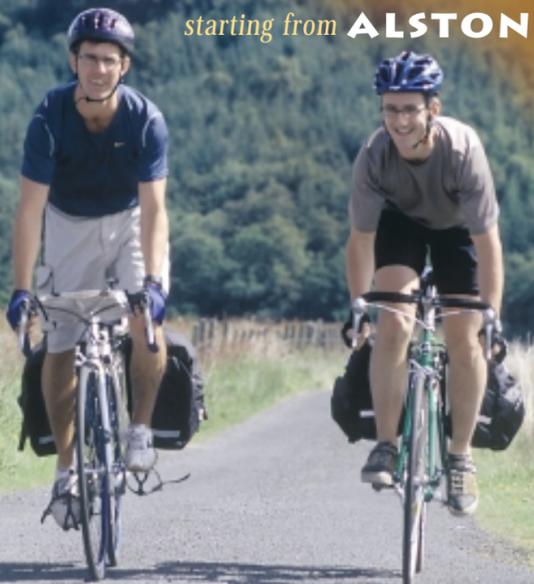


Cycling

IN THE NORTH PENNINES

4 ROUTES for experienced cyclists on and off road starting from **ALSTON**



A L S T O N

NORTH PENNINES

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

NORTH PENNINES

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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

An excellent way of exploring the North Pennines is by bike. This leaflet describes four routes of various lengths that can be started from Alston.

Other leaflets in this series cover routes from Allendale Town, Middleton-in-Teesdale and Stanhope.



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Durham County Council LA1000197 79 2005.

THE ROUTES

They are designed as a series of circular routes and one figure-of-eight off-road route - all starting from Alston. They link to the Sea to Sea (C2C) Cycle Route.

Route 1 is very tough due to the numerous steep hills, however the terrain in the North Pennines means that it is impossible to avoid some steep climbs and so few routes are easy.

There are off road sections on some of the routes - marked with dots. Routes 3 & 4 are only suitable for fit off-road cyclists and need care on rough and wet sections. The routes are generally not suitable for children.

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 or call 0845 1130065.

A L S T O N

INFORMATION

PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION
Traveline
 Tel: 0870 608 2 608
 Web: www.traveline.org.uk

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES
Alston - The Town Hall
 Tel: 01434 382244
Penrith
 Tel: 01768 867466

FURTHER INFORMATION
 For more information about the North Pennines contact the AONB Staff Unit
 Tel: 01388 528801
 Email: info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk
 Web: www.northpennines.org.uk

***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

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

Design & Print Services, Durham County Council, 2005
 Front cover photo: © Countryside Agency/Charlie Hedley

THINGS TO SEE

along the way

Alston - a town with altitude!

Alston developed at the cross roads of major trans-Pennine routes - as a service centre and busy lead mining town. Many of its cobbled streets and the market cross still survive. Distinctive 'bastle' derived houses can be seen throughout the town with stone steps up to first floor level. Today the Parish of Alston Moor is a thriving community of 2,000 people. When it was at the heart of the world's largest lead producing area, however, its population was five times greater!

An industrial past

The landscape throughout Alston Moor bears witness to its industrial past. Features such as the restored Hudgill Bingsteads (passed on Routes 1 & 2) built to collect duty ore from the surrounding mines, the washing floor at Whitesyke Mine, Blagill (passed on Routes 1, 2 & 3) where ore was separated provide interesting short diversions.

Settlements such as Leadgate, Blagill and Garrigill owe their existence to lead mining. Nenthead is a planned settlement from where the London Lead Company controlled their mines. In Nenthead the emphasis placed by the London Lead Company on the social and economic well-being of their employees can be seen in its reading room, school and fountain - still visible in the village.

Birds galore!

The North Pennines is rich in birdlife. In spring and early summer the cries of waders - curlew, redshank, oyster catcher and golden plover can be heard echoing across the moors. You may catch a glimpse of rarer birds such as black grouse, merlin and buzzard or even spot Britain's smallest bird - the goldcrest!



(Philip Nixon)

ARTS & CRAFTS IN THE AREA:

Stokoe House Ceramics Gallery, Alston

Studio & gallery where ceramics are made and are for sale.
 Tel: 01434 382137

Pennine Pottery, Clargyll Head

Pottery sold from own shop.
 Tel: 01434 382157

Gossipgate Gallery, Alston

Specialising in the work of artists and craftspeople from the North, coffee shop & gift shop.
 Tel: 01434 381806

Alston Craftworkers Ltd

Co-operative, selling locally made goods.
 Tel: 01434 381879

AND PLACES TO VISIT

nearby::

South Tynedale Railway, Alston

England's highest (steam and diesel) narrow gauge railway. Cafe and shop. Tel: 01434 381696

Hartside Nursery Garden, Nr Alston

Specialising in a range of rare and unusual Alpines.
 Tel: 01434 381372

Thortergill Forge, Nr Garrigill

A working smithy making traditional quality hand forged iron products for the home/garden, gift shop, tearooms, gardens and half-mile waterfall walk. Tel: 01434 381936

Nenthead Mines, Nenthead

Heritage Centre explaining the mining, processing and smelting of lead, zinc & silver. Self-guided trails aboveground & guided underground trips. Cafe and shop.
 Tel: 01434 382037

High Mill Waterwheel, Alston

Rebuilt in 1767. Managed by the North Pennines Heritage Trust. Tel: 01434 382037 for details.

REFRESHMENTS and facilities

REFRESHMENTS

There are a number of hotels, pubs, cafes and restaurants in and around Alston as well as in Nenthead, and a tearoom and inn at Garrigill.

TOILETS

You'll find public toilets at:

- ❖ Alston, Nr Town Hall
- ❖ South Tynedale Railway Station, Alston
- ❖ Garrigill
- ❖ Nenthead

ACCOMMODATION

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

- ❖ Contact Alston Tourist Information Centre on 01434 382244 for a free guide.
- ❖ Call 01388 528801 and request a North Pennines Discovery Guide (inc. accomm. listing).

A L S T O N

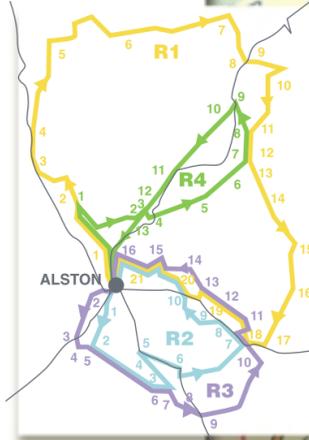
A L S T O N

South Tyne (Northumberland County Council)

Route 1

APPROX. 56KM
(35 MILES)

- long climb before dropping to **Ashholme**.
- 1.5 TR quite steeply at first but soon turning to descent.
 - 1.6 TR then after 1 mile begin to climb steadily over the next 2 miles for the long level approach to **Beacon Hill**.
 - 1.7 TR (SP: Whitfield 1½) and descend to **Whitfield** (shop and refreshments).
 - 1.8 TR on A686 (SP: Alston 9 - fight the temptation! Allendale 4) for 250m to **Elks Head** (PH).
 - 1.9 TL (SP: Allendale 4) and climb steadily for 1.5km.
 - 1.10 TR (SP: Ninebanks) at Keenley X rds then gently up to **Quarry House**.
 - 1.11 SA passing Quarry House on R then begin the long descent towards **Ninebanks**.
 - 1.12 TR (NSP) then VERY steeply downhill. Take great care!
 - 1.13 TL (SP: Ninebanks ½, Carr Shield 4½, Nenthead 7¾). Look for lime kiln on L on approach to the fortified hamlet (pele tower) of **Ninebanks** then limestone quarry on L.
 - 1.14 Keep L (SP: Limestone Brae, Carr Shield 3½, Nenthead 7) and begin long steady undulating climb to **Coalcleugh**. More lime kilns (L) and Old Smithy (R), dated 1689; Throstle Hall Buddhist Abbey on L - look for old packhorse routes on opposite hillside.
 - 1.15 TR on level section thru' **Carr Shield**.
 - 1.16 SA (SP: Nenthead 2) on C2C (westward direction) to climb up to **Black Hill** view point then the long descent to **Nenthead**. Look for 'holloways' on L - worn grooves made by packhorse trains.
 - 1.17 TR (SP: Alston 6) down to **Nenthead**. Look for old-style Cumberland SP, views of lead mining heritage remains everywhere plus R2 and 3 in the distance.
 - 1.18 In **Nenthead** TR at old drinking fountain for some 40m (not 1st L behind church) then TL at 'NO Entry' SP up steep cobbled hill avoiding two cul-de-sac alternatives. Continue up S bend hill which soon levels out as a fine 'balcony' road descending to next Tj.
- **ALTERNATIVE:** stay on A689 but this would mean missing out on the recommended circuit!
- 1.19 TL (NSP) downhill to A689 then TR along main road.
 - 1.20 TR at grass triangle (SP: Hexham 25½) and contour the hillside on the relatively quiet **B6294** for 4kms.
 - 1.21 TL (Coatley Hill North Loaning) down steep hill then TL on A686 back to start (lonnen, loaning and loanen are corruptions of 'lonning' meaning a wall- or tree-lined road/track).



Route 2

APPROX. 26.5KM
(16½ MILES)

- ROUTE 2 is an anti-clockwise circuit which joins the C2C Cycle Route at **Leadgate** and follows its road option to **Nenthead**. This involves the very steep ascent and descent of **Flinty Fell** for which walking the steepest section is the sensible option! The return to Alston varies slightly from the latter stage of R1. Alston to Garrigill has some uphill sections matched with descents; the last third is generally easy. Follow **Pennine Cycleway (68)** signs as far as **Leadgate**.
- START:** Leave Alston (SP: Penrith) along short section of A686, crossing River S Tyne.
- 2.1 Bear L (SP: Garrigill, Thortergill Force, Leadgate).
 - 2.2 SA (SP: Garrigill 3 + C2C sign) and undulate upwards before long descent into **Garrigill**.
 - 2.3 TL in village (SP: Nenthead 3, Alston 3¾) shop, PH and public toilets.
 - 2.4 Very steep hill. Option: (short-cut down only) (SP: Nenthead / Garrigill ¾).
 - 2.5 TR opposite old lime kilns on B6277. Short-cut to start (SP: Alston 2¼).
 - 2.6 TL (SP: Nenthead 2¼, Unsuitable for Heavy Traffic) VERY steep up AND down.
 - 2.7 TR at **Overwater** (houses built by Quaker owners of lead mines) into **Nenthead**.
- 2.8 TL along A689 gently up to pass cemetery on L (prepare to TL after 400m).
 - 2.9 TL (NSP) 100m to farm (white house adj to old stone building behind small cluster of trees).
 - 2.10 TL on A689 for 250m opp. **High Lovelady Shield Farm**. Follow **R1.20** to finish (less attractive short-cut - along A689).

ROUTE 3 is an off-road version of R2 as it shadows the circuit wherever there are suitable sections of off-road available. Fairly strenuous but with several alternatives to shorten.

- START:** Leave Alston (SP: Penrith) along short section of A686, crossing River S Tyne.
- 3.1 TR (SP: Brampton) at **War Memorial** along very short section of A689.
 - 3.2 TL (cross third side of road triangle) (SP: Wardway to Middle Park and Raise Hamlets) and continue along rising **Wardway** track to A686.
 - 3.3 SA over A686 with care (note old milestone: Alston 2. Penrith 17).
 - 3.4 TL onto minor road at sm. grass triangle next to small sub-station; downhill with care.
 - 3.5 (R2.2) TR (SP: Garrigill 3 + C2C sign) and undulate upwards before long descent into **Garrigill**.
 - 3.6 SA through village (services).
 - 3.7 At end of houses TL (SP: Public Byroad - Middleton road, Unsuitable Under Flood Conditions + C2C sign) cross ford then push on up steep hill.
 - 3.8 TR along **B6277** (DOWN SP: Public Byroad Garrigill, Unsuitable for Motor Vehicles beyond Pasture Houses).

- 3.9 TL (C2C sign) at white cottages up tarmac road changing to dirt track at **Priorsdale**.
- 3.10 At **Nenthead** (services) TL on main road to end of houses then TR along riverside track.
- 3.11 TR up steep hill to minor road (tarmac after house).
- 3.12 TL at grass triangle opp. green seat along minor 'balcony' road.
- 3.13 TR (NSP) at wide Tj (slightly uphill) (R1.19)
- 3.14 TL at Tj of tracks (SP: Public Byroad Blagill NOT Black Cross direction) VERY steep descent after 1 mile.
- 3.15 Through gate then TR along relatively quiet **B6294**.
- 3.16 (R1.21) TL (Coatley Hill North Loaning) down steep hill then TL on A686 back to start.

Route 3

APPROX. 29KM
(18 MILES)

- ROUTE 4 is also an off-road route although, as with R3, it is necessary to link available off-road sections with quiet country roads as well as one unavoidable stretch of the A686. This figure-8 route permits either loops to be used as a single circuit which together make up a superb tour of some of Alston's historical access routes. Fairly Strenuous but always scenic.
- START:** Leave Alston on the A686 (SP: Hexham) passing rail station on L & follow **R1.1**.
- 4.1 (R1.2) TR at **Low Row Farm** (SP: Ayle 1½, Alston 4½).
 - 4.2 At sharp bend TL opp. sm. coal mine (SP: Public Byroad via Leipsic, Long Cross).
- **ALTERNATIVE:** SA along to X rds, SA to **R1.21** then TL to finish in Alston.
- 4.3 TR up steepening rough track to A686.
 - 4.4 SA over A686 up to **Clargillhead** (refreshments/not winter).
 - 4.5 Continue thru' gate past wood and follow old road over **White Hill** (avoid in bad weather). Descend technical section with care (surface washed out in several places).
 - 4.6 Join minor road and continue downhill past 1st Tj on L (SP: Alston) which leads up to A686. Continue down to bridge (SP: Ninebanks ¾, Whitfield 3¾, Allendale 5¾).
 - 4.7 (R1.14) Bear L, in effect SA (SP: Ninebanks ½, Whitfield 3½).
 - 4.8 (R1.13) SA (SP: Whitfield 3½). 4.9 TL along A686 for 350m.
 - 4.10 TR up **Morley Hill** farm track at end of pine plantation (NSP) then after 100m SA at track bend thru' gate. Climb steadily then less so to gently cross **Round Hill** until the A686 is reached.
 - 4.11 Join A686 at bend in road then SA for 1 mile (tough in a head wind).
 - 4.12 Bear R (in effect SA) thru' gate (SP: Public Byroad Clargill) for steady descent to **4.3/2**.
 - 4.13 TL along to X rds, SA to **R1.21** then TR to finish in Alston.



KEY

- Visitor centre / information
- Parking
- Picnic Areas
- Refreshments
- Public toilets
- Public telephone
- Place/Feature of interest
- Steep descent (points down hill)
- C2C Cycle Route (7)
- Pennine Cycleway (68)
- Off-road sections
- 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)

