



Explore the footpaths to the south of the village, with a choice of woodland and hill routes which reveal the expansive views and historical sites which inspired local artist John Martin

# WALKS AROUND HAYDON BRIDGE

## Hills and Woods that Inspired an Artist

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#### Walk Summary

**Longer route:** Elrington, Branchend and Langley: 7¼ miles, max height 981 ft

**Shorter route:** Spring Woods and Langley: 4 miles, max height 688 ft

#### Introduction

The southern slopes of the South Tyne Valley climb through a variety of woodland until they reach the northern foothills of the North Pennines. This is a walk which offers broad vistas, not only over the Northumberland landscape which unfurls below, but also into the history of the area from the imposing Langley Castle to its industrial and artistic heritage. The walk passes the birthplace of Victorian artist John Martin, and those familiar with his work can take added enjoyment in spotting the influences he took when he trod these very same paths as a boy.

Within a couple of miles the flora and fauna change from woodland to moorland, and the observant walker may be rewarded with a glimpse of a range of wildlife.

The routes in this leaflet can be combined to give walks of varying length to explore just as much or as little of this fascinating area as you wish.

Track from Langley to Threepwood



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**By road**  
A69 from M6 at Newcastle 28 miles  
A69 from M6 at Carlisle 31 miles

**By rail** Newcastle – Carlisle service [www.northernrail.org](http://www.northernrail.org)  
Newcastle – Carlisle service [www.arrivabus.co.uk](http://www.arrivabus.co.uk)

**By air** from Newcastle Airport

**The Bridge**  
HAYDON BRIDGE

This Community Library, Visitor Information Centre and Internet Cafe is on Church Street next to the railway station. As well as providing library services and a focal point for the local community, it offers visitors friendly advice and a range of leaflets and information on local tourist attractions and facilities.

**For more information:**  
[www.haydon-bridge.co.uk](http://www.haydon-bridge.co.uk)  
[www.northpenines.org.uk](http://www.northpenines.org.uk)  
[www.wojm.org.uk](http://www.wojm.org.uk)



#### Look out for...

- A** The Anchor Hotel, on the other side of the river and across the old bridge, used to house the old courthouse and assizes.
- B** Some of the old bridge to the right may date back to the late 17th century, but it failed to survive the Great Flood of 1771 and was rebuilt on more than one occasion in the 1800s. It ceased carrying traffic in 1967 and a temporary wooden bridge was used until the new bridge was completed in 1970.



Old bridge in the 1870s

- C** A short detour into the small settlement of Elrington takes you to an abandoned railway and converted station house with the old platform still in situ. The railway branch to Allendale was built to serve the lead mining industry but declined along with it. Passenger services ceased in 1930 and it closed completely in 1950.



Elrington station, taken shortly after the railway had closed to passenger traffic.

- D** The terrace of cottages to the right are almshouses, still administered by the Shaftoe Charities. They were endowed by the Rev John Shaftoe in 1685, along with the building of a grammar school (where Shaftoe Trust First School stands today).



Shaftoe Terrace

- E** Langley Castle is an impressive tower-house which was built by Thomas de Lucy around 1365. It was destroyed by Henry IV in 1405 and stood as a ruin until it was restored by Cadwallader Bates in the 1890s. It has since been converted into a hotel.



Langley Castle

- F** Gatesettle Plantation, locally known as Bogle Wood on the right, is said to be inhabited by the Land Ends Bogle, a particularly troublesome spirit which haunted the farms to the west of the wood.

- G** A small cottage at East Land Ends farm on the right is the birthplace of the 19th century artist John Martin. Read the plaque outside the building for more information about him and his work.

- H** Shaftoe street used to be a busy shopping area earlier in the C20 with numerous shops, including the Co-op department store. It was built in 1887 and was more recently used as an antique shop.



**IF YOU LIKED THIS WALK**

Why not explore further by trying another leaflets in this series taking you through walk from the village? Look out for other more of our beautiful countryside. Don't miss the John Martin Trail, an 11-mile route from the village, past East Land Ends, the place of his birth, to Allbanks, Staward Gorge and back via Langley Castle.

**JOHN MARTIN 1789-1854**

On its return from Langley this walk passes the modest cottage at East Land Ends where celebrated Victorian artist John Martin was born and spent his formative years. He gained much inspiration from his exploration of the local countryside and is known to have played in the ruins of Langley Castle. The wide vistas and open skies of the Tyne valley must have been a powerful influence on the young Martin, and combined with his strict religious upbringing to result in spectacular canvases on biblical themes. Those familiar with Martin may feel they are walking among the shapes and landforms of his works as they follow these routes.

**A BRIEF HISTORY**

Haydon Bridge has been an important crossing of the South Tyne since the 14th century, and the village grew around the river as the turmoil of the Border wars receded. Only Haydon Old Church, above the village to the north remains as a reminder of the original settlement of Haydon, while the lawless times of the Border Reivers are recalled by the imposing bulk of Langley Castle to the south. In more peaceful times, Haydon Bridge has grown through agriculture and industries associated with coal and lead mining. Its importance as a transport link saw the arrival of the railway in 1838, and increasing road traffic necessitated a new bridge in 1970 and a bypass in 2009.





View from Humbleton Fell



Crossing the old railway above Langley

9 At the junction opposite the Haydonian Club turn left then left over the bridge by the Anchor Hotel to return to your starting point.



Byway to West Land Ends

8 At the road turn right and proceed with care to the bend. Cross the road to the grassed area and left along the minor road, signposted West Deanraw. Follow this road as it turns right, passing a farm, and then when the road turns left take the track straight ahead.

Follow downhill until it meets a road. Turn right, to keep heading downhill on the road and keep to the road as it turns right at the foot of the hill. From here walk for about a mile along the road to return to the village.



Stublick Chimney

**Both routes: Start here**

1 Leaving The Bridge turn left along Church Street and at the T-junction left again to cross the road bridge. At the bus stop on the far side cross the road via the traffic island and head up Whittis Road to the left of the brick terraced houses.

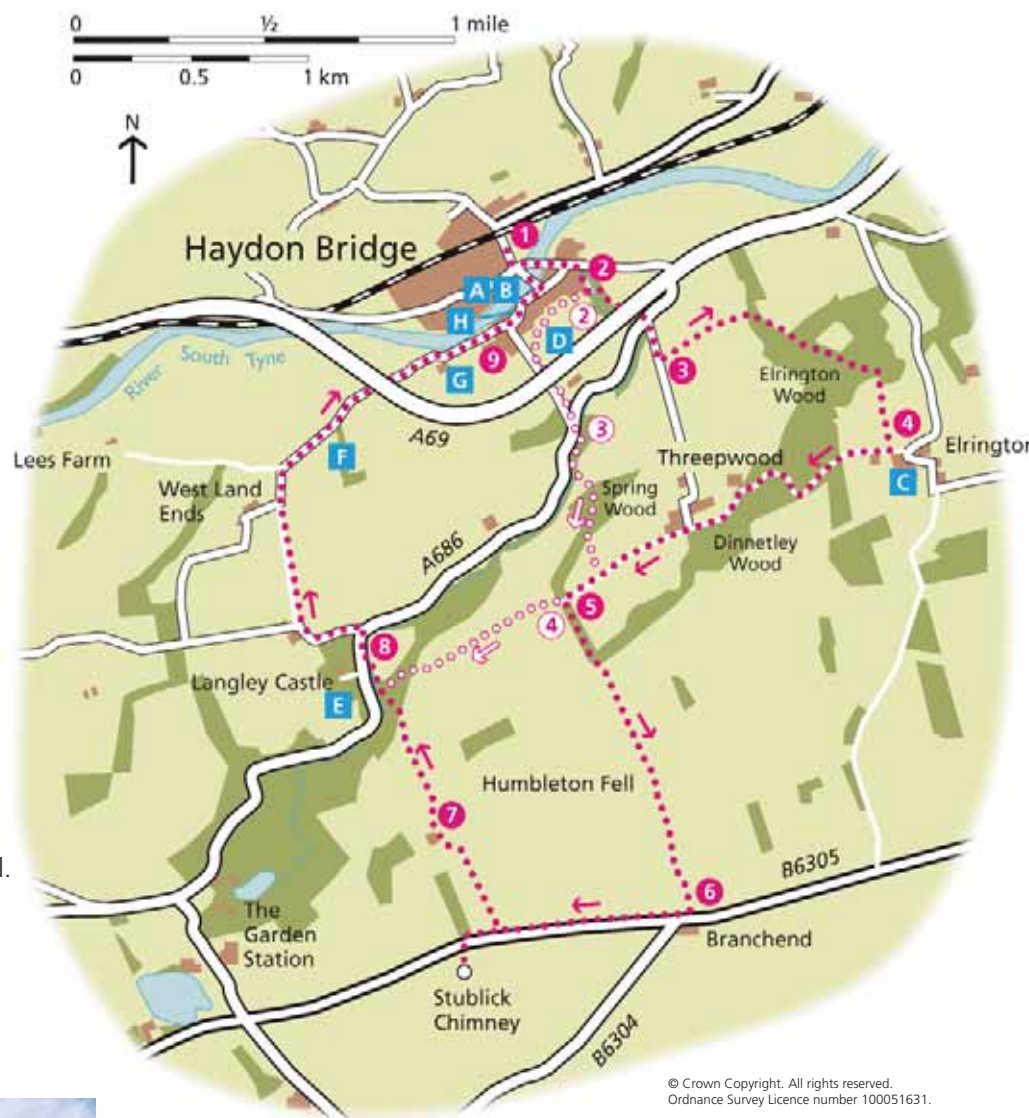
**Longer route, continue below  
For shorter route follow from 2 (in box right)**

2 At the top of the hill turn left and follow the narrow path to the right of a high wooden fence, down to a footbridge and into a wood (Gees Wood).

Follow the path uphill and then under the bypass viaduct until you come to a road. Cross the road with care and head up the lane to a gate on your left with a signpost to Elrington.



The A69 viaduct in Gees Wood



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6 Turn right and follow the road to the right (signed Alston 15). Take care of traffic on this stretch.

At the signpost for Humbleton turn right through the gate\* onto the fell and make your way downhill towards the cottage and past it to a stile.

\*For a short detour to Stublick Chimney, continue on past the gate. Built in the C19 to channel fumes from the lead smelting mill at Langley a mile downhill, the chimney has been restored and is well worth a visit.

7 Cross the stile and go straight ahead on an indistinct path that curves to the right, dropping down the tree-covered hill to a stile into the field. Head down the field towards two ladder stiles that provide a route across the steep sided railway cutting. From here the path leads half right downhill and past the corner of a wall to a stile leading into a wood.

Cross this stile and turn right to descend steeply, through the woods, eventually joining a rough track. Follow the track downhill to meet the road near Langley Castle.

**Spring Woods (shorter) Route**

Follow direction 1 for both routes, then continue below.

2 At the top of the hill turn right along the lane and on reaching the school car park at the end turn left, up the steps to a playing field. Go half right to the far corner of the field, through the wicket gate and left up the road.

At the junction cross the road towards a seat, turn right for 50m then left at the signpost for Threepwood and Branchend.

3 Follow this path down and over a footbridge, right then up through the woods, crossing a field between two wickets on the way. After emerging from the thick conifer wood go diagonally right up to a stile and continue up the field, bearing right to follow the wall to a stone squeeze-stile in the top right corner. Cross the stile and turn right along the lane to a gate at the end.

4 Go through the gate and follow the track as it bears right to a gate. Go through the gate, turn left and keep to the track across the top of this field. Go through another gate and keep straight on with the wall on your right. After a third gate the track descends to the right, through another gate and into a wood. Follow the track downhill, eventually meeting the road near Langley Castle.

**Joins longer route here – follow from 8 onwards**

3 Go through the gate and follow the waymarks to a third field, where you bear right to a wicket gate on the edge of a wood. Descend into the wood, cross a footbridge and head uphill.

Join a wall and keep it on your left. At the corner of the wall continue uphill. The path runs through a slight gully but in damp conditions it may be easier to walk on top of the left bank.

When you reach a clearing keep straight uphill, and at the edge of the wood find a gap in the right of a fallen bush which will lead to a stile.

Climb the stile, cross the field and after the gate follow the track, with the wall on your left, to meet an unsurfaced lane.

4 Turn right and follow the track over a bridge and through a field gate. Keep right at a fork, going through another gate. The track then leads downhill over a bridge and up to pass a large house.

Where a road joins from the right continue straight on, past a farm and on to a field gate at the end of the lane. Look out for a step through stile in the wall to the right – this is where the shorter Spring Woods route joins, and offers a shortcut back to Haydon Bridge.



5 Go through the gate then turn left to follow the line of the wall uphill to reach an old railway embankment. On reaching this go through the gate to your left and turn right to follow the waymark uphill along the line of the wall. Towards the top of this steep climb bear left to cross a ditch and join a track leading to a gate.

After the gate continue straight on with a fence to your right to a stile in a dip. Cross this and continue uphill towards the farm buildings where you join the road. As you gain altitude it is always good to pause and look back as the Northumberland landscape unfolds behind you. All along this stretch there are unenviable views of the Northumberland hills, way beyond the Hadrian's Wall ridge and all the way to Cheviot itself and the Scottish border.



Heading towards Branchend