

LOCOMOTION

OLD SHILDON AND THE BLACK BOY BRANCH LINE

DISTANCE: 2½ MILES (4KM)

Start: Collection Building, Locomotion

Finish: Collection Building, Locomotion

Circular walk on pavements and
footpaths. Some long slopes.
Will take about 1½ - 2 hours

OTHER FREE TRAILS AVAILABLE

see locomotion.org.uk for details

A range of other trail books are on sale
from the Locomotion Gift Shop

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RAIL TRAIL 2
SHILDON

SHILDON RAIL TRAIL 2

OLD SHILDON AND THE BLACK BOY BRANCH LINE

This is a walk from Locomotion to old Shildon and back, taking in the Timothy Hackworth monument and his grave in St John's Churchyard. It goes through the town to reach the highpoint of one of the colliery branch lines and returns along the course of that line and the Bishop Auckland line.

2

DIRECTIONS

From the Collection Building (1), follow the museum's central path under Spout Lane Bridge, keeping the children's play area on your left.

You are walking alongside the route of the original 1825 Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR), one of Britain's pioneering railways.

After you pass under Spout Lane Bridge you will see a Signal Box (2) built in 1887. This is still being used by the railway to keep trains running safely.

Continue along the path past Shildon Station to the Coal Drops (3). These were used to fuel locomotives on the S&DR and later the North Eastern Railway (NER).

Keep following the path to the Black Boy Stables (4). The stables were the meeting point for the S&DR (1825), Black Boy Colliery (1827) and Surtees Railway (1831).

Continue along the path until you reach Locomotion's Sunday School Building, then bear right along Hackworth Close. You will see the former home of Timothy Hackworth to your right.

Follow Hackworth Close to Alma Road and turn right. Go past the mini roundabout and walk up St John's Road until you reach the junction with Hackworth Street. Opposite is the gate to Hackworth Park.

Enter the park and take the right-hand path to the Hackworth Monument (5). This was put up in 1925 – the statue is a modern replacement for the original. The edging round it is made of stone sleeper blocks from the Stockton & Darlington Railway.

On the other side of the road are four maisonettes – these were built by the London & North Eastern railway (LNER) in 1929 as cottage homes for retired employees.

Continue on this path to the drinking fountain (6) provided by the Old Shildon Workmen's Club in 1914.

Leave the park by the gate near to the fountain, turn left along Central Parade and then right into Church Street.

At the Shildon War Memorial (7) turn right into St John's Churchyard.

Follow the path as it leads towards the church and then swings back round – Timothy Hackworth's grave (8) is next to the path on your way out.

Leave the churchyard and continue right along Church Street, passing the landscaped square on your right.

The statue of Timothy Hackworth (9) as the builder of the Royal George locomotive was made by Graham Ibbeson in 1998.

Continue round and along Church Street until you reach a roundabout. Turn left into Cheapside.

Opposite the Lord Elliot's Café Bar Rooms is a replica of a chaldron wagon (10) for carrying coal, as used on the railways in the 19th century.

On the pavement here the blue-grey cobblestones mark the course of the Black Boy branch line. This line was opened in 1827 to serve the collieries to the north of the town, including Black Boy Colliery, which was named after a local inn.

Walk along Cheapside to Rose Cottages (11). On your right you will pass Foundry Street and Phoenix Place (12). This was the site of the Phoenix Iron and Brass Foundry, one of the industries set up in Shildon because of the railway development.

Opposite Rose Cottages (13) was the site of a stationary winding engine used to bring wagons from the coal valley to the north over the ridge at Shildon.

This stretch of the railway was largely replaced by a new line, tunnelled through the ridge in 1842.

Turn around and walk back along Cheapside – you are walking over the top of the tunnel.

At the roundabout, cross straight over and continue on the road and then path along the course of the Black Boy branch line.

The cutting for the 1842 line (which connected Shildon to Bishop Auckland and Weardale) becomes visible just past the start of the tunnel.

Follow the path away from the Black Boy branch line and along the Bishop Auckland line. You will see an aqueduct (14) built to carry an open stream over the cutting.

Before you reach the Coal Drops, turn sharp right and head back towards Timothy Hackworth's house. You will pass the ruins of the Black Boy stables.

Behind Timothy Hackworth's house was the site of the Soho Works (15) opened by Hackworth in 1833 to build locomotives for the Stockton & Darlington Railway and other railway companies.

Now follow the museum's central path back to the Collection Building.

