



This Heritage Trail takes you on a tour of the historic town. The Trail is 1.75 miles long (2.8 km) and takes approximately an hour and a half to complete. The route is suitable for wheelchairs.

Sedgefield is an ancient village founded in Norman times but with roots in Roman times. The earliest recorded tenth century name for Sedgefield is that of *Ceddesfeld* probably meaning *field of sedge* which fits in with the marshy nature of the area, or from a Saxon personal name of *Cedd* or *Secg*, possibly the person originally granted the land.

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Sedgefield HERITAGE TRAIL

The trail begins at the Water Pump on the Green opposite the Black Lion public house.



1 WATER PUMP Until the early 20th Century, the village obtained its water supply from public pumps like this one on the Green though many houses had their own pumps or wells in their gardens. Sedgefield was renowned for the therapeutic qualities of its water and was once referred to as the *Montpellier of the North*.

Facing in the direction of the Church cross over the road and follow the footpath over the green.

Stop in front of the Crossbill Hotel



During the Middle Ages, Sedgefield was made up of farms and cottages built of timber or stone with thatched roofs. Development of buildings over the years has created a variety of styles which is part of the charm of Sedgefield. Earliest remaining buildings probably date from the 17th century.

The market was held on Cross Hill from 1312 until 1918. The market cross was removed during the 19th century but the name *Cross Hill* survives. A Farmers Market is held here on the second Sunday of every month.

The trees, which are such a feature of the Green today, were not planted until the early 20th century (except those in the churchyard).

From the front of the Crossbill Hotel follow the footpath towards the church.



3 ST EDMUND'S CHURCH

The present church has dominated The Green for more than 700 years. There may have been a wooden church here in the 10th century. The present, mainly 13th century, building has an imposing 15th century tower visible for miles around.

Inside there is some fine 17th century wood carving.

THE LYCHGATE (lych meaning corpse) was erected in 1906 as a memorial to a Mr & Mrs Thompson, old inhabitants of the village, at the behest of their son who was an alderman.

WAR MEMORIALS Beside the Lych-gate stands the War Memorial, erected in 1920. There is also a Canadian memorial to airmen lost in a training flight nearby in 1944.

Pass through the Church gates and into the churchyard.

Notice the words on the back of the war memorial.

Over on the road side of the graveyard there is a monument to Frederick Hardwicke Bolton who died at the Battle of Balaklava in the Crimean War.

CHURCH TOWER The clock in the church tower was bought and installed by public subscription during the late 19th century although the current blue face is more modern. The funeral bell was *half muffled* after the death of anyone of importance, and a *passing bell* was rung twelve hours after a death, thrice for a child, six times for a woman, and nine for a man. The curfew bell was also tolled from the church tower until the 1960s, at 8.00 pm in the winter and 9 pm in the summer.

Continue along footpath in the churchyard; if the door of the church is ajar, it is well worth a visit. Turn right towards the steps and into Rectory Row. Turn right - continue for 50 yards then cross the road into the car park of Ceddesfeld Hall.

6 CEDDESFELD HALL

This was formerly the Rectory and is now the Community Centre. The Latin inscription above the door translates as:

BY THE GENEROSITY OF SAMUEL AND SHUTE BARRINGTON, ONE AN ADMIRAL OF THE BRITISH FLEET, THE OTHER BISHOP OF DURHAM, WHOSE ACHIEVEMENTS ARE PRAISED BY EVERYONE.

These gentlemen rebuilt this house after a disastrous fire as a miniature stately home with landscaped gardens for their nephew, the Rector.

The fire benefitted that rector in another way by eliminating the Rectory of its ghost, the *pickled parson*. The name does not refer to the ghost's alcoholic state but, literally to pickling. The story goes that a parson died a week before the tithes (rents) were due to be paid. His wife concealed the death by salting his body, obtained the rents and next day announced his death. From that time until the fire he haunted the house

Walk around the side of the building. Stop and view the terraced lawns

The Town Council have maintained the grounds, which were laid out to a design by Joseph Spence in the mid 18th century, as a pleasant public area. The mound south-west of the lake was an earlier garden feature.

Take the path to the right hand side of the ground. Then follow the footpath down and around the bottom of the lake.



The lake was probably created as a medieval fish pond to provide the Rector with fresh fish. The relationship between Church and town was often stormy; in the 15th century Bishop Langley preached against Sedgefield's poachers (it was his game that they were poaching!) and in 1575 villagers put the curate in the stocks. After The Rising of the North in 1589, 19 men from Sedgefield were hanged.

Continue left on the path between the two lakes and then walk past the first two bungalows. Stop at the tall, wide brick wall over on your right.



8 HEATED WALL

This south facing wall made of hand made bricks once formed part of the Rector's garden and is hollow inside. A furnace produced heated air to fill the space, heating the wall and enabling fruits to ripen early for use in the house. You can still see the hooks in the wall which held the fruit trees in place.

Take the narrow path between the bungalows and gardens along Wykes Close (named after a former rector). Stop when you get to Rectory Row. Cross the road and proceed along Cross Street.

The single storey building on your left was once one of Sedgefield's smithies. It is now a pottery. In market towns such as this blacksmiths made specialised implements as well as shoeing horses. The forge and other features still remain.

Continue along Cross Street and cross the main road.



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10 Take care as traffic speeds have increased since the days when this was the Durham - Stockton turnpike road. In 1850 a tollgate was still in use beyond the Golden Lion.

Walk down to the Dun Cow Inn, turn left and walk along for about fifty yards.

EAST PARADE.

The long terrace of houses on your left was built in the 19th century as one unit during a boom period. Previously nearly all houses in Sedgefield had been built individually.

Walk a little way up the narrow alley with a high stone wall alongside it. It is marked with a public footpath sign.

This is part of the old town wall and is built of stones which would have been taken off the adjacent common field. It is thought that this wall originally encircled the mediaeval town.

Retrace your steps back to the pavement.



13

Just in sight to the left, facing towards you is **East Well House**, an 18th century farmhouse. Originally, all Sedgefield's farm houses were within the village but after the enclosure of common land in 1636, most farms were moved out of town onto enclosed land. Next to the farm but demolished in

the mid 19th century, stood the original Sedgefield workhouse, a very unsanitary place that was severely criticised by inspectors before being closed down and replaced elsewhere in the village.

Return to the Dun Cow Inn and then turn right into Front Street. The Trail continues overleaf...



11



12

Walking from the Dun Cow Inn up Front Street.

As you walk up the hill, notice the three-storey, brick Georgian building called **Elm House**.

Malvern House (21 Front Street) is also a fine example of 18th century housing.

Continue along Front Street until you reach the Parish Hall



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The distinctive front of the **Parish Hall**, founded in 1849 but later rebuilt, was a reflection of its important status in the community. Early last century, concerts were given by talented local people each Saturday night. It is still used regularly by local groups although at the time of writing, the future of the Parish Hall is uncertain.

On the bank side opposite, two shops are all that remain of a row of buildings. Uphill, were

Cooper's Almshouses. These were built as a single-storey block of brick cottages in 1703 to house deserving old people. Thomas Cooper was a surgeon who bequeathed money for this purpose.

Beyond the almshouses, there used to be an endowed school founded in 1596 for poor children. A replacement school which also housed the village gaol was erected in 1826 but that too has been demolished.

Cross the road and turn right along the side of the church until you reach the ballgame statue.

SHROVE TUESDAY BALL GAME STATUE

Tradition has it that the townsfolk have competed against the country folk on Shrove Tuesday for at least seven hundred years. Some say the game began with warring tribes and that the original ball was the head of the enemy! The game starts at 1 pm on the Green when a hand-stitched saddle leather ball is passed through the bull ring on the green by a respected village elder whose identity remains a closely guarded secret until the day. Villagers then chase and throw the ball through the streets with everyone battling to get a kick. Recent practice has been for the ball to be "kidnapped" to neighbouring communities to tour the pubs, enabling participants to refresh themselves with a drink. To finish the game, the ball has to be "alleged" in the mill stream down Spring Lane; this usually happens around 4 pm. The winner will be the person who returns the ball to the green and passes it through the ring three times. There are no boundaries, no teams and few rules

Continue along Front Street and cross over at the zebra crossing and walk up to the Black Lion public house on the corner.



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18

BLACK LION

Notice the sundial high up on the wall.

Turn right at the Black Lion and continue along North End until you reach the White House.

THE WHITE HOUSE

This sizeable farmhouse now presents the appearance of a pair of double fronted houses and was built probably in the 1790's.

During the last century a smithy stood on the site where the petrol station is today.

There was also a pond here which marked a goal in the annual Shrove Tuesday football match.

Cross the road and turn left back towards the village centre until you get to the Hardwick Arms. Walk through the archway.



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HARDWICK ARMS

This was Sedgefield's main coaching inn. The arch has stone blocks set on either side to keep coach wheels away from the walls. The stables have survived and have been converted to residential use. The yard remains partly cobbled.

Continue past the coaching houses until you face the fields. You can either cross the fields to Hardwick Park with its eighteenth century follies and lakes, returning via Sedgefield Racecourse and the Cricket Club, or continue on the Heritage Trail.

Information about Hardwick Park is available at the library or the park itself.

To continue on the Heritage Trail, turn left along West Park Lane keeping the fields to your right until you meet the main road.



22

IVY HOUSE

Originally the Poor Law Institution, it was built in 1861, on the site of the present Dunelm Court on the south side of Station Road. It was one of the first purpose built workhouses in the country and served the poor of the local area. It admitted tramps only if they had travelled a certain distance and obtained a card from the police station; they were then given a night's free lodging but records show that the master of the Sedgefield Workhouse did his best to discourage tramps from coming and had been known to order buckets of cold water thrown over the new arrivals at the door!

Cross the road and continue towards the town centre opposite the multi-coloured houses.

Here the houses have been improved without losing their character. On the left of the road and nearer to the village is the **Scout Hall** built in 1856 as the Methodist chapel.

Continue towards the town centre and stop at the junction with Spring Lane.



24

The house on the corner of the lane, Sedgefield House, is a splendid example of a Regency villa, early 19th century with a contemporary cottage attached. It bears the date 1857, but this may well refer to restoration.



25

Walk fifty yards down Spring Lane.

On the left of are the remains of **The Pinfold**, a high-walled compound where stray cattle were kept until their owners claimed them. The house beyond was formerly a coach house.

Retrace your steps up Spring Lane, turn right and head towards the green.



26

BADGERS' GREEN

This roughcast whitewashed house, in the angle where West End turns to run westwards, was built originally as three separate cottages early in the 17th century, and had a large cellar beneath. By 1827 it had become a single house known as Rose Cottage and it acquired its present name in more recent years. Note the brick segmental arch incorporated into its right hand (southern) half, as a drive through for carriages.



27

On the opposite side of the road a little further on stands the three-storey **Manor House** occupying a prominent position at the head of The Green. It was part of the Hardwick Estate until 1923. It is a fine example of Queen Anne architecture and was built in 1707 as the sundial on the house proclaims. Currently the building is used for offices and has been carefully restored. The rear of the house is of some interest since it shows, apart from a splendid staircase window, signs of quite early alteration.

Go to the corner of the Green opposite the Black Lion Pub.



28

BULL RING

This is a fitting place to end the trail as this is the spot where the ball-game begins and ends. This is also, presumably, where the farmers tethered their bulls on market day.



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The centre of Sedgefield has been labelled a conservation area due to the historical features of the differently styled houses around the large village green. This medieval layout is typical of many villages and small towns in County Durham.



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