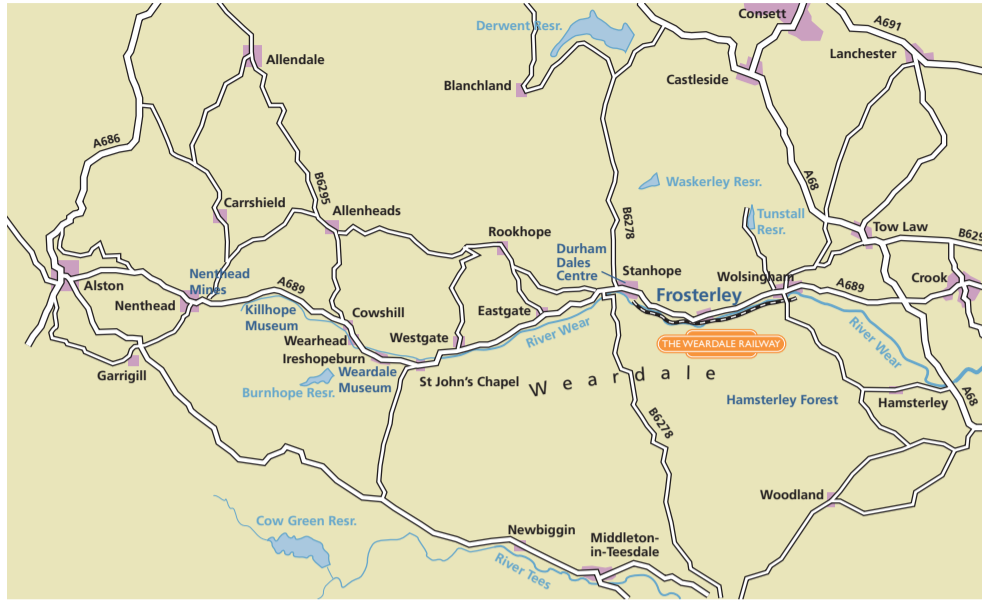


If you have enjoyed these walks, try others in the Mineral Valleys Project Walks series.

Enjoy exploring Frosterley, Weardale and the surrounding area.



Leaflets from the series are available from station offices and tourist information centres in Weardale and Durham County Council.

A leaflet on Frosterley Marble is available from the North Pennines AONB Partnership. Tel: 01388 528801, or go to www.northpennines.org.uk

Credits:
Wear Valley District Council leaflet: Frosterley Marble
The Durham Dales Centre, Stanhope
North Pennines AONB Partnership
Jill Essam, Harehope Quarry
Durham County Council

This leaflet is funded by HLF with a partnership of funders through the Mineral Valleys Project designed to bring communities together to enhance and celebrate their natural and social history.



Frosterley

in search of Frosterley Marble



These three walks look at some of the old quarrying remains of Frosterley and their effects on the landscape here in Weardale. Each walk follows the same outward journey from Frosterley Station on the Wear Valley Railway line.

Walk 1: 2km/1½ mile
Walk 2: 5.5km/3½ mile
Walk 3: 7.5km/5 mile

WALKS FROM FROSTERLEY RAILWAY STATION

Before you start, you need to know:

Walk 1 is a 2 km/1½ miles route and takes approximately 1 hr 15 minutes. This short walk is a circuit through fields and along tracks taking in some of the old quarrying sites, a visit to Frosterley Church and points where you can view Frosterley marble in its traditional worked and raw forms.

Walk 2 is a 5.5km/3½ miles route and takes about 2 hours. It gives great views across Weardale and a fascinating return via an excellent exposure of Frosterley marble in its raw form in the riverbed of the Bollihope Burn.

Walk 3 is 7.5km/5 miles and takes about 2 hrs 30 mins. This route follows Walk 2 but incorporates a simple there-and-back extension and gives the chance to explore a quiet limestone valley with close up views of water worn limestone, ancient yew trees and an abundance of beautiful flowers in spring and summer. You rejoin **Walk 2** and see the excellent Frosterley marble exposures. **Please keep to the path when at the quarry.**

P In Frosterley village beside village hall or at Frosterley Station

W Weardale Motor services bus 101 provides a regular service between Wolsingham, Frosterley and Stanhope

I The Black Bull Inn, Frosterley
The Frosterley Inn
Frosterley Fish and Chip Shop
Frosterley Cooperative store

i Tourist Information Centre at The Durham Dales Centre, Stanhope

W In the village, opposite car park

THE WEARDALE RAILWAY www.weardale-railway.org.uk or 01388 526203

Cautionary note about cows and calves...

Cattle may be inquisitive and approach you, especially if you have a dog. Please:

- avoid walking through a herd of cattle and never come between a cow and her calf
- keep your dog under close control, preferably on a short lead
- if you have a dog with you and feel threatened by cattle, let the dog go and retreat.

All information correct at time of printing.

Quarrying in Frosterley

Limestone has been quarried from the valley sides around Frosterley since the 12th century but it was in the 1800s that the village became an important centre for limestone quarrying. Limestone has many uses - as a roadstone, agricultural lime, for flux in the iron and steel industry and for cement.

A special type of limestone is found in Frosterley; this fossil-rich stone, known as Frosterley marble, can be polished to a high shine. Technically, it is not a proper marble. Marble is formed when limestone is heated or subjected to pressure (or both) which causes it to recrystallize into marble. This limestone has not been altered in this way. It is the white fossils, from a tropical seabed of 325 million years ago, encapsulated within the dark grained limestone which make this such a decorative stone.

The earliest known reference to the rock is via 'Lambert the marble cutter' who is mentioned in the Bolden Book, a northern version of the Domesday Book commissioned by Bishop Hugh de Puiset in 1183.

The most famous use of Frosterley marble is in Durham Cathedral. Here, the ceiling of the Chapel of the Nine Altars is supported by slender columns of this unusual stone. The columns would have been roughly cut, possibly from the Bollihope Burn river bed, then transported to the cathedral building site. Here, industrious Norman monks would have begun the laborious process of polishing, using blocks of sandstone lubricated with water and leather cloths impregnated with fine sand and silt, to bring the stone to a smooth decorative finish.

Locally, in Frosterley Parish Church (built in 1869) you can see a Frosterley Marble font rescued from the church grounds at Gainsborough in Lincolnshire. It has been installed as a result of a local public appeal.

A large piece of Frosterley marble in its raw state can be seen in the public car park adjacent to the village hall. Broadwood Quarry still quarries Frosterley marble today.

The stone sculpture on the platform is a large piece of Frosterley marble which has been shaped and polished.



In search of Frosterley Marble: three walks from Frosterley Railway Station

Directions

Walks 1, 2 and 3:

- 1 Start at Frosterley Station. Leave the station and at the road (opposite the Black Bull Inn) turn left to cross the bridges over the railway line and River Wear.
- 2 Pass the Old Sunday School and Primitive Methodist Chapel on your left and take the next left in front of Old Bridge House (look out for the finger post on the right hand side of the road). Follow this track in front of Old Bridge Farm. Keep left, passing the large modern barns and then fork right through a gate (with a yellow footpath waymarker).
- 3 The path climbs gradually and goes through a second gate. After about 250 metres, where the track turns right, turn left along the footpath, following a fence on your right. **Take care as this path can be slippery.**
- 4 Go through a kissing gate and into an area of old spoil heaps. You will notice an old railway track bed which is cut off by the river (the abutments are still in place). Follow the old railway track bed towards a cutting ahead (the entrance to a disused quarry). Do not go into the quarry, instead keep left on the stony path that climbs up to a kissing gate.

Walk 1 leaves Walks 2 and 3 at this point.

- 5 For **Walk 1**, go through the kissing gate and follow the footpath to a memorial bench. Carry on for 100 metres to a track junction. Turn left down to a footbridge across the River Wear. Then follow the directions from 15 back to the start.
- For **Walks 2 and 3**, don't go through the kissing gate but turn right to head up through the hawthorn grove to overlook the old quarry on your right and a working quarry (Broadwood) on your left. Go through a second kissing gate and then turn right along a fence running along the top edge of the old quarry.
 - 6 After 200 metres, go through a gate and drop down to a surfaced farm track. Turn right to pass an old brick building, and continue on the track as it curves left then climbs to the road. Turn left down the road, past the 'White Kirkley' sign, over the river to a gate on your right signposted Weardale Way.

For **Walk 2**, now follow directions from 7 back to the start.

For **Walk 3** only; Go through this gate, (if you find yourself crossing a road bridge, you've gone too far). Follow this track up the valley of the Bollihope Burn to a footbridge.

© L Silvera



Beyond this footbridge you will notice the steep banks of old grassed-over spoil heaps which support a good variety of limestone loving plants, such as Black Knapweed (left). Enjoy the flowers and the contrasting landscape of this narrow gorge-like valley.

The track follows an old railway branch line built to transport limestone to the main rail line (constructed in 1847) leading from Weardale to Middlesbrough via Darlington and Stockton.

Follow the path as it leads through a rock gap. Here you can see the effects of thousands of years of water dripping onto and sculpting the sides of this rocky gorge. This was probably once the river course until it found the route to your left. Limestone rivers are notorious for changing their courses, leaving riverbeds dry once the water finds an alternative route through cracks and fissures in the rock.

Head up the valley past a series of pools (remnants of the quarrying operations here) and head to a second footbridge. This is the turning back point. As you head back down the valley you will probably notice more of the quarrying evidence, such as the stones lining the banks of the Bollihope Burn beside one of the pools. Return to the road and turn right.

- 7 Stay on the road, and cross the bridge into the hamlet of White Kirkley, turn left (opposite White Kirkley farmhouse) through a kissing-gate marked with a finger post, 'Weardale Way'.
- 8 Go straight ahead for 30 metres and then keep left past a gate. Now head half-left, down the hill (towards a large tree) and through a gate in the bottom field corner. If you look to your left over the Bollihope Burn you can see the ruins of Bishopley Lime Kilns.

Bishopley Lime Kilns



These massive kilns were built for the production of lime which was added to pastures in order to 'sweeten' grass and improve the grazing. Limestone was layered with coal and set at a slow burn, creating a powder suitable for spreading on acid pasture. The kilns closed in 1920 but following the Agriculture Act of 1937 (when the use of lime on the land was financially assisted through the Land Fertility Scheme) they were reopened by the Broadwood Limestone Company. The quarry and kilns were still working as recently as 1975.

- 9 Follow the river passing through another two gates.
- 10 Where the path climbs away from the river, look for a kissing gate ahead next to a field gate. Go through the kissing gate into shrubby woodland, where there are some of the building remains of Harehope Gill Lead Mine. Climb to go through another kissing gate and follow the fence to a stile on your left marked 'Permissive Footpath'. Go over this stile. To your right is Harehope Quarry.

©Judith Bainbridge



Harehope quarry workers in late 19th/early 20th century.

© Tom Mercer/Harehope Quarry



Harehope in April 1987, after it closed 20th century.

Harehope Quarry

Harehope was started as a limestone quarry in the early 1900s, it closed in the 1930s and reopened in the 1950s. It is now an educational site and centre specialising in sustainable development.

- 11 Go down the hill to a footbridge. **Take care as there are steep, uneven stone steps which can be slippery when wet.**

On the bridge are information panels which tell the story of Karst (limestone) landscape features. If you look down into the riverbed, you see an outstanding exposure of Frosterley Marble. The pale shapes in the rock are fossil corals. On the far side of the bridge is a polished block of Frosterley Marble which shows the fossils very clearly.



- 12 Cross the bridge and follow the path as it sweeps left, go over a stile and immediately turn right to go through a metal field gate. Head up hill, past some old workings on your left.
- 13 At the wire fence bear RIGHT, go through the kissing gate next to a six bar gate. Stay on the track to where it meets the road, opposite Broadwood House. Turn left and follow the road down to a junction just before it crosses the railway line.
- 14 Turn left here, along a road towards the quarry. The footpath keeps to the riverbank; just before the 'Danger Quarry' sign is a public footpath sign which leads you to the right, along a narrow precipitous path above the River Wear (parents need to supervise children closely here). The path emerges from the woodland and joins a quarry track. Where the track forks, turn right, through a gate and down to the footbridge across the River Wear.
- 15 Cross the bridge and go through the double gates to cross the railway line, taking care to follow the safety instructions. You will pass the old mill and mill cottages which make this a pleasant return route. Follow Mill Lane to the main road and turn left in front of a row of houses. To visit the church, look for the track to the church on your left between the houses. Return to the road, turn left and in 200 metres, turn left at the road junction to return to Frosterley Station.

