

# County Durham Countryside Directory for People with Disabilities

*Second edition*

Whatever your needs, access to and enjoyment of the countryside is rewarding, healthy and great fun. This directory can help you find out what opportunities are available to you in your area. Get yourself outdoors and enjoy all the benefits that come with it...

Foreword written by Tony Blair



Co-financed by



This directory was designed for people with a disability, though the information included will be useful to everyone.

The Land of the Prince Bishops has some of the most stunning landscapes in Britain. From its high Pennine moorland in the west to the limestone cliffs of its North Sea coastline in the east, County Durham boasts an impressive variety of landscape for you to explore. Upper Teesdale, in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is home to England's highest waterfall, High Force. At Barnard Castle, on the banks of the Tees, you can explore the romantic ruins which gave the town its name, as well as the sumptuous Bowes Museum and the medieval Raby Castle with its majestic deer park.

For people interested in wildlife and conservation there is much that can be done from home or a local accessible area. Whatever your chosen form of countryside recreation, whether it's joining a group, doing voluntary work, or getting yourself out into the countryside on your own, we hope you will get as much out of it as we do.

There is still some way to go before we have a properly accessible countryside. By contacting Open Country or another of the organisations listed here, you can help to encourage better access for all in the future.



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# Foreword



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA  
[www.pm.gov.uk](http://www.pm.gov.uk)

THE PRIME MINISTER

I am delighted to give my support to Open Country's Countryside Directory for Durham.

As those of us lucky enough to be brought up in the county already know, it is a beautiful place with varied and breath-taking scenery – one of Britain's great undiscovered secrets.

With the information and ideas in this imaginative guide, many more people – abled and disabled – can enjoy Durham's wonderful countryside and wildlife.

I wish Open Country every success with this guide and some great days out to all who use it.

*Tony Blair*

February 2007

# Using the Directory

Throughout the Directory you will see some symbols. These are to help you see what kind of facilities or information is available. Please also contact individual places to ask what they can offer people with disabilities.

## Key:



Blue Badge parking is available



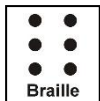
A wheelchair accessible toilet is available  
*(Changing Places facilities at venues have also been included, see [www.changing-places.org](http://www.changing-places.org) for a full list)*



Scooters / wheelchairs are available for loan



Large print leaflets are available



A Braille guide is available

County Durham covers a large geographical area; it borders Tyne and Wear to the north east, Northumberland to the north, Cumbria to the west and North Yorkshire and Teesside to the south.



# Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Walking &amp; Outings</b>	<b>1</b>
	Breakfree	2
	Walking Clubs & Contacts	3
	Easy Going Walks	5
	Outings	10
<b>2.</b>	<b>Sports &amp; Outdoor Pursuits</b>	<b>18</b>
	Sports Clubs & Contacts	19
	Outdoor Pursuits	20
	Cycling	25
	Fishing	30
	Horse Riding	33
<b>3.</b>	<b>Wildlife &amp; Conservation</b>	<b>34</b>
	Wildlife Clubs & Organisations	35
	Accessible Wildlife Watching	38
<b>4.</b>	<b>Volunteering</b>	<b>42</b>
	Volunteering Contacts & Advice	43
	Volunteering in the Countryside	44
	Countryside Employment	46
<b>5.</b>	<b>Useful Information</b>	<b>47</b>
	Community & Public Transport	48
	RADAR, Blue Badge & Wheelchair Hire	51
	Tourist Information	73
	Disability Links	53
	The Countryside Code	54
	<b>The Funders &amp; Authors</b>	<b>55</b>

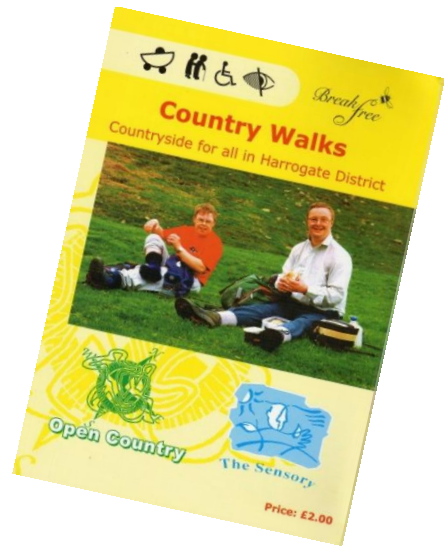
## **1. Walking & Outings**

Breakfree	2
Walking Clubs & Contacts	3
Easy Going Walks	5
Outings	10



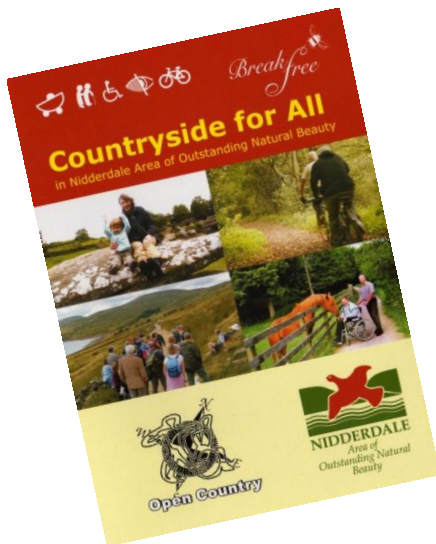


Open Country have produced four *Breakfree* packs for Harrogate District, Nidderdale AONB and Wharfedale (web-based).



Great for short walks, nature trails, children, cycles and people with disabilities.

The packs have clear, colour maps for each place, with all the information you need to help plan your day.



*Call Open Country on 01423 507227 and we will gladly post them to you.*

***Breakfree: get healthy and discover your local green space!***

# Walking Clubs & Contacts

## **General Contacts**

### **Disabled Ramblers**

[www.disabledramblers.co.uk](http://www.disabledramblers.co.uk)

The Disabled Ramblers help mobility-challenged people get back out into the countryside. Able-bodied helpers are welcome to support members and to help with loading scooters and other jobs. About 30 rambles are run each year across England and Wales – mostly from March to October. They ramble in all weathers and over a variety of terrain. The rambles are graded according to difficulty; some are suitable for shopping buggies and power chairs, whilst others need larger scooters capable of travelling over rough ground.

### **Ramblers Association**

Tel: 020 7339 8500

Email: [ramblers@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:ramblers@ramblers.org.uk)

[www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)

Britain's walking charity, working to safeguard the footpaths, the countryside and other places people go walking, and to encourage more people to take up walking. They provide information and publications and promote walking for all throughout England, Wales and Scotland. There are several local groups across County Durham; each group has its own programme with walks ranging from easy to strenuous. You can search for a group near you on their website.

### **Walking for Health**

Tel: 020 7339 8541

Email: [walkingforhealth@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:walkingforhealth@ramblers.org.uk)

[www.walkingforhealth.org.uk](http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk)

Walking for Health encourages more people to become physically active in their local communities. They support the largest network of health walk schemes across England, offering regular, short, easy group walks with trained walk leaders that are free and accessible to all. Walks take place in the local community, lasting between 30 and 60 minutes, mainly on level ground and are led by trained volunteer walk leaders. There are many walks in County Durham; some are wheelchair accessible.





# Walking Clubs & Contacts

## **Local Contacts**

### **Durham Council Guided Walks**

Tel: 03000 264 589 (Countryside Service)  
[www.durham.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.durham.gov.uk/countryside)

Durham County Council's Guided Walks programme operates throughout the year and is an excellent way of exploring the County on foot in the company of experts. They range from short walks for beginners to those which offer more of a challenge. The programme also contains countryside events suitable for all the family. They are published seasonally and can be found on the website address above.

### **Journey**

13 Tees Walk, Bishop Auckland, DL14 8JZ (main office)  
Tel: 01388 612160  
[www.journeyenterprises.co.uk](http://www.journeyenterprises.co.uk)  
Email: [maggie.leadbeater@journeyenterprises.co.uk](mailto:maggie.leadbeater@journeyenterprises.co.uk)

A charity supporting adults with learning disabilities and additional needs. They run a rambling group from their Coundon hub exploring the local countryside and learning about flora and fauna.

### **Walk Durham**

Contact: Durham County Council Culture and Sport  
Tel: 03000 266 555  
[www.durham.gov.uk/walkdurham](http://www.durham.gov.uk/walkdurham)



A programme of short, guided walks operating across County Durham, designed for people to make their first steps in improving their wellbeing or simply to help maintain a healthy lifestyle. All the walks are free and guided by trained walk leaders. The walks range from 30 to 90 minutes long and are accessible to all.

### **Wolsingham Wayfarers**

Email: [wolsinghamwayfarers@gmail.com](mailto:wolsinghamwayfarers@gmail.com)  
[www.wolsinghamwayfarers.co.uk](http://www.wolsinghamwayfarers.co.uk)

A community organisation that looks after and promotes the 140 miles of footpaths around Wolsingham. They host free monthly guided walks, a great way to discover pathways and make new friends. For gentle, shorter, easy to moderate walks, join them on the last Thursday of the month. The walks start at Wolsingham Market Place at 10.00am.



# Easy Going Walks

Please note that paths are subject to natural erosion and their quality may vary over time, though maintenance of the paths should be ongoing. Please ring your local council's Access Officer or Open Country if you would like to report or comment on any accessible paths.

## **Picnic Sites**

Tel: 03000 264 589 (Countryside Service)  
Email: [countryside@durham.gov.uk](mailto:countryside@durham.gov.uk)  
[www.durham.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.durham.gov.uk/countryside)

Enjoy your sandwiches in wonderful surroundings! Durham County Council have detailed information on six picnic areas, ideal for short walks; some even feature historic remains.

## **Railway Paths**

Tel: 03000 264 589 (Countryside Service)  
Email: [countryside@durham.gov.uk](mailto:countryside@durham.gov.uk)  
[www.durham.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.durham.gov.uk/countryside)

Durham's railway paths, former railway lines, are attractive countryside routes that can be used by walkers and runners, wheelchair users, horse-riders and cyclists. The council has detailed information on each route including maps and accessibility.

## **Walks**

### **Easington Colliery**

Crawlane Avenue, off the B1283, SR8 3QW

Easington Colliery, on the Durham Heritage Coast has a one mile circular route with spectacular coastal views that is suitable for pushchairs and wheelchair users.

### **Baldersdale Hay Meadow Walk**

Contact: North Pennines AONB Partnership  
Approach from Romaldkirk or Cotherstone on the B6277  
Tel: 01388 528801  
[www.northpennines.org.uk](http://www.northpennines.org.uk)



This 3½ mile walk in Baldersdale visits some of the most spectacular hay meadows in the North Pennines. It also passes close to Hury reservoir, a popular site for over-wintering wildfowl such as mallard, teal, tufted duck and goosander. The best time to see the flowers is between April and August. Much of the route is along quiet, level country lanes and these sections are suitable for people with limited mobility, including wheelchair users, however, the return route from Willoughby Hall to Fiddler House, crosses rough pastureland and meadows via a series of

## Easy Going Walks

gates and stiles, so those with limited mobility should retrace their steps at this point. There are accessible toilets at the northern end of the Hury Reservoir dam. A walk leaflet can be downloaded from the website above.

### **Burnhope Reservoir**

Contact: Northumbrian Water  
A couple of miles west of Ireshopeburn  
Tel: 0845 604 7468 (Head Office)  
[www.nwl.co.uk](http://www.nwl.co.uk)

Situated in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are toilet facilities and a disabled access public footpath that follows the north shore of the reservoir.

### **Cow Green Reservoir**

Contact: Northumbrian Water  
About 3 miles from Langdon Beck off the B6277  
Tel: 0845 604 7468 (Head Office)  
[www.nwl.co.uk](http://www.nwl.co.uk)

Four miles on smooth tarmac with a long slope. From Wheelhead Sike car park, walk back along the road for a short distance, and you will see signs for the wheelchair path, running parallel to the reservoir. A very exposed site – dress warmly! Car park, but no toilets.

### **Derwent Reservoir**

[www.northpennines.org.uk](http://www.northpennines.org.uk)



North East of the B6278 Consett to Stanhope road. 'B' roads encircle the entire reservoir. Derwent lies within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and, after Kielder, is the second largest reservoir in the region. There are five seasonal recreational areas with car parks, picnic sites and toilets around this reservoir, of which Pow Hill Country Park and Carricks are operated in conjunction with Durham County Council. A range of excellent views of Derwent can be seen from a number of roadside vantage points including the lay-bys on the Edmundbyers to Blanchland road. Permissive footpaths enable access to most areas of the site. A wheelchair accessible trail runs from the south end of the dam along to Pow Hill Country Park (see page 8) and from the north shore of the dam wall to Millshield picnic site. See page 31 for details of fishing at the reservoir.

### **Flatts Wood**

Access via the end of Raby Avenue, Barnard Castle, DL12 8AJ

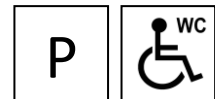
Some wheelchair access along a hard woodland track, with some steep slopes, it can get muddy in wet weather. Accessible toilets in Morrisons car park on Galgate (RADAR key required).

# Easy Going Walks



## Hamsterley Forest

Contact: Forestry Commission  
Redford Lane, Nr Bedburn, DL13 3NL  
Tel: 01388 488312  
Email: [enquiries.hamsterley@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.hamsterley@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)  
[www.forestryengland.uk/hamsterley-forest](http://www.forestryengland.uk/hamsterley-forest)



A 2000-hectare woodland oasis situated in the Durham Dales. The 1.5 mile 'Riverside Trail' starts from the notice board at the main forest car park, and runs beside Bedburn Beck to Low Redford. This route is accessible to wheelchair users for the first  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile. The path is level with a hard surface. There are a number of benches and wheelchair accessible picnic tables en-route. Currently, the return route for unassisted wheelchair users is to either retrace your steps back along the trail or follow the Forest Drive back from Low Redford car park to the visitor centre. If you have assistance or have a motorised wheelchair there is the option to complete the circular 1.5 mile route, but this involves crossing the Forest Drive and negotiating a short but steep incline onto forest tracks surfaced with looser gravel. The last section to the visitor centre has a downhill gradient.

## Hudeshope Beck Walk

King's Walk, Middleton in Teesdale, DL12 0RN

Two miles along a quiet no-through road which has a smooth, mainly flat tarmac surface. There are several flat, grassy areas to get down to the beck. Nearest accessible toilets by Hill Terrace in Middleton-in-Teesdale (RADAR key required).

# Easy Going Walks

## Pow Hill Country Park

Contact: Durham County Council Countryside Service  
Edmundbyers, Consett, DH8 9NU  
Tel: 03000 264 589  
Email: [countryside@durham.gov.uk](mailto:countryside@durham.gov.uk)  
[www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk)



Off the B6306 between Edmundbyers and Blanchland. A moorland country park on the banks of Derwent Reservoir. From the free car park, there is a multi-user path suitable for cyclists, walkers, wheelchairs and pushchairs. Along the route there are hand-powered listening posts where you can discover information about the route and local area. A self-guided trail leaflet is available to download from the North Pennines website: [www.northpennines.org.uk](http://www.northpennines.org.uk) or you can call them for a paper copy on 01388 528801. There are accessible toilet facilities at nearby Edmundbyers (on The Closes) and at the reservoir visitor centre where there is also a small shop where you can buy refreshments.

## Stanhope Riverside Walk

Durham Dales Centre, Castle Gardens, Stanhope, DL13 2FJ  
Tel: 01388 527650



1 mile circular walk on tarmac, with a short slope leading to a level riverside path. Start the walk at the Durham Dales Centre, which has parking and an accessible toilet.

## Tunstall Reservoir

Contact: Northumbrian Water  
Leazes Lane, north of Wolsingham, Bishop Auckland  
Tel: 0845 604 7468 (Head Office)  
[www.nwl.co.uk](http://www.nwl.co.uk)



Within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The east shoreline lies within Backstone Bank and Baal Hill Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest. Two miles along a smooth no-through road by the edge of Tunstall Reservoir. The first part is level, and the second is gently hilly. There is an accessible portaloo and picnic area at the car park.

## Waldrige Fell Country Park

Waldrige, Chester-le-Street, DH2 3RY  
Contact: Durham County Council Countryside Service  
Tel: 03000 264 589  
Email: [countryside@durham.gov.uk](mailto:countryside@durham.gov.uk)  
[www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk)



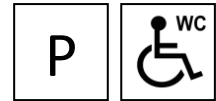
Waldrige Fell has two Easy Access routes - a circular route around North Fell and a linear route linking Tinkler Row and Ellen Street car parks. They have a hard sealed surface and are gently undulating with a few slopes,

# Easy Going Walks

with seats at regular intervals. Nearest accessible toilet is in the car park off Wesley Terrace, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3EJ.

## **Wolsingham Family Walk**

Email: [wolsinghamwayfarers@gmail.com](mailto:wolsinghamwayfarers@gmail.com)  
[www.wolsinghamwayfarers.co.uk](http://www.wolsinghamwayfarers.co.uk)



A 1.5 mile circular route around Wolsingham and along the River Wear and Waskerly Beck on wheelchair accessible paths. The surface varies from crushed stone and tarmac to concrete and paving slabs. There is parking at the recreation field (off the A689 Stanhope Road) and also at Demesne Mill Picnic Site (off the B6296 Angate Street). Accessible toilets are situated at the junction of market town and Angate Street. A walk leaflet is available from Wolsingham Wayfarers; see website above.

## **Open Access**

Tel: 0300 060 2091 (Open Access Contact Centre)  
Email: [openaccess@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:openaccess@naturalengland.org.uk)  
[www.gov.uk/right-of-way-open-access-land/use-your-right-to-roam](http://www.gov.uk/right-of-way-open-access-land/use-your-right-to-roam)

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW), the public can walk freely on mapped areas of mountain, moor, heath, downland and registered common land without having to stick to paths. The right of open access includes using a wheelchair or mobility scooter. Clearly, most areas will not be very accessible, but you can view the CRoW maps for further information, or give the Contact Centre a call. Access land is shown on the newer OS maps with the symbol to the right:



## **Permissive Access**

Tel: 0300 060 1114 (Environmental Stewardship Permissive Access Team)  
<http://cwr.naturalengland.org.uk>

Increasingly, permissive rights of access are created under the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) farm conservation schemes. On their website you can find details and maps of more than 1,800 walks and rides and areas of open access, though only a small proportion have access for all. Printed copies are held by some councils. These rights of access are often only for a few years. Currently there is only one site in County Durham that is listed as easy access:

Cowbyer Farm, near Consett



# Outings

## **Contacts**

### **Dunelm Phab**

Durham Day Break Centre, Abbey Road, Durham, DH1 5DQ

Tel: 0191 3875822

Email: [dunelmphab@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:dunelmphab@hotmail.co.uk)

[www.dunelm.phab.org.uk](http://www.dunelm.phab.org.uk)

There are seven Phab clubs in County Durham, whose activities and age groups vary from club to club. Some clubs have breaks away each year.

### **Jolly Holidays**

Tel: 01277 355565

Email: [enquiries@jollydaysholidays.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@jollydaysholidays.co.uk)

[www.jollydaysholidays.co.uk](http://www.jollydaysholidays.co.uk)

Provides supported holidays for adults with mild to moderate learning disabilities in the UK and abroad. They offer activities to suit everyone. Some of the holidays are fully wheelchair accessible.

### **Trio Supported Holidays**

Tel: 07908 8135917 / 07788713369

Email: [holidaystrio@gmail.com](mailto:holidaystrio@gmail.com)

[www.triosupportedholidays.co.uk](http://www.triosupportedholidays.co.uk)

Trio Supported Holidays are provided with experienced individuals specialised in giving support and friendship to adults who may require extra support to enjoy holidays they may find difficult to experience through the mainstream holiday outlets. They aim to provide full inclusion throughout.



# Outings

## Auckland Castle

Market Place, Bishop Auckland, DL14 7NR

Tel: 01388 743 750

Email: [enquiries@aucklandproject.org](mailto:enquiries@aucklandproject.org)

[www.aucklandcastle.org](http://www.aucklandcastle.org)



For the last 800 years, this has been the Prince Bishop's country residence. Parking is available at North Bondgate car park in Bishop Auckland, which is a five minute walk away (less mobile visitors can be dropped off by the entrance). Wheelchair access to St. Peter's Chapel and the ground floor. For the upstairs State Rooms a lift for wheelchair users is being installed. Wheelchairs available for loan, please call in advance to book. The main garden areas are flat and the deer park has a gravelled access via the castle driveway. The park itself has undulating topography, but nothing that is too hilly or challenging. At the time of writing the castle has limited opening hours due to major conservation work taking place, though the grounds are open year-round – please contact them before you visit to avoid disappointment.

## Barnard Castle

Scar Top, Barnard Castle, DL12 8PR

Tel: 01833 638212

[www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/barnard-castle](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/barnard-castle)



Imposing Norman stronghold, now extensive ruins standing high above the River Tees. Wheelchair access to most of the site, albeit on fairly smooth grass and compacted gravel paths. A fully accessible sensory garden is situated within the Town Ward of the Castle. The fragrant flowers and shrubs together with tactile objects and original sculpture provide an all-year round experience. The nearest parking is in the town centre, but visitors with limited mobility can be dropped off at the entrance. Please check the opening times before you visit as they vary throughout the year.

## Beamish Museum

Beamish, County Durham, DH9 0RG

Tel: 0191 370 4000

Email: [museum@beamish.org.uk](mailto:museum@beamish.org.uk)

[www.beamish.org.uk](http://www.beamish.org.uk)



This award-winning museum magically transports you back to Northern life in the early 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Free accessible parking is to the left of the Entrance Building. A 300 acre open air site, with some steep gradients, a degree of personal mobility is required to board the museum transport, though there is an accessible bus which can carry up to four manual wheelchairs, but not larger mobility scooters. Some exhibits are fully accessible to wheelchair users and there are multiple accessible

## Outings

toilets across the site. Induction loops, audio visual aids and photo files available. Essential carers admitted for free. Wheelchairs available to loan on a first come, first served basis, though they can be reserved in advance.

### **Binchester Roman Fort**

Binchester, Bishop Auckland, DL14 8DJ

Tel: 01388 663089

Email: [archaeology@durham.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@durham.gov.uk)

[www.durham.gov.uk/binchester](http://www.durham.gov.uk/binchester)



The remains of part of the Roman fort of Vinovia, including the commanding officer's house, the best-preserved Roman military bath house in Britain, and a stretch of Dere Street. Good wheelchair access, including to the bath house and hypocaust. Seasonal opening.

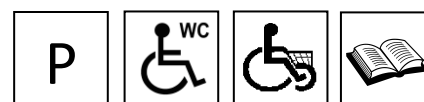
### **The Bowes Museum**

Newgate, Barnard Castle, DL12 8NP

Tel: 01833 690606

Email: [info@thebowesmuseum.org.uk](mailto:info@thebowesmuseum.org.uk)

[www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk](http://www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk)



Magnificent French-style chateau set in 23 acres of parkland with a parterre garden. World class visitor attraction with an outstanding collection of art, ceramics and textiles. Blue Badge bays near to the accessible entrance to the rear of the museum building. Induction loop facilities in the education room and reception. Wheelchair access to shop and refreshment area, and to most rooms of the museum; a lift is available to the upper floors. Most of the gardens allow wheelchair access, with assistance, although some paths may pose difficulties in places. Free entry for essential carers.

### **Broom House Farm**

Witton Gilbert, Durham, DH7 6TR

Tel: 0191 371 9697

Email: [broomhousedurham@btinternet.com](mailto:broomhousedurham@btinternet.com)

[www.broomhousedurham.co.uk](http://www.broomhousedurham.co.uk)



Farm and coffee shop with a forest adventure park and woodland challenge. The coffee shop has accessible toilets and Blue Badge parking. Wheelchair access around forest when dry.

### **Durham Dales Centre**

Castle Gardens, Stanhope, DL13 2FJ

Tel: 01388 527650

Email: [durham.dales.centre@durham.gov.uk](mailto:durham.dales.centre@durham.gov.uk)

[www.durhamdalescentre.co.uk](http://www.durhamdalescentre.co.uk)



## Outings

Visitor Centre in Weardale with craft and gift shops, Tourist Information, tea room, garden and sculptured children's animal trail. Occasional events. Free admission. Provides lots of information about events and things to do in the Durham Dales. See *Easy Going Walks* - page 8. It is worth popping along to the adjacent St Thomas' Church, where in the graveyard, there is a remarkable fossilised tree that is over 250 million years old. You can download a leaflet from the North Pennines AONB Partnership website; a large print and Braille version is also available:

Tel: 01388 528801 [www.northpennines.org.uk](http://www.northpennines.org.uk)

### **Chester-le-Street Riverside Park**

Ropery Lane, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3PL  
Tel: 03000 266 447



The park includes a play area, splash pool, visitor centre, gardens and a riverside walk. The park and visitor centre are fully accessible, with level tarmac paths.

### **Durham University Botanic Garden**

Hollingside Lane, South Road, Durham, DH1 3TN  
Tel: 0191 334 2887  
Email: [botanic.bookings@durham.ac.uk](mailto:botanic.bookings@durham.ac.uk)  
[www.dur.ac.uk/botanic.garden](http://www.dur.ac.uk/botanic.garden)



25 acres of botanical gardens set in countryside and mature woodland. Wheelchair access to Prince Bishops garden, the glasshouses and the visitor centre. The paths to the rest of the garden are generally good, but are quite steep in parts and some are not suitable for wheelchairs.

### **Eggleston Hall Gardens**

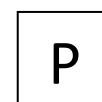
Eggleston, Barnard Castle, DL12 0AG  
Tel: 01833 230230  
Email: [info@egglestonhallgardens.co.uk](mailto:info@egglestonhallgardens.co.uk)  
[www.egglestonhallgardens.co.uk](http://www.egglestonhallgardens.co.uk)



Established gardens growing many species of plants amidst lovely countryside. Wheelchair access to about two thirds of the site, including garden shop and tearoom/gift shop.

### **Finchale Priory**

Finchale Avenue, Framwellgate Moor, Durham, DH1 5SH  
Tel: 0370 333 1181  
Email: [customers@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:customers@english-heritage.org.uk)  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)



13<sup>th</sup> century Benedictine Priory by the River Wear. Built around the tomb of St. Godric who lived there in a hermitage until he was 105! Seasonal

## Outings

opening. Toilets not wheelchair accessible. Free admission. Parking available on private land near to the site, but disabled visitors can be driven to and collected from the main entrance. Ramped entrance is wide enough for some wheelchairs. Most parts of church and cloisters accessible with care and assistance, but there are steps to the refectory and kitchen.

### Hall Hill Farm

Lanchester, Durham, DH7 0TA

Tel: 01388 731333

Email: [info@hallhillfarm.co.uk](mailto:info@hallhillfarm.co.uk)

[www.hallhillfarm.co.uk](http://www.hallhillfarm.co.uk)



Family fun set in attractive countryside with the chance to see and touch animals at close quarters. Farm trailer ride, gift shop, tearoom, picnic and play area. Seasonal opening. Level wheelchair access to many of the areas, but there are steps in places and a grass surface to some of the paddocks. The site has a refreshment area, shop and accessible toilets, including a *Changing Places* toilet. Manual wheelchair loan; which can be booked in advance. A large print daily events leaflet is available. Essential carers admitted free.

### Hamsterley Forest

Contact: Forestry Commission

Redford Lane, Nr Bedburn, DL13 3NL

Tel: 01388 488312

Email: [enquiries.hamsterley@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.hamsterley@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

[www.forestryengland.uk/hamsterley-forest](http://www.forestryengland.uk/hamsterley-forest)



A 2000-hectare woodland oasis situated in the Durham Dales. Blue Badge parking near the visitor centre; charges apply. The visitor centre houses displays on forest wildlife and management. There is also a small gift shop, tearoom and play park (accessible to wheelchairs and pushchairs). It is also the starting point for a scenic 4 mile forest drive that runs through the heart of the forest, giving access to the numerous picnic sites along the way. See *Easy Going Walks* – page 7 for more details.

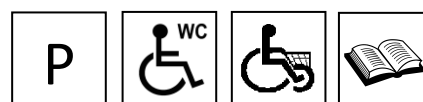
### Hardwick Hall Country Park

Sedgefield, TS21 2EH

Tel: 03000 262 899

Email: [hardwickpark@durham.gov.uk](mailto:hardwickpark@durham.gov.uk)

[www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk)



An 18<sup>th</sup> century landscaped garden, with the remains of several follies and the Serpentine Lake. Level wheelchair access around the park, including the lakeside paths. Many seats and benches provided. Shop, café and visitor centre on site, with events taking place throughout the year. There

# Outings

is a portable hearing loop system in the visitor centre.

## Herrington Country Park

Houghton-le-Spring, Tyne and Wear, DH4 7EL



Although just outside County Durham, this large park has many walks and cycle trails, as well as a play area, lake and sculptures. There are tarmac paths down to the lake and gravel paths elsewhere in the park.

## High Force Waterfall

Forest-in-Teesdale, Barnard Castle, DL12 0XH

Tel: 01833 622209

Email: [highforce@rabycastle.com](mailto:highforce@rabycastle.com)

[www.highforcewaterfall.com](http://www.highforcewaterfall.com)



On the B6277. With its spectacular drop of 70 feet, High Force is reputed to be the highest unbroken fall of water in England. The woodland path from the main road to the Falls is approximately ½ mile long down a gradual incline of approximately 1 in 10 via a gravel footpath; manual wheelchair users may need a strong pusher to assist. There are several benches along the approach to the waterfall to rest on with steps leading down to the river's edge but the falls can be viewed from the platform at the top. Accessible toilet between the car park and gift shop.

## Killhope - The North of England Lead Mining Museum

Cowshill, Upper Weardale, County Durham, DL13 1AR

Tel: 01388 537505

Email: [info@killhope.org.uk](mailto:info@killhope.org.uk)

[www.killhope.org.uk](http://www.killhope.org.uk)



Killhope explores the life of North Pennine lead mining families.

Wheelchair access to large parts of the site, including the visitor centre with exhibition, shop and café. The lead mine and most of the woodland walk are not accessible to wheelchair users and other less mobile visitors. Seasonal opening.

## Locomotion

Dale Road Industrial Estate, Shildon, DL4 2RE

Tel: 01388 777999

Email: [info@locomotion.org.uk](mailto:info@locomotion.org.uk)

[www.nrm.org.uk](http://www.nrm.org.uk)



Celebrates Shildon's history as one of the World's oldest railway towns. Displays of over 60 vehicles. Children's play area, café, free admission. Museum is fully wheelchair accessible, however part of the large museum site is open air so visitors will need to use outdoor footpaths to view all of the buildings. Wheelchair loan available – visitors are advised to book in advance.



# Outings

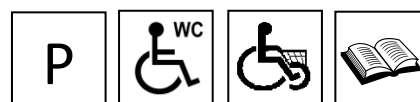
## Raby Castle, Park & Gardens

Staindrop, DL2 3AH

Tel: 01833 660202

Email: [admin@rabycastle.com](mailto:admin@rabycastle.com)

[www.rabycastle.com](http://www.rabycastle.com)



The medieval castle, home of Lord Barnard's family since 1626, includes a 200-acre deer park, walled gardens, carriage collection, adventure playground, shop and tearoom. Wheelchair access, with assistance, to some of the ground floor. DVD interpretation with option of subtitles available. Coach and carriage collection, tearooms and gift shop wheelchair accessible. Gardens accessible with assistance (gravel paths). Blue Badge parking available near to the castle, disabled visitors can also be driven to and collected from the main entrance – ask at the pay box. Wheelchair loan available (first come, first served, though you can book in advance). Seasonal opening.

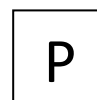
## Rokeby Park

Rokeby, near Barnard Castle, DL12 9RZ

Tel: 01833 695692

Email: [enquiries@rokebypark.com](mailto:enquiries@rokebypark.com)

[www.rokebypark.com](http://www.rokebypark.com)



Palladian-style country house. Wheelchair access to ground floor only (main rooms upstairs). Disabled visitors can be driven to and collected from the entrance. There is a large toilet on the ground floor, though not fully accessible as it has no hand rails. Seasonal opening.

## Tanfield Railway

Old Marley Hill, Gateshead, NE16 5ET

Tel: 07508 092365 (Tues & Thurs Only)

Email: [info@tanfield-railway.co.uk](mailto:info@tanfield-railway.co.uk)

[www.tanfield-railway.co.uk](http://www.tanfield-railway.co.uk)



Oldest existing railway in the world, opened in 1725. Wheelchair access to station and shed area, and to some trains with assistance. Open year round, mainly Sunday service - ring for train times.

## Thorpe Farm Centre

Greta Bridge, Barnard Castle, DL12 9TY

Tel: 01833 627242

Email: [info@thorpefarm.co.uk](mailto:info@thorpefarm.co.uk)

[www.thorpefarm.co.uk](http://www.thorpefarm.co.uk)



Farm shop, café, restaurant, gift shop, picnic area, adventure playground and Wetheriggs Animal Rescue Centre. No designated Blue Badge parking, but plenty of space to park.

# Outings

## Weardale Museum and High House Chapel

Hotts, Ireshopeburn, Bishop Auckland, DL13 1HD

Tel: 01388 517433

Email: [dtheatherington@ormail.co.uk](mailto:dtheatherington@ormail.co.uk)

[www.weardalemuseum.co.uk](http://www.weardalemuseum.co.uk)



High House Chapel is the oldest Methodist chapel in the world in continuous weekly use, since 1760. The adjoining folk museum houses a Wesley room, 1870 Cottage room, local history and collection of mineral displays. Wheelchair access to two downstairs rooms, chapel and shop. Upstairs displays can be viewed on a downstairs computer and stewards will, where possible, bring items downstairs. Parking available by courtesy of the Weardale Inn (50 yards), but people with disabilities may park on site.

## Weardale Railway

Stanhope Station, Station Road, Stanhope,

Bishop Auckland, DL13 2YS

Tel: 01388 526203 ext 1

Email: [marketing@weardale-railway.org.uk](mailto:marketing@weardale-railway.org.uk)

[www.weardale-railway.org.uk](http://www.weardale-railway.org.uk)



Set in the Durham Dales, the Weardale Railway runs for 5¼ miles beside the River Wear between Stanhope, Frosterley and Wolsingham. A ramp is available for wheelchair access to the train at all stations. Accessible toilet at Stanhope station only, which has a well-stocked shop and café. Please contact them to confirm accurate opening times/timetable.

## Whitworth Hall Country Park

Stanners Lane, Spennymoor, DL16 7QX

Tel: 01388 811772

Email: [enquiries@whitworthhall.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@whitworthhall.co.uk)

[www.bw-whitworthhall.co.uk](http://www.bw-whitworthhall.co.uk)



Historic parkland with resident deer, ornamental lake, Victorian walled garden, children's playground and Grade II listed building. The estate belonged to the Shafto family from the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century and was home to the Durham MP Robert Shafto, 'Bonny Bobbie Shafto'. Wheelchair access, with assistance, around the grounds. No tarmac paths in the grounds but they are mainly flat and will be suitable for wheelchairs in the summer months.

### **2. Sports & Outdoor Pursuits**

Sports Clubs & Contacts	19
Outdoor Pursuits	20
Cycling	25
Fishing	30
Horse Riding	33

## Sports Clubs & Contacts

### **British Blind Sport**

Tel: 01926 424247

Email: [info@britishblindsport.org.uk](mailto:info@britishblindsport.org.uk)

[www.britishblindsport.org.uk](http://www.britishblindsport.org.uk)

Enables visually impaired people to have the same opportunities as sighted people to access and enjoy sport and recreational activities in the UK.

### **Durham Area Disability Leisure Group**

Vane Tempest Hall, Maynards Row, Gilesgate, Durham, DH1 1QF

Tel: 07592 366454

[www.dadlg.org](http://www.dadlg.org)

Email: [dadlg08@googlemail.com](mailto:dadlg08@googlemail.com)

Aims to provide sports, leisure and social opportunities for children and young people with disabilities living within Durham and surrounding areas.

### **English Federation of Disability Sports**

Tel: 01509 227750

[www.efds.co.uk](http://www.efds.co.uk)

Works to make active lives possible for people with disabilities, with the vision that disabled people are active for life.

### **Parasport**

Tel: 020 7842 5789

Email: [info@parasport.org.uk](mailto:info@parasport.org.uk)

[www.parasport.org.uk](http://www.parasport.org.uk)

Provides information about disability sporting opportunities and clubs in your local area.

### **Wheelpower – British Wheelchair Sport**

Tel: 01296 395995

Email: [info@wheelpower.org.uk](mailto:info@wheelpower.org.uk)

[www.wheelpower.org.uk](http://www.wheelpower.org.uk)

Dedicated to providing opportunities for disabled people to live healthy active lifestyles.

### **UK Deaf Sport**

Tel: 01905 746031

Email: [office@ukds.org.uk](mailto:office@ukds.org.uk)

[www.ukdeafsport.org.uk](http://www.ukdeafsport.org.uk)

Aims to help deaf people to participate, enjoy and excel at sport.

# Outdoor Pursuits

## **Aerial Sports & Activities**

### **Aerobility**

Tel: 0303 303 1230

Email: [info@aerobility.com](mailto:info@aerobility.com)

[www.aerobility.com](http://www.aerobility.com)

A registered charity founded in 1993 offering disabled people the opportunity to fly an aeroplane.

### **Flyability**

Tel: 0116 289 4316 (BHPA office)

Email: [contact@flyability.org.uk](mailto:contact@flyability.org.uk)

[www.flyability.org.uk](http://www.flyability.org.uk)

Flyability is the disability initiative of the British Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association (BHPA) and strives to motivate disabled people to become involved in the sport of hang gliding and paragliding and to train as pilots.

### **The Frank Morgan School of Flying**

13a Hall Way, Humberside International Airport, Kirmington,  
North Lincolnshire, DN39 6YH

Tel: 01652 688859 / 07891 219954

Email: [info@flyatfranks.org](mailto:info@flyatfranks.org)

[www.flyatfranks.org](http://www.flyatfranks.org)

Lessons and one-off flights available for disabled people depending on the type of disability; ring to discuss your needs. The toilets and club house are fully accessible.

### **Skydive Academy**

Peterlee Parachute Centre, Shotton Airfield, Shotton Colliery, DH6 2NH

Tel: 0191 517 1234

Email: [info@skydiveacademy.org.uk](mailto:info@skydiveacademy.org.uk)

Ever fancy skydiving or parachuting? Contact the Skydive Academy to discuss options for people with disabilities.

## **Archery**

### **Durham City Archers**

[www.durhamcityarchers.org](http://www.durhamcityarchers.org)

A friendly archery club based in Durham City. They will do everything they can to get you shooting and enjoying archery no matter what your ability or age.

# Outdoor Pursuits

## **East Durham Archers**

[www.eastdurhamarchers.com](http://www.eastdurhamarchers.com)

A family orientated club based in Peterlee, with members who shoot both for pleasure and competition. The club is suitable for people of most ages and abilities.

## **Green Lane Disabled and Able Bodied Archers**

Email: [beginners@greenlanearchers.com](mailto:beginners@greenlanearchers.com)

[www.greenlanearchers.com](http://www.greenlanearchers.com)

A club based in Northumberland that cater for all abilities and bow styles. They shoot on a Saturday afternoon; during the summer at Ashington Rugby Club and moving indoors during the winter to Newbiggin Sports Centre.

## **Norton Archers**

Norton Sports Charity, Station Road, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees, TS20 1PE.

Email: [secretary@nortonarchers.co.uk](mailto:secretary@nortonarchers.co.uk)

[www.nortonarchers.co.uk](http://www.nortonarchers.co.uk)

Norton Archers is a friendly, dynamic club on Teesside with members who shoot for both pleasure and competition. Their coaches have had training to help adapt the standard shooting style for a range of disabilities, including visual impairments and spinal injuries.

## **Camping & Caravanning**

### **Caravan Sitefinder**

[www.caravansitefinder.co.uk](http://www.caravansitefinder.co.uk)

You can search for accessible caravan sites and campsites across the UK.

### **Pitchup.com**

[www.pitchup.com](http://www.pitchup.com)

The website has information and tips on camping with a disability and enables you to search for accessible campsites and holiday parks.

## **Canals & River Cruises**

### **Prince Bishop River Cruiser (Durham River Trip)**

The Boat House, Elvet Bridge, Durham, DH1 3AF

Tel: 0191 386 9525

[www.princebishoprc.co.uk](http://www.princebishoprc.co.uk)

Regular summer sailings from Durham city centre. Wheelchair access to



## Outdoor Pursuits

open air upper deck and saloons. The commentary includes history, natural history and geography. Disabled visitors can be driven to and collected from the boat. The on-board toilet is not accessible; the nearest accessible toilet is at the adjacent Prince Bishops Shopping Centre.

### **Skipton & Craven Action for Disability (SCAD)**

46/48 Newmarket Street, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 2JB

Tel: 01756 701005

Email: [info@scad.org.uk](mailto:info@scad.org.uk)

[www.scad.org.uk](http://www.scad.org.uk)

Their canal cruiser, 'SCAD's Endeavour' has been purpose built for people with disabilities, and is based at Skipton on the Leeds & Liverpool canal. Can accommodate up to 12 people including four wheelchair users. Accessible toilet onboard, as well as tea and coffee making facilities. The boat is crewed by a friendly, helpful group of volunteers.

### **Caving**

#### **Ingleborough Cave**

Clapham, LA2 8EE

Tel: 01524 251242

Email: [info@ingleboroughcave.co.uk](mailto:info@ingleboroughcave.co.uk)

[www.ingleboroughcave.co.uk](http://www.ingleboroughcave.co.uk)

Fairly accessible, although some parts are steep and/or narrow. Scooters are not admitted on safety grounds. **Manual wheelchair users should ring in advance as a risk assessment may be required** (in this case please contact Open Country for a copy of ours on 01423 507227). Guided tours leave on the hour from the cave shop. At least a 30-minute walk to the cave entrance, though it is possible to drive up by arrangement. Note: on the way up, there is a raised hump that is hard to negotiate in low floor buses. Nearest accessible toilets at the National Park's car park in Clapham Village (RADAR key required). Entry charge. Open daily March to October, weekends in winter.

### **Climbing**

#### **ROF59 Activity Centre**

Durham Way South, Aycliffe Business Park, DL5 6XN

Tel: 01325 728 222

Email: [hello@rof59.co.uk](mailto:hello@rof59.co.uk)

[www.rof59.co.uk](http://www.rof59.co.uk)

An activity centre with restaurant and bar in the heart of Aycliffe Business Park. There is an indoor bouldering and climbing area for people of all ages and abilities. Accessible toilet facilities.

# Outdoor Pursuits

## **Orienteering**

### **British Orienteering**

Tel: 01629 583037

Email: [info@britishorienteering.org.uk](mailto:info@britishorienteering.org.uk)

[www.britishorienteering.org.uk](http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk)

Orienteering is an exciting and challenging outdoor sport that exercises mind and body. The aim is to navigate between control points marked on an orienteering map. As a recreational activity, it doesn't matter how young, old or fit you are, as you can make progress at your own pace on the courses planned to suit you. Orienteering can take place anywhere from remote forest and countryside to urban parks and playgrounds. You can use the website to search for permanent orienteering courses and events near to you. The site also provides information on TrailO, a form of orienteering competition where people of all levels of physical ability, including wheelchair users, can compete on equal terms.

## **Swimming**

### **Stanhope Swimming Pool**

Castle Park, Stanhope, County Durham, DL13 2LY

Tel: 01388 528466

Email: [info@stanhopepool.co.uk](mailto:info@stanhopepool.co.uk)

[www.stanhopehosting.co.uk/pool](http://www.stanhopehosting.co.uk/pool)

Enjoy outdoor swimming in a 25-metre heated swimming pool, with spring board, water slide and toddler's pool, café and shop. Wheelchair access throughout, including changing cubicles and toilets. Seasonal opening.

## **Water Sports**

### **British Rowing**

Tel: 020 8237 6700

Email: [info@britishrowing.org](mailto:info@britishrowing.org)

[www.britishrowing.org](http://www.britishrowing.org)

The governing body for the sport of rowing. Their website has information on adaptive rowing for people with disabilities.

### **Derwent Reservoir Sailing Club**

Blanchland, Consett, DH8 9PT

Tel: 01434 675033

Email: [info@drsc.co.uk](mailto:info@drsc.co.uk)

[www.drsc.co.uk](http://www.drsc.co.uk)

## Outdoor Pursuits

The club has several boats which are suitable for use by people with physical disabilities, either accompanied or alone. They also have a personnel hoist for access in and out of the boat. See *Easy Going Walks* – page 6.

### **Gateshead Community Rowing Club**

[www.gatesheadrowing.com](http://www.gatesheadrowing.com)

The rowing club welcomes rowers of all ages and abilities, and also have adapted boats and equipment for rowers with disabilities and impairments. You can contact them via their website.

### **Outdoor Centres**

#### **Carlton Lodge Outdoor Centre**

Carlton Miniott, Thirsk, YO7 4NJ

Tel: 01845 522145

Email: [info@nyy.org.uk](mailto:info@nyy.org.uk)

[www.carltonlodge.org.uk](http://www.carltonlodge.org.uk)

#### **Low Mill Outdoor Centre**

Station Road, Askrigg, Leyburn, DL8 3HZ

Tel: 01969 650432

Email: [info@lowmill.com](mailto:info@lowmill.com)

[www.lowmill.com](http://www.lowmill.com)

#### **Moor House Adventure Centre**

Moor House Adventure Centre, Houghton le Spring, DH4 6QY

Tel: 0191 584 1703

Email: [info@moor-house.org.uk](mailto:info@moor-house.org.uk)

[www.moor-house.org.uk](http://www.moor-house.org.uk)

#### **The Calvert Trust**

[www.calvert-trust.org.uk](http://www.calvert-trust.org.uk)

The Calvert Trust runs three outdoor pursuits centres for people with disabilities from 12 years upwards:

- **Calvert Trust Keswick** Tel: 01768 772255
- **Calvert Trust Kielder** Tel: 01434 250232
- **Calvert Trust Exmoor** Tel: 01598 763221

# Cycling

## **Clubs & Contacts**

### **Bikeability**

Email: [contactus@bikeability.org.uk](mailto:contactus@bikeability.org.uk)

[www.bikeability.org.uk](http://www.bikeability.org.uk)

Bikeability is 'cycling proficiency' for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, giving everyone the skills and confidence for all kinds of cycling. You can search their website to find a Bikeability Cycle Trainer near to you.

### **British Cycling (Breeze Rides for Women)**

[www.letsride.co.uk/breeze](http://www.letsride.co.uk/breeze)

British Cycling's Breeze programme organise guided cycle rides for women from 3 to 30 miles. All ages and abilities are welcome.



### **Durham County Council**

Email: [activetravel@durham.gov.uk](mailto:activetravel@durham.gov.uk)

[www.durham.gov.uk/cycling](http://www.durham.gov.uk/cycling)

The council has information on where to cycle in County Durham, whether you're a commuter, cycle for leisure or you're visiting the area. You can download maps and routes off their website or contact them for hard copies.

## **Gateway Wheelers**

The Old Rectory, The Broadway, Houghton-le-Spring, DH4 4BB

Tel: 0791 3905422

Email: [officegatewaywheelers@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:officegatewaywheelers@yahoo.co.uk)

[www.gatewaywheelers.org.uk](http://www.gatewaywheelers.org.uk)

A small cycling club for disabled people of all ages that provides cycling facilities, events, time trials and competitions.

## **National Bike Week**

Email: [hq@bikeweek.org.uk](mailto:hq@bikeweek.org.uk)

[www.bikeweek.org.uk](http://www.bikeweek.org.uk)

Bike Week brings together cyclists for events and a celebration of cycling all around the country. Contact the National Help Line above to find out what is happening local to you.

## **North Pennines AONB Partnership**

Tel: 01388 528801

Email: [info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk](mailto:info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)

[www.northpennines.org.uk](http://www.northpennines.org.uk)

The area has some of the country's best cycling, quiet country roads and a range of traffic-free routes. You can download maps and routes from their website.

## **Sustrans**

Tel: 0117 926 8893 (Head Office) / 0191 261 6160 (North East)

Email: [reception@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:reception@sustrans.org.uk)

[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

Sustrans works on practical projects to encourage more people to walk and cycle. They also produce information on the National Cycle Network and have many maps and cycle routes available to download or purchase.

## **Tandem Club**

Contact: Disabilities Liaison Officer

Tel: 01732 848432

Email: [disabilities@tandem-club.org.uk](mailto:disabilities@tandem-club.org.uk)

[www.tandem-club.org.uk](http://www.tandem-club.org.uk)

The club can help with questions relating to disabled and visually impaired tandem riding. It cannot offer tandems for loan but can advise on groups who do. People with disabilities are welcome as members and to participate in Club activities. They produce a bi-monthly talking journal on CD for visually impaired people.

# Cycle Routes

The following are some of the longest, best-surfaced and most enjoyable traffic-free routes that we know of in County Durham. Most of them are at least partly accessible to wheelchair users and are part of the National Cycle Network. Maps and information for the railway paths can be downloaded from Durham County Council's website, or ring their Countryside Service for more details: Tel: 03000 264 589

## **Auckland Way**

Spennymoor to Bishop Auckland, 4½ miles

OS Explorer map 305

[www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk)

The eastern end starts off Rosa Street, Spennymoor, DL16 7NA, the western end starts at the Auckland Way car park near the roundabout, off the A688 near Bishop Auckland, DL14 7GF (rough postcode). The route follows the line which once ran between Byers Green and Bishop Auckland prior to closing in 1939. Provides fine views over the Wear Valley. Links to the Brandon to Bishop Auckland path (below).

## **Brandon to Bishop Auckland**

Durham to Bishop Auckland, 9½ miles.

OS Explorer maps 305 and 308

[www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk)

Start at Broompark Picnic Area, ½ mile from Stonebridge on the B6302 road to Ushaw Moor. The line was built mainly to carry coal and coke and closed to passenger traffic in 1964. There are links to the Deerness Valley, and Lanchester Valley cycle routes.

## **Consett and Sunderland Railway Path**

OS Explorer maps 307 and 308

Tel: Sustrans (Stanley Office) 01207 281259

[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk) and [www.c2c-guide.co.uk](http://www.c2c-guide.co.uk)

This 23-mile path is well surfaced and accessible for wheelchair users (special arrangements are made for motorised wheelchairs) and others with restricted mobility. There are no toilets. This pathway forms an integral part of the C2C route, which stretches across the country. On the route around Stanley there are several sculptures, which are constructed from materials that reflect the recent industrial history of the area. This route is part of the National Cycle Network Route 7. About nine miles of the route is in Derwentside running from Lydgett's junction, in Consett, to Beamish. The Stanley to Sunderland section must be one of the easiest on the whole C2C route; apart from one minor climb at Cox Green, it's downhill (or at least flat) all the way. This allows ample time to view the change in the landscape from the rolling hills around Beamish to the new town of Washington and the industrial landscape of Sunderland.



# Cycle Routes

## **Deerness Valley**

Durham to Stanley, Crook, 8 miles.

OS Explorer maps 305, 307, 308

Start at Broompark Picnic Area, ½ mile from Stonebridge on the B6302 road to Ushaw Moor. The path follows the route of the river Deerness through a mixture of arable and grazing land, woods and herb rich meadows.

## **Derwent Walk Railway Path**

Lydgetts Junction car park (southern end), Consett, off the A692

OS Explorer map 307 and 317

[www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk)

12 miles, part of the National Cycle Network Route 14 and C2C cycle route. The route winds down the picturesque Derwent Valley from Lydgetts Junction, Consett to Swalwell, Gateshead via Rowlands Gill. It runs through the Derwent Walk Country Park, where it passes Ebchester with its Roman Fort. The National Trusts Gibside property lies a short ride from this route. Look out for the huge metal carriages, once used to carry 50 tons of molten iron.

## **Hamsterley Forest**

OS Explorer map OL31

Redford Lane, Nr Bedburn, DL13 3NL

Tel: 01388 488312

Email: [enquiries.hamsterley@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.hamsterley@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

[www.forestryengland.uk/hamsterley-forest](http://www.forestryengland.uk/hamsterley-forest)

A 2000 hectare forest with 33 miles of way-marked trails, managed by the Forestry Commission. There are different cycle routes catering for all ability levels, from short family routes on relatively wide, flat tracks, to more demanding routes suitable for experienced mountain bikers. Cycle hire facilities available. See *Easy Going Walks* – page 7.

## **Lanchester Valley Railway Path**

Lydgetts Junction car park, Consett, off the A692

OS Explorer maps 307 and 308

[www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk)

This 12-mile route is part of the National Cycle Network Route 14. Running south from Lydgetts Junction to Broom Park, near Durham City, this path passes through the pretty village of Lanchester, nestling in the beautiful Browney Valley. This railway line was originally built to carry iron ore to Consett Steelworks.

# Cycle Routes

## **Tees Railway Path**

Cotherstone to Lonton, near Middleton, 6 miles.

OS Explorer map OL31

[www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk)

Start at Low Lathbury, just south of Cotherstone, DL12 9PL. The Tees Valley Railway was the remnant of a scheme for a line from Barnard Castle to Alston. We gather this route is rough in parts, with some sections on a grass surface. There are good views along the entire route, passing picturesque villages and a patchwork of fields, dry-stone walls and mature hedgerows.

## **Waskerley Way Railway Path**

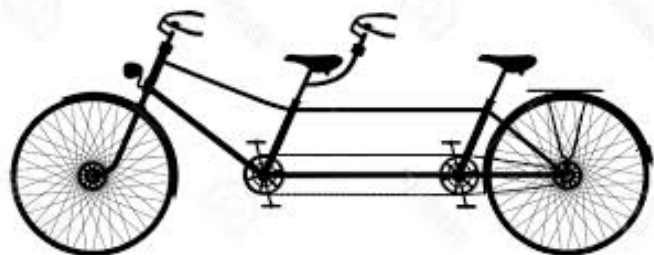
Lydgetts Junction car park, Consett, off the A692

Consett to Stanhope, 9.7 miles.

OS Explorer map 307

[www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk)

The route follows the western branch of the former Stanhope and Tyne Railway, built to carry limestone, lead and iron ore from Weardale to the Tyne. It passes over the impressive Hownsgill Viaduct, a monument to Victorian engineering, which provides spectacular views. The route becomes more exposed as it enters the North Pennines. Three reservoirs can be seen along this stretch. This route is part of the National Cycle Network Route 7 and C2C Cycle Route.



# Fishing

Open Country does not profess to be an authority on fishing; the entries here are just a sample of fishing areas that we know are accessible. Inclusion in this guide may indicate easy access, wheelchair accessible platforms or toilets. We would always advise you to contact the site management before visiting.

Do remember that all fresh water fishing in England requires both a permit from the owner or manager of the water in question and an Environment Agency National Rod Licence. Licenses are available to buy online at [www.gov.uk/fishing-licences](http://www.gov.uk/fishing-licences), at Post Offices and tackle shops, or by ringing 0344 800 5386. You may be eligible for a concessionary licence.

## **Angling Trust**

Tel: 0343 5077 006

Email: [admin@anglingtrust.net](mailto:admin@anglingtrust.net)

[www.anglingtrust.net](http://www.anglingtrust.net) and [www.fishinginfo.co.uk](http://www.fishinginfo.co.uk)

The Angling Trust represents all game, coarse and sea anglers in England. They lobby government, campaign on environmental and angling issues and run national and international competitions. You can search for your nearest fishery or club on their website.

## **British Disabled Angling Association (BDAA)**

Email: [info@bdaa.co.uk](mailto:info@bdaa.co.uk)

[www.bdaa.co.uk](http://www.bdaa.co.uk)

The BDAA develops opportunities for disabled people of all ages and abilities to access the activity of fishing in the UK.

## **Canal & River Trust**

Tel: 0303 040 4040 (Customer Services Team)

[www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)

You can search the Canal & River Trust's online directory, which lists over 6,000 fishing venues nationwide. There is also information about fishing guidelines and a fish species guide.

## **Environment Agency Flood Information Service**

Tel: 0345 988 1188 (24-hour Floodline)

Type talk: 0345 602 6340 (for the hard of hearing)

<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/river-and-sea-levels>

For information on levels in your local rivers you can call the number above. Alternatively, you can check the online map using the link above.

# Fishing

## **The Wheelyboat Trust**

Tel: 01798 342222

Email: [info@wheelyboats.org](mailto:info@wheelyboats.org)

[www.wheelyboats.org](http://www.wheelyboats.org)

A charity providing disabled people with the opportunity and freedom to enjoy waters large and small all over the UK. Their role is to help and encourage venues open to the public to acquire Wheelyboats for their disabled visitors and to help groups and organisations acquire Wheelyboats for their own use.

## **Key:**

**T** Trout fishing

**C** Coarse fishing

## **C Angel Fishing**

Bassetts Lookout, Northside, Birtley, Chester-le-Street, DH3 1RF

Tel: 0191 4100449

[www.angelfishing.com](http://www.angelfishing.com)

Accessible toilets, disabled pegs, warden assistance. Shop on site selling snacks and fishing gear.

## **C Eden meadows**

Wingate Road, Station Town, TS28 5LZ

Tel: 07999 955099

Wheelchair users can drive down and park close to the pegs. Toilet and tackle shop on site.

## **C/T Derwent Reservoir**

Near Edmundbyers, DH8 9TT, off the B6278

[www.nwwatersideparks.com](http://www.nwwatersideparks.com)

Tel: 01207 255250

Disabled access pegs, accessible toilets, fishing lodge shop with light refreshments, hearing loop.

## **C Eden Grange Fishery**

Off Dale Road, Shildon, County Durham, DL4 2QD

Tel: 07809 125 206

[www.edengrangefishery.co.uk](http://www.edengrangefishery.co.uk)

# Fishing

Many disabled access pegs and swims; Blue Badge holders can access some pegs by vehicle. Café, accessible toilets and bait shop.

## **C Grassholme Reservoir**

West Pasture Road, Near Grassholme, DL12 0PW  
Tel: 01833 641121  
[www.nwwatersideparks.com](http://www.nwwatersideparks.com)

Disabled platforms, accessible toilet, shop and visitor centre.

## **T Jubilee Lakes Fly Fishery**

Corner Bank Lane, Redworth, Darlington DL2 2UH  
Tel: 01388 772611  
[www.jubileelakes.com](http://www.jubileelakes.com)

Good disabled access to lower lake. Toilet, tackle shop and free tea and coffee for anglers!

## **T Hury Reservoir**

Approach from either Romaldkirk or Cotherstone on the B6277  
Tel: 01833 641121  
[www.nwwatersideparks.com](http://www.nwwatersideparks.com)

Disabled platform, accessible toilets.

## **C Shafto Lake**

Whitworth Park, off Whitworth Road, Spennymoor, DL16 7QX  
Disabled access platforms, pub and restaurant nearby.

## **T Sharpley Springs**

Off the B1404, Seaham, SR7 0NP  
Tel: 07860 757527  
[www.sharpleysprings.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.sharpleysprings.blogspot.co.uk)  
Disabled access to lake. Free tea and coffee!



# Horse Riding

## **Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA)**

Tel: 01926 492915 (National Office team)

Email: [info@rda.org.uk](mailto:info@rda.org.uk)

[www.rda.org.uk](http://www.rda.org.uk)

The Association provides disabled people of all ages with the opportunity to ride and/or carriage ride for the general benefit of their health and well-being. There are centres in the County Durham area offering riding for disabled sessions:

### **Brookleigh Group**

Tel: 07881 636902

Postcode: DL11 7PB

### **Mill House Riding (affiliated to the RDA)**

Tel: 01740 622882

Email: [millhouseridingcentre@outlook.com](mailto:millhouseridingcentre@outlook.com)

Postcode: TS21 4BD

### **Tyne and Wear Group**

NE37 3HR

Tel: 0191 416 2745

### **Wear Valley RDA Group**

Tel: 01388 604637

Postcode: DL14 7SR

## **Horse Racing**

### **Sedgefield Racecourse**

Racecourse Road, Sedgefield, TS21 2HW

Tel: 01740 621925

Email: [info@sedgefield-racecourse.co.uk](mailto:info@sedgefield-racecourse.co.uk)

[www.sedgefield-racecourse.co.uk](http://www.sedgefield-racecourse.co.uk)



One of the country's friendliest racecourses, with a reputation for a warm, relaxed atmosphere and set in the beautiful Durham countryside. The racecourse offers easy access to most areas; there are many paths and tarmac areas including access to the front trackside and rear of most stands but you may also need to cross grassed areas at times so please be aware of changing ground conditions in rain.

### **3. Wildlife & Conservation**

Wildlife Clubs & Organisations	35
Accessible Wildlife Sites	38

# Wildlife Clubs & Organisations

## **British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)**

Tel: 01842 750050  
Email: [info@bto.org](mailto:info@bto.org)  
[www.bto.org](http://www.bto.org)

The BTO have a broad range of surveys for volunteers to participate in, including the 'Garden Bird Watch' and 'Garden Nesting Survey'. The surveys are fun and a great way to help wildlife from your home.

## **Butterfly Conservation**

Tel: 01929 400209  
Email: [info@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:info@butterfly-conservation.org)  
[www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org)

A national charity devoted to saving butterflies, moths and their habitats throughout the UK. You can take part in the annual Big Butterfly Count in August in your garden or local area.

## **Darlington & Teesdale Naturalists Field Club**

[www.dtnfc.org](http://www.dtnfc.org)

The club studies plants, animals, insects and all things related to natural history. They organise summer trips out and indoor meetings during the winter months.

## **Durham Bat Group**

Email: [dbgbats@gmail.com](mailto:dbgbats@gmail.com)  
[www.durhambats.co.uk](http://www.durhambats.co.uk)

Promotes the conservation and study of bats in the area and organises meetings, surveys and training activities. Members also lead guided walks and give talks.

## **Durham Bird Club**

Email: [durhambirdclub@gmail.com](mailto:durhambirdclub@gmail.com)  
[www.durhambirdclub.org](http://www.durhambirdclub.org)

Records and studies bird and organises field trips and indoor meetings. The club caters for all levels, from the absolute beginner to the dedicated twitcher, and from the family to the serious scientist!

## **Durham County Badger Group**

Tel: 0191 5843112 (Durham Wildlife Trust)  
Email: [chairman@durhamcountybadgers.org.uk](mailto:chairman@durhamcountybadgers.org.uk)  
[www.durhambadgers.org.uk](http://www.durhambadgers.org.uk)

The DCBG was formed in 1981 and aims to protect and study the badger in its natural environment.





# Wildlife Clubs & Organisations

The group has monthly meetings and organises guest speakers.

## **Durham Wildlife Trust**

Tel: 0191 5843112

Email: [mail@durhamwt.co.uk](mailto:mail@durhamwt.co.uk)

[www.durhamwt.com](http://www.durhamwt.com)

The Wildlife Trust protects wildlife and promotes nature conservation in County Durham, the City of Sunderland and the Boroughs of Gateshead, South Tyneside and Darlington. They manage 35 reserves, have two visitor centres (Rainton Meadows and Low Barns, see *Accessible Wildlife Sites* – pages 39 & 40) and work with people of all ages. They also provide training in survey skills and plant identification.

## **Natural England**

Tel: 0300 060 3900

Email: [enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk)

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england)

Natural England is the Government body for protecting natural landscapes. They work on access and rights of way, nature reserves and protected sites and species. There are several National Nature Reserves in County Durham managed by Natural England which are listed in the next section.

## **North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

Tel: 01388 528801

Email: [info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk](mailto:info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)

[www.northpennines.org.uk](http://www.northpennines.org.uk)

The AONB's primary purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the North Pennines landscape by working in partnership with various organisations across the region. They run a range of events to help you explore the area including walks, nature workshops, craft sessions and family-friendly activities.

## **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)**

Tel: 0300 777 2676 (North of England Regional Office)

[www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

The RSPB is the UK charity working to secure a healthy environment for birds and all wildlife. You can help out the wildlife in your garden by taking part in the annual 'Big Garden Birdwatch'; the world's largest wildlife survey. Their website also has advice for disabled bird watchers. Durham has a local group:

- **RSPB Durham Local Group**

[www.rspb.org.uk/groups/durham](http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/durham)

## Wildlife Clubs & Organisations

The group has a full programme of indoor meetings from October to April, and many outdoor meetings throughout the year. The group welcomes new members, both RSPB members and the general public.

### **Wear Rivers Trust**

Tel: 01388 488867

Email: [admin@wear-rivers-trust.org.uk](mailto:admin@wear-rivers-trust.org.uk)

[www.wear-rivers-trust.org.uk](http://www.wear-rivers-trust.org.uk)

The charity works on a catchment-wide scale to encourage local interest in the river, promote the rivers environmental health, and improve the wildlife surrounding and within the river.

### **Weardale Wildlife Group**

Email: [enquiries@weardalewildlifegroup.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@weardalewildlifegroup.co.uk)

[www.weardalewildlifegroup.co.uk](http://www.weardalewildlifegroup.co.uk)

This group aims to bring people together who share an interest in wildlife, record species, encourage local interest in wildlife and conservation, and share their knowledge with other groups and organisations.



# Accessible Wildlife Watching

Wildlife watching is an enjoyable and peaceful past time where you can develop your skills in your own time. Below are some of the best accessible sites in which you can enjoy, watch and study wildlife.

This picture denotes an accessible bird hide is on site:



## **Blackhall Rocks Nature Reserve**

Station Road, Blackhall Colliery, Hartlepool, TS27 4AT  
Tel: 03000 264 589 (Durham Council Countryside Service)  
[www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk)



A beautiful coastal grassland of magnesian limestone displaying cowslip, thrift, and common rock rose. The coast has one of the highest densities of breeding skylark populations in County Durham. There is a circular 0.3 mile 'Easy Access' path which is gently undulating with a short steep section and seats at regular intervals. A leaflet is available to download from the council's website.

## **Castle Eden Dene National Nature Reserve**

Contact: Natural England  
Oakside Dene Lodge, Stanhope Chase, Peterlee, SR8 1NJ  
Tel: 0300 060 6000  
[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england)



Located on the urban fringe of Durham city, this woodland gives you an idea of what the old 'wildwoods' of the past would have looked like. With over 450 species of plants, and a mixture of mammals and birds, it provides a home to a large variety of wildlife. There is a short, easy access path that leaves from the main car park near Oakside Dene Lodge where there is ample parking (although no specific Blue Badge bays) and wheelchair accessible toilets.

## **Grassholme Reservoir**

Contact: Northumbrian Water  
West Pasture Road, Near Grassholme, DL12 0PW  
Tel: 01833 641 121  
[www.nwl.co.uk](http://www.nwl.co.uk)



This popular reservoir for fishing and sailing offers spectacular views of the valley, with Blue Badge parking a small shop for refreshments and a visitor centre (seasonal opening) and accessible toilets. The nature reserve is situated to the west end of the reservoir, where there is an accessible bird hide (off Kelton Lane). Parking is on the roadside.

## **Hamsterley Forest**

Contact: Forestry Commission  
Redford Lane, Nr Bedburn, DL13 3NL



# Accessible Wildlife Watching

Tel: 01388 488312

Email: [enquiries.hamsterley@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.hamsterley@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

[www.forestryengland.uk/hamsterley-forest](http://www.forestryengland.uk/hamsterley-forest)

A 2000-hectare woodland oasis situated in the Durham Dales. Blue Badge parking near the visitor centre; charges apply. The visitor centre houses displays on forest wildlife and management. There is a small gift shop, tearoom and play park (accessible to wheelchairs and pushchairs). It is also the starting point for a scenic 4 mile forest drive that runs through the heart of the forest, giving access to the numerous picnic sites along the way. See *Easy Going Walks* – page 7 for more details.

## Killhope

Near Cowshill, Upper Weardale, DL13 1AR

Tel: 01388 537505

Email: [info@killhope.org.uk](mailto:info@killhope.org.uk)

[www.killhope.org.uk](http://www.killhope.org.uk)



The North of England Lead Mining Museum has an accessible hide which allows wheelchair users to (possibly!) see red squirrels close up. Seasonal opening. See *Outings* - page 15.

## Low Barns Nature Reserve & Visitor Centre

Contact: Durham Wildlife Trust

Low Lane, Witton-le-Wear,

Bishop Auckland, DL14 0AG

Tel: 01388 488728

Email: [mail@durhamwt.co.uk](mailto:mail@durhamwt.co.uk)

[www.durhamwt.com/reserves/low-barns-nature-reserve](http://www.durhamwt.com/reserves/low-barns-nature-reserve)



A Site of Special Scientific Interest and one of the region's most important wildlife sites, this wetland reserve, bordered by the River Wear, contains a mix of woodlands, species rich grasslands, lakes and ponds. There is a visitor centre and café on site. The reserve has a flat terrain and a network of surfaced paths and a number of accessible bird hides. Regular sightings of kingfisher and great for spotting butterflies.

## Milkwellburn Wood

Contact: Durham Wildlife Trust

Near Blackhall Mill, NE17 7TE

Tel: 0191 584 3112

Follow the unsurfaced road north west from the end of River View in Blackhall Mill to the reserve entrance where limited parking is available at South View. There are surfaced tracks within the woodland, providing access for wheelchairs and pushchairs via the southern entrance. The ancient woodland's ground flora includes greater woodrush, primrose,

## Accessible Wildlife Watching

bluebell, dog's mercury, broad-leaved helleborine and many ferns such as hart's-tongue and lady fern.

### Rainton Meadows Nature Reserve

Contact: Durham Wildlife Trust  
Mallard Way, Houghton le Spring, DH4 6PU  
Tel: 0191 584 3112  
Email: [mail@durhamwft.co.uk](mailto:mail@durhamwft.co.uk)



Between Durham and Sunderland just off the A690. The wetlands and grasslands support over 200 species of birds, including all five species of owl. There is a good network of accessible pathways linking viewing areas that look across the lakes and wetlands. There is also wheelchair access to the lakeshore and bird hide. Visitor centre and café on site.

### Washington Wetland Centre

Contact: The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust  
Pattinson, Washington, Tyne and Wear,  
NE38 8LE  
Tel: 0191 416 5454  
Email: [info.washington@wwt.org.uk](mailto:info.washington@wwt.org.uk)  
[www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/washington](http://www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/washington)



More than 100 acres of stunning wetland and woodland to explore. The park is known for its wildfowl collections, featuring hundreds of rare and endangered ducks, geese and swans, plus a colourful breeding colony of Chilean Flamingoes. Manual wheelchairs, walkers and mobility scooters are available to borrow - they do ask for a donation if possible, please book in advance. The site has mainly flat access; staff can advise on routes that avoid steep slopes. Step free entry to all hides. The River Wear Trail passes the centre, as does the C2C cycle route.

### Watergate Forest Park

Contact: Gateshead Council Countryside Team  
Off Whickham Highway at Lobley Hill, Gateshead, NE11 9RQ  
Tel: 0191 433 7412  
Email: [countryside@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:countryside@gateshead.gov.uk)



Just outside the County Durham border, Watergate Forest Park is a local nature reserve on the site of the former Watergate Quarry, with wetlands, woodlands and wildflower meadows. The Wildlife Trail is a 1.4 mile route around the lake which gives good opportunities to see the wildlife on the reserve. The route is undulating and rough in places, but could be suitable for mobility scooters.

# Accessible Wildlife Watching

## Notable Others...

Outside County Durham, these RSPB reserves have been included as they offer some of the finest and most accessible bird watching sites in the country. See the RSPB website for more information and full Accessibility Statements: [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

### **Bempton Cliffs**

Cliff Lane, Bempton, YO15 1JF

Tel: 01262 422212

Email: [bempton.cliffs@rspb.org.uk](mailto:bempton.cliffs@rspb.org.uk)



This sea cliff bird reserve is home to one of the UK's top wildlife spectacles; 200,000 seabirds gather here between April and July to raise a family on towering chalk cliffs, including gannets, guillemots, razorbills and puffins. Three cliff edge viewpoints are accessed via a hard-surfaced path and have wheelchair bays. Information centre, tea room, picnic area and accessible toilets on site. Tramper mobility scooters and manual wheelchairs are available to borrow; donations are appreciated, best to book in advance. Admission charge, carers free.

### **Blacktoft Sands**

Ousefleet, Nr Goole, DN14 8HR

Tel: 01405 704665

Email: [blacktoft.sands@rspb.org.uk](mailto:blacktoft.sands@rspb.org.uk)



A reserve of tidal reed beds and salt marsh, home to lots of specialised birdlife, such as bearded tit, bittern and marsh harrier. Good level paths, six accessible hides and a small visitor centre with hot drinks and snacks for sale. An accessible toilet is available in the main toilet block near the car park. Manual wheelchair available to hire for free. Admission charge, carers free.

### **Saltholme**

Seaton Carew Road, Port Clarence,  
Middlesbrough, TS2 1TP

Tel: 01642 546625

Email: [saltholme@rspb.org.uk](mailto:saltholme@rspb.org.uk)



Fantastic reserve near Middlesbrough. A great place to see starling murmurations during the winter months, as well as water rail, yellow wagtail and terns. There are signposted trails surfaced in bound gravel, mostly on level ground with seating provided. The bird hides are accessible, with some having floor-to-ceiling viewing windows. The visitor centre has accessible toilets, an indoor bird viewing area, café, gift shop and two electric scooters available for hire – it is advisable to pre-book.

## **4. Volunteering**

Volunteering Advice & Contacts	43
Volunteering in the Countryside	44
Countryside Employment	46



# Volunteering Advice & Contacts

There are always lots of opportunities to get involved in your local countryside through volunteering for a conservation or community group. Try the following places and contacts to find out about local groups and projects in your area.

## **Websites**

Two websites worth a look at for volunteering opportunities are:

- **'Do It!'**

[www.do-it.org](http://www.do-it.org)

- **The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)**

[www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering](http://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering)

## **Volunteer Contacts**

### **Durham Community Action**

9 St Stephen's Court, Low Willington Industrial Estate, Crook, DL15 0BF

Tel: 01388 742040

Email: [info@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk](mailto:info@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk)

[www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk](http://www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk)

Provides information about volunteering in County Durham, including current opportunities.

### **Durham County Council**

[www.durham.gov.uk/volunteering](http://www.durham.gov.uk/volunteering)

The county council website provides information about the latest volunteering opportunities as well as details about how to get involved with the parks and countryside team.

### **East Durham Volunteer Centre**

East Durham Trust, Community House, Yoden Road, Peterlee, SR8 5DP

Tel: 0191 5693522

The volunteer centre, now managed by the East Durham trust, assist individuals wanting to volunteer and organisations requiring volunteers.





# Volunteering in the Countryside

## **County Durham's Countryside Service**

Tel: 03000 264 589

Email: [countryside@durham.co.uk](mailto:countryside@durham.co.uk)

You can help look after the countryside in a variety of ways; practical work, helping with guided walks, fundraising and office work.

## **Durham Cathedral Woodland and Riverbank Volunteers**

Tel: 0191 374 4068 / 0191 374 4076

Email: [volunteers@durhamcathedral.co.uk](mailto:volunteers@durhamcathedral.co.uk)

[www.durhamcathedral.co.uk](http://www.durhamcathedral.co.uk)

You can get involved with the riverbank and woodland management activities and ongoing maintenance. There are also opportunities to become visitor guides and help with events.

## **Durham Wildlife Trust**

Chilton Moor, Houghton-le-Spring, Tyne & Wear,  
DH4 6PU

Tel: 0191 584 3112

Email: [volunteer@durhamwt.co.uk](mailto:volunteer@durhamwt.co.uk)

[www.durhamwt.com](http://www.durhamwt.com)

There are many voluntary opportunities with the Trust including practical work on reserves, admin work and help with education and events.



## **Groundwork NE and Cumbria**

Grosvenor House, 29 Market Place, Bishop Auckland, DL14 7NP

Tel: 01388 662 666

Email: [north.east@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:north.east@groundwork.org.uk)

Groundwork helps people gain confidence and skills, get into training and work and protect and improve green spaces.

## **National Trust**

Tel: 0191 2558600 (North East Regional Office)

Email: [yne.customerenquiries@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:yne.customerenquiries@nationaltrust.org.uk)

The National Trust has many voluntary options including gardening, leading walks, holiday assistance, wardening, information stewards and conservation tasks. Training is provided.

## **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)**

Tel: 0300 7772 676 (North of England Regional Office)

[www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

The RSPB offer a range of volunteering roles which can be tailored to your skills, interests and circumstances.

# Volunteering in the Countryside

For opportunities at Saltholme Reserve contact:

- Seaton Carew Road, Port Clarence, Middlesbrough, TS2 1TP  
Tel: 01642 546625  
Email: [saltholme@rspb.org.uk](mailto:saltholme@rspb.org.uk)

## **The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)**

Tel: 01302 388 883

[www.tcv.org.uk](http://www.tcv.org.uk)

TCV enables volunteers from all sections of the community to take practical environmental action in towns, cities and the countryside. You can search for 'Friends Groups' and other local opportunities on their website.



# Countryside Employment

As well as paid employment, many environmental organisations take on volunteers on formal work experience schemes that are advertised alongside job adverts. The services listed below are some of the best. We recommend the following:

## **Countryside Jobs Service (CJS)**

Tel: 01947 896007

Email: [ranger@countryside-jobs.com](mailto:ranger@countryside-jobs.com)

[www.countryside-jobs.com](http://www.countryside-jobs.com)

The CJS brings together available countryside jobs, both paid and voluntary, from a wide range of sources and organisations. Jobs are advertised on their website and include countryside apprenticeships and traineeships.

## **Environment Job**

Tel: 01392 491578

Email: [admin@environmentjob.co.uk](mailto:admin@environmentjob.co.uk)

[www.environmentjob.co.uk](http://www.environmentjob.co.uk)

Web-based information about both paid and voluntary job opportunities as well as courses and events.

## **Environment Jobs**

Tel: 01268 450024

Email: [jobs@environmentjobs.co.uk](mailto:jobs@environmentjobs.co.uk)

[www.environmentjobs.co.uk](http://www.environmentjobs.co.uk)

Includes job and voluntary vacancies from environmental journals and papers worldwide. Also details student placements.

## **North East Jobs**

[www.northeastjobs.org.uk](http://www.northeastjobs.org.uk)

This website features various jobs, including those in the countryside, which are based anywhere in the North East, including Durham, Northumberland, Teeside and Tyne and Wear.

## **The Guardian Newspaper**

<https://jobs.theguardian.com/jobs/environment>

Find details of environmental and conservation jobs online or in the printed newspaper.

### **5. Useful Information**

Community & Public Transport	48
RADAR, Blue Badge & Wheelchair Hire	51
Tourist Information	52
Disability Links	53
The Countryside Code	54

## **Community Transport**

Community Transport organisations provide transport services to people who do not have easy access to other forms of transport, including the elderly, those with disabilities, people with special needs, or people living in remote communities with little or no public transport. You are advised to book in advance, preferably giving at least 24 hours notice. Some schemes will accept Concessionary Bus passes and offer free or reduced cost travel for any helpers you may need. Below is a list of current community transport schemes at the time of writing:

### **Chester-le-Street Voluntary Welfare Committee Community Bus**

Tel: 0191 3871044 (contact Norma Menzies between 9.30am and 1.00pm Monday to Friday)

### **Consett Churches Detached Youth Project**

Tel: 01207 501863  
[www.consettdetachedyouth.com](http://www.consettdetachedyouth.com)

### **Durham County Council**

Contact: Travel Response Centre  
Tel: 03000 269 999

The council run the Access Bus Scheme across the county, providing people who have limited mobility with a door-to-door transport service to popular shopping and leisure destinations.

### **Dene Valley Community Transport**

Tel: 01388 417740  
[www.denevalleycommunitytransport.co.uk](http://www.denevalleycommunitytransport.co.uk)

### **East Durham Community Transport**

Tel: 0191 5182633  
[www.edct.co.uk](http://www.edct.co.uk)

### **Shildon Community Bus**

Tel: 01325 321447

### **Supportive Community Transport Scheme**

Tel: 01740 658884  
[www.supportive.org.uk](http://www.supportive.org.uk)

### **Teesdale Community Resources**

Tel: 01833 690150  
[www.tcrhub.co.uk](http://www.tcrhub.co.uk)

# Community & Public Transport

## **The Cornforth Partnership**

Tel: 01740 652000

[www.cornforthpartnership.org](http://www.cornforthpartnership.org)

## **Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services**

Tel: 01833 641010

[www.utass.org](http://www.utass.org)

## **Weardale Community Transport**

Tel: 01388 528777

[www.weardalecommunitytransport.org.uk](http://www.weardalecommunitytransport.org.uk)

## **Willington SLAM**

Tel: 01388 747000

[www.spectrumleisurecentre.com](http://www.spectrumleisurecentre.com)

## **Public Transport**

### **Cross Country Trains**

Contact: Journey Care Team

Tel: 0344 811 0125     Textphone: 0344 811 0126

[www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk](http://www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk)

You can book assistance for your journey when you buy your tickets through their website or by calling the dedicated Journey Care Team. If you can, it is advised that you book your assistance 24 hours in advance.

### **Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee**

Email: [dptac.enquiries@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dptac.enquiries@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

DPTAC advises the government on transport legislation, regulations and guidance and on the transport needs of disabled people, ensuring they have the same access to transport as everyone else.

### **Durham County Council**

Contact: Sustainable Transport

Tel: 03000 268 667

[www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk)

Contact the council for information on bus timetables, routes, fares, passes and information on help for disabled travellers.

### **London North Eastern Railway**

Contact: Assisted Travel Team

Tel: 03457 225 225     Text relay service: 18001 03457 225 225

## Community & Public Transport

[www.lner.co.uk/rail-travel/your-journey/assisted-travel/](http://www.lner.co.uk/rail-travel/your-journey/assisted-travel/)

Contact the Assisted Travel Team if you have restricted mobility or access needs. They can help you plan your journey, give information about accessibility at stations and assist you when you arrive at the station and at your destination. It helps if you give them as much notice as possible before you travel.

### **National Express Coaches**

Contact: Assisted Travel Helpline

Tel: 0371 781 8181 Textphone/Minicom: 0121 622 2717

Email: [adtl@nationalexpress.com](mailto:adtl@nationalexpress.com)

[www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com)

They can give journey details, take reservations, sell tickets, and advise on what help can be provided. Information in other formats including large print is available.

### **National Rail Enquiries**

Tel: 03457 48 49 50 (lines open 24 hours except Christmas Day)

[www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations\\_destinations/disabled\\_passengers.aspx](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/disabled_passengers.aspx)

Provides information on rail travel including routes, departure times and costs, as well as information for disabled passengers on travel assistance, discounts, accessible stations and train facilities. It is advised that you book your assistance 24 hours in advance.

### **Northern Rail**

Tel: 0800 138 5560

[www.northernrailway.co.uk](http://www.northernrailway.co.uk)

Older and disabled people can arrange assistance at stations and reserve wheelchair spaces. Northern Rail has joined Blue Assist; a system set up to help people who have difficulty communicating.

### **TransPenine Express**

Tel: 0800 107 2149     Textphone: 0800 107 2061

[www.tpexpress.co.uk](http://www.tpexpress.co.uk)

They have a number of ways to help if you need extra support. You can book travel assistance up to 24 hours before your journey.

### **Traveline North East**

Tel: 0871 200 2233

Email: [info@travelinenortheast.info](mailto:info@travelinenortheast.info)

[www.travelinenortheast.info](http://www.travelinenortheast.info)

Provides comprehensive timetables and fare information for all local bus, Metro, train and ferry journeys throughout North East England.

# RADAR, Blue Badge & Wheelchair Hire

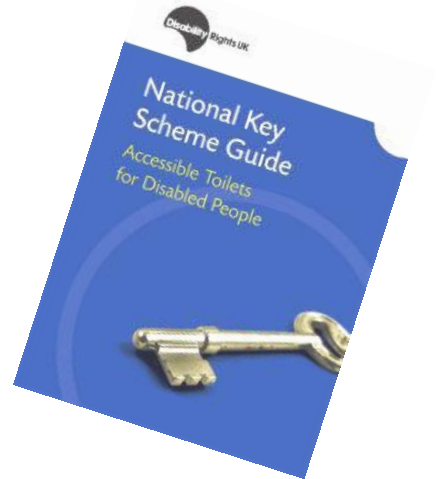
## Disability Rights UK (Formerly RADAR)

Tel: 0330 995 0400

Email: [enquiries@disabilityrightsuk.org](mailto:enquiries@disabilityrightsuk.org)

[www.disabilityrightsuk.org](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org)

Disability Rights UK works to create a society where everyone with lived experience of disability or health conditions can participate equally as full citizens. Disability Rights UK is led, run and controlled by disabled people, who make up at least three-quarters of its board members.



The RADAR National Key Scheme (NKS) ensures that one key will open wheelchair accessible toilets throughout the country. RADAR padlocks are also increasingly used on many nature reserves and cycle paths. Keys are available directly from Disability Rights UK. You can also purchase lists of available NKS toilets in your region.

## Blue Badge Scheme

[www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge](http://www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge)

The Blue Badge scheme is for people with severe mobility problems. It allows Blue Badge holders to park close to where they need to go. The scheme operates throughout the UK and is managed by local authorities, who deal with applications and issue Blue Badges.

Blue Badge holders may:

- Park as long as they wish in a disc parking zone provided that the Blue Badge is displayed.
- Park on a single or double yellow line for up to three hours provided that the Blue Badge and disc is displayed and the vehicle causes no obstruction.
- Always check individual car parks to see if you are required to pay or not as practice differs widely.

## Wheelchair Hire

Many of the places in this Directory have wheelchairs and scooters available for loan, either free or relatively cheaply. For other outlets ring your local Tourist Information Centre (see next page), or contact:

### Durham City Shopmobility

Level 1 car park, Prince Bishops Shopping Centre, High Street, DH1 3UJ

Tel: 0191 386 8556

Email: [durhamshopmobility@talktalkbusiness.net](mailto:durhamshopmobility@talktalkbusiness.net)

[www.durhamshopmobility.co.uk](http://www.durhamshopmobility.co.uk)



# Tourist Information

## **Websites**

### **Durham Tourism**

Tel: 01297 9824 0967

Email: [contact@durhamtourism.co.uk](mailto:contact@durhamtourism.co.uk)

[www.durhamtourism.co.uk](http://www.durhamtourism.co.uk)

### **This is Durham**

Tel: 03000 262626

Email: [visitor@thisisdurham](mailto:visitor@thisisdurham)

[www.thisisdurham.com](http://www.thisisdurham.com)

Durham has 15 Visitor Information Points across the county, providing the latest information via face-to-face or electronic tourist information kiosks and telephone points, plus access to a wide selection of leaflets and guides. Contact the number above for details.

## **Information Centres**

### **Bishop Auckland Town Hall**

Town Hall, Market Place, Bishop Auckland, County Durham, DL14 7NP

[www.bishopaucklandtownhall.org.uk](http://www.bishopaucklandtownhall.org.uk)

Tel: 03000 269 524

### **Bowlees Visitor Centre**

Bowlees, Newbiggin in Teesdale, DL12 0XF

Tel: 01833 622145

Email: [visit@northpenninesaonb.org.uk](mailto:visit@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)

[www.northpennines.org.uk/bowlees-visitor-centre](http://www.northpennines.org.uk/bowlees-visitor-centre)

### **Durham World Heritage Site Visitor Centre**

7 Owengate, Durham, DH1 3HB

Tel: 0191 3343805

Email: [visitor.centre@durham.ac.uk](mailto:visitor.centre@durham.ac.uk)

[www.durhamworldheritagesite.com](http://www.durhamworldheritagesite.com)

### **Middleton-in-Teesdale Tourist Information Centre**

10 Market Place, Middleton-in-Teesdale, DL12 0QG

Tel: 01833 641001

### **Stanhope**

Durham Dales Centre, Castle Gardens, Stanhope, DL13 2FJ

Tel: 01388 527650

Email: [durham.dales.centre@durham.gov.uk](mailto:durham.dales.centre@durham.gov.uk)

[www.durhamdalescentre.co.uk](http://www.durhamdalescentre.co.uk)

# Disability Links

## **Breathing Space**

St Michael's & All Angels Church, Coach Lane, Witton Gilbert, Durham, DH7 6SX

Email: [info@breathingspace.org.uk](mailto:info@breathingspace.org.uk)

[www.breathingspace.org.uk](http://www.breathingspace.org.uk)

A health and well being project running courses, activities and events that make use of their 800 year old church environment and local nature reserve (Witton Dene). Activities include conservation work, walks and cycle rides, mindfulness walks in woods and arts and crafts.

## **Darlington Association on Disability (DAD)**

1P Enterprise House, South Entrance, Valley Street North, Darlington DL1 1GY

Tel: 01325 489999

Email: [mail@darlingtondisability.org](mailto:mail@darlingtondisability.org)

Offers a free, impartial and confidential information service to people with disabilities, their families and professionals.

## **Disability North**

The Dene Centre, Castle Farm Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 1PH

Tel: 0191 2840480

Email: [reception@disabilitynorth.org.uk](mailto:reception@disabilitynorth.org.uk)

[www.disabilitynorth.org.uk](http://www.disabilitynorth.org.uk)

Provides a range of free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support services relating to all aspects of disability.

## **Teesdale Disability Access Forum**

Unit 1, Cuthbert House, Market Place, Barnard Castle, DL12 8NE

Tel: 01833 631000

Email: [teesdaledisability@btconnect.com](mailto:teesdaledisability@btconnect.com)

Aims to improve the quality of life for elderly and disabled people living in Teesdale by breaking down the barriers that disabled people often face.

## **Shaw Trust Garden and Learning Centre**

The Heathway, Parkside, Seaham, SR7 7UD

Tel: 0300 790 0535

Email: [Gardening.NorthEast@shaw-trust.org.uk](mailto:Gardening.NorthEast@shaw-trust.org.uk)

A Social Enterprise offering training to adults with physical and mental disabilities. They offer many different opportunities to learn a range of new skills and take part in their in-house training including, horticulture, recycling, ground maintenance, woodwork and life skills.

# The Countryside Code

For anyone visiting the countryside it is well worth remembering the Countryside Code:

## ***Respect other people***

- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

## ***Protect the natural environment***

- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under effective control

## ***Enjoy the outdoors***

- Plan ahead and be prepared
- Follow advice and local signs



By following these basic guidelines, the countryside stays open to everyone whilst helping the people, animals and wildlife who live there. For more information visit [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

## **Cycling and Horse Riding**

Cyclists and horse riders should be familiar with the Highway Code if they intend to use public roads:

- Always give way to walkers
- Cyclists should give way to horse riders on bridleways
- Give adequate warning of your approach
- Always ride in control and wear a helmet
- Be extra careful when approaching bends and path junctions
- Ensure that your bike is safe to ride

For more information visit [www.gov.uk/rules-for-cyclists-59-to-82](http://www.gov.uk/rules-for-cyclists-59-to-82)

# The Funders & Authors

## The Funders

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## The Authors

This Directory was researched and revised by members of Open Country. Thanks to Adam, Andrew, Helen, John, Simon, Hayley and her guide dog Winter.



*The authors of this Directory have made every effort to ensure that the information included was right at the time of going to print. However, we cannot accept any responsibility for any errors or omissions, or any loss or damage arising from the use of this information. We advise Directory users to ensure the suitability of all services described for their individual needs.*

# The Funders & Authors

## Open Country

Open Country was set up in 1990 to enable anyone with any disability to access and enjoy the countryside. In 2006 we were presented with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, followed by the Duke of York's Community Initiative in 2008 and again in 2014.

We lead a wide variety of countryside activities including, hiking, wheelchair accessible walks, cycling, conservation projects, nature study and outdoor pursuits. In addition, we are able to offer high quality information, training and advice to organisations wanting to provide better access to their countryside sites and events, as well as individuals and their families wishing to access the countryside independently.

The Open Country staff have joined the project from a countryside background of work and personal interest. This Directory is just one of the ways that we try to let people know about what is available to them and how they can get involved.

There are also directories available for East Yorkshire, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, Lancashire and Teesside. They can be downloaded from:

[www.opencountry.org.uk](http://www.opencountry.org.uk)

Our directories are free but we always welcome donations. You can donate online via Virgin Money Giving: [www.virginmoneygiving.com](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com)

Thank you very much!





We hope to be able to update this Directory in the future. If you have any comments or suggestions please contact us at:

## **Open Country**

Community House

46 East Parade

Harrogate

North Yorkshire

HG1 5LT

Tel: 01423 507227

Email: [info@opencountry.org.uk](mailto:info@opencountry.org.uk)

[www.opencountry.org.uk](http://www.opencountry.org.uk)



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