

County Durham Countryside Directory for People with Disabilities

Third 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...



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 National Landscape, 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.



This Third Edition was published in 2026

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Using the Directory

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

Key:



Blue Badge parking is available



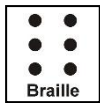
A wheelchair accessible toilet is available
(Changing Places facilities at venues have also been included, see www.changing-places.org for a full list)



Scooters / wheelchairs / trampers 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.



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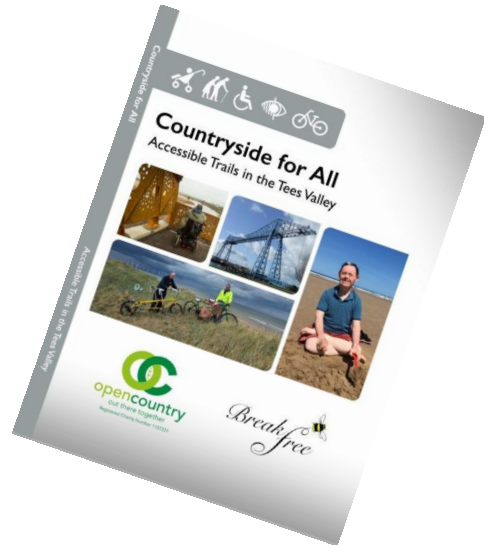
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Breakfree



Open Country have produced *Breakfree* packs for Burley in Wharfedale, Harrogate District, Leeds, Nidderdale, Selby, Wakefield, Wharfedale, York and the Tees Valley.



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.

Breakfree: get healthy and discover your local green space!

Call Open Country on 01423 507227 to request a copy.

Walking Clubs & Contacts

General Contacts

Disabled Ramblers

Email: chairman@disabledramblers.co.uk
www.disabledramblers.co.uk

Working across England and Wales to help make the countryside more accessible to people with limited mobility. They campaign to raise awareness of the needs of people with limited mobility and organise a national programme of rambles for people who use mobility scooters.

The Ramblers

Tel: 020 3961 3232
Email: ramblers@ramblers.zendesk.com
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. There are several local groups across Yorkshire, each has its own walks programme with routes ranging from easy to strenuous. Their website also has a directory of 'Wellbeing Walks' in County Durham, including walks from Durham, Peterlee, Consett and more. These are free, short walks designed to help you take the first step towards better health, wellbeing and happiness.

Local Contacts

Durham Council Guided Walks

Tel: 03000 264 589 (Countryside Service)
Email: countryside@durham.gov.uk
www.durham.gov.uk/GuidedWalks

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 above. Carers accompanying a disabled person are free.

Journey

13 Tees Walk, Bishop Auckland, DL14 8JZ (main office)
Tel: 01388 612160
www.journeyenterprises.co.uk
Email: gemma.sowerby@journeyenterprises.co.uk

Walking Clubs & Contacts

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.

Move Walking

<https://thriveleisure.co.uk/index.php/activities/move-walking>

They run free, short weekly walks which take place in local communities across the county. You can start out with a gentle stroll and gradually increase your health and fitness through longer walks. It's a great way to get out and enjoy the outdoors, meet new people and have fun.

Northumbria Short Circuits (Ramblers)

www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/ramblers-groups/northumbria-short-circuits-group

A Ramblers group specialising in shorter, easier walks of around 4 to 6 miles. Walks take place regularly and are designed to be more accessible for those who prefer a gentler pace or shorter distance. The group provides a supportive and sociable environment for enjoying the countryside. Walks are free of charge to Ramblers members.

Rose Cottage Community Hub Walking Group

Tel: 01429 882929

Email: rosecottagecommunityhub@gmail.com

www.rosecottagecommunityhub.co.uk

A friendly, informal walking group offering short "walk and talk" sessions focused on wellbeing. Walks are gentle in pace and suitable for a wide range of abilities.

Wolsingham Wayfarers

Email: wolsinghamwayfarers@gmail.com

www.wolsinghamwayfarers.co.uk

A charity that looks after and promotes the 140 miles of footpaths around Wolsingham. The walks are open to anyone able to negotiate countryside obstacles such as stiles and muddy patches. The charity have also produced self-guided walk leaflets which range from a wheelchair and pushchair-friendly 1.5 miles, up to a challenging 13 miles. The leaflets are available from many local outlets, or from their website.

Easy Going Walks

Please note that paths are subject to natural erosion and their quality may vary over time, though maintenance should be ongoing. Please contact 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

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

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.

Burnhope Reservoir

2 miles from Ireshopeburn off the A689



Situated within the North Pennines National Landscape, this site offers a 2.5-mile circular walk around the reservoir. The route follows a well maintained, solid footpath and is relatively flat, making it suitable for a wide range of visitors. Toilet facilities are available. Several picnic tables and benches are located along the route, providing places to rest and enjoy the surrounding landscape.

Easy Going Walks

Cow Green Reservoir

Tel: 03451550236

Email: info@watersideparksuk.com

www.watersideparksuk.com/park/cow-green



About 3 miles from Langdon Beck off the B6277. A 4-mile long linear walk on smooth tarmac with a long slope. From Wheelhead Sike car park, walk back along the road a short distance and you will see signs for the wheelchair path running alongside the reservoir. Cow Green has some of the darkest skies in the North Pennines National Landscape, making it a great spot for spectacular night sky views. It's a very exposed site, so dress warmly! Blue Badge parking is available, but there are no toilets.

Derwent Reservoir

Tel: 01207255250

www.watersideparksuk.com/park/derwent



North east of the B6278 Consett to Stanhope road. 'B' roads encircle the entire reservoir. Derwent lies within the North Pennines National Landscape and, after Kielder, is the second largest reservoir in the region. There are various seasonal recreational areas with car parks, picnic sites and toilets around the reservoir, of which Pow Hill Country Park and Carricks are operated in conjunction with Durham County Council. 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 5) and from the north shore of the dam wall to Millshield picnic site. Two all-terrain mobility Trampers are available for pre-booking at www.outdoormobility.org/north-pennines.

Riverside Walk, Barnard Castle

Access from Flatts Road, Barnard Castle, DL12 8PW



Blue Badge parking on Galgate, near Barnard Castle. Cross Flatts Road, passing Barnard Castle Methodist Church on your left and follow the signs for the Riverside Walk. The 0.8-mile route passes the mini golf course and playground before joining a tarmac path along the River Tees, with a picnic area and views of Barnard Castle. The path continues to the back of the castle before looping back to the start. The route is undulating and manual wheelchair users may require a strong pusher. The walk can be extended onto Flatts Wood, where paths become steeper and can get muddy. Accessible toilets in Morrisons car park on Galgate (RADAR key).

Hamsterley Forest

Redford Lane, near Bedburn, DL13 3NL

Tel: 01388 488312

Email: enquiries.hamsterley@forestryengland.uk

www.forestryengland.uk/hamsterley-forest



Easy Going Walks

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 level with a hard surface for the first $\frac{3}{4}$ mile and this section is suitable for wheelchair users. Benches and wheelchair accessible picnic tables are situated on the route. For the return route, 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

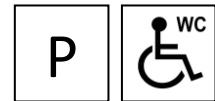
Two miles along a quiet no-through road which has a smooth, mainly flat tarmac surface. There are several flat, grassy areas to get down to the beck. Nearest accessible toilets by Hill Terrace in Middleton-in-Teesdale (RADAR key required).

Pow Hill Country Park

Tel: 03000 264 589

Email: countryside@durham.gov.uk

www.durham.gov.uk



Off the B6306 between Edmundbyers and Blanchland. A moorland country park on the banks of Derwent Reservoir. From the 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 website above. There are accessible toilets at the reservoir visitor centre and a small shop where you can buy refreshments.

Stanhope Riverside Walk

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

Tel: 03000 264300

Email: durham.dales.centre@durham.gov.uk



A 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.

Easy Going Walks

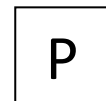
Tunstall Reservoir



Leazes Lane, north of Wolsingham, Bishop Auckland

Located within the North Pennines National Landscape. The eastern shoreline borders the Backstone Bank and Baal Hill Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest. A circular route of around 1.8 miles follows the edge of the reservoir, with generally good paths that include a mix of level stretches and some gently uneven or hilly sections. Parts of the route, particularly along the dam and the western side of the reservoir, are suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs, while other parts are rougher. Car parking and picnic facilities are available nearby, and an accessible portable toilet is sometimes provided, although this is not always in place.

Waldrige Fell Country Park



Waldrige, Chester-le-Street, DH2 3RY

Tel: 03000 264 589

Email: countryside@durham.gov.uk

www.durham.gov.uk

Waldrige Fell offers two easy-access routes: a circular trail around North Fell and a linear path linking Tinkler Row and Ellen Street car parks. Both have hard, gently undulating surfaces with occasional slopes and regular seating. An accessible toilet is available at the Riverside Park Centre in the Riverside Sports Pavilion, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3SJ.

Wolsingham Family Walk



Email: wolsinghamwayfarers@gmail.com

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 at Demesne Mill Picnic Site (off the B6296 Angate Street). Accessible toilets are situated at the junction of Market Place and Angate Street. A walk leaflet is available from Wolsingham Wayfarers; see website above.

Outings

Auckland Palace

Market Place, Bishop Auckland, DL14 7NR
Tel: 01388 743 750
Email: enquiries@aucklandproject.org
www.aucklandproject.org



For more than 800 years this has been the Prince Bishops' country residence. Blue Badge parking is available on Market Place within sight of Auckland Palace, there is also North Bondgate car park in Bishop Auckland, around a five-minute walk away; but less mobile visitors can be dropped off directly at the entrance. Auckland Palace, along with the Faith Museum, Mining Art Gallery, Spanish Gallery and Auckland Tower, is wheelchair accessible and accessibility guides are available for each of those venues. There is step-free access to St Peter's Chapel and the ground floor of the palace, with lift access provided to upper levels. Wheelchairs are available for loan; booking in advance is recommended. The main garden areas are largely flat and accessible, though the historic Walled Garden is not suitable for wheelchair users. The Deer Park is accessed via a gravelled driveway and while the terrain is uneven with changes in level, it is not excessively hilly. A motorised wheelchair is recommended for this area. Free carer tickets are available with valid supporting documentation on arrival.

Barnard Castle

Scar Top, Barnard Castle, DL12 8PR
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. One accessible/unisex toilet behind the shop. 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
www.beamish.org.uk



This award-winning museum magically transports you back to Northern life in the early 19th and 20th centuries. Free Blue Badge 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

Outings

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 toilets across the site. Induction loops, audio visual aids and photo files available. A quiet space is available in the 1950s welfare hall for any visitor who needs to use it. Essential carers admitted for free. Motorised scooters and wheelchairs are available for hire/loan for a charge (wheelchairs may be subject to availability or pre-booking).

Binchester Roman Fort

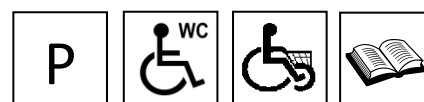
Binchester, Bishop Auckland, DL14 8DJ
Tel: 01388 663089
Email: archaeology@durham.gov.uk
www.durham.gov.uk/binchester



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: hello@thebowesmuseum.org.uk
<https://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. A wheelchair is available for hire. Free entry for essential carers.

Broom House Farm

Witton Gilbert, Durham, DH7 6TR
Tel: 0191 371 9697
Email: broomhousedurham@btinternet.com
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.

Outings

Durham Dales Centre

Castle Gardens, Stanhope, DL13 2FJ

Tel: 01388 527650

Email: durham.dales.centre@durham.gov.uk

www.durhamdalescentre.co.uk



Visitor Centre in Weardale with craft and gift shops, Tourist Information, tearoom, 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 5. 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.

Chester-le-Street Riverside Park

Ropery Lane, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3PL

Tel: 03000 266 447



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

Durham University Botanic Garden

Hollingside Lane, South Road,

Durham, DH1 3TN

Tel: 0191 334 5524

Email: botanic.garden@durham.ac.uk

www.dur.ac.uk/things-to-do/venues/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

www.egglestonhallgardens.co.uk



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

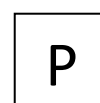
Finchale Priory

Finchale Avenue, Framwellgate Moor, Durham, DH1 5SH

Tel: 0370 333 1181

Email: customers@english-heritage.org.uk

www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/finchale-priory

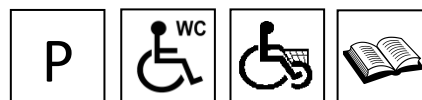


Outings

13th 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 opening. Toilets not wheelchair accessible. Free admission. Parking available on private land near to the site, but disabled visitors can be dropped off at the main entrance. Ramped entrance is wide enough for some wheelchairs. Most parts of the church and cloisters are 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
www.hallhillfarm.co.uk



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

Hamsterley Forest

Redford Lane, Near Bedburn, DL13 3NL
Tel: 01388 488312
Email: enquiries.hamsterley@forestryengland.uk
www.forestryengland.uk/hamsterley-forest



A 2000-hectare woodland oasis situated in the Durham Dales and managed by Forestry England. 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). 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 5.

Hardwick Hall Country Park

Sedgefield, TS21 2EH
Tel: 03000 262 899
Email: hardwickpark@durham.gov.uk
www.durham.gov.uk/Hardwickpark



An 18th century landscaped garden, with the remains of several follies and the Serpentine Lake. Level wheelchair access around the park and lakeside paths with many seats and benches. Shop, café and visitor centre on site, with events throughout the year. Free wheelchair loan from the gift shop, available on a first come, first served basis. There is a portable hearing loop system in the visitor centre.

Outings

Herrington Country Park

Houghton-le-Spring, Tyne and Wear, DH4 7EL
www.sunderland.gov.uk



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 622336
Email: highforcehotel@raby.co.uk
www.raby.co.uk/high-force



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 1/2-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. Several benches along the approach to the waterfall to rest on, with steps leading down to the river's edge, but the falls can also be viewed from the platform at the top. Accessible toilet between the car park and gift shop. Admission fee applies, online pre-booking recommended. Mobility Trampers are available for pre-booking at www.outdoormobility.org/north-pennines

Hopetown Darlington

McNay Street, Darlington, DL3 6SW
Tel: 01325 405060
Email: hopetown@darlington.gov.uk
www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk



Award-winning railway-themed visitor attraction set across 7.5 acres of historic railway land. Hopetown Darlington celebrates over 200 years of railway heritage on the original route of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, combining historic buildings with modern immersive experiences. The site is largely accessible, with lifts, ramps and step-free access throughout indoor and outdoor spaces, as well as accessible toilets and a Changing Places toilet. Wheelchair accessible play equipment and inclusive experiences are available across the attraction. Free admission (though pre-booking required), with some exhibitions and activities carrying a separate charge.

Locomotion

Dale Road Industrial Estate, Shildon, DL4 2RE
Tel: 033 0058 0058
Email: info@sciencemuseumgroup.ac.uk
www.locomotion.org.uk

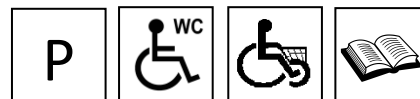


Outings

Celebrates Shildon's history as one of the World's oldest railway towns. Displays of over 40 vehicles. Children's play area, café, free admission. The museum is wheelchair accessible, however part of the large museum site is outside so visitors will need to use outdoor footpaths to view all of the buildings. Wheelchair loan available – please book in advance.

Raby Castle, Park & Gardens

Staindrop, DL2 3AH
Tel: 01833 660202
Email: admin@rabycastle.com
www.raby.co.uk/raby-castle



The medieval castle, home to Lord Barnard's family since 1626, is set within a vast deer park and estate and includes the castle, gardens, café and retail areas. Due to the historic nature of the building, accessibility within the castle is limited. There are steps throughout the ground floor and upper floors are accessed by stairs only, meaning wheelchair access is restricted. The grounds and gardens include some accessible pathways, but also feature slopes, gravel paths and uneven terrain, so assistance may be required. The Coach House, café and shop areas are wheelchair accessible. Blue Badge parking is available, and staff can advise on suitable routes. Accessible toilet facilities are located within visitor areas outside the castle. Admission fee applies.

Rokeby Park

Rokeby, near Barnard Castle, DL12 9RZ
Tel: 01833 631342
Email: enquiries@rokebypark.com
www.rokebypark.com



Palladian-style country house. Wheelchair access to the ground floor only (main rooms upstairs). Disabled visitors can be driven to and collected from the entrance. Seasonal opening.

Tanfield Railway

Old Marley Hill, Gateshead, NE16 5ET
Tel: 07508 092365 (Tues & Thurs Only)
Email: info@tanfield-railway.co.uk
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.

Outings

Thorpe Farm Centre

Greta Bridge, Barnard Castle, DL12 9TY
Tel: 01833 627242
Email: info@thorpefarm.co.uk
www.thorpefarm.co.uk



Farm shop, café, restaurant, gift shop, picnic area, adventure playground and Wetheriggs Animal Rescue Centre. Two Blue Badge spaces next to the entrance of the courtyard (to the left of the glass fronted porch).

Weardale Museum and High House Chapel

Hotts, Ireshopeburn, Bishop Auckland, DL13 1HD
Tel: 01388 335085
Email: info@weardalemuseum.org.uk
www.weardalemuseum.org.uk



Tells the story of local life and heritage in Weardale, including the historic High House Chapel built in 1760, one of the oldest Methodist chapels. The Weardale Museum occupies the adjoining former manse and showcases local history displays and collections. Ground floor areas of the museum are wheelchair accessible and large illustrated books and computer displays allow visitors to view material from the upstairs galleries.

At the time of writing the museum car park was temporarily closed due to maintenance. Visitors are advised to park on the roadside adjacent to the museum, taking care not to block entrances, and passengers may be dropped off at the door before parking nearby.

Weardale Railway

Stanhope Station, Station Road, Stanhope,
Bishop Auckland, DL13 2YS
Tel: 07729 765504
Email: weardalerailway@aucklandproject.org
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. Ramp available for wheelchair access to the train at all stations. Accessible toilet at Stanhope station only, which has a well-stocked shop and café.

Sports Clubs & Contacts

Activity Alliance

Tel: 0808 175 6991

www.activityalliance.org.uk

A national charity that works to make active lives possible for people with disabilities, with the vision that all disabled people feel they belong in sports and activities.

British Blind Sport

Tel: 01926 424247

Email: info@britishblindsport.org.uk

www.britishblindsport.org.uk

A charity that works across the UK ensuring people with sight loss have the same opportunities as sighted people to access and enjoy sport and physical activity.

Durham Area Disability Leisure Group

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

Tel: 07592 366454

Email: dadlg08@googlemail.com

www.dadlg.org

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

Every Body Moves

Tel: 02039 654124 (British Paralympic Association)

Email: info@everybodymoves.org.uk

www.everybodymoves.org.uk

Aims to make disability sport more accessible by listing local opportunities, from wheelchair basketball to disability cycling.

Wheelpower – British Wheelchair Sport

Tel: 01296 395995

Email: info@wheelpower.org.uk

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

www.ukdeafsport.org.uk

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

Aerial Sports & Activities

Aerobility

Tel: 0303 303 1230

Email: info@aerobility.com

www.aerobility.com

Offering disabled people the opportunity to fly an aeroplane. They provide 'experience of a lifetime' trial flying lessons for as many terminally ill and disabled people as possible every year. They also offer subsidised flying days for other disability charities and at-cost instruction and qualification flight training to disabled people.

Flyability

Flyability Tel: 0116 289 4316 (BHPA office)

Email: contact@flyability.org.uk

<https://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.

Archery

Green Lane Disabled and Able Bodied Archers

Email: info@greenlanearchers.com

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

North East Durham Archers

Email: secretary@northeastarchers.co.uk

<https://northeastarchers.co.uk>

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

Norton Archers

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.

Outdoor Pursuits



Canals & River Cruises

Prince Bishop River Cruiser

The Boat House, Elvet Bridge, Durham, DH1 3AF
Tel: 0191 386 9525

Regular summer sailings from Durham city centre. The commentary includes history, natural history and geography. The on-board toilet is not accessible; the nearest accessible toilet is at the adjacent Prince Bishops Shopping Centre.

Climbing

ROF59 Activity Centre

Durham Way South, Aycliffe Business Park, DL5 6XN
Tel: 01325 728 222
Email: hello@rof59.co.uk
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

www.britishorienteering.org.uk

Orienteering is a challenging outdoor adventure sport that exercises both body and mind. The aim is to navigate in sequence between points marked on a map and decide the best route to complete the course in the quickest time. 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 near to you. TrailO provides an orienteering competition for people of all levels of physical ability, including those who are physically challenged or wheelchair users.

Northern Navigators Orienteering Club

Email: info@northern-navigators.org.uk

www.northern-navigators.org.uk

A friendly, volunteer-run club based in County Durham and the surrounding North East. They organise a range of orienteering activities for all ages and abilities, from beginners to experienced competitors. The club welcomes newcomers and provides guidance to help people get started. Some events, such as park-based and urban courses, may be more suitable for those with limited mobility.

Swimming

Freeman's Quay Leisure Centre

Freeman's Place, Durham DH1 1SW

Tel: 0300 026 8488

Email: enquiries-freemans-quay@sport.durham.gov.uk

www.thriveleisure.co.uk

Offers swimming, gym, and fitness activities, including a 25-metre pool and learner pool. The centre is accessible, with step-free access, accessible changing rooms, a pool hoist, and inclusive or disability-friendly swimming sessions.

Stanhope Swimming Pool

Castle Park, Stanhope, County Durham, DL13 2LY

Tel: 01388 528466

Email: enquiries@stanhopepool.co.uk

<https://stanhopepool.co.uk>

Outdoor Pursuits

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

Water Sports

British Rowing

Tel: 020 8237 6700

Email: info@britishrowing.org

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

Tel: 07572 117942

Email: info@drsc.co.uk

www.drsc.co.uk

Derwent Reservoir Sailing Club offers sailing and water sports for people of all abilities. Boats suitable for physical disabilities are available, with volunteer support and a personnel hoist to assist with access in and out of the boats. The club promotes an inclusive environment for all visitors.

Outdoor Centres

Moor House Adventure Centre

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

Tel: 0191 584 1703

Email: info@moor-house.org.uk

www.moor-house.org.uk

Provides adventurous activities for groups and individuals in the North East and beyond. From day visits to catered overnight accommodation their experienced team of staff and instructors are there to help plan and run your visit.

Clubs & Contacts

Bikeability

Tel: 01223 606027

Email: contactus@bikeability.org.uk

www.bikeability.org.uk

Bikeability is a cycle training programme for children and adults, all about gaining practical skills and understanding how to cycle safely on today's roads. Search their website to find a Bikeability Cycle Trainer near to you.

British Cycling (Breeze Rides for Women)

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

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 from their website or contact them for copies.

Gateway Wheelers

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

Tel: 0758 4737449

Email: sara@gatewaywheelers.org.uk

www.gatewaywheelers.org.uk

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

North Pennines National Landscape

Tel: 01388 528801

Email: info@northpennines.org.uk

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.

Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

Tel: 0117 926 8893

Email: enquiries@walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk

www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk

The Walk Wheel Cycle Trust aims to make it possible for everyone to walk, wheel, and cycle safely and easily. Their mission focuses on creating accessible, traffic-free, and enjoyable routes across the UK, specifically managing the 12,000-mile National Cycle Network to foster healthier, happier, and greener communities.

Tandem Club

Tel: 01732 848432

Email: disabilities@tandem-club.org.uk

www.tandem-club.org.uk

The club can help with questions relating to disabled and visually impaired tandem riding. They cannot offer tandems for loan but can advise on groups who do. For visually impaired members, the club produces its bi-monthly journal as a Talking Journal, available on CD and as MP3 files.

Cycle Routes

The following are some 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

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 (see below).

Brandon to Bishop Auckland

Durham to Bishop Auckland, 9½ miles.

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

Cycling

closed to passenger traffic in 1964. There are links to the Deerness Valley, and Lanchester Valley cycle routes.

Consett and Sunderland Railway Path

Tel: 0117 926 8893

www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk and www.c2c-guide.co.uk

This 23-mile, well-surfaced route is accessible for wheelchair users and those with limited mobility, though there are no toilets. Part of the C2C and National Cycle Network Route 7, it includes nine miles in Derwentside from Lydgett's Junction (Consett) to Beamish. The Stanley to Sunderland section is one of the easiest on the C2C, mostly flat or downhill apart from a small climb at Cox Green, offering scenic views from the hills around Beamish to Washington and Sunderland's industrial landscape.

Deerness Valley

Durham to Stanley, Crook, 8 miles.

www.thisisdurham.com

The start of the route is 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

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 Trust's 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

Redford Lane, Near Bedburn, DL13 3NL

Tel: 01388 488312

Email: enquiries.hamsterley@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

www.forestryengland.uk/hamsterley-forest

A 2000-hectare forest managed by Forestry England, with 33 miles of way-marked trails. 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 5.

Cycling

Lanchester Valley Railway Path

Lydgetts Junction car park, Consett, off the A692
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.

Tees Railway Path

Cotherstone to Lonton, near Middleton, 6 miles.
www.northpennines.org.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
www.durham.gov.uk

The 9.7-mile Consett to Stanhope 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.



Horse riding

Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA)

Tel: 01926 492915 (National Office team)

Email: info@rda.org.uk

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 and around the County Durham area offering riding for disabled sessions:

Bedale Group

Tel: 07711 583081

Email: bedalerda@outlook.com

Postcode: DL9 4LQ

Mill House Riding (affiliated to the RDA)

Tel: 01740 622882

Email: millhouseridingcentre@outlook.com

Postcode: TS21 4BD

Teesside Group

Tel: 07775 883708

Email: paula.kuit@btinternet.com

Postcode: TS17 9AB

Tyne and Wear Group

Tel: 0191 416 2745

Postcode: NE37 3HR

Wildlife Clubs & Organisations

British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)

Tel: 01842 750050
Email: info@bto.org
www.bto.org

The BTO have a broad range of surveys for volunteers to participate in, including the 'Garden BirdWatch' and 'Nest Record Scheme'. The surveys are a great way to help wildlife from your home by making an important contribution to the understanding of the UK's birds.

Butterfly Conservation

Tel: 01929 400209
Email: info@butterfly-conservation.org
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

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

www.durhambats.org.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: admin@durhambirdclub.org.uk
www.durhambirdclub.org.uk

Records and studies birds 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: 07868 522154
Email: chairman@durhamcountybadgers.org.uk
www.durhambadgers.org.uk

The DCBG was formed in 1981 and aims to protect and study the badger in its natural environment. They educate the public about the threats the badger is subjected to, from roads, persecution and land development.

Wildlife Clubs & Organisations

Durham Wildlife Trust

Tel: 0191 5843112

Email: mail@durhamwt.co.uk

www.durhamwt.com

The Durham Wildlife Trust protects wildlife and promotes nature conservation across County Durham, the City of Sunderland, and the boroughs of Gateshead, South Tyneside, and Darlington. The Trust manages more than 50 nature reserves and have two visitor centres; Rainton Meadows and Low Barns (see *Accessible Wildlife Sites* – pages 28 & 29). They work with people of all ages through education, volunteering, and community projects, and provide opportunities for training in wildlife survey skills and plant identification.

North Pennines National Landscape

Tel: 01388 528801

Email: info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk

www.northpennines.org.uk

The North Pennines National Landscape team works with partner organisations, farmers, land managers and local communities to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of this protected landscape. Their work focuses on nature recovery, restoring habitats such as peatlands, woodlands and hay meadows and protecting wildlife and cultural heritage. They also help people understand and connect with the landscape through education, volunteering and community.

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

www.rspb.org.uk

The RSPB is the UK charity working to secure a healthy environment for birds and all wildlife. You can help 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.group.rspb.org.uk/durham

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

Wildlife Clubs & Organisations

Wear Rivers Trust

Tel: 01388 488867

Email: admin@wear-rivers-trust.org.uk

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

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. They hold talks and guided walks.



Accessible Wildlife Watching

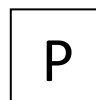
Wildlife watching is an enjoyable and peaceful past time where you can develop your skills in your own time. Below are some of the best accessible sites in which you can enjoy, watch and study wildlife.

This symbol 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



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 short, circular '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

Oakerside Dene Lodge, Stanhope Chase, Peterlee, SR8 1NJ
Tel: 0191 586 0004

Email: cedenquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

www.gov.uk/government/publications/durhams-national-nature-reserves



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 Oakerside Dene Lodge. The car park has ample parking, including two Blue Badge bays. An accessible toilet with direct access from the car park is available. The easy access path is suitable for wheelchair users; however, after heavy rain the ground may become softer, so it may be advisable to avoid the path during these times.

Grassholme Reservoir

West Pasture Road, Near Grassholme, DL12 0PW

Tel: 01833 641 121

Email: info@watersideparksuk.com

www.watersideparksuk.com/park/grassholme



This reservoir for fishing and sailing offers spectacular views of the valley, with Blue Badge parking, a small shop for refreshments, a visitor centre (seasonal opening) and accessible toilets. The nature reserve is situated to the west end of the reservoir; parking is on the roadside.

Accessible Wildlife Watching

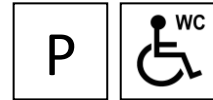
Hamsterley Forest

Redford Lane, Near Bedburn, DL13 3NL

Tel: 01388 488312

Email: enquiries.hamsterley@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

www.forestryengland.uk/hamsterley-forest



A 2000-hectare woodland oasis situated in the Durham Dales and managed by Forestry England, Hamsterley Forest offers good opportunities for accessible wildlife watching. Visitors may spot roe deer and a variety of woodland birds, including birds of prey. In summer, butterflies are often seen along sunny paths. Blue Badge parking is available near the visitor centre (charges apply). The centre includes displays on forest wildlife and management, along with a small gift shop, tearoom and play park (accessible to wheelchairs and pushchairs). A scenic 4-mile forest drive runs through the heart of the forest, giving easy access to picnic sites and viewpoints. See *Easy Going Walks* – page 5 for more details.

Hannah's Meadow Walk, Baldersdale

Balderhead Reservoir carpark, near Middleton-in-Teesdale, DL12 9UX

Tel: 01388 488728

Email: mail@durhamwt.co.uk

www.durhamwt.com/nature-reserves/hannahs-meadow

Hannah's Meadow is a protected upland hay meadow and one of the richest wildflower meadows in County Durham. In early summer the fields are filled with species such as ragged robin and marsh marigold. The walk also passes Hannah's Barn, which tells the story of Hannah Hauxwell, who lived and farmed alone at nearby Low Birk Hatt for many years without mains electricity or running water. Park at Balderhead Reservoir carpark and follow the waymarked circular route (1¾ miles). The walk follows wide, solid farm tracks through open countryside and past Hannah's Meadow nature reserve. Paths are generally firm and wide but can be undulating and uneven, so powered wheelchairs may find the route easier than manual chairs. There is also a solid grassy section, which may be best avoided after heavy rain. The closest accessible toilets are available at Grassholme Reservoir.

Low Barns Nature Reserve & Visitor Centre

Low Lane, Witton-le-Wear,
Bishop Auckland, DL14 0AG

Tel: 0191 584 3112

Email: mail@durhamwt.co.uk

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

Accessible Wildlife Watching

mix of woodlands, species rich grasslands, lakes and ponds. There is a visitor centre and café on site. The reserve has a flat terrain with a network of surfaced paths and a number of accessible bird hides. Regular sightings of kingfisher and great for spotting butterflies.

Milkwellburn Wood

Near Blackhall Mill, NE17 7TE

Tel: 0191 584 3112

www.durhamwt.com/nature-reserves/milkwellburn-wood

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 via the southern entrance. The ancient woodland's ground flora includes greater woodrush, primrose, bluebell, dog's mercury, broad-leaved helleborine and many ferns such as hart's-tongue and lady fern.

Rainton Meadows Nature Reserve

Mallard Way, Houghton le Spring, DH4 6PU

Tel: 0191 584 3112

Email: mail@durhamwf.co.uk

www.durhamwt.com/nature-reserves/rainton-meadows



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.

WWT Washington Wetland Centre

Pattinson, Washington,
Tyne and Wear, NE38 8LE

Tel: 0191 416 5454

Email: info.washington@wwt.org.uk

www.wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/washington



A Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust site, with 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 and mobility scooters are available to borrow - please book in advance. The site is mainly flat; staff can advise on routes that avoid steep slopes. Step free entry to most hides. The River Wear Trail passes the centre, as does the C2C cycle route.

Accessible Wildlife Watching

Watergate Forest Park

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

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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.

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

Bempton Cliffs

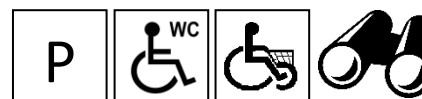
Cliff Lane, Bempton, YO15 1JF
Tel: 01262 422212
Email: bempton.cliffs@rspb.org.uk
www.rspb.org.uk/days-out/reserves/bempton-cliffs



This sea cliff bird reserve is home to one of the UK's top wildlife spectacles; half a million seabirds gather here between March and August to raise a family on towering chalk cliffs, including gannets, guillemots, razorbills and puffins. Some 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.

Saltholme

Seaton Carew Road, Middlesbrough, TS2 1TP
Tel: 01642 546625
Email: saltholme@rspb.org.uk
www.rspb.org.uk/days-out/reserves/saltholme



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 and gift shop. Electric scooters are available for hire – it is advisable to pre-book.

Volunteering in the Countryside

There are always lots of opportunities to get involved in your local countryside through volunteering for a conservation or community group.

General Contacts

Durham Community Action

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

Tel: 01388 742040

Email: info@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk

www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk

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

Durham County Council

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 5693511

Email: info@eastdurhamtrust.org.uk

www.eastdurhamtrust.org.uk

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

Countryside Contacts

County Durham's Countryside Service

Tel: 03000 264 589

Email: countryside@durham.co.uk

www.durham.gov.uk/countryside

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

Durham Wildlife Trust

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

Tel: 0191 584 3112

Email: volunteer@durhamwt.co.uk

www.durhamwt.com

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

Volunteering in the Countryside

Groundwork NE & Cumbria

Unit 14 Parsons Court, Welbury Way, Aycliffe Business Park,
Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6ZE

Tel: 01388 662 666

Email: north.east@groundwork.org.uk

www.groundwork.org.uk/north-east-and-cumbria

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

National Trust

Email: n.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)

www.rspb.org.uk

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

For opportunities at Saltholme Reserve contact:

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

The Conservation Volunteers (North-East)

Tel: 01919169801

north-east@tcv.org.uk

www.tcv.org.uk/northeast

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.

RADAR and Blue Badge

Disability Rights UK

Tel: 0330 995 0400

Email: enquiries@disabilityrightsuk.org

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

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.

The Countryside Code



Your guide to enjoying parks and waterways, coast and countryside

Respect everyone

- be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside
- leave gates and property as you find them
- do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking
- be nice, say hello, share the space
- follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available

Protect the environment

- take your litter home - leave no trace of your visit
- do not light fires and only have BBQs where signs say you can
- always keep dogs under control and in sight
- dog poo - bag it and bin it in any public waste bin or take it home
- care for nature - do not cause damage or disturbance

Enjoy the outdoors

- check your route and local conditions
- plan your adventure - know what to expect and what you can do
- enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory



www.countryside-code.org.uk

About Open Country

Open Country began in 1990 as a temporary project set up to enable adults with a disability to access and enjoy the countryside. Since then, we have developed into a small charity with huge aims! On an average week we run up to 20 countryside activities, catering for a range of abilities. Over the years we have been recognised by many awards including the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

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 activities staff have joined the charity from a countryside background of work and personal interest. This Directory is just one of the ways in which we try to let people know about what is available to them in their area 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/countryside-access-directories

Our directories are free, but we always welcome donations. You can donate online at www.opencountry.org.uk/donate Thank you very much.



The authors of this Directory have made every effort to ensure that the information included was correct 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.



We hope to update this Directory in the future. If you have any comments or suggestions, please get in touch:

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46 East Parade

Harrogate

North Yorkshire

HG1 5LT

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