found at the head of the Gaunless Valley.

The Gaunless Smelt Mill was unique, being located away from the lead ore fields of Teesdale. Most ore from Teesdale was smelted at mills within the area of the mines themselves. However, Gaunless Smelt Mill was located on part of the West Durham coalfield owned by Lord Barnard of Raby. The mill was used to smelt duty ore levied from lead mining companies who owed their mineral rights to Lord Barnard.

The walk begins at the car park over-shadowed by Gaunless Smelt Mill chimney. Please keep to public right of way as old colliery sites can be dangerous. Leave the car park and drop down over a bridge, turn left and enter the mill yard (now a large grassed area). Follow the track, known as Steele Road, passing the old smelt mill manager's house on your right and then another house on your left. The track leads you above Arn Gill, climbing up through a plantation.

B In 1947 the newly formed National Coal Board took over two drift mines, forming the Arn Gill Colliery. An aerial ropeway was built to take coal across Arn Gill. The coal was then taken to a siding on the Bishop Auckland to Barnard Castle line near Penny Hill, just to the south west. A further drift mine was sunk near Hill House Farm, which was linked to Arn Gill Colliery by tramway. Remains of the colliery network can still be seen amongst the trees.

On reaching the cattle grid turn right, following a track to Hill House.

C Many of the Raby Estate farms are painted white and are easily identifiable. One local story is that a former Lord Barnard was lost one day on the moors and found an isolated farmhouse which was painted white. Thinking that this was a good idea, he decreed that all farms belonging to his estate should be painted white.

On reaching the farm, keep the buildings to your left. Go through a gate and leave the farm via a stile. Head left across the field to a stone stile within a wall, cross the stile and head straight on. Cross Hindon Beck and then go through a wooden gate. Head straight on again through two gates and turn right passing a ruined building, following the fence on your right.

D The remains of Cowley Colliery are clearly visible in the second field. Beside the spoil heaps are the remains of bases for the steam engines that operated the winding gear, and the top edge of the brick lined shaft still remains visible after being infilled.

