

Waldridge Fell Country Park

What is special?

Waldridge Fell has had many uses over the years; grazing, part of the Prince Bishops' hunting chase and even a military training ground during the Napoleonic Wars. Extensive coal mining took place from the early 1800's until 1963. Waldridge colliery and village community thrived here. The present car parks are named after the rows of houses that once stood here.

There are panoramic views across the Fell and surrounding countryside. A number of waymarked routes around the site enable you to experience different parts of the Fell. Guided walks often take place around this fascinating site. More information can be found in the *Country Durham* booklet, call 0191 372 9100 for your free copy.

Waldridge Fell is an extensive area of lowland heath (moorland less than 300m above sea level), and contains heather, bilberry and moorland grasses. These look stunning in late summer and autumn when the purple heather is in flower. Lowland heath is globally rare and makes it especially important to manage it carefully.

Coppicing of birch trees takes place on a rotational basis. If we did not do this the Fell would turn to woodland and the rare heathland habitat would be lost. The heather itself is cut on rotation. This encourages new growth and creates stands of different aged heather which benefits a broader range of animals.



[more info...](#)

Contact the Countryside Service

telephone: 0191 372 9100

email: countryside@durham.gov.uk

www.durham.gov.uk/countryside



Area: 284 acres (115 hectares)

Total length of Easy Access route: 0.8 miles (1.3km)

Grid Reference: NZ 250 498

Map Ordnance Survey: Explorer 308

Directions: 5.5 mile

north of Durham City centre, 1.5 mile west of Chester-le-Street. From A167 Chester Moor roundabout take turning onto Waldridge Lane.

Alternatively, access via the Edmondsley to Waldridge road.

Car parks are signposted. Nearest postcode is DH2 3RY

Parking: There are five car parks: **William St** NZ 252 497, **Hylton St** NZ 251 498, **Ellen St** NZ 250 497 (2 disabled bays), **Tinkler Row** NZ 248 496 (2 disabled parking bays), **North Fell** NZ 249 498 (2 disabled parking bays)

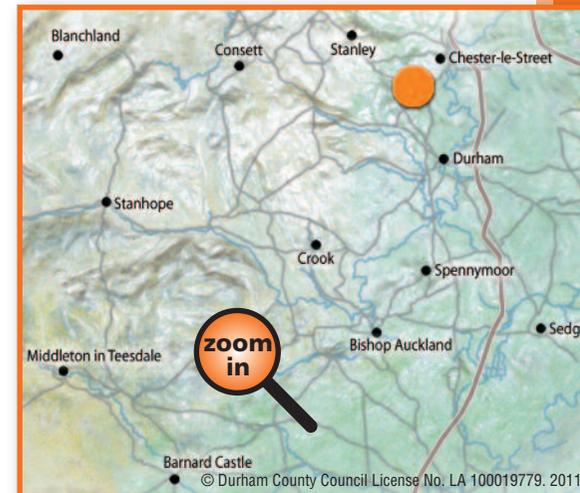
Public transport: Service 25 (Go Northern). Bus stop is at Chester Street in Waldridge Village, approximately 500 metres to the car parks

Dogs: Allowed under control on a lead during bird nesting season (March to August). Please clean up after your dog

Designation: Country Park, Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Open Access Land, UK Woodland Assurance Scheme certified, Local Wildlife Site

Suitable for: Walkers and wheelchair users. Cyclists and horse-riders are not allowed

Habitats: Lowland heath, wetland, woodland, grassland



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What is special? continued...

This Country Park is home to a number of interesting insects and plants some of which are scarce in this county, such as the green hairstreak butterfly and emperor moth. The very rare red tipped clearwing moth has been recorded here. Pairs of breeding stonechat may be seen, often perching on a gorse bush.

Wanister Bog is the most significant area of wetland and contains plants such as marsh marigold, bogbean, sedges and bog moss. The bog is the only known valley mire in lowland Durham and it is for this reason that the Fell is a Site of Special Scientific Interest - only given to the best wildlife habitats.

Because this site is of great conservation importance, we need to manage it carefully. In the summer, working horses pull 'bracken bashers' across the Fell. This is an environmentally friendly method of controlling the bracken which would crowd out the heather if left unmanaged.

Help us to protect this rare habitat

- Lowland heath is fragile and does not respond well to being trampled on, please stick to waymarked trails
- Keep your dog on a lead during the bird breeding season, (March to August)
- Clean up after your dog - dog poo which is left to rot on the ground increases the nutrient levels in the soils which means heather and wildflowers cannot survive
- Prevent uncontrolled moorland fires

Accessibility statement

Waldridge Fell has two Easy Access routes - a circular around the North fell and a linear route linking Tinkler Row and Ellen St car parks. These are two metres wide, have a hard sealed surface and are gently undulating with a few slopes. There are seats at regular intervals. Take care when crossing the road as it is near a bend and views are restricted.

Waldridge Fell is Access Land which means you can wander freely without sticking to rights of way. Paths and tracks throughout most of the Fell are narrow, uneven and may have large stones and ruts in them. Some routes become impassable in bad weather. There are some steep gradients and there is the possibility of mine shafts.

There may be certain times of year when we have to restrict public access for reasons of conservation, land management or public safety. Please take note of any signs.



Stonechat



Green Hairstreak



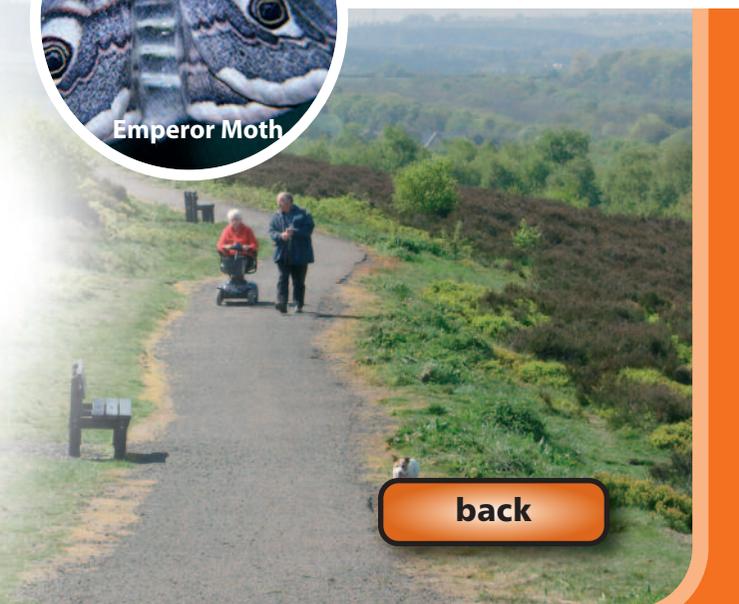
Red Tipped Clearwing



Emperor Moth

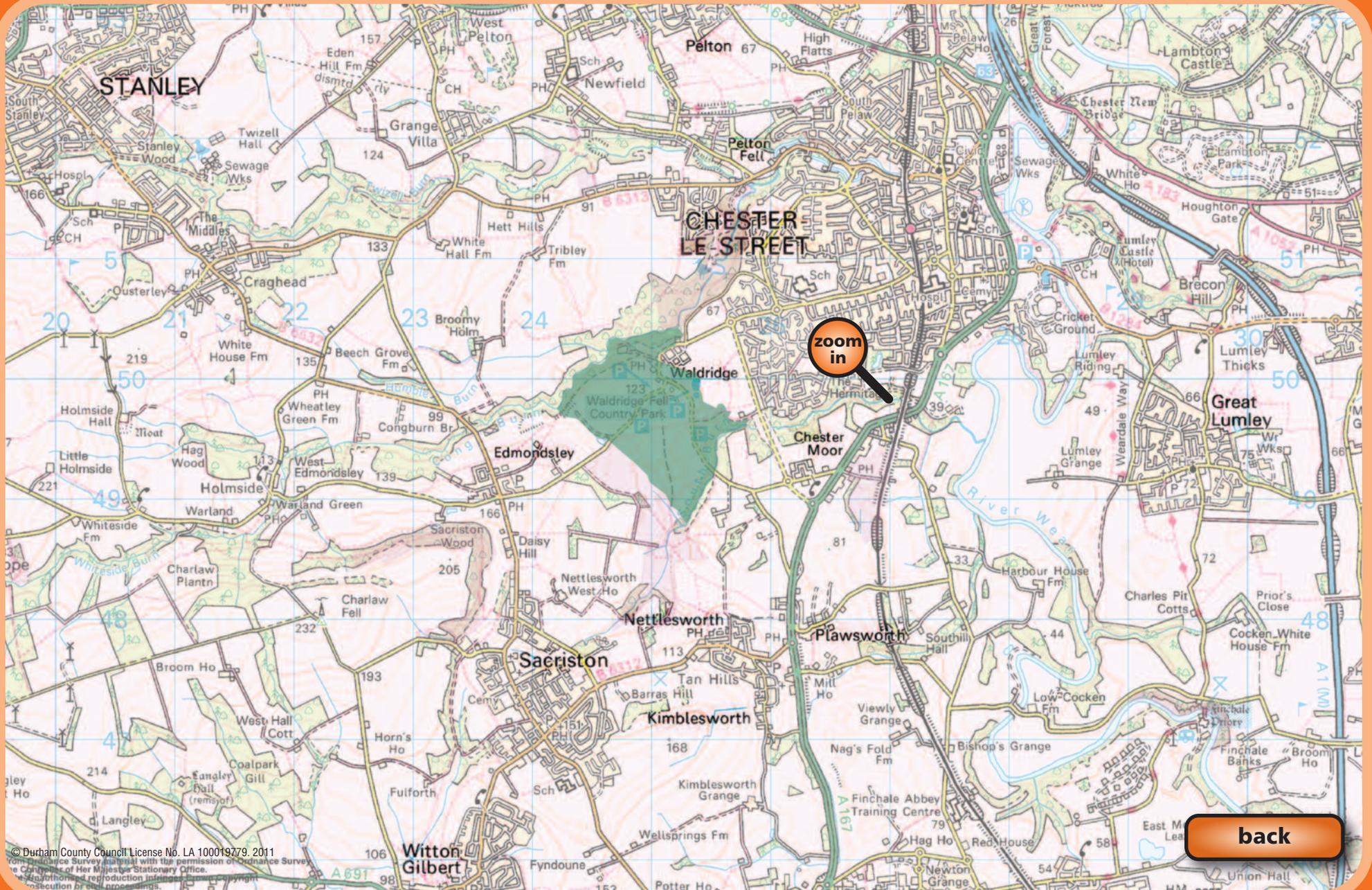


Bracken Bashing



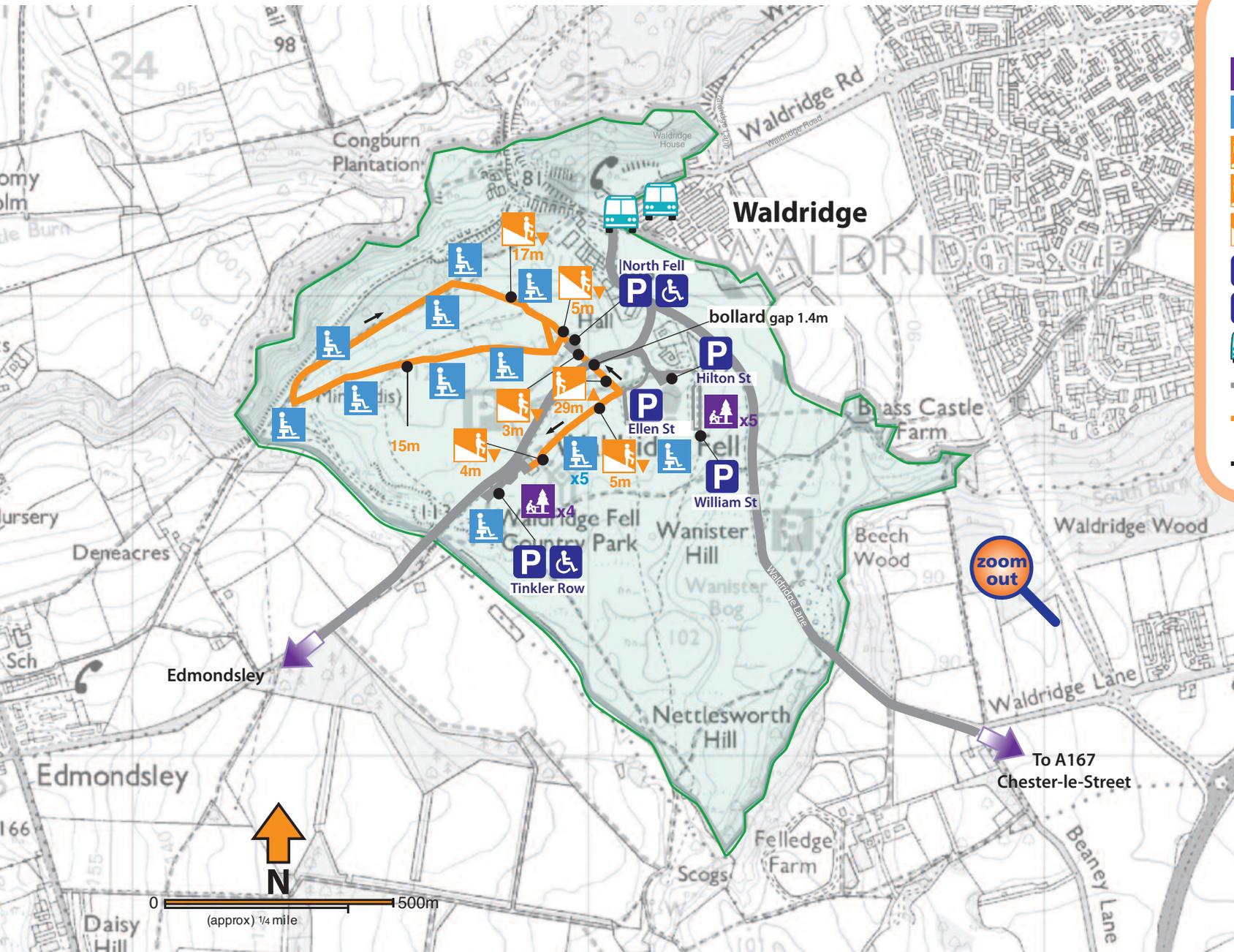
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KEY

-  Picnic Area
-  Seat
-  Steep Slope Up 1:10-1:10
-  Medium Slope Up 1:20-1:10
-  Medium Slope Down 1:10-1:10
-  Parking
-  Disabled Parking
-  Bus Stop
-  Road/Tarmac
-  Easy Access Route
-  Direction of Travel

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