NORTH PENNINES
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The North Pennines is one of England's most special places - a peaceful, unspoilt landscape with a rich history and vibrant natural beauty. It was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1988. The AONB is also a UNESCO Global Geopark.

An excellent way of exploring the North Pennines is by bike. This leaflet describes four routes of various lengths that can be started from Middleton-in-Teesdale where you'll find parking, toilets and refreshments.

Three other leaflets in this series highlight routes starting from Aycliffe, Aycliffe Town and Stanhope.

The four routes are designed as a series of mainly circular routes starting from Middleton-in-Teesdale and linking into the National Byway.

The terrain in the North Pennines means that it is impossible to avoid some climbs. There are steep hills on some and moderate uphill sections on all of the routes. The routes are designed for reasonably fit people who are used to cycling. They are generally not suitable for children.

The National Byway

The National Byway has been designed as Britain's heritage cycling route. It is a signed route on quiet country lanes linking places of interest. More information from www.thenationalbyway.org or call 01636 636818.

The ROUTES

The four routes are as follows:

Route 1
Start at Middleton-in-Teesdale. The route heads north, crossing the River Tees. The route is gently undulating with good views of the countryside.

Route 2
The route follows the River Tees and then branches off to the north. The route is suitable for all ages and abilities.

Route 3
This route is more challenging and is suitable for more experienced cyclists.

Route 4
This route is the most challenging of the four routes and is suitable for experienced cyclists.

Things to see along the way

Shaped by history
The area is shaped by a long history of farming, lead mining and quarrying. Traditional management means that Teesdale is still awash with flower-rich hay meadows. The whitewashed farm buildings of the Raby estate at its eastern edge. As you ride the route you'll see lots of mine entrances, associated buildings and "hushes". Coldberry Gutter at the top of the valley is a fine example of a hush but other smaller ones can also be seen throughout the area. Water was dammed and then released in a torrent, removing soil and rocks, to expose lead veins on the surface that could then be worked. These V-shaped landscape features are still easily spotted in the landscape.

Water sources
Routes 1 and 2 will take you around the reservoirs of Baldersdale and Lune Dale. The need for water in the growing towns of Middleton and Stockton led to the construction of the first reservoir at Huryn in Baldersdale in the 1880s. Baldersdale Reservoir followed 10 years later, whilst Grassholme in Lune Dale was completed by 1914. The continued growth in the demand for water brought about the building of the larger Balderhead and Selside Reservoirs at the head of each valley in the 1960s. The reservoirs are now important not only as sources of water but also for leisure activities and wildlife conservation.

Hannah's home
Low Birk Hat on the Blackton Reservoir (Route 2) is the former home of Hannah Hauxwell. Hannah lived alone for many years at this isolated farm without running water or electricity. She became famous in a Yorkshire TV documentary in the early 1970s.

Full of character
Middleton, Rollingpark and Cotherstone are all attractive agricultural villages worth exploring for their pubs, churches and village greens. Romaldkirk still has its village stocks!

Good Cycling Code...

Please follow this simple code to ensure enjoyable riding and the safety of others.

- Obey the rules of the road
- Follow the Highway Code
- Be courteous
- Give way to pedestrians and horse riders. Don't assume they can see or hear you
- Don't expect to travel quickly on shared use cycle paths
- Ring a bell or call out to warn of your approach. A knowledge of people who give way
- Respect the life and work of the countryside
- Care for the environment
- Can you cycle the whole of your journey or reach the start by public transport?

Cycling routes for experienced cyclists

Follow the Highway Code
Tell someone where you are going and when you will be back.

Look after yourself
- Take care at junctions, when cycling downhill and on loose or wet surfaces
- Carry food, repair kit, map, spare clothing and waterproofs
- Tell someone where you’re going and when you’ll get back
- Keep your bike well-maintained
- Consider wearing a helmet and bright clothing

Thank you for cycling!

MIDDLETON
THINGS TO SEE
along the way

Hannah's Meadow and Barn
Nature reserve looked after by Durham Wildlife Trust. An exhibition in the barn explores what makes the meadow such a fascinating place.
Tel: 0191 5843934
Grassholme Visitor Centre
Teasroom (weekends only)
Northumbria Water.
Tel: 01833 641121

ACCOMMODATION
A wide range of accommodation is available in the North Pennines, including hotels, guesthouses, farmhouse B&Bs, self-catering cottages, caravan and camping sites and group accommodation.

For further information:
- Contact Middleton-in-Teesdale Tourist Information Centre on 01833 641001.
- Call 01388 528801 and request a North Pennines Discovery Guide (inc. accomm. listing).
- Ask for a County Durham Holiday Guide - Tel: 0191 3833334.
- Call the YHA on 01629 823850 and ask about ‘Camping Barns’.

REFRESHMENTS
AND FACILITIES

REFRESHMENTS
There are various pubs, restaurants and tearooms in Middleton-in-Teesdale, Middlestone, Eggleston, Romaldkirk and Cotherstone.

TOILETS
You’ll find public toilets in Middleton-in-Teesdale.

CONTACTS
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