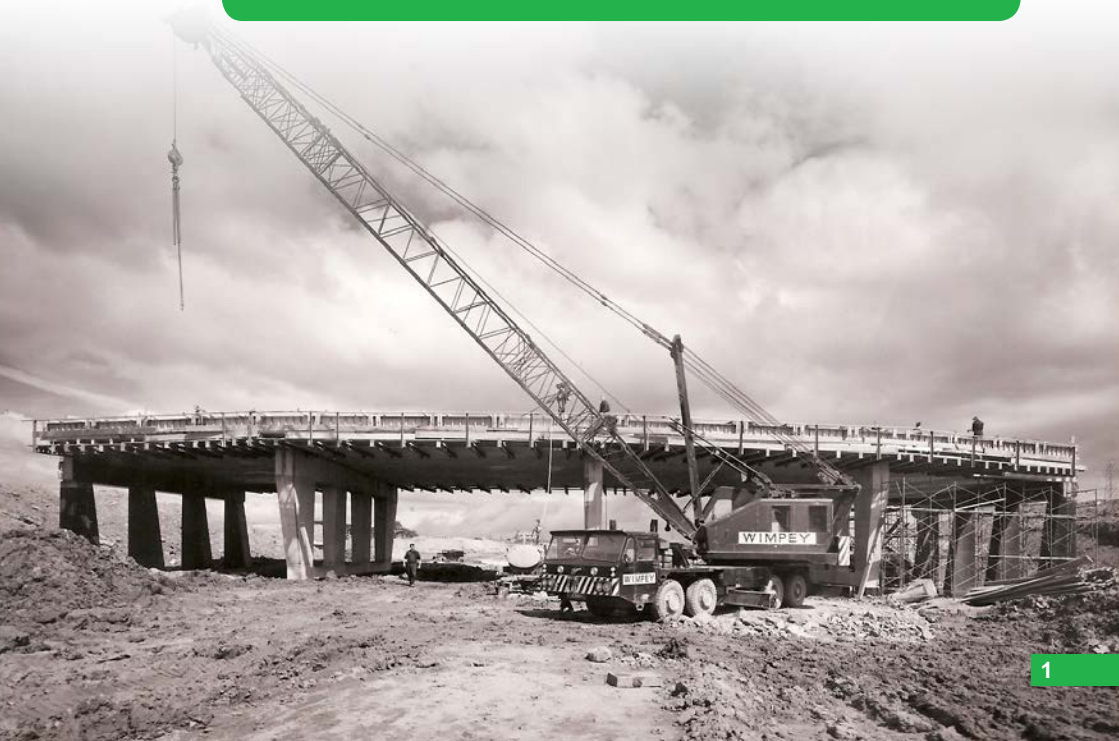


# A189 South East Northumberland Spine Road

The A189 South East Northumberland Spine Road is a good example of a road constructed to promote the regeneration of a whole area through greatly improved road access. Construction started in the late 1960s and early 1970s, although upgrading of the northern end was carried out in the 1990s.



## Building the Spine Road

North of urban Tyne and Wear, the A189 is often referred to as simply the Spine Road. It is a good example of a road which was constructed to promote regeneration of a whole area by greatly improving road access to Tyneside and the A1 and A19 trunk roads.

Construction of the Spine Road was undertaken in stages in the late 1960s and 1970s to facilitate regeneration of the historic coalfield area of South East Northumberland, which by this time was suffering from pit closures and loss of employment. The emphasis was on attracting new employment to the area and the Spine Road was an essential part of the regeneration by providing improved road access to the towns of Ashington, Blyth, including its port, and Newbiggin, as well as serving the then growing new town at Cramlington and other smaller communities in the area.

It was constructed on a “green field” alignment to mainly dual carriageway standards and with grade separated junctions. However at the northern end it was initially built to single carriageway standard which included the bridge across the River Wansbeck.

The A189 now carries in excess of 30,000 vehicles per day – more than the A1 north of Morpeth – and is one of the most heavily trafficked roads in the County. Since the early 1990s, Northumberland County Council has undertaken a £12 million four year programme to upgrade the northern end of the Spine Road, so that now the whole length between Woodhorn Roundabout and the A19 trunk road is now to dual carriageway standard.

The final part of this upgrading programme was completed in March 1998 with the provision of a second carriageway from the Sleekburn junction to north of the River Wansbeck. These works included a second bridge over the River Wansbeck at North Seaton alongside the one constructed in the 1970s.

The scheme included a cycleway/footway as part of a strategy to create an inter-urban cycle network in the south east of Northumberland. The scheme was carried out by a partnership approach between the County Council and contractors Balfour Beatty.

*Thanks to Malcolm Smith, CIHT North Eastern Branch, for preparing this article.*

**If you enjoyed this article, try also:**

*'The Newcastle Central Motorway East and Other Plans'*

*'The Tyne Tunnels'*

*'The A1 Trunk Road'*

*'The A19 Trunk Road'*

