

Bracken Hill Local Nature Reserve (LNR)

What is special?

The steep hill sides are covered in dark and mysterious woodland which drop to a slow running winding stream. Bracken Hill forms part of an extensive unspoilt wooded valley that offers a variety of woodland and grassland habitats. Part of the woodland is classed as 'ancient' and has existed in the valley prior to the 1600's. It is made up largely of ash, hawthorn, hazel and willow with some oak. Ancient woodland now covers less than 1% of County Durham.

The plants which grow under the tree canopy are usually only present in ancient woodland and indicate that the trees have been here for hundreds of years. These plants include wood anemone, dogs mercury, herb paris and wood sorrel.

There is a small piece of Magnesian Limestone grassland on the bank side adjacent to Shotton Lane. Even though the area is small, the rarity of this type of grassland makes it very important in the conservation of wild plants and animals.

The site is also home to fox, badger, squirrel and many species of woodland birds such as tawny owl and jay.

The meadow and grassland add considerable botanical value to this nature reserve.

[more info...](#)

Contact the Countryside Service

telephone: 0191 372 9100

email: countryside@durham.gov.uk

www.durham.gov.uk/countryside



Area: 37 acres (15 hectares)

Grid Reference: NZ 408 398

Map: Ordnance Survey Explorer 308

Directions: Approx 11 miles (17km) east of Durham City centre. Follow A19 north from Castle Eden for 1 mile. Just before the footbridge which crosses the A19, turn left onto Shotton Lane and follow signs for Bracken Hill Industrial Estate. At the T-junction, turn left into Whitehouse Way. Turn right at the 'Road Closed' sign where limited parking is available. Nearest postcode SR8 2RR



Parking: See above. Alternative parking is available in Bracken Hill Industrial Estate

Public transport: Service numbers 30 and 201 (Go Wear) to Bracken Hill Industrial Estate

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

Designation: Local Nature Reserve, UK Woodland Assurance Scheme certified, Local Wildlife Site, Ancient Woodland

Suitable for: Walkers

Habitats: Grassland, scrub, woodland

Whilst every effort has been made by Durham County Council to ensure accuracy of information, the Council cannot accept any liability resulting from omissions or inaccuracies.

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Accessibility statement

There are two main paths; one with a hard unsealed surface with some large stones, the other is of bare earth. Both paths are an average of 1.5m wide. There are a number of slopes and steps throughout the site and only those that are particularly steep are marked on the map. There are two narrow concrete bridges crossing the burn. The bare earth route may become muddy.

The site is primarily managed for wildlife and while you are welcome to walk here, the path through the western woodland is informal and sometimes difficult to negotiate.



Hazel



Ash



Tawny Owl



Herb Paris



Fox



Jay



Badger



Squirrel



Wood Sorrel



Wood Anemone

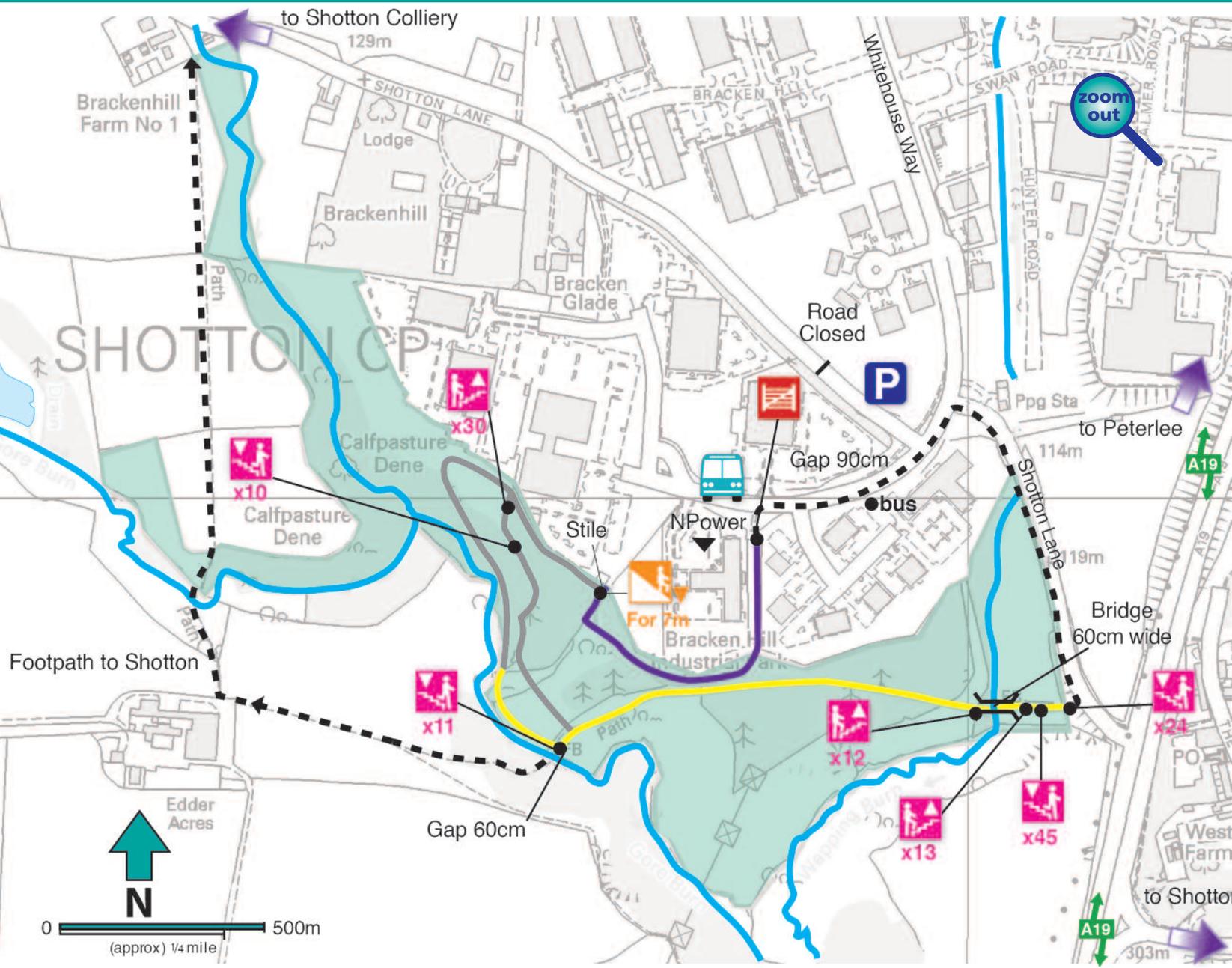
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KEY

- Steps Up
- Steps Down
- Gate
- Steep Slope Down 1:10-1:10
- Parking
- Bus Stop
- Bridge
- Road/Tarmac
- Hard Unsealed Surface
- Bare Earth
- Public Footpath

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