This cycle routes map/guide shows all principal cycle routes. The identified routes use a combination of converted rail paths, new and improved cycleways, bridleways, quiet roads and town streets. Together with the addition of new and/or improved cycle paths, the combined result is a resource which is available to everyone to use and enjoy.

Links - Loops -

Circuits and Spurs...

A cycle routes map/guide mainly showing off-road cycle routes on converted railpaths, new and improved cycleways, bridleways, quiet roads and town streets.

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Circuits and Spurs...

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In the 17th century, a network of waggonways was created in this region. They were used to transport coal from the collieries inland to the rivers Tyne, Wear and Tees, then to be shipped elsewhere in the country. These lines were constructed from wooden rails and sleepers and then gradually replaced by iron and stone sleepers. With no engines, these first railroads had to rely on gravity and the pulling power of horses.

Later, mineral railway lines were developed. National Cycle Network Route 1 follows the mineral railway line which was built in 1855 linking collieries to the docks at Hartlepool, Seaham and Sunderland. The route was owned and constructed by the Hartlepool Dock and Railway Company. The line was difficult to construct and the company incurred heavy financial debts. However, it developed to take passengers as did many other mineral railways at this time. It only began to decline when the coastal railway from Hartlepool to Sunderland was constructed in 1905. It continued to carry coal until the line was disbanded in 1930. Interpretive boards placed at intervals along this cycle route will give you more information about the area.

Many colliery owners built their own railway lines. Two of these now form part of this local cycle network. The Third Marquis of Londonderry was anxious to reduce the cost of transporting coal via Sunderland. He therefore built a harbour at Seaham and a railway line to connect his inland collieries to it. This Londonderry line forms part of the signed Linking Cycle Way (Colonel Bradbottle, owner of the Hottes Colli Co.), built another to the south. This line is known locally as the Yellow Brick Road and connects South Hylton with Seaham.

Placces to visit...

A small number of the settlements on the coast which are well worth visiting are described as follows:

**Easington Village**

This village goes back to Anglo-Saxon times but, essentially, was built in the 12th/13th centuries. Easington Holmes, a medieval water mill was refurbished in 1948 for Bishop Farmham of Durham as a retirement home. It is well worth a visit and among other things it also houses a Discovery Centre where more information about the area can be obtained. St Mary's Church, one of a series of churches in the area which form a Horden Heritage Trail, is also worth exploring.

**Easington Colliery**

One of the last pits to close, the colliery site has now been reclaimed, leaving a landmark pit cage, a Timeline and a Memorial Garden as reminders of an industry which once dominated this area.

**Crimdon**

Walls, sandy beaches can be found here as well as a walk through Crimdon Dene. The area was once a popular resort. A number of people once came here for their annual holiday or for a day’s visit, perhaps to see the Hacienda Redondo competition! Now the area is more peaceful but just as attractive.

**Postcard from the 1930s.**

Crimdon beach in its heyday

The South media Railway to Southwick Harbours, from a woodcut of 1835.

St Mary’s Church, Easington Village, South Gildersleeve

Easington Colliery Pit Cage, erected on the former main colliery roadway where St John’s Church

Easington Colliery Pit Cage, erected on the former colliery roadway near St. Mary’s Church

The South media Railway to Southwick Harbours, from a woodcut of 1835.