

7 Half way through field

The salmon quickened her pace. She swam past smaller fish, that she would have eaten in the sea but she was not interested. Returning salmon do not feed once they have entered the river. The young man quickened his pace too. He fingered the St. John's- wort for courage. He rubbed mint on his hands from the allotments that were once here to disguise their smell.



Crouch down close to the water...how good are you at seeing below the surface? Shoals of small fish are probably minnows.

Walk to the stony area at the end of the field and stop before the bridge.



8 Stony Field End

They both journeyed to the small waterfall, where the salmon made a final thrust through the fast flowing water. The man watched her start to thrash her tail making a redd (depression) in the gravel to lay her eggs. Cock salmon swarmed around her, their hooked jaws threatening each other. The young man watched fascinated as one male took his place beside her and they quivered the length of their bodies as she laid her eggs and he fertilized them.

As the daylight faded, he watched the life drain out of her exhausted body. It drifted towards him. The young man entered the river and gently lifted out the dead fish.

Make a sculpture or tower out of stones on the river's edge to celebrate something you have noticed today.

**Continue through the field to the road and climb the stile.
Turn left at the road and left over the railway.
Notice the lime kilns in front of you.**

9 The Road to Harehope Quarry

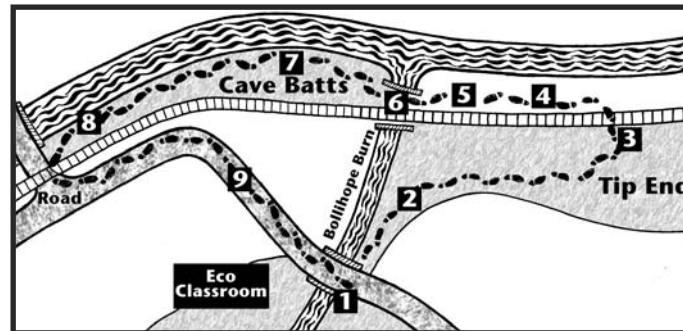
He walked up the lane to a quiet place under larch trees. As he admired the fish, and the huge distance she had travelled, he felt a hard object in her stomach. He carefully cut her open. Inside lay a ring...of course, the answer to the riddle:

"What has neither beginning nor end and encircles blood, flesh and bone?"

He recognised the family crest with a tiny carving of a leaping salmon. This was the long lost family ring. He could now claim his family right to fish and care for the river. He slipped it on his finger, the inscription read: ***'As one journey ends another begins'***. He kicked his heels and walked on. He had found his true wealth.



What memory will you take back from this walk?



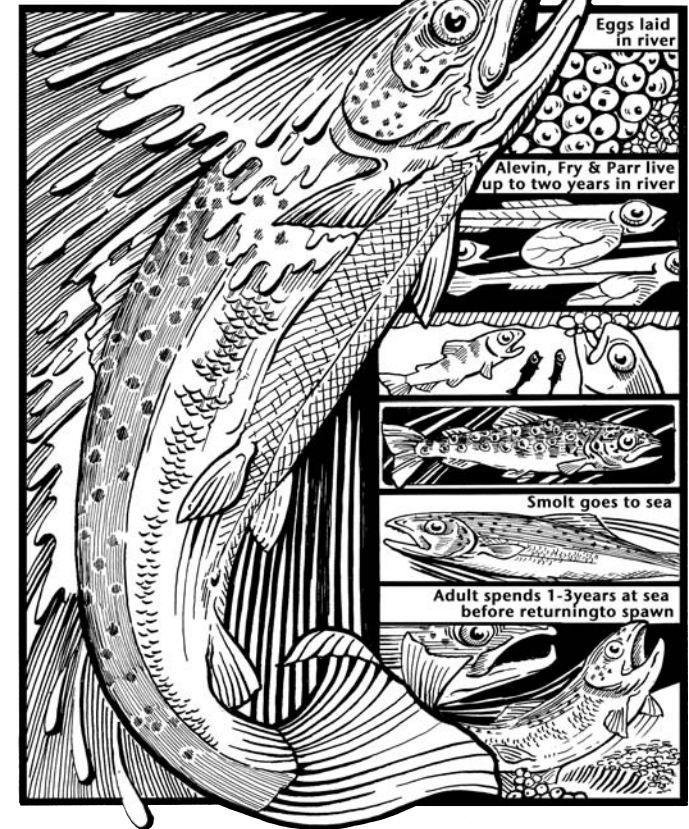
Tonks Family Fund



The Mineral Valleys Project
Working for Wear Life & Landscapes
Led by Natural England and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund
Devised & written by Malcolm Green
Designed & Illustrated by www.davidhallartist.co.uk

the Salmon's Return

A circular walk that starts at the bridge over Bollihope Burn, just beyond the gates into Harehope Quarry



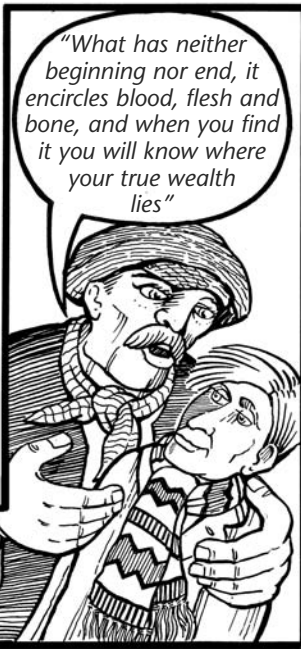
Salmon start returning from the long ocean migration in late summer to spawn in the Wear and the Bollihope in November and December



This walk tells a story, which weaves together a young man's quest with a salmon's journey. It lasts about an hour

1 The bridge

A young man had worked in the quarry for ten years, since his father died...and all that time his father's last words had puzzled him. They were a riddle: "What has neither beginning nor end, it encircles blood, flesh and bone, and when you find it you will know where your true wealth lies?" One night he had a dream of a salmon calling him. Being sure this must be a clue to the riddle, he left the quarry and headed down to the river.



Can you work out the riddle? Trace your eyes up the burn, salmon swim up here to spawn.

When you have crossed the bridge turn left. After passing the barn on your right, take the left hand path up the hill to the meadow.



2 The meadow

At the meadow, he got on his belly and wriggled through the long grass. He breathed in the smell and noticed the flowers that his mother used in her medicines: eyebright, St. John's-wort, yarrow, agrimony. His dream had made him uneasy and he picked a St John's-wort, for protection.

Get down on your hands and knees or lower and see what you can see or smell in the grass. A lot of the flowers here have medicinal properties.

Continue across the meadow and where the path forks, walk down the slope to the bottom of the wood

3 The wood...

He walked with a poacher's silence. He noticed the diggings of animals enjoying the loose soil of the old quarry tipping. He crept off beside the old ash tree and crouched there in silence. Eddie the shot firer had brought him here some years before to poach delicious sea trout. They had left the shot-drilling machine running slowly at the quarry to fool their bosses. But this time he wasn't going back.



Sit under the big ash tree on your right and listen to the sounds. Imagine a 100 years ago, when this ash was a sapling men were tipping quarry spoil here. Crush a leaf of a meadowsweet plant growing here. What can you smell?

Continue through the kissing gate and across the railway track and turn left.



4 By river over the railway

A train moved slowly past with its cargo of limestone, heading for the lime kilns. The young man remembered his dream of the mighty hen salmon, with a torn dorsal fin, who had called to him from the depths of the river. He dipped his hands into the water and wondered if she was there. But he did not find the huge fish lying silently under a stone. She smelt him but did not stir.

Remember a time that you set out on a long journey.

Follow the path upstream along the river.

5 Multi-trunked sycamore

The salmon traced the shadow of the young man as he walked. She too was on a journey. She hatched in this river and had lived here for two years until she was just 18cms long. One day she had turned and swam out to sea, venturing as far as Greenland, where for two years she ate the plentiful food. She grew to over a metre long. She was one of the few of her clan to survive, but only just as her dorsal fin was torn in a narrow escape with a seal.



Continue along the path to the bridge.



6 Bollihope Bridge

The young man peered into the flowing water. Gradually he began to see the silent shapes of large salmon swimming upstream, guided by the particular scent of this river, back to their 'home', where they would spawn and then die. He turned and looked towards the wide river Wear. A huge fish, with a torn fin leaped out of the water. It was the salmon of his dreams. He followed it as she swam upstream.

You are standing over the Bollihope Burn that you crossed earlier. Look into the water and allow yourself to daydream

Go through the gate over the bridge. Turn right to follow the path along the river.