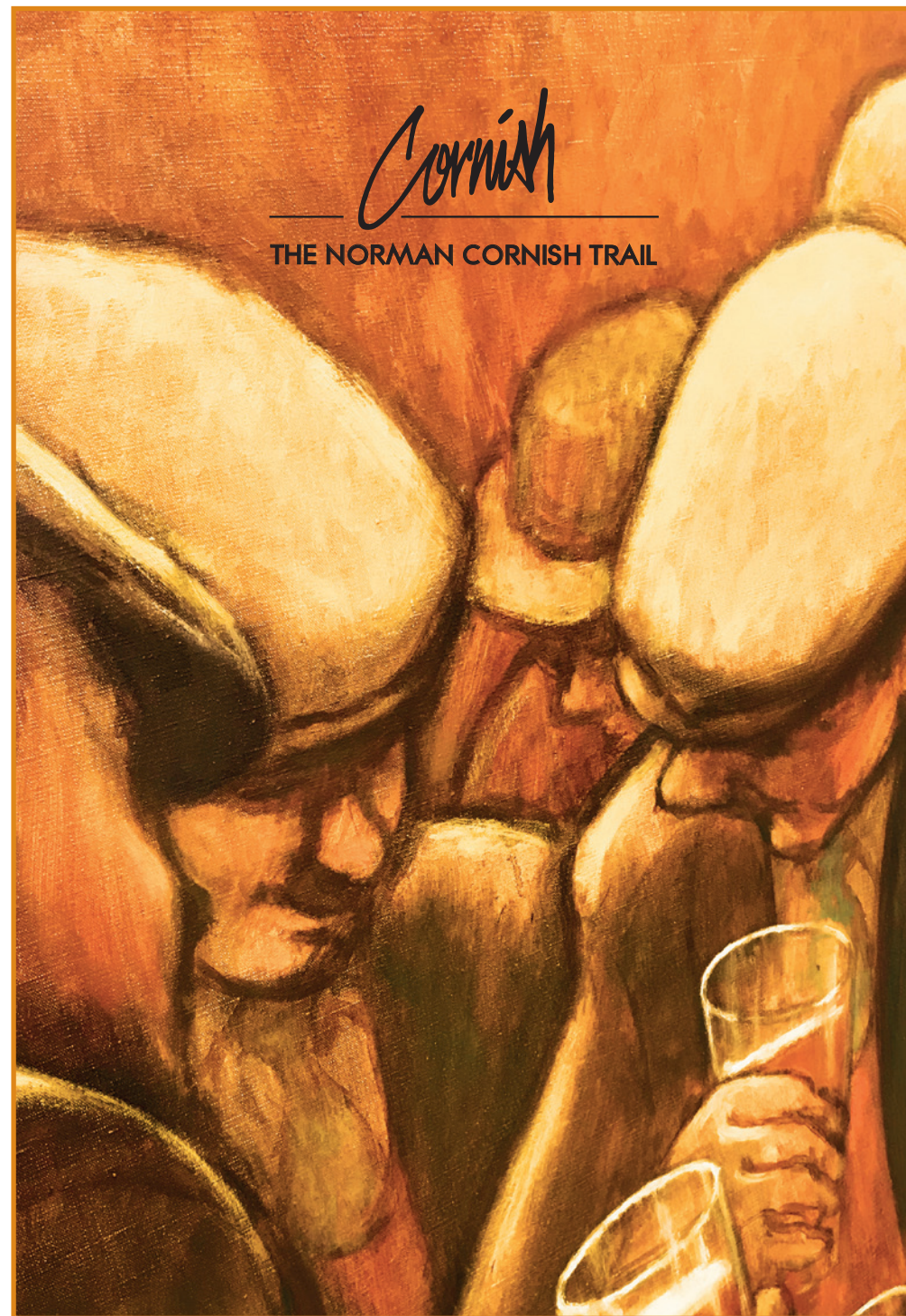


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audio, imagery and  
directions.



*Cornish*  
THE NORMAN CORNISH TRAIL





“ Spennymoor  
has all that  
a painter needs  
in order to depict  
humanity ”

## THE ARTIST

Cornish



Norman Cornish was born in Spennymoor and this is where he lived the whole of his life until his death in 2014 at the age of 94.

As a young teenage boy, Cornish was welcomed into the sketching club at The Spennymoor Settlement, and was encouraged by the Warden, Bill Farrell, to paint the world he knew.

As an artist, he found everything he needed right here in this town. Some would say his artistic inspiration came from a 'narrow world', but according to him this world offered everything he needed.



# THE NORMAN CORNISH TRAIL

Covering an approximate distance of 1.5 miles (2.4 km) and a moderate 50 mins walk, The Norman Cornish Trail allows you to follow in the artist's footsteps and identify the locations of many of his most iconic works.

The trail is an experience that takes you back in time – back to a time when coal was once the life blood of industry here in Spennymoor and a key part of community life. His work will take you on a journey that captures the social history of the time – showing how people lived, worked, played and how communities and families came together as one.

Follow the trail to identify views and locations of Cornish's iconic works. Walk in his footsteps and gain a real insight into the composition of his works, seeing the world as he saw it.

See where he gained his inspiration, what he painted, what has changed and what remains the same today. The artwork featured at the various locations reflects the cultural landscape during the artist's working lifetime, evoking feelings of nostalgia and rekindling memories, whilst also providing a rich, social and historical record of bygone times. Many of the people who frequented these places have now long gone and some of the places themselves have since been demolished.

"I just close my eyes and they all spring to life."

# SPENNYMOOR TOWN HALL ART GALLERY & MINING MUSEUM

Cornish

## Spennymoor Town Hall

The Norman Cornish Trail starts and ends in the superbly refurbished John Kitson Archway in Spennymoor Town Hall, located on the main high street. Here you will find many examples of the artist's work uniquely displayed on backlit glass panels creating a stunning visual image of his most iconic works.

The Town Hall also plays host to the Mining Museum and The Bob Abley Art Gallery which exhibits a significant collection of work from the Cornish permanent collections and is the only gallery in the North East which offers original Norman Cornish artwork for sale, as well as a wide range of books and prints.

Within the gallery, you can also see the artist's studio, faithfully reconstructed from its original location in the family home on Whitworth Terrace.

The Art Gallery is **FREE** to enter and is open between the hours of 12.00 – 4.00pm Monday – Friday and 10.00am – 2.00pm each Saturday.

Parking is **FREE** and is available immediately behind the Town Hall.





# TRAIL LOCATIONS

The trail takes you around ten locations in Spennymoor which the artist saw as a rich source of inspiration - places that he would often pass on his way through the town as part of his daily life.



## 1: EDDY'S FISH SHOP

Once a real focal point in the community, Eddy's Fish Shop no longer stands on the end of Craddock Street, but it is easy to imagine the thriving community centred around this location. The artwork depicted at this location brings it all to life.

**“ If you see a street and it's not terribly interesting, you don't draw it. But then something happens. Some interesting people come in or some kids start playing with skipping ropes and suddenly it enlivens the place and I want to draw it.”**

## 2: ZEBRA CROSSING

The artist stood at this location sketching the activity at the lollipop crossing during busy times of the day – for example, school children flocking home from the nearby Rosa Street Primary School. A large oil painting of this actual scene was gifted by the artist to Spennymoor Town Council and can be seen at the Bob Abley Art Gallery in the Town Hall.



## 3: ST. PAUL'S CHURCH

St Paul's Church, with its spire reaching up into the sky, was drawn and painted by the artist many times. He painted the church in different weather conditions – times when it would be shrouded in a veil of mist, and winter days when the church and its grounds were covered in a blanket of thick snow.



## THE NORMAN CORNISH TRAIL SITE MAP

- 1: EDDY'S FISH SHOP
- 2: ZEBRA CROSSING
- 3: ST PAUL'S CHURCH
- 4: EDWARD STREET
- 5: ROSA STREET SCHOOL
- 6: MINING SCENES
- 7: SPENNYMOOR PEOPLE
- 8: BAR SCENES
- 9: BISHOP'S CLOSE STREET
- 10: BERRIMAN'S CHIP VAN

TOWN HALL:  
START & FINISH OF TRAIL

--- TRAIL ROUTE



TOWN HALL -  
MINING MUSEUM



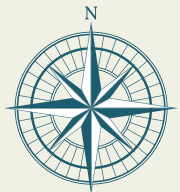
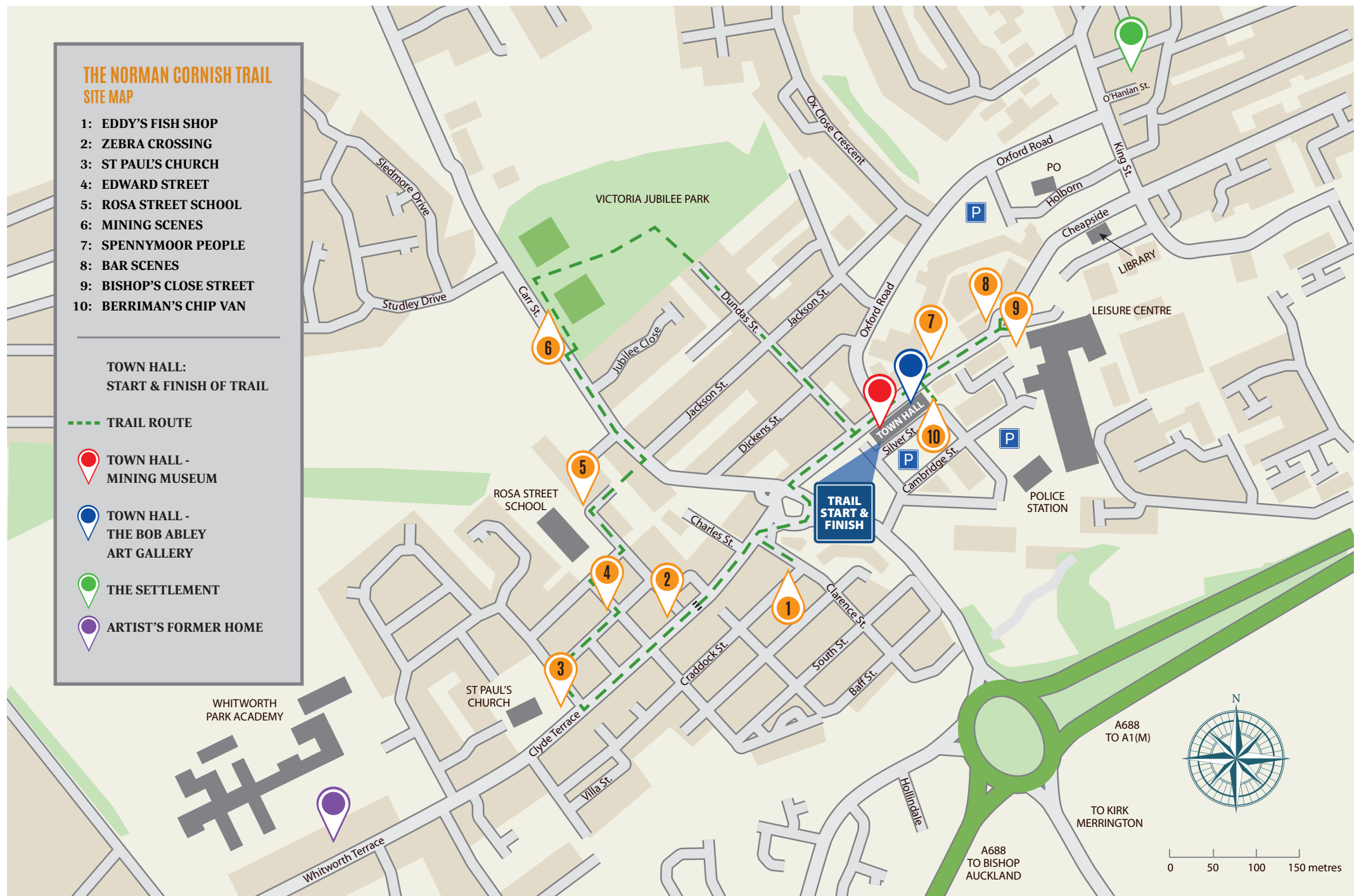
TOWN HALL -  
THE BOB ABLEY  
ART GALLERY



THE SETTLEMENT



ARTIST'S FORMER HOME



0 50 100 150 metres



#### 4: EDWARD STREET

This street is typical of many of the terraced streets in Spennymoor. The artist especially liked the way it is 'crowned' by St Paul's Church. When the artist painted this street, there were fewer cars, if any, making the street feel emptier than it appears today.



#### 5: ROSA STREET SCHOOL

The artist was attracted to this busy scene and here he found a rich source of inspiration for his art – children playing, parents pushing prams, people hurrying by on their way to work.



#### 6: MINING SCENES

Cormish

Spennymoor's roots are steeped within the mining industry – the artist himself worked underground for over 30 years. Here, in the beautifully tended Jubilee Park, which is open from dawn until dusk each day, the trail boards showcase some of the artist's most iconic mining scenes - depicting the harsh working conditions underground. This point on the trail stands beside the 'Mining Memorial' which pays tribute to those who laboured in cramped conditions and lost their lives doing dangerous work – risks from explosions, fires and roof fall, to suffocating gases and flooding.

**“The images come from the people. They create them. I am just the medium.”**

#### 7: SPENNYMOOR PEOPLE

The boards at this location feature Spennymoor people of times gone by. The artist would regularly sit on the benches here, chatting to locals, sharing stories or sketching his fellow man. He was captivated by the fascinating characters who could be seen going about their daily business – the newspaper seller, a group huddled together in conversation, a lone character sat with his dog beside him on a leash.







### 8: BAR SCENES

The Brewers Arms (formerly known as the Bridge Inn) was just one of the many busy local pubs where the artist sketched working men at leisure. In fact, in the late 1930s, there were approximately 25 public houses within a quarter of a mile of this location! The artist was certainly not an outsider looking in; he was entirely immersed within this community.

He was fascinated by the shapes people made: two men leaning together in conversation; a group playing dominoes; a man stood at the bar with a shivering whippet at his heels. The artist would sketch his fellow man and capture those pure, unguarded moments.

### 9: BISHOP'S CLOSE STREET

The Leisure Centre stands on the former site of Bishop's Close Street. The artist's home from the street is now recreated at Beamish Museum.

33 Bishop's Close Street was a typical 'two up, two down' colliery house, with an outside toilet and a tin bath hung outside in the back yard. The street was surrounded by the remnants of the town's industrial past - a railway embankment, slag heaps, coal bunkers and gas works.



### 10: BERRIMAN'S CHIP VAN

The chip van, owned by the Berriman family, would be seen around the streets of Spennymoor and was mostly located just yards from this actual spot, a corner just off Thomas Street. The chip van has since been restored and can be seen at Beamish Museum. The artist's paintings show the townsfolk, young and old, all eager to buy their fishcakes and chips.





# OTHER SIGNIFICANT LOCATIONS:

## THE SPENNYMOOR SETTLEMENT, DL16 6RY

Funded by the Pilgrim Trust, the Spennymoor Settlement was established in 1930 during the height of the Depression years and a period of widespread unemployment. It set out to offer this impoverished community some hope and set people on a path towards new horizons by broadening interests, developing practical skills and cultivating creativity. The so-called Pitman's Academy at the pioneering Spennymoor Settlement was highly significant in providing the young Norman Cornish with an outlet for his obvious talent. As a teenager, he knocked on the door of The Settlement asking if he could join the sketching club. He was advised to come back when he was a little older. Undeterred and driven by his passion for drawing, he returned one year later to try again – and this time was accepted. The advice to 'paint what you know', offered by the Warden, Bill Farrell, proved to be highly influential in shaping his artistic direction. The talents of writer Sid Chaplin and other local artists such as Tom McGuinness, Robert Heslop, George Heslop, Tom Alderson and Bert Dees were also nurtured at the Spennymoor Settlement.

## THE ARTIST'S HOME WHITWORTH TERRACE

A few hundred yards beyond St Paul's Church on Whitworth Terrace stands a Victorian terraced house with a blue plaque – the artist's former home for a period of some 45 years. It was in this house that many of Cornish's most iconic works were painted; where once a bus load of forty or more people arrived one day to meet the artist and see examples of his work when Norman himself was only expecting one representative from the Tate Gallery, London!



SPENNYMOOR SETTLEMENT



WHITWORTH TERRACE



# MORE TO EXPLORE...

Cornish

If you're interested in viewing more in the local area, then you might like to consider:

## Spennymoor Town Hall, DL16 6DG

### Bob Abley Art Gallery

The gallery is home to a permanent collection of Norman Cornish paintings and also features a selection of the artist's original artwork and reproductions for sale. A broad range of work from other regional artists is also available to purchase. - Free entry.

### The Durham Mining Museum

The museum houses an interesting collection of exhibits related to the Durham Coalfield - there are many mining books to browse, photographs to view, old mining tools and equipment on display. - Free entry.

### Opening Times

Check opening times before visiting: Normally 12pm-4pm Mon – Thurs; 10am-2pm on Fridays and Saturdays.

## The Mining Art Gallery, Bishop Auckland, DL14 7NP

This wonderful gallery explores life in mining communities, both above and below ground, through original artwork and artefacts. Mining heritage is perfectly showcased by the work of prominent artists.

Open daily 10am-4pm

## Beamish Museum, Beamish, DH9 0RG

Experience a real sense of the past in this unique open-air, living and working museum which tells the story of life in North East England in the 1820s, 1900s and 1940s. The 1950s town (scheduled for opening autumn 2019) features the recreated Bishop's Close Street home of the artist and his family.

## Locomotion, Shildon, DL4 2RE

This family friendly attraction is home to over 70 railway vehicles from the National Collection and brings railway history to life.

Free entry and open daily 10am-5pm

## Ramside Hall Hotel Golf Club and Spa, Durham, DH1 1TD

This luxury hotel features a full-service spa, with both indoor and outdoor swimming pools, as well as a golf course. The Norman Cornish Lounge, located just off the reception area, showcases a wonderful private collection of original works by the artist.

### ONLINE APP WITH ADDITIONAL CONTENT

A digital version of The Norman Cornish Trail with additional visual and audio content is available to view from your smartphone. This version, complete with full audio description if required, will help you to navigate your way around the locations and find out more about the exact places where the artist painted his most iconic images. Hear memories and anecdotes recounted by local people of life in Spennymoor during the post-war years as they relate to the scenes captured by the artist; view a slideshow of imagery including old photographs of these places.

Simply visit: <http://normancornish.com/trail> from your preferred browser.

### THANKS TO:

Spennymoor Town Council  
The Cornish Family  
Durham County Council  
Spennymoor Area Action Partnership

Brochure designed & produced by Rufus Creative Design