

# Cycling

IN THE  
NORTH PENNINES

4 ROUTES for

EXPERIENCED CYCLISTS  
on roads in  
UPPER WEARDALE  
from STANHOPE



**NORTH PENNINES**  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

S T A N H O P E

## THINGS TO SEE

along the way

### An industrial legacy

During the 18th and 19th centuries the North Pennines was the most important lead mining area in Britain. At its peak six thousand miners were dependent on the industry.

Mining and farming developed together, with the miners often living in 'mineshops' adjacent to the mine during the week and returning to their smallholdings on Sundays. Watch out for small farms dotted around the hillsides surrounded by small dry stone-walled enclosures. The mining/farming dual-economy was important to the miners who relied on the produce from their smallholdings to supplement the unreliable income from mining.

Industrialisation has had an enduring effect on the landscape. Look out for signs of 'hushing' - a method of extracting ore by creating a dam on the hillside then releasing the water thus stripping away the soil and exposing the lead veins on the surface which could then be worked. These V-shaped landscape features are still easily spotted.

Quarries, from which limestone and sandstone were extracted for building stone, roads and agricultural improvement, are dotted throughout the area.

### The importance of religion

Methodism was very strong within the communities and many former Methodist chapels can still be seen in the area. Most communities had several chapels to choose from and they were often built through subscriptions from miners who felt distanced from the mainstream church.

### Settlements along the way

**Rookhope** Village grew up as a direct result of lead mining. It was once the richest lead mining area in Britain and the



Mineshop (Beamish, The North of England Open Air Museum)



Weardale/Cyclist (Philip Nixon)

Boltsburn mine was the most important mine in the valley.

The **Rookhope Arch** is now all that remains of a series of six arches that carried flues over the river from Rookhope Smelt Mill. These flues (horizontal chimneys) were used to take fumes away from the mills and the surrounding settlements.

**Allenheads** - the headquarters of WB Lead - was built to provide housing for mine workers. Notice also the old school perched on the hillside above the village. The lead mining companies in the North Pennines provided education for the miners' children. The industrial buildings in the middle of Allenheads are the remains of 20th century activities when the mine was re-opened for fluorspar. You're bound to spot reservoirs around Allenheads - these were used to provide power for a variety of lead mining processes.

**Cowhill** developed as a mining and quarrying centre during the 19th and early 20th century. Its church needed to be moved down the valley from Heatherycleugh when the gravestones started toppling over when they were undermined by quarrying.

### Wildlife hotspots

Upper Weardale (Routes 1 and 2) and the routes across the moors are fantastic for viewing wildlife. Black grouse inhabit the moorland edge. Breeding waders are common during the spring on blanket bogs and wet grassland. Hay meadow flowers are at their best from May to July.

## NORTH PENNINES

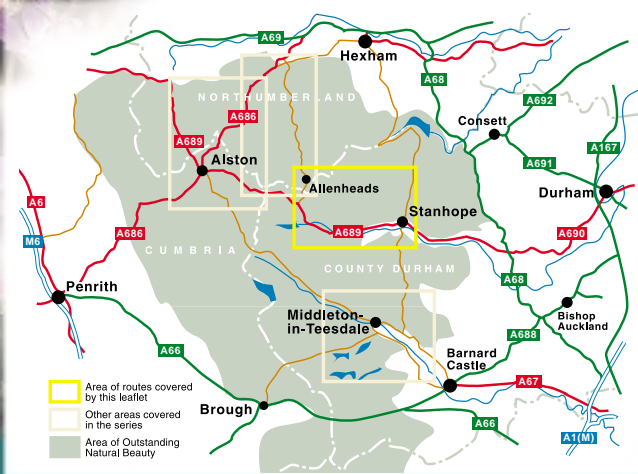
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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

An excellent way of exploring the area is by bike. This leaflet describes four routes of various lengths that can be started from the Dales Centre in Stanhope.

❖ You'll find parking, toilets and refreshments available at the Dales Centre

Three other leaflets in this series highlight routes starting from Alston, Allendale Town and Middleton-in-Teesdale.



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S T A N H O P E

## Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

### THE ROUTES

The four routes are designed as a series of loops and one figure-of-eight off-road trail radiating from Alston. They link to the Sea to Sea (C2C) Cycle Route. They provide interesting detours down into Weardale from Allenheads and Rookhope. They can also be explored from Stanhope. The routes also connect to the National Byway.

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

### Sea to Sea Cycle Route



The award-winning C2C Cycle Route is part of the National Cycle Network and is recognised as being the most popular long-distance cycle route in the UK. The C2C links Whitehaven or Workington on the west coast of Cumbria with Sunderland or Tynemouth on the east coast. More information from [www.sustrans.co.uk](http://www.sustrans.co.uk) or call 0845 1130065.

### The National Byway

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



S T A N H O P E

## AND PLACES TO VISIT

nearby..

### Killhope – the North of England Lead Mining Museum

Upper Weardale

Award winning museum exploring the life of North Pennine lead mining families. Tel: 01388 537505

### Weardale Museum, Ireshopeburn

Folk museum in the Minister's House adjacent to an 18th Century Methodist chapel where John Wesley preached. Tel: 01388 537417

### Heritage Centre, Allenheads

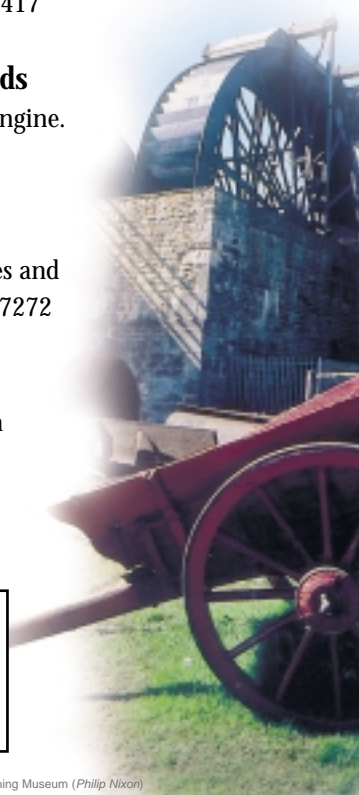
Displays and restored hydraulic engine. Tel: 01434 685395

### Rookhope Nurseries

One of the highest plant nurseries and gardens in Britain. Tel: 01388 517272

### Dales Centre, Stanhope

Purpose built Visitor Centre with Tourist Information, crafts, gifts and refreshments. Tel: 01388 527650



Killhope Lead Mining Museum (Philip Nixon)

## INFORMATION

### CYCLE HIRE

#### Dale Bike Hire

Mobile hire in Weardale, Teesdale & Allendale  
Tel: 01388 527737

#### The Rookhope Inn

Tel: 01388 517215

### TRANSPORT

#### The Bike Bus

Stanley Mini Coaches, Cycle collection & delivery service  
Tel: 01207 237424

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

Traveline Tel: 0870 608 2 608 Web: [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

### TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

Stanhope - The Dales Centre Tel: 01388 527650

### FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information about the North Pennines contact the AONB Staff Unit Tel: 01388 528801  
Email: [info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk](mailto:info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)  
Web: [www.northpennines.org.uk](http://www.northpennines.org.uk)

## G\*~D CYCLING CODE . . .

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

### Obey the rules of the road

\* Follow the Highway Code

### Be courteous

\* Give way to pedestrians and horse riders. Don't assume they can see or hear you

\* Don't expect to travel quickly on shared use cycle paths

\* Ring a bell or call out to warn of your approach. Acknowledge people who give way

\* Respect the life and work of the countryside

### Care for the environment

\* Can you cycle the whole of your journey or reach the start by public transport?

\* Follow the Countryside Code. Respect. Protect. Enjoy. Visit [www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk)

### Look after yourself

\* Take care at junctions, when cycling downhill and on loose or wet surfaces

\* Carry food, repair kit, map, spare clothing and waterproofs

\* Tell someone where you're going and when you'll get back

\* Keep your bike well-maintained

\* Consider wearing a helmet and bright clothing

Thank you for cycling!

Produced by

**NORTH PENNINES AONB PARTNERSHIP**

Working together for the North Pennines

With the support of



and the area's nine local authorities

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## REFRESHMENTS and facilities

### REFRESHMENTS

Stanhope offers a selection of shops, cafes and pubs. There is a pub at Rookhope, a cafe and inn at Allenheads and pubs at Cowhill, Westgate, Eastgate and St John's Chapel. There is a pub and restaurant at Ireshopeburn.

### TOILETS

You'll find public toilets at:

- ❖ Allenheads
- ❖ The Dales Centre
- ❖ St John's Chapel\*
- ❖ Wearhead - opp. Post Office\*

\*Open Easter - Oct



Durham Dales Centre (Philip Nixon)

### ACCOMMODATION

A wide range of accommodation is available in the North Pennines. For further information:

- ❖ Contact the Dales Centre on 01388 527650.
- ❖ Call 01388 528801 and request a North Pennines Discovery Guide (inc. accomm. listing).
- ❖ Ask for a County Durham Holiday Guide - Tel: 0191 3833354.

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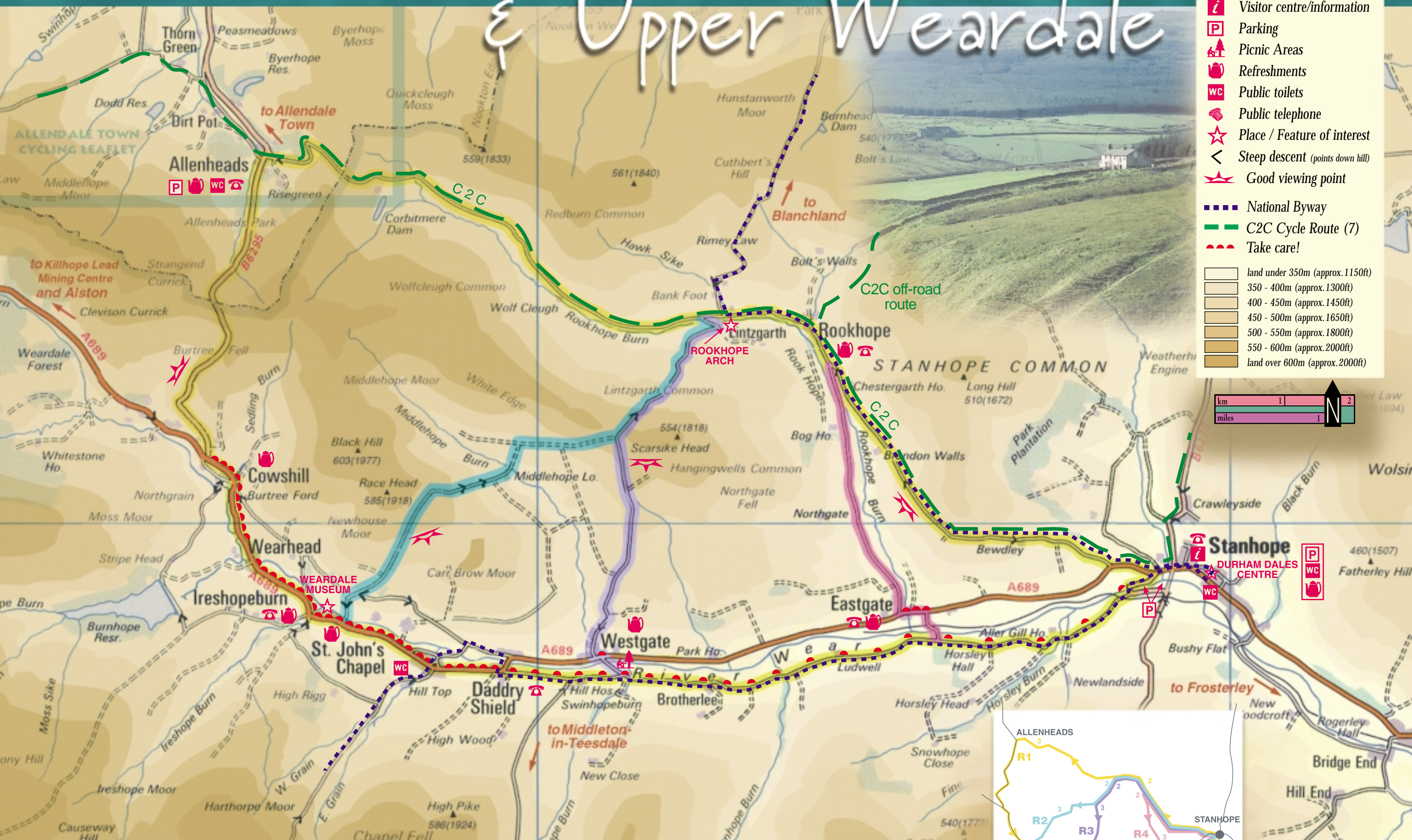
# Upper Weardale

## KEY

- Visitor centre/information
- Parking
- Picnic Areas
- Refreshments
- Public toilets
- Public telephone
- Place / Feature of interest
- Steep descent (points down hill)
- Good viewing point

- National Byway
- C2C Cycle Route (7)
- Take care!

- land under 350m (approx.1150ft)
- 350 - 400m (approx.1300ft)
- 400 - 450m (approx.1450ft)
- 450 - 500m (approx.1650ft)
- 500 - 550m (approx.1800ft)
- 550 - 600m (approx.2000ft)
- land over 600m (approx.2000ft)



## Route 1

APPROX. 39KM  
(24 MILES)

**1.1** TR out of Dales Centre in Stanhope and join the shared-use path along the A689 for 1km (just over ½ mile) past **Old Stanhope Hall**. On the outskirts of the village, on the brow of the hill, TR up the minor road beside **Toll Cottage** (SP: **Greenfoot Caravan Park**). There is a long uphill section and two gates to pass through but a magnificent view of the dale.

**1.2** Follow this road downhill and give way at the bottom as you are now joining the main road into **Rookhope** (pub). TR and go through the village, passing Rookhope Nursery and **Rookhope Arch** on left. The route then takes you out over the moorland climbing gently as you head for the County boundary with Northumberland.

**1.3** After you pass the County boundary there is a steep descent into **Allenheads** with some sharp bends. At the Tj the route turns left and climbs steadily before descending effortlessly back into **Cowshill** in County Durham.

**1.4** Continue on the main A689 road through **St. John's Chapel** and on to **Daddy Shield**. TR just before the left hand bend in the village.

**1.5** SA along this road taking care in wet weather as the sides of the roads become heavily silted. This section of the route is used by farm vehicles and the occasional car does travel quite fast. Keep well to the left and go round corners in single file. Follow this road along the south side of the valley for about 10km (6 miles).

Near Stanhope TL across the bridge over **River Wear** and TR onto A689 back into Stanhope.

## Route 2

APPROX. 30KM  
(19 MILES)

**2.1** As for R1.1 and 1.2 but after Rookhope Arch TL **over bridge**. Begin the steady climb to the top of **Scarsike Head**.

**2.2** SA at the junction downhill, and then up a really steep uphill stretch. The road then levels out, with views into Weardale.

**2.3** Continue steeply downhill and then TR at the Tj, go downhill over river and left onto the main road.

**2.4** SA on to village of **St. John's Chapel** and at **Daddy Shield** TR before the bend in the road. Watch out for farm vehicles and the occasional fast car.

**2.5** Continue along this pleasant lane as in R1.5 for 10km (6 miles), then TL to cross the bridge over **River Wear**. Then TR to Stanhope on A689.

## Route 3

APPROX. 25KM  
(15½ MILES)

**3.1** As for R1.1 and 1.2 but after Rookhope Arch TL **over bridge**.

**3.2** Begin the steady climb to the top of **Scarsike Head**, with views of the valley opening up.

**3.3** Go over the top, TL at the junction (SP: **Westgate**) and descend gently and then steeply down to **Westgate**. Beware of oncoming traffic.

**3.4** At Tj, TL onto **main road**, then TR over river and TL onto a pleasant country lane. Watch out for farm vehicles and the occasional fast car.

**3.5** As in R1.5 continue for some 8km (5 miles), then TL to cross the bridge over **River Wear**, then TR back into Stanhope on A689.

## Route 4

APPROX. 16KM  
(10 MILES)

**4.1** As for R1.1 and then at the end of the descent into **Rookhope** TL at Tj.

**4.2** SA along the road which gently undulates alongside **Rookhope Burn** and continues down into **Eastgate**.

**4.3** TL onto main road. Take care over the narrow bridge.

**4.4** TR after ½ km (¼ mile), crossing over **River Wear**, then TL at Tj along a pleasant country lane.

Watch out for the occasional vehicle which can be travelling quite fast.

**4.5** As in R1.5 continue for 4km (2½ miles), then TL to cross the bridge over **River Wear**, then TR back into Stanhope on A689.