

Key points of interest

A) Hylton Castle

Hylton Castle was built by Sir William Hylton and dates from the late 14th or early 15th century. The Hylton family has long been associated with this part of Sunderland. They can be traced back to the Norman Conquest. The Castle has its very own ghost, the "Cauld Lad of Hylton". A young boy named Roger Skelton was said to have been murdered here in 1609 by Lord Robert Hylton.

B) First World War Army Camp

During the First World War an Army Camp was set up in the grounds of the Castle. At one stage the Camp was home to the Sherwood Foresters, which included Sunderland AFC star player Charlie Buchan among their ranks.

C) Hylton Dene fishing pond

The pond was created in 1995 with regeneration money from Castletown Regeneration Programme. The pond is stocked with 7 species of course fish and a favourite of many local anglers. The lake is also used for environmental activities affording local schools an opportunity to bring children to pond dip and identify marshland flora and fauna.

D) Wildflower Meadow

This steep slope cut between the regenerating scrub was where local families brought their cattle into the dene to access its water.

E) Hylton Dene

The Castle resides in an area of parkland called Hylton Dene. The Dene is a local nature reserve and is dominated by mature woodlands. Part

of the woodland is designated Ancient Semi-Natural woodland. In the days of the Hylton family this woodland would have been managed by the family to provide wild boar and venison.

F) 16th-17th Building

Evidence of a large building dating from the late Elizabethan period was discovered here in 1994 as part of Channel 4's Time Team excavation.

G) St Catherine's Chapel

A chapel dedicated to St Catherine of Alexandria is known to have existed on the site since 1157. Nothing remains of the first chapel and the ruins seen today date from the 15th century. In the 1840s the Castle's chapel functioned as a boarding school under Reverend John Wood. His most famous pupil was Joseph Wilson Swan, inventor of the incandescent electric lamp. The castle and chapel have been Grade I listed buildings since 1949 and form a Scheduled Ancient Monument under the care of English Heritage.

Facilities & Accessibility:

Toilets: Bunny Hill
Customer Service Centre

Catering: Café at Bunny Hill
Customer Service Centre

Parking: Hylton Castle Car Park
(free)

Accessibility: The walk in most parts is suitable for assisted wheelchair use and pushchairs. Some parts of the walk include steps/hills, however alternative routes can be taken.

Heritage Trails North Area

Walk 9

Hylton Castle and Dene Circular

Walk Distance & Time:

1.4 miles or 2.2km

30 mins (approx)

Start and Finish Point:

Hylton Castle
North Hylton

Walk 9

Hylton Castle and Dene Circular



Walk Directions

At the car park take the path to the right, cutting through the children's play area. The wooded area to the left was the site of the First World War Army Camp.

Pass through the gate on to the roadside path and up the bank passing the stream on the left.

Take the next left onto the tarmac path and stay on this to the junction.

At the junction take the path to the left down the bank.

Do not go down the steps but continue on the path veering to the right up the bank, follow this until it brings you up to a road.

At the road turn left and head down the bank until reaching a set of steps on the left.

Go down the steps and follow the path to the left and around the Hylton Dene fishing pond. Stay on this path, passing the red signs and the marsh area on the left, and the steep wildflower meadow to the right.

Take the next path on the right up a steep set of steps. At the top, do not turn left or right but go up the bank on to an open field.

Take the path to the right that skirts the field and follow this back to the castle, passing the site of the former 16th/17th century building and St. Catherine's Chapel.