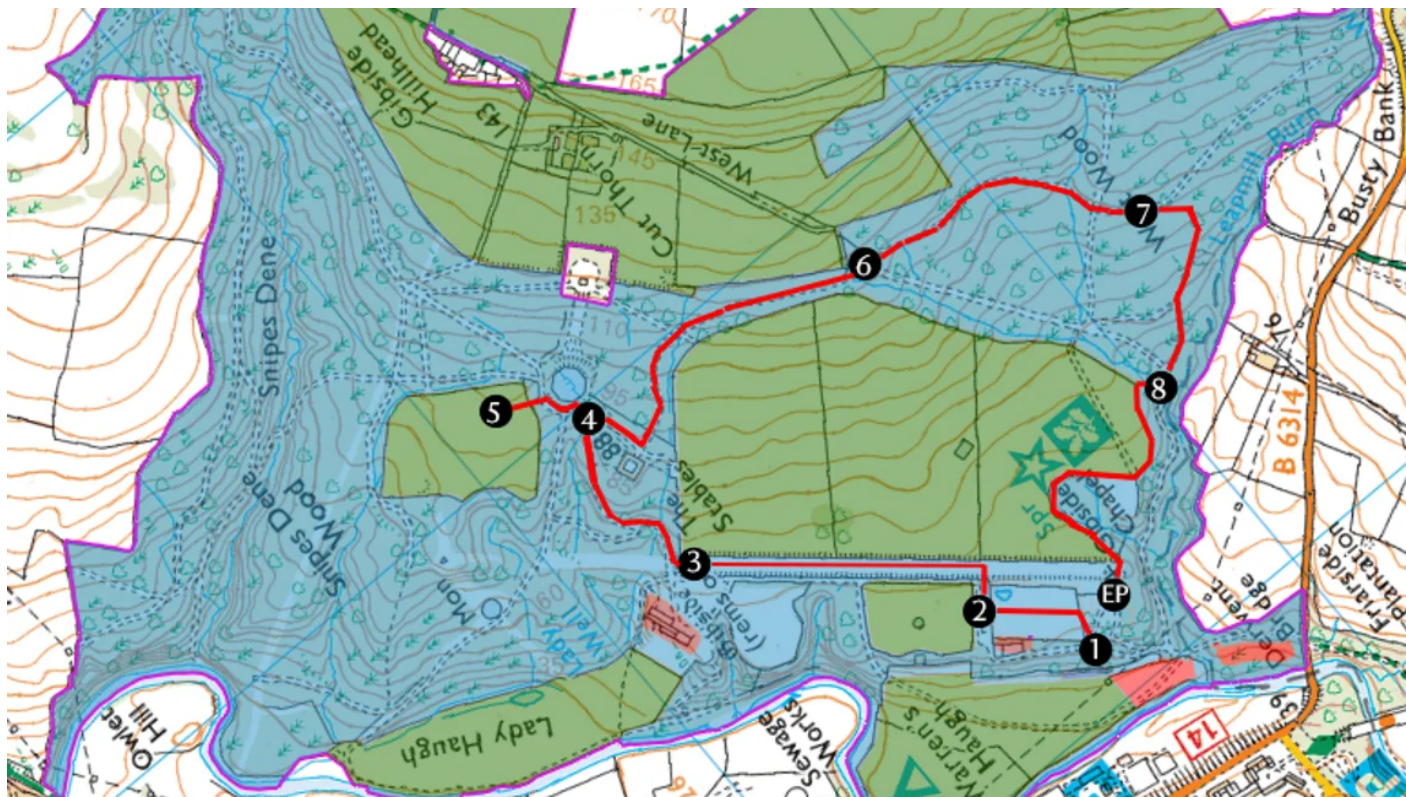


## NORTH EAST

# Explorer family-friendly trail at Gibside

Discover the fun side of Gibside with an action-packed circular walk finding family adventure highlights including the nature playscape, den-building area, the low ropes course and the Strawberry Castle play area.



## Information

Address: Market Place, Gibside, near Rowlands Gill, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear NE16 6BG. Grid ref: NZ171583.

OS map: Explorer 307

Activity: Walking

Easy: Roughly surfaced footpaths and tracks, no steps or stiles but some steep gradients. For further details, please see Terrain section.

Dog friendly: Keep your dog on a lead at all times – extendable leads are fine. Dogs can go inside or out at Market Place Café and Carriage House Coffee Shop. There is an off-lead area beside the Stables.

Full trail: Miles: 2.2 (km: 3.52)

Access: Easy

Duration: 1 hour - 2 hours 30 mins

## Terrain

This is a circular route of the West Woods starting and finishing at Market Place, passing all of Gibside's play areas, all on pushchair-accessible, roughly surfaced footpaths and tracks. There are no steps or stiles but there are some steep gradients in places along the route.

## Total steps: 8

Start point: Market Place, Gibside, NE16 6BG. Grid ref: NZ171583.

1. Find the start of the trail beside the estate map after ascending the wooden walkway. Go straight ahead with the Walled Garden wall on your left and the café straight ahead of you. At the doorway to the Walled Garden, take a left turn and head through the door. The path leads you straight through the middle of the garden, passing apple trees. The end of the path leads to large wooden gates.
2. Out of the Walled Garden turn right and head towards the Avenue and when you reach it, turn left. You have a couple of options here: walk along the road alongside the Avenue or head up the grassy slope, and walk along the Avenue itself. The road has a roughly surfaced path while the Avenue is grassy but flat and a nice place for kids to run, away from the road. Head along the Avenue, passing the ruin of the Orangery on your left, followed by some woodland and then Green Close (a large field with a mound in the middle). Continue with Green Close on your left, which leads to the ruin of the Hall. Head to the end of the Avenue and the road bears to the right.
3. Turn right at the end of the Avenue and start to wind your way up the hill between the yew trees. Watch out for any vehicles on this section as there are a few bends in the road. Keep heading up the hill until you emerge out of the trees, with a grassed lawn on your right, in front of the Stables. At the top of the hill at the junction, the Stables will be on the right but instead turn left for an adventure to the bird hide.
4. Head uphill, passing the Octagon pond and banqueting house to your right. Take in the scenery and stop to spot birds, newts and deer. As you continue up the hill, the path will bear right but on the left, you'll see an opening into the woodlands. Take this path and the bird hide will be on the left. Once you've watched the birds, retrace your steps back to the Stables.
5. Follow the road towards the Stables, then head up the hill away from the building. Follow the small incline to find the Nature Playscape on your right. Continue following the path, heading up into the woods.

6. Follow the road, if you look carefully you might spot a giant wooden bat hanging in the trees. Continue straight ahead, even when you reach a road junction, keeping on the level. You'll pass Gibside's den-building area on your right. As you head onwards into West Wood, you may see more wooden carved animals among the trees. The track continues straight ahead for about half a mile before a path junction marked by a fingerpost. If you miss it, you'll see a sign saying Forestry Access. There's no through route here, so turn around and find the junction that heads down the hill.
7. Head downhill through the woods on this roughly surfaced footpath. Less than a quarter of a mile down the hill, there is a path on the left-hand side, which leads to the low ropes course. Continue down the hill, crossing the road junction, and take a right up the hill into the woods leading you towards Strawberry Castle play area.
8. After a short, steep climb, following the path that bears left, you can see the play area ahead. Follow the path around the side of the field and enter Strawberry Castle play area. Once you've finished here, find the path to the right of the café cabin, and follow it round along the edge of the field. In the fields here you could see sheep from the farm. The path comes out at the end of the Avenue, behind the chapel and leads straight ahead back to Market Place.

End point: Market Place, Gibside, NE16 6BG. Grid ref: NZ171583.

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