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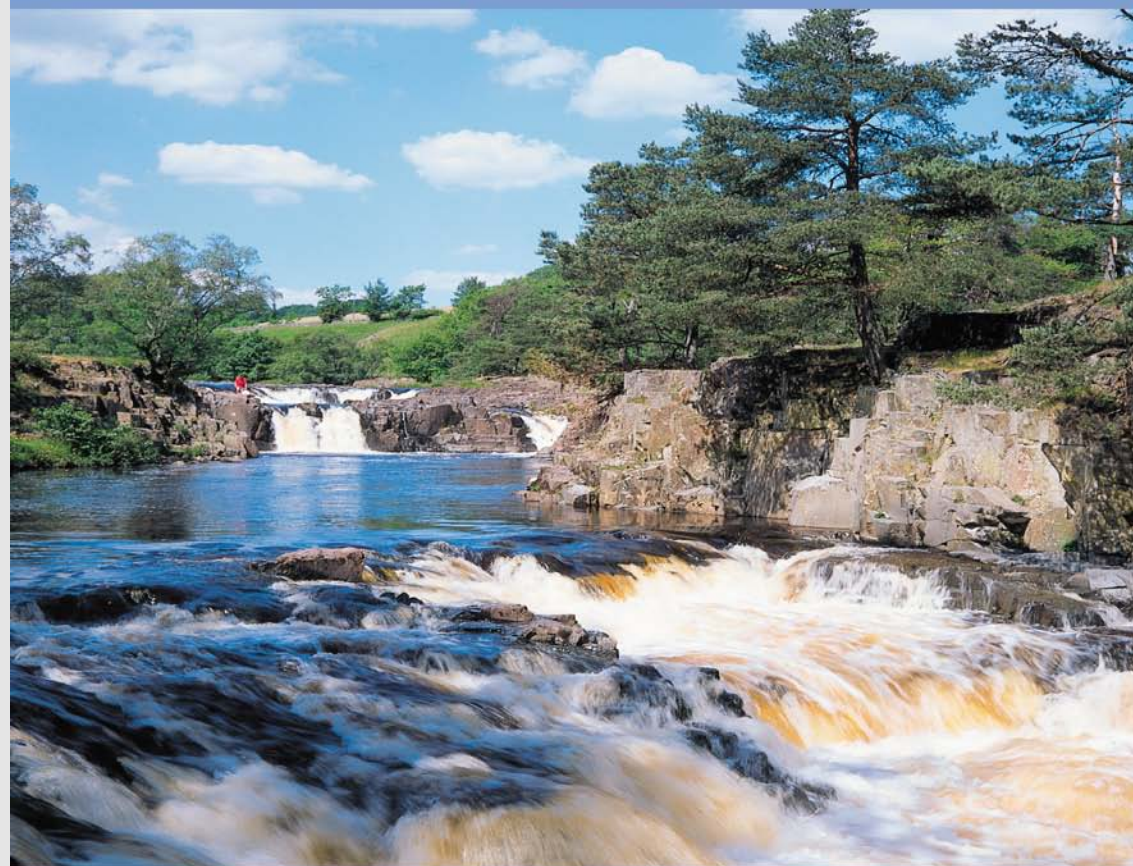
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Guide to Rural England

DURHAM



WHERE TO GO | WHAT TO SEE | WHAT TO DO
WHERE TO STAY | WHERE TO EAT | WHERE TO BUY

Fully illustrated with detailed directions and maps

LOCATOR MAP



Towns and Villages

Please click on any of the towns and villages listed below for information on that location.

Barnard Castle	pg 29	Elwick	pg 24	Pittington	pg 11
Beamish	pg 27	Escomb	pg 13	Pow Hill Country Park	pg 38
Billingham	pg 24	Finchale Priory	pg 10	Redcar	pg 21
Binchester	pg 13	Frosterley	pg 38	Romaldkirk	pg 33
Bishop Auckland	pg 12	Gainford	pg 15	Rookhope	pg 38
Bowes	pg 31	Greta Bridge	pg 31	Saltburn-by-the-Sea	pg 21
Brancepeth	pg 11	Guisborough	pg 21	Seaham	pg 28
Chester-le-Street	pg 26	Hamsterley Forest	pg 35	Seal Sands	pg 25
Consett	pg 25	Hart	pg 24	Sedgefield	pg 17
Cotherstone	pg 31	Hartlepool	pg 22	Shildon	pg 13
Cowhill	pg 37	Heighington	pg 16	St John's Chapel	pg 38
Crook	pg 13	Ireshopeburn	pg 38	Staindrop	pg 34
Darlington	pg 14	Kirkleatham	pg 19	Stanhope	pg 36
Durham City	pg 7	Lanchester	pg 11	Stockton-on-Tees	pg 17
Durham Dales	pg 29	Low Dinsdale	pg 16	Trimdon	pg 25
Easington	pg 24	Middlesbrough	pg 19	Westgate	pg 39
Eastgate	pg 39	Middleton St George	pg 16	Witton-le-Wear	pg 14
Ebchester	pg 26	Middleton-in-Teesdale	pg 33	Wolsingham	pg 39
Eggleston	pg 33	Peterlee	pg 24	Wycliffe	pg 35
Egglestone Abbey	pg 31	Piercebridge	pg 17	Yarm	pg 18

County Durham

County Durham's prosperity was founded on coalmining. Coal has been mined here for centuries, but it wasn't until the 18th century that the industry was established on a commercial basis. When the railways came along in the 1840s, the industry prospered creating great wealth for the landowners, and occasionally great misery for the miners. An explosion in Trimdon Grange Colliery in 1882 claimed the lives of 74 miners – some of them no more than boys. And in May 1951, an underground explosion in Easington Colliery killed 81 men.

Now that the industry has all but disappeared, the scars it created are being swept away. Spoil heaps have been cleared or grassed over, pit heads demolished and old industrial sites tidied up. The colliery villages such as Pity Me, Shiny Row, Bearpark, Sunniside and Quebec still exist – tight-knit communities that retain an old-style sense of belonging and sharing, and even in the most unprepossessing of villages there are delightful surprises to be discovered, such as the near perfect Saxon church at Escomb.

Coal may have been king, but County Durham's countryside has always supported an important farming industry, and Central and South Durham still retains a gentle landscape of fields, woodland, streams and narrow country lanes. This area stretches from the east coast to the Pennines in the west, and from the old border with Yorkshire in the south to the edge of the Tyne and the Wear conurbations in the north. Within this area there are picturesque villages, cottages, grand houses, museums, snug pubs, old churches and castles aplenty.

The coastline, too, has been cleaned up. An 11-mile coastal footpath snakes through the district of Easington from Seaham Hall Beach in the north to Crimdon Park in the south. Much of it is along clifftops with spectacular views down onto the beaches. This coastal area has recently been designated a National Nature Reserve.

Travelling around the region, the visitor is constantly reminded of its rich social, industrial and Christian heritage. The Romans marched along Dere Street in County Durham, and in the 9th and 10th centuries holy men carried the body of St Cuthbert with them as they sought a place of refuge from the marauding Vikings. More recently, the railways were born in the county in 1825, with the opening of the famous Stockton and



Guisborough Priory

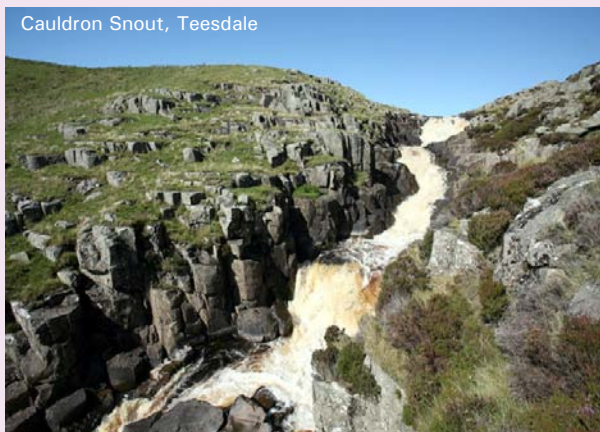
Darlington Railway.

Dominating the whole area is the city of Durham – one of Europe's finest small cities. It was here, in 1832, that England's third great university was established.

The towns of Darlington, Stockton-on-Tees, Redcar, Hartlepool and Bishop Auckland are all worthy of exploration. At one time all falling within the borders of Durham County, local government reorganisation placed Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees in the county of Cleveland. Now that Cleveland itself is no more, they, along with Darlington, are unitary authorities and, strictly speaking, not part of County Durham at all, but old loyalties still exist.

To the west, County Durham sweeps up to the Northern Pennines – a hauntingly beautiful area of moorland, high fells and deep, green dales. Officially designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1988, the North Pennines covers almost 2,000 square kilometres. It is one of the most remote and unspoiled places in the country and has been called England's last wilderness.

Cauldron Snout, Teesdale



The great northern rivers of the Wear, the Tees, the Tyne and the Derwent have their sources here. Tumbling mountain streams have cut deep into the rock, creating the impressive waterfalls of Low Force, High Force and Cauldron Snout. These are magical places and show just how water has shaped the Durham Dales. The area is rich in wildlife. Hen harriers, merlins and other rare species breed here, and in spring and summer the plaintive call of the curlew can often be heard.

This is ideal country for walking and cycling, though in the winter months it can be wild and inhospitable. There are numerous rights-of-way to be explored, including the coast-to-coast (C2C) cycle path. The Pennine Way cuts through County Durham in the south, close to the towns of Barnard Castle and Middleton-in-Teesdale, continuing westward through Upper Teesdale until it enters Cumbria. Further north it enters Northumberland to the west of Haltwhistle and then the Northumberland National Park.

Man has left his mark here too, for this is working countryside. The lower reaches have been farmed for centuries, and the high fells are home to many flocks of sheep. At one time there were woollen mills in Barnard Castle, providing a ready market for local sheep farmers. Lead mining was a thriving industry, with mines located at Killhope, Ireshopeburn and St John's Chapel. Middleton-in-Teesdale was once the headquarters of the London Lead Company, a great Quaker business venture.

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Durham City

Cathedral	Castle	Churches
The Old Fulling Mill	Crook Hall	
University Museum	Battle of Neville's Cross	
Botanic Gardens	DLI Museum	and Art Gallery

Arriving in Durham by train, the visitor is presented with what must be one of the most breathtaking urban views in Europe. Towering over the tumbling roofs of the city are the magnificent towers of **Durham Cathedral** and, close by, Durham Castle.

The Cathedral is third only to Canterbury and York in ecclesiastical significance, but excels them in architectural splendour, and is the finest and grandest example of Norman architecture in Europe. This was the power base of the inordinately wealthy Prince Bishops of Durham who once exercised king-like powers in an area known as the Palatinate of Durham. The powers vested in them by William I permitted them to administer civil and criminal law, issue pardons, hold their own parliament, mint their own money, create baronetcies and give market charters. They could even raise their own army. Though these powers were never used in later years, they

continued in theory right up until 1836, when the last of the Prince Bishops, Bishop William Van Mildert, died. The Palatinate Courts, however, were only abolished in 1971. It is little wonder that the County Council now proudly presents the county to visitors as The Land of the Prince Bishops.

The cathedral owes its origin to the monks of Lindisfarne who, in AD875, fled from Viking attacks, taking with them the coffin of St Cuthbert, shepherd saint of Northumbria. In AD883 they settled at Chester-le-Street. However, further Viking raids in AD980 caused them to move once more, and they eventually arrived at a more easily defended site about 10 miles to the south, where the River Wear makes a wide loop round a rocky outcrop. Here, in Durham, they built the White Church, where St Cuthbert's remains were finally laid to rest.

The present cathedral building was begun by William de St Carleph or St Calais, Bishop of Durham from 1081 to 1096. William arrived at the White Church bringing with him holy relics and a group of monks and scholars from Monkwearmouth and Jarrow. Forced to flee to Normandy in 1088, having been accused of plotting against William

Rufus, William returned in 1091 after a pardon, determined to replace the little church with a building of the same scale and style as the splendid new churches he saw being built in France at that time. In August 1093, the foundation stones were laid, witnessed by King Malcolm III of Scotland, famed as the soldier who slew Macbeth in battle.



Durham Cathedral

Durham Castle

*Palace Green, Durham,
Co Durham DH1 3RW
Tel: 01913 344106*

In 1069, three years after landing in Britain, William the Conqueror finally subdued the North of England. William recognised the defensive potential of the rocky peninsula of Durham and a castle was founded there in 1072. Nine centuries later, Durham Castle remains one of England's largest and best-preserved Norman strongholds and one of the grandest Romanesque palaces. Since 1836 it has housed the Foundation College of Durham University, England's third oldest university after Oxford and Cambridge.



The main part of the great building was erected in a mere 40 years, but over ensuing centuries each generation has added magnificent work and detail, such as the 14th-century Episcopal Throne, said to be the highest in Christendom, and the Neville Screen made from creamy marble. On the North Door is a replica of the 12th-century Sanctuary knocker used by fugitives seeking a haven. They were allowed to remain within the church for 37 days, after which time, if they had failed to settle their affairs, they were given a safe passage to the coast carrying a cross and wearing a distinctive costume.

Nothing is more moving however, than the simple fragments of carved wood that survive from St Cuthbert's coffin, made for the saint's body in AD698 and carried around the north of England by his devoted followers before being laid to rest in the mighty cathedral. The fragments are now kept in the **Treasures of St Cuthbert Exhibition**, within the cathedral, with examples of the Prince Bishops' own silver coins. The cathedral is also the resting place for the tomb of the Venerable Bede (AD673-735), saint, scholar and Britain's first and pre-eminent historian.

Durham Castle (see panel above), sharing the same rocky peninsula and standing close to the cathedral, was founded in 1072 and belonged to the Prince Bishops. Such was the impregnability of the site that Durham was one of the few towns in Northumbria that was never captured by the Scots. Among the castle's most impressive features are the Chapel, dating from 1080, and the Great Hall, which was built in the middle of the 13th century. The 18th-century gatehouse has a Norman core, as does the massive keep, which was rebuilt in Victorian times.

Only open to the public at limited times, the Castle is now used as a hall of residence for the students of Durham University, and the Great Hall serves as the Dining Hall of University College. Students and visitors of a nervous disposition should beware – the castle is reputedly haunted by no less than three ghosts. One is supposed to be Jane, wife of Bishop Van Mildert, and takes the form of the top half of a woman in 19th-century dress. She glides along the Norman Gallery, leaving the scent of apple blossom in her wake. A second spirit is of university tutor Frederick Copeman who, in 1880, threw himself off the

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tower of the cathedral. His ghost is said to haunt his former room off the Norman Gallery. A further apparition, who has been seen at various locations within the castle, is a cowed monk of uncertain identity.

The university, England's third oldest after Oxford and Cambridge, was founded in 1832 by Bishop Van Mildert. In 1837, it moved into Durham Castle, though today its many buildings are scattered throughout the south of the city. The importance of the whole area surrounding the cathedral and castle was accorded international recognition in 1987 when it was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

A favourite walk past the castle and cathedral follows the footpaths that run through the woodlands on each bank of the River Wear, around the great loop. You can begin at either Framwellgate Bridge or Elvet Bridge. The path along the inside of the loop goes past **The Old Fulling Mill**, situated below the cathedral, which now houses an archaeological museum containing material from excavations in and around the city. Prebends Bridge offers spectacular views of the Cathedral. If walking isn't to your taste, you can take a cruise along the river from Elvet Bridge.

The rest of Durham reflects the long history of the castle and cathedral it served. There are winding streets, such as Saddler Street and Silver Street (whose names reflect their medieval origin), the ancient Market Place, elegant Georgian houses - particularly around South Bailey - and quiet courtyards and alleyways. Much of Durham's shopping area is closed to traffic. There are several churches worth visiting such as **St Nicholas's Church**

in the Market Place, **St Mary le Bow Church** in North Bailey, which houses **The Durham Heritage Centre and Museum**, and **St Oswald's Church** in Church Street. Their presence highlights the fact that, in medieval times, this was a great place of pilgrimage.

Opened in 2002, the Durham Millennium Complex incorporates the Gala Theatre, a visitor centre with a large format cinema, craft workshops and a tourist information bureau.

The **DLI Museum and Durham Art Gallery** at Aykley Heads tells the story of the county's own regiment, the Durham Light Infantry, which was founded in 1758 and lasted right up until 1968. The horrors of World War One are shown, as is a reconstruction of a Durham street during World War Two. Individual acts of bravery are also remembered, such as the story of Adam Wakenshaw, the youngest of a family of 13, who refused to leave his comrades after his arm was blown off. He died in action, and was awarded a Victoria Cross. The art gallery has a changing exhibition of paintings and sculpture. (0191 384 2214).

Opened in 1960, the **Durham University Oriental Museum** houses a collection of oriental art of international importance with



University Botanic Gardens, Durham

Crook Hall and Gardens

Frankland Lane, Durham, Co Durham DH1 5SZ

Tel: 01913 848028

e-mail: info@kbacrookhall.co.uk

website: www.crookhallgardens.co.uk

Described by Alan Titchmarsh as 'a tapestry of colourful blooms', Crook Hall is a beautiful medieval manor house surrounded by romantic gardens, which include ancient fruit trees and climbing roses.

Visitors are invited to try out the maze, hunt down the ghosts, experience the peace and tranquillity of the walled gardens, or simply relax and enjoy a homemade cream tea in the pretty little courtyard café. The Hall is just a short walk from Durham's bustling market place yet the atmosphere is one of peace and tranquillity.



exhibits from Ancient Egypt, Tibet, India, China, Persia and Japan. Located in parkland off Elvet Hill Road to the south of the city, the museum entrance is guarded by two stately Chinese lion-dogs. The Ancient Egyptian collection is housed in a fine new gallery.

The university also manages the 18-acre **Botanic Gardens** on Hollingside Lane (off the A167) on the south side of the city. The gardens include a large collection of North American trees, including junior-sized giant redwoods, a series of small gardens-within-gardens and walks through mature woodland. Two display greenhouses with trees and plants from all over the world feature cacti and a tropical 'jungle'.

Crook Hall and Gardens (see panel above) is on Frankland Lane, a 10-minute walk north of the Millburngate Shopping Centre. Centred on a lovely 14th-century medieval manor house, the gardens - described by Alan Titchmarsh as "a tapestry of colourful blooms" - are quintessentially English. The hall itself, with its haunted Jacobean Room, is also open to the public.

On the western outskirts of the city, and straddling the A167, is the site of the **Battle of Neville's Cross**, fought in 1346 between Scotland and England. The Scottish army was heavily defeated, and the Scottish king, David II, taken prisoner.

Around Durham City

FINCHALE PRIORY

4 miles N of Durham off the A167

Cocken Wood

On a minor road off the A167 lies



Finchale Priory

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13th-century Finchale (pronounced Finkle) Priory. It was built by the monks of Durham Cathedral as a holiday retreat on the site of a hermitage founded by St Godric in about 1115. The ruins sit on a loop of the Wear in a beautiful location, across the river from **Cocken Wood Picnic Area**, which is linked to the priory by a bridge.

LANCHESTER

8 miles NW of Durham on the A691

All Saints Church

Lanchester owes its name to the Roman fort of Longovicium (The Long Fort), which stood on a hilltop half a mile to the southwest. The fort was built to guard Dere Street, the Roman road that linked York and the north. The scant remains sit on private land, however, and can't be visited. Stone from the fort was used in the mostly Norman **All Saints Church** and Roman pillars can be seen supporting the north aisle. There is also a Roman altar in the south porch and some superb 12th-century carvings over the vestry door in the chancel.

A place well worth visiting near Lanchester is Hall Hill Farm, on the B6296 four miles southwest of the village. It's a working sheep farm, which is open to the public all year.

The area to the south of Lanchester is a typical County Durham mining area, with several small former colliery villages including Quebec, Esh Winning, Tow Law and Cornsaw Colliery.

PITTINGTON

3 miles E of Durham off the B1283

St Laurence's Church

A small village, Pitlington contains one of County Durham's hidden gems - the Saxon-Norman **St Laurence's Church** at Hallgate.

The present church dates from the 11th century, on the site of what is believed to be an even earlier Saxon church. The 12th-century paintings of St Cuthbert are well worth seeing.

BRANCEPETH

4 miles SW of Durham on the A690

Castle

Brancepeth is a small estate village built by Matthew Russell in the early 1800s, with picturesque Georgian-style cottages and an 18th-century rectory. To the south, in parkland, is the imposing **Brancepeth Castle**. The original 13th-century castle was owned by the Nevills, Earls of Westmorland, and for many years was the headquarters of the Durham Light Infantry. Constantly adapted, added to and evolving ever since, the castle has been the home of the Dobson family for over 25 years. Not routinely open to the public, tours can be arranged for a modest charge, and some of the rooms can be seen during the Craft Fairs held on the last weekends in July and November. These three-day events provide a showcase for up to 100 exhibitors whose wares range from furniture to clothing, glass to painting, pottery and much more.

Close to the castle are the remains of St Brandon's Church. In 1998 a fire destroyed all



Brancepeth Castle

but the four walls and tower of what was once a beautiful and historic building. The church's magnificent woodwork, commissioned by its rector John Cosin in the early 1600s, was completely destroyed. Cosin went on to become Bishop of Durham, and restored many churches in the county. Thanks to an appeal, work has begun to restore the church.

Bishop Auckland

🏰 Castle 🏛️ Town Hall 🏰 St Andrew's Church

Bishop Auckland is an ancient town, standing on the major Roman thoroughfare of Dere Street. Like many County Durham towns, it owed its later prosperity to coal mining. When the surrounding pits closed, the town went into decline, but it is now gradually rediscovering itself as new industries are established. As its name implies, up until the early 19th century, this was part of the territory of the Prince Bishops of Durham who controlled what was then a scattering of small villages. Rapid expansion occurred during the 19th century and Bishop Auckland became an important market town and administrative centre for the region.

Auckland Castle, at one time the principal country residence of the Prince Bishops, is now the official residence of the Bishop of Durham. The castle began as a small 12th-century manor house.

Over the years, successive bishops added to it, and looking at it today, it appears largely 17th or 18th century. But the fabric is still basically medieval, although parts of it were destroyed during the Civil War when it was the headquarters of Sir Arthur Hazlerigg, Governor of the North. Bishop Cosin set about making it wind and watertight after the

Restoration, turning the Great Hall into a magnificent private chapel in 1665. Dedicated to St Peter, it is reputed to be the largest private chapel in Europe.

Cosin's successor, Nathaniel, Lord Crewe, made a gift of the beautifully toned Father Schmidt organ with its unusual keyboard on which the black and white keys are reversed. And in the 1880s, Bishop Joseph Lightfoot presented the fine stained glass windows, which trace the growth of Christianity in the north east, vividly depicting incidents in the lives of St Oswald, St Aidan, St Cuthbert and St Bede.

The castle's greatest treasures, however, are the paintings now displayed in the Long Dining Room. Created by the 17th century Spanish artist Francesco Zurbarán, these monumental works, seven feet high, depict Jacob and his 12 sons, the founders of the Tribes of Israel.

The palace grounds, within which there is an 18th-century deer house, are open all year round; the palace itself is open from May to September.

A market has been held in Bishop Auckland for centuries. Opposite the present marketplace is the imposing Franco-Flemish **Bishop Auckland Town Hall**, built in the early 1860s.

While the villages immediately surrounding Bishop Auckland are mainly industrial, there are still some attractions worth seeing. At South Church is the cathedralesque **St Andrew's Church**, 157 feet long and said to be the largest parish church in the county.

On display in a working men's club at West Auckland can be found the most unlikely of trophies – the World Cup, no less. In 1910 the village's football team headed off to Italy to represent England in the first ever World Cup.

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It competed against teams from Germany, Italy and Switzerland, and remarkably won the cup when it beat Juventus 2-0 in the final. The team returned the following year to defend its title, and again won the trophy, which earned them the right to retain it for all time. Sadly the trophy you see today is actually a replica, as the original was stolen.

Around Bishop Auckland

SHILDON

2 miles SE of Bishop Auckland on the A682

🏠 Locomotion

Timothy Hackworth served from 1825 as the resident engineer on the Stockton and Darlington Railway. In 1840 he resigned and left in order to develop the Soho Engine Works at Shildon and make his own locomotives. The first trains to run in Russia and Nova Scotia were built here. Today, the Engine Works, along with his house, can be seen at **Locomotion**, where the displays give a fascinating insight into the early days of rail and steam power in England, including a full size replica of the Sans Pareil locomotive, built for the Liverpool-Manchester railway. This fascinating complex demonstrates



Beam Engine, Shildon

vividly what made Shildon the first railway town in the world. It attracts thousands of tourists each year who want to find out about the transport revolution of the early 1800s. You don't need to be a railway buff to enjoy this museum, one of the most popular attractions in the region. Call 01325 460532 for opening times. Locomotion is an annex of York's National Railway Museum, part of the National Museum of Science and Industry (NMSI).

BINCHESTER

1 mile N of Bishop Auckland off the A689

🏰 Roman Fort

Binchester Roman Fort, known to the Romans as Vinovia, was built around AD80. It was one of a chain of forts built along Dere Street, and has the best-preserved Roman military bathhouse in Britain, complete with a pillared hypocaust heating system. In addition to acting as a military centre controlling the local area, the fort also provided a stopping-off place for troops and supplies heading towards Hadrian's Wall. A portion of Dere Street has been preserved here.

CROOK

5 miles NW of Bishop Auckland on the A689

Crook is a small, spacious town with a wide square, which, in summer, is full of flowers. At one time it was a centre of coal mining, and the quaintly named Billy Row to the north of the town centre is a typical coalfield hamlet of miners' cottages.

ESCOMB

2 miles NW of Bishop Auckland off the A688

🏰 Church of St John the Evangelist

In the small village of Escomb is one of the true hidden gems of County Durham –

St John the Evangelist Church, built using stone from nearby Binchester Roman Fort. This is one of only three complete Saxon churches in Britain, and is typically Saxon in layout, with its long, high nave and tiny chancel arch, which may have been taken from the Roman fort at Binchester. In the south wall of the nave is a curious sundial surrounded by serpents and surmounted by what may be a mythical beast.

WITTON-LE-WEAR

4 miles NW of Bishop Auckland off the A68

Overlooking the River Wear are the hillside terraces of the village of Witton-le-Wear, noted for its handsome green, its open views, attractive cottages and a pele tower attached to fragments of a medieval manor house in the High Street. The grounds of Witton Castle, a medieval fortified house just across the river, have been incorporated into a recreational area.

Darlington

 St Cuthbert's Church  Railway Centre  Train

Darlington is an important regional centre serving the southern part of County Durham, Teesdale and much of North Yorkshire. It was founded in Saxon times, and has a bustling town centre with one of the largest marketplaces in England. On its west side is the Old Town Hall and indoor market, with an imposing Clock Tower designed by Alfred Waterhouse in 1864.

There are many fine buildings in Darlington, most notably **St Cuthbert's Church** with its tall spire on the east side of the marketplace. It is almost cathedral-like in its proportions, and was built by Bishop Pudsey between 1183 and 1230 as a collegiate

church. Its slender lancet windows and steep roof enhance its beauty, which has earned it the name The Lady of the North.

High Row, with its elevated street of shops, forms part of a compact but characterful shopping centre. The tall buildings evolved due to the narrowness of the plots of land in medieval times. The façades are pierced by tunnels, which at one time gave access to rear gardens. These have long since been built over and turned into yards that lend their name to this part of town. The Yards now contain shops and small businesses and are public rights of way between High Row and Skinnergate.

Perhaps Darlington's greatest claim to fame lies in the role it played, with neighbouring Stockton, in the creation of the world's first commercially successful public railway, which opened in 1825. Locomotion No 1 pulled a mixed train of coal wagons and wagons with seats on the journey to Stockton at an average speed of 12mph. It was the Darlington Quaker and banker, Edward Pease, who became the main driving force behind the scheme to link the Durham coalfields with the port of Stockton.

The original Darlington Station, built in 1842, was located at North Road Station. Today it serves as the **Darlington Railway Centre and Museum** (see panel opposite) – a museum of national importance, which houses relics of the pioneering Stockton and Darlington Railway. This includes a replica of Stephenson's Locomotion No 1, a Stockton and Darlington first-class coach carriage built in 1846, a World War Two newsstand, the Derwent (the earliest surviving Darlington-built locomotive) and even Victorian urinals. To the north of Bank Top station, on the main London-Edinburgh line, a notice

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Darlington Railway Centre & Museum

North Road Station, Darlington DL3 6ST
Tel: 01325 460532 Fax: 01325 287746
e-mail: museum@darlington.gov.uk
website: www.drvm.org.uk

Experience the atmosphere of the steam railway age as you step back in time to the North Road Passenger Station of 1842. See Stephenson's Locomotion, which hauled its first train on the Stockport and Darlington Railway in 1825. Explore the railway heritage of North East England through a collection of engines, carriages and wagons. Open daily 10-5pm, all year except 25th and 26th December and 1st January.



indicates where the old Stockton-Darlington line crosses the main line

So much early railway history is to be seen in this part of County Durham that National Rail have named their local Bishop Auckland-Darlington-Middlesbrough line the Heritage Line.

Continuing with the railways theme, there's an unusual engine to be seen in Morton Retail Park, to the east of the town, off the A66.

Train is a life-size brick sculpture, designed by sculptor David Mach, of the fastest-ever steam locomotive, Mallard. Bricks are not the

first materials you associate with speed but Mach's replica of the streamlined record-holder is completely convincing and very impressive. It surges out from a tunnel of earth, its chimney belching smoke, which, incredibly, is also made of brick.

Around Darlington

GAINFORD

7 miles W of Darlington on the A67

 St Mary's Church  Gainford Hall

Gainford village sits just north of the Tees. At its core is a jostling collection of quaint 18th and 19th-century cottages and houses grouped around a village green.

At the southwest corner of the green is **St Mary's Church** – a large church, built mostly in the 12th century from stone that is believed to have come from Piercebridge Roman fort, three miles to the east. Certainly a Roman altar was found built into the tower during the restoration of



Darlington Train



Gainford Hall

1864-65, and it can be seen in the museum of Durham Cathedral.

Gainford Hall is a large Jacobean mansion built by the Rev John Cradock in the early 1600s. Though not open to the public, it can be viewed from the road. It's hard to believe that in the 19th century this quiet village was a spa, visited by people from all over the north of England. Some way away along the banks of the Tees to the west, a basin can be seen where the sulphurous waters were collected.

HEIGHINGTON

5 miles N of Darlington off the A6072

St Michael's Church

Heighington is an attractive village with neat cottages and a large green. **St Michael's Church** is predominantly Norman, and has a



St Michael's Church, Heighington

pre-Reformation oak pulpit with prayers inscribed on it for its donors, Alexander and Agnes Fletcher. About three miles west of the village, near Bolam, is the shaft of a 9th-century cross known as the Legs Cross.

LOW DINSDALE

4 miles SE of Darlington off the A67

Church of St John the Baptist

A visit on foot or by car to Low Dinsdale is well worthwhile, as the 12th-century red sandstone **St John the Baptist Church**, surrounded by copper beeches, is worthy of a postcard. Opposite stands a 16th-century manor house built on the site of a moated Norman manor owned by the Siward family. They later changed their name to Surtees, and became wellknown throughout the north.

MIDDLETON ST GEORGE

3 miles E of Darlington off the A67

St George's Church

Middleton St George is a pleasant village on the banks of the River Tees to the east of Darlington, close to Durham Tees Valley Airport – once an airfield from which British and Canadian bombers flew during World War Two. **St George's Church** dates from the 13th century with 18th and 19th-century additions, and is detached from the village, standing among fields. Curiously, the stonework has been heavily patched with brick at some point. It is thought to have been built on the site of an old Saxon church and the Victorian pews are rather incongruous – more like old-fashioned waiting room seats than pews.

The nearby village of Middleton One Row

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is aptly named, as it consists of a single row of Georgian cottages. The cottages have inevitably been altered over the years as the arrival of the railway inspired development in the region.

PIERCEBRIDGE

4½ miles W of Darlington on the A67

Roman Fort

Driving past the picturesque village green of Piercebridge, most motorists will be unaware that they are passing through the centre of a once important **Roman Fort**. Piercebridge was one of a chain of forts on Dere Street, which linked the Roman headquarters at York with the north. Other forts in the chain were located at Catterick to the south and Binchester, just outside Bishop Auckland, to the north. The remains of the fort, which are still visible today, can be dated from coin evidence to around AD270. The site is always open and admission is free. Finds from this site are housed in the Bowes Museum at Barnard Castle.

SEDGEFIELD

9 miles NE of Darlington on the A689

St Edmund's Church

Hardwick Hall Country Park

Sedgefield, famous nowadays for its National Hunt racecourse, is a small town whose market charter was issued in 1315. The grand 15th-century tower of **St Edmund's Church** dominates the village green and the cluster of Georgian and early Victorian houses. It is famous for its intricately carved Cosin woodwork, which was on a par with the woodwork lost when Brancepeth church was destroyed by fire in 1998. Cosin's son-in-law, Denis Granville, was rector here in the late 17th century, and it was during this time that the woodwork was installed.

Hardwick Hall Country Park lies to the west of the town, beyond the A177.

Developed as a pleasure garden between 1748 and 1792 the gardens were laid out and the ornamental buildings designed by the architect James Paine. The hall is now a luxury hotel, but the 50-acre park with its network of woodland walks and Gothic folly is open to the public.

Stockton-on-Tees

Parish Church Green Dragon Museum

Preston Hall Museum

Stockton-on-Tees found fame with the opening of the Stockton and Darlington railway in 1825, constructed so that coal from the mines of South Durham could have access to the Tees, where it would be shipped south to London. The opening of the railways encouraged the growth of industry, and the subsequent discovery of ironstone in the Cleveland Hills in the 1850s, was to transform the fortunes of the town, providing great wealth for many of its citizens.

Nowadays it is a large, busy town, and no longer a part of County Durham after local government reorganisation created the county of Cleveland, and Stockton found itself on the wrong side of the border. When Cleveland itself was dissolved, the town became a unitary authority, taking in parts of former North Yorkshire.

In the centre of Stockton's High Street is the Old Town Hall and market cross dating from the mid 18th century, and in Theatre Yard off the High Street is the **Green Dragon Museum**, set in a former sweet factory warehouse. Here the visitor can explore the region's heritage, with displays of



Preston Hall Museum, Stockton-on-Tees

decorative applied art, contemporary photography, land transport, maritime, personalities, social history, science and technology, weapons and war.

The red brick Parish Church was built between 1712 and 1713, and is one of only a handful of Anglican churches in England without a dedication. Its official title is **The Parish Church of Stockton-on-Tees**, though for many years it has been informally called St Thomas's. This unofficial dedication came from a chapel of ease that stood on the site when Stockton was part of the parish of Norton.

Captain James Cook is said to have served the early part of his apprenticeship in Stockton. A full-size replica of his ship, HM *Bark Endeavour*, is moored at Castlegate Quay on Stockton's riverside. Alongside is the *Teeside Princess*, a river cruiser that takes visitors on a pleasure trip as far inland as Yarm, stopping at Preston Hall. From the Quay visitors can walk across the stunning Millennium Footbridge linking Stockton with Thornaby on the opposite bank of the Tees.

Other famous characters connected with the town include John Walker, the inventor of the friction match, who was born in Stockton

in 1781, and Thomas Sheraton, the furniture maker and designer, born here in 1751 and married in St Mary's Church, Norton. One of the town's citizens with a more unusual claim to fame was Ivy Close, who won Britain's first ever beauty contest held in Newcastle in 1908.

Preston Hall Museum, set in 110 acres of parkland to the south of the town on the banks of the Tees, is housed in the former home of local shipbuilder, Robert Ropner. Exhibits describe how life was lived in the area at the time the Hall was built in 1825. There is a re-created period street, a fully furnished drawing room of the 1820s, a schoolroom and a collection of Arms and Armoury in the cellar. The museum's most famous exhibit is *The Diceplayers*, painted by Georges de la Tour in the 17th century.

Stockton may no longer be a busy port, but in recent years there has been a lot of development along the banks of the Tees. The spectacular £54 million Tees Barrage, built to stop the flow of pollution from the chemical plants being carried upstream by the tides, has transformed an 11-mile stretch of river. Features include Britain's finest purpose-built White Water canoe slalom course, navigation lock, fish pass and recreation site with picnic area.

YARM

4 miles S of Stockton-on-Tees on the A67

Set within a loop of the River Tees, Yarm was a prosperous river port as far back as the 1300s, trading in wine, flax and sheepskins to

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tanneries set along the river banks. Its broad main street, one of the widest in England, is still lined with some fine Georgian houses and coaching inns, but the bustling river traffic has gone, drawn away to the superior amenities of Stockton and Middlesbrough. Standing in the centre of the main street is an elegant Town Hall of 1710 with marks on its walls recording the levels of past river floods – the most damaging filling the whole marketplace to a depth of four feet. From this street, wynds – quaint passageways – lead down to the river where you can stroll along the banks and admire the handsome old bridge originally built around 1400. The most impressive structure, however, is the railway viaduct with its 40 arches soaring above the rooftops and extending for almost half a mile. Yarm has another important railway connection, since it was at a meeting at the George and Dragon Hotel in 1820 that initial plans were drawn up for the construction of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, the first public railway.

Middlesbrough

Transporter Bridge Ormesby Hall MIMA
 Captain Cook Birthplace Museum
 Dorman Museum

Dominating the skyline of this busy town is the **Transporter Bridge**. Opened in 1911, it is the only working bridge of its kind in Britain. It can carry nine cars or 200 pedestrians on each crossing. Captain Cook was born here in 1728 and his life story can be charted in the



Transporter Bridge, Middlesbrough

Captain Cook Birthplace Museum. The **Dorman Museum** has themed displays on natural history, social history and world cultures. Exhibits include an extensive collection of bird's eggs and more than 70,000 fossils. Built at a cost of £19 million and opened in 2007, **MIMA** (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art) next to the Carnegie Library is home to a variety of art collections and touring art exhibitions. It was designed by Erick van Egeraat Architects. On the south edge of the town is the National Trust's **Ormesby Hall**, a beautiful 18th-century mansion.

Around Middlesbrough

KIRKLEATHAM

5 miles E of Middlesbrough on the A174

Museum Owl Centre

Two good reasons for a visit here. **Kirkleatham Museum** is a 17th-century house with exhibitions on art, coast and country, and the region's ironstone mining and iron and steel heritage. **Kirkleatham Owl Centre** has one of the country's most

SPRINGHOUSE COTTAGES

3 Springhouse Cottages, Easington,
Saltburn-by-the-Sea, Cleveland TS13 4UE
Tel: 01947 893284/07956 344132

e-mail: holiday@springhousecottages.co.uk

website: www.springhousecottages.co.uk

Springhouse is a two-bedroom self-catering cottage near the fishing village of Staithes. Owners Amanda and Adrian Pearson's property offers well-equipped modern facilities and fantastic views over the surrounding countryside and out to sea. The cottage was converted by the owners with love and skill from an old blacksmith's barn. The work took ten months and was completed in May 2009. The whole of the property is at least 200 years old and when they started the work it had not been lived in for 35 years. The ground floor comprises a kitchen-diner, cloakroom and a living room with leather settees, a log-burning stove and underfloor heating. One the first floor are two bedrooms – a double (which has a large walk in wardrobe and a 26" LCD TV and DVD player) and a twin, both with en suite shower. This lovely pantile-roofed cottage has two sets of patio doors, into the kitchen-diner and living room, and outside is a terrace with garden furniture that commands terrific views.

Springhouse is an ideal base for relaxing or walking the dog, while sporting facilities available nearby include golf, fishing, sailing and riding. Staithes, on the Cleveland Way, is two miles away, and also within easy reach are Runswick Bay, Whitby, Guisborough, Pickering and Kirkby Moorside.



WOLD POTTERY

79 High Street, Loftus, Saltburn-by-the-Sea,
Cleveland TS13 4HG

Tel: 01287 640100

e-mail: woldpottery@yahoo.co.uk

website: www.woldpottery.co.uk

For more than 50 years **Wold Pottery** has been producing pieces to delight buyers and owners at home and overseas. Jill Christie has long been passionate about pottery, working in the finest traditions of the studio pottery movement. In 1973 she was apprenticed to Aidan Dixon, who founded the Pottery in its original location near Beverley. At Aidan's wheel she learnt throwing and decorating techniques and took over the business in 1985. To meet the growing needs of commissioning for customers the Pottery moved into a 19th century butchers shop on the main street of Loftus. In 2008 the premises were extended to house the Gallery, fulfilling Jill's dream of having the workshop and the gallery under one roof.

Jill produces earthenware of a lightness and clarity that is never equalled by stoneware. The output includes a wide range of domestic and decorative pieces; some are embossed with real leaves, others feature lattice work, and the classic Wolds colours of sea green, browns and blues are often to be seen. The Gallery houses a collection of original works by Jill and other people in a variety of media, including oils, watercolours, ceramics, sculpture, silks, soaps and candles – gifts at all prices for all occasions, and almost everything made in and around the Moors and Coast.



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important collections of owls, along with falcons, buzzards, vultures and caracaras. The Centre is open Tuesday to Sunday in summer, Thursday to Sunday out of season.

GUISBOROUGH

8 miles E of Middlesbrough on the A171

Priory

The stark remains of **Guisborough Priory** stand on an elevated site overlooked by the Cleveland Hills. Founded by the great landowner Robert de Bruis in 1119, the monastery became one of the most powerful in Yorkshire. Much extended in 1200, and rebuilt after a fire destroyed the whole site, the estate was sold in 1540 to a Thomas Chaloner, who cannibalised much of the fabric to grace ornamental gardens at his grand mansion nearby. Nothing remains of that mansion, and of the Priory itself the great arch at the east end is the most striking survival. The grounds are a popular venue for picnics.

Redcar

Zetland Lifeboat Museum

This popular town and holiday resort is home to the oldest lifeboat in the world, on display at the **Zetland Lifeboat Museum**. The *Zetland* was built in 1802 by Henry Greathead and saved more than 500 lives in its long career. It stands among exhibitions on fishing history, models, photographs, paintings and cards, and a replica fisherman's cottage in a handsome listed building in King Street. Crew training takes place from 9am to 12noon on Sundays.

Around Redcar

SALTBURN-BY-THE-SEA

5 miles SE of Redcar on the A174

Inclined Tramway Smugglers Heritage Centre

Italian Gardens

This charming seaside town (complete with a pier) at the northern end of the 36-mile Heritage Coast, is largely the work of the Victorians. It stands on a cliff high above a long, sandy beach, and to transport visitors from the town to the promenade and beach, the ingenious **Inclined Tramway** was built. It is still in use, the oldest such tramway to survive in Britain. A miniature railway runs from the seafront to the **Italian Gardens** and the Woodland Centre, set between the formal pleasure gardens and the wild natural woodland beyond. The pre-Victorian Saltburn was a notorious haunt of smugglers, and those days are brought to life in the **Smugglers Heritage Centre**, set in old fishermen's cottages next to the Ship Inn in Old Saltburn.



Hartlepool

-  Sandwellgate  St Hilda's Church
-  Historic Quay  HMS Trincomalee
-  Lifeboat Station  Museum  Art Gallery

There are really two Hartlepoons – the old town on the headland, and the newer part with the marina and town centre, formerly known as West Hartlepool. Up until 1968 they were separate boroughs, but have now been combined under the one name. The town, like Stockton-on-Tees and

Darlington, is a unitary authority.

A proud maritime town, the old part of Hartlepool dates back centuries. In the Middle Ages it was the only port within County Durham that was allowed to trade outside the Palatinate, thus confirming its importance. After the Norman Conquest, the Bruce family, whose most notable member was Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland, acquired the town. In 1201 King John bestowed a market charter on Hartlepool and ordered that walls be built to defend it against the marauding Scots. Today, parts of the wall remain and continue

Hartlepool Historic Quay & Museum

*Jackson Dock, Maritime Avenue,
Hartlepool, TS24 0XZ*
Tel: 01429 860006 Fax: 01429 867332
e-mail: historic.quay@hartlepool.gov.uk
website: www.thisishartlepool.com

Open every day all year round and voted one of the top six Heritage and History attractions in the UK, **Hartlepool Historic Quay and Museum** is a fun day out for all the family. Here you will find a re-creation of an 18th-century seaport, which tells the story of life at sea at the time of Captain Cook and Nelson and the Battle of Trafalgar. As well as the coffee shop and gift

shop, authentic reconstructions of harbour-side shops surround the Quay, including gunsmiths, tailors and instrument makers. A film presentation shows how two brothers were pressganged into serving aboard ship and 'Fighting Ships' lets you experience the noise and drama of a naval sea battle.

Guided tours are available of HMS Trincomalee, launched in Bombay in 1817. The oldest floating warship in Britain, it has been lovingly restored at Hartlepool Historic Quay.

The Museum tells the story of Hartlepool from prehistoric times to the present day and includes exhibits such as sea monsters, a Celtic 'Roundhouse', the first 'gas illuminated lighthouse', models, computer interactive displays and PSS *Wingfield* - a fully restored Paddle Steamer.



to stand guard over the headland. There is a particularly fine gatehouse, called **Sandwellgate**, with solid turrets on either side. Go through the pointed archway and you find yourself on the beach.

Built by the Bruces as a burial place, the ornate 13th-century **St Hilda's Church** stands on the site of a monastery founded by St Aidan in AD647. The church is dedicated to St Hilda – its most famous abbess – celebrated for her teachings and her mentoring of a poor cowherd Caedmon, now regarded as the creator of religious verse. Hilda subsequently went on to found the great monastery at Whitby, where the Synod of Whitby was held in AD664. The church houses a collection of religious artefacts, Saxon wall carvings and a tomb, made of Frosterley marble, believed to be that of Robert the Bruce. Parts of the cemetery were excavated in the 19th century, and some of the finds are on display in Durham and Newcastle.

Hartlepool's harbour gradually went into decline, and by the early 1700s the place was no more than a fishing village. In 1835 work started on opening up the harbour once more, and rail links were established with the coalfields. But the project faced stiff competition. In 1847 work started on the West Harbour and Coal Dock, and by 1860 it was thriving with timber and shipyards. Other docks were opened and Ralph Ward Jackson, a local entrepreneur, instigated the building of a new town with streets of terraced houses to accommodate the workers. So West Hartlepool was born.

On 16 December 1914 Hartlepool was the first town in Britain to suffer from enemy action during World War One when it was

shelled by German warships lying off the coast.

Nowadays, the town is a thriving shopping centre, with some interesting tourist attractions, including the **Hartlepool Historic Quay and Museum** (see panel opposite). A small seaport has been constructed around one of the old docks, showing what life was like in the early part of the 19th century when Britain was at war with France. Grouped around the small dock are various businesses and shops, such as a printer, gunsmith, naval tailor, swordsmith and instrument maker. Visitors can also go aboard **HMS Trincomalee**, a British warship originally launched in 1817. Open every day all year round, the site was voted one of the top six Heritage and History attractions in the UK.

Next door is the **Hartlepool Museum**, with exhibits depicting life in the town through the ages. It features tales of sea monsters and the legend of the Hartlepool monkey. Washed ashore on a piece of wreckage during the Napoleonic Wars, local fishermen, unable to understand the monkey's gibberings, presumed it to be a French spy and hung it from a gibbet on Fish Sands. Visitors to the museum can have coffee aboard the PSS *Wingfield Castle*, an old paddle steamer. Hartlepool's **Lifeboat Station** is open for visits daily, with crew training on Tuesday evenings and Sunday mornings.

Hartlepool Art Gallery is housed within a beautifully-restored Victorian church on Church Square. It features a collection of contemporary art and photographic exhibitions. A 100-foot-high tower affords the visitor great views of the town. The local tourist information office is located here, too.

Around Hartlepool

BILLINGHAM

5 miles SW of Hartlepool
off the A19

St Cuthbert's Church

Modern Billingham grew up as a result of the great chemical plants that surrounded the River Tees.

Although the town looks modern, it is in fact an ancient place, possibly founded by Bishop Ecgred of Lindisfarne in the 9th century. **St Cuthbert's Church** has a 10th-century Saxon tower, and Saxon walls survive in the nave. The chancel was rebuilt and widened in 1939 to provide for the town's growing population due to the influx of workers to the chemical plants. In August, Billingham hosts the week-long Billingham International Folklore Festival. Close by is the attractive village of Wolviston.

ELWICK

4 miles W of Hartlepool off the A19

St Peter's Church

Elwick is a small, pretty village with patches of village green running up each side of a main street lined with neat, unassuming cottages. **St Peter's Church** has a nave dating from the 13th century. The chancel was rebuilt in the 17th century using materials from the previous chancel, and its tower was added on in 1813. On either side of the chancel arch are two small Saxon carvings – possibly fragments of grave markers.



St Cuthbert's Church, Billingham

HART

2 miles NW of Hartlepool on the A179

Church of St Mary Magdalene

In this quiet village stands the mother church of Hartlepool, the **Church of St Mary Magdalene**, which has varied examples of architecture. The nave is Saxon, the tower and font are Norman, and the chancel is early 19th century.

On the outer wall of the White Hart Inn is a figurehead, said to have been a relic from the *Rising Sun*, which was shipwrecked off Hartlepool in 1861.

PETERLEE

6 miles N of Hartlepool off the A19

St Mary's Church

Castle Eden Dene Nature Reserve

Peterlee is a new town, established in 1948 to rehouse the mining families from the colliery villages around Easington and Shotton. The town has a modern shopping centre, a tourist information office and a market. Close by is the village of **Easington** whose fine old **St**

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Mary's Church sits on a low hill. The church tower is Norman, and the interior contains some examples of Cosin-style woodwork.

Castle Eden Dene National Nature Reserve, on the south side of the town, is of national importance, being the largest area of semi-natural woodland in the North East, which means that it has not been planted or extensively altered by man. It covers 500 acres and lies in a steep-sided valley on magnesian limestone, with a wide variety of native trees and shrubs, wild flowers, bird life and butterflies, including the Castle Eden Argus, which is found only in eastern County Durham. There is a network of footpaths, some steep and narrow. Visitors are requested to keep to paths at all times to avoid damage.

SEAL SANDS

3 miles S of Hartlepool off the A689

Standing in the shadows of Hartlepool Nuclear Power Station is Seal Sands and the Teemouth Field Centre. Local organisations have come together to protect and enhance the marshes, tidal flats and dunes here on the north shore of the Tees estuary. The area is protected as a Nature Reserve and popular with people who come to view its large Common and Grey seal population and thousands of migratory birds.

TRIMDON

9 miles W of Hartlepool on the B1278

St Mary Magdalene Church

There are a trio of villages with the word Trimdon in their name – Trimdon Grange, Trimdon Colliery and Trimdon itself. It's a quiet village with a wide main street and the unpretentious medieval **St Mary Magdalene Church**.

Trimdon Colliery is two miles to the

northeast, and it was here, in 1882, that the Trimdon Colliery pit disaster took place. A great underground explosion claimed the lives of 74 miners.

Consett

Shotley Bridge Hownsgill Viaduct

Derwent Walk Country Park Allensford

Deneburn Wood

Steel-making first started in this area of County Durham at **Shotley Bridge**, when craftsmen from Germany set up their furnaces in the 1600s and began making swords and cutlery. When the railway came here to serve the local iron works and surrounding collieries in the 19th century, Shotley Bridge began to develop something of a reputation as a spa town, and its popularity as such is evident from the many fine houses that can still be seen, including the Dial House.

Steel-making on a grand scale began in Consett in 1840, when the Derwent Iron Company built two blast furnaces. By 1890 over 7,500 people were employed in the industry, and over one million tonnes of steel was being produced. In the late 1960s, 6,000 people were still employed in the steelworks, though this wasn't to last. The demand for steel dropped, and in 1980 the works closed down.

Consett is now cleaning itself up. Land reclamation schemes have smartened up the area where the steelworks once stood, and its attendant spoil heaps have made way for green hillocks dotted with young trees. The countryside outside the town has some interesting places to visit.

A redundant railway line north of the town is linked to the **Derwent Walk Country Park**. The park covers 425 acres of woodland and

riverside meadow, and the Derwent Walk itself is the trackbed of the old Derwent Valley Railway between Consett and Swalwell. The main walk is 11 miles long, and suitable for cycles, horses and wheelchairs. It gives access to a number of paths, which include nature trails, the South Tyne Cycleway and the Heritage Way. Swalwell Visitor Centre, situated at the northern end of the Derwent Walk, is the starting point for a history trail and has a large pond and butterfly garden. There is another visitors' centre at Thornley Woodlands.

The local council has produced a small guidebook outlining various walks, none more than six and a half miles long, near the town. To the southwest of Consett, almost in the North Pennines, is **Allensford Park**. It sits off the A68, on the County Durham and Northumberland border, and on the banks of the Derwent. It has a picnic park, caravan site and woodland walks. **Deneburn Wood**, a 10-acre plot of woodland with some delightful walks, also contains wood carvings by well-known sculptor David Gross.

To the south of the town is **Hownsgill Viaduct**, constructed in 1857 to take the track



Hownsgill Viaduct, Consett

of the Stanhope and Tyne Railway. Visitors can now walk across it, and there are some spectacular views.

Around Consett

EBCHESTER

10 miles SW of Gateshead on the A694

St Ebba's Church

Ebchester is the site of a Roman fort called Vindomora, and some scant remains can be seen in the churchyard of **St Ebba's Church**. It was one of a string of forts on Dere Street, the Roman road that linked York with the north. Inside the church are a number of inscribed Roman stones, including an altar to the god Jupiter, "the greatest and the best".

Chester-le-Street

Church of St Mary & St Cuthbert Lumley Castle

Ankers House Museum

Waldrige Fell Country Park

Chester-le-Street is a busy market town built around the confluence of Cong Burn and the River Wear. There was a Roman fort here at one time, and the street on which the town once stood was a Roman road, later replaced by the Great North Road.

The medieval **St Mary's and St Cuthbert's Church** is built on the site of a cathedral established in AD883 by the monks of Lindisfarne carrying the body of St Cuthbert. His coffin rested here for 113 years until the monks took it to its

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final resting place at Durham. There are no less than 14 effigies (not all of them genuine) of members of the Lumley family within the church, though they don't mark the sites of their graves. Next to the church is the **Ankers House Museum**, situated in the medieval anchorite. Between 1383 and 1547, various anchorites, or Christian hermits, lived here.

Lumley Castle, to the east across the River Wear, was built in 1389 by Sir Ralph Lumley, whose descendant, Sir Richard Lumley, became the 1st Earl of Scarborough in the 1690s. In the early 18th century it was refashioned by the architect Vanbrugh for the 2nd Earl, and turned into a magnificent stately home. But gradually the castle fell out of favour with the Lumley family, and they chose to stay in their estates in Yorkshire instead. For a while the castle was owned by Durham University before being turned into the luxurious hotel that it is today.

Waldrige Fell Country Park, two miles southwest of Chester-le-Street and close to Waldrige village, is County Durham's last surviving area of lowland heathland. A car park and signed footpaths give access to over 300 acres of open countryside, rich in natural history.



Causey Arch, nr Beamish

Around Chester-le-Street

BEAMISH

4 miles N of Chester-le-Street on the A693

North of England Open Air Museum

Causey Arch Tanfield Railway

The award-winning **Beamish, The North of England Open Air Museum** (see panel on page 92) is situated in 300 acres of beautiful County Durham countryside and vividly illustrates life in the North of England in the early 1800s and 1900s. This is one of the North East's leading tourist attractions. Buildings from throughout the region have been brought to Beamish, rebuilt and furnished as they once were, so that visitors can stroll down a cobbled street full of shops, banks and offices, visit an old Methodist chapel, find out how life was lived on a farm in the late 19th century, take a trip on a tram or steam train, visit an old dentist's surgery (and be grateful you weren't alive to have to visit one back then!), walk through a colliery village and go down a drift mine. You can also see the world's third oldest surviving railway engine, which dates from 1822 and is housed

in a specially created Great Engine Shed. Costumed staff welcome visitors and demonstrate the past way of life.

Two miles to the northwest is **Causey Arch**, reputed to be the world's first single-arch railway bridge. It was designed by Ralph Wood, a local stonemason, and carried the **Tanfield Railway**, opened in 1725, between Sunniside and Causey. In those days the wagons were pulled by

Beamish Museum

Beamish, County Durham DH9 0RG
Tel: 0191 370 4000 Fax: 0191 370 4001
e-mail: museum@beamish.org.uk
website: www.beamish.org.uk

No trip to County Durham is complete without a trip to the award-winning **Beamish Museum**. Set in 300 acres of countryside, it illustrates life in the North of England in the early 1800s and 1900s. There is so much to see. Stroll down a cobbled street of shops, houses, a bank and Masonic hall. Visit an old Methodist chapel, find out how life was lived on a farm in the late 19th century, take a trip on a tram or steam train, visit an old dentist's surgery (and be grateful you didn't live in those days and needed a filling!), walk through a Pit village, and go down a drift mine.

There's also Pockerley Old Hall, based on a small fortified manor house. Here you experience life as it was lived 200 years ago. Stroll the terraced gardens, walk through the fine horse yard, and see the costumes from that time.

Beamish is justly famous as a great day out for all the family. Reasonably priced meals and snacks are available, and there's a friendly shop where you can buy souvenirs.



horses, though steam power eventually took over. Trains now run along three miles of line between Sunniside and East Tanfield. There is a car park and picnic area close by, and rights of way link them to Beamish.

SEAHAM

4 miles S of Sunderland on the B1287

St Mary the Virgin Church Seaham Hall

Durham Coastal Footpath

Seaham was developed by the Marquises of Londonderry. In 1821, the family bought what was then the old village of Seaham in order to build a harbour from which to transport coal from the family's collieries to London and the

continent. The present town grew up around the harbour, and although most of the collieries have now closed, Seaham is still very much a working town.

All that now remains of the original village is **St Mary the Virgin Church** (some parts of which date from Saxon times), its vicarage, and **Seaham Hall** on the northern outskirts of the town. This was once the home of the Milbanke family, where in 1815 Lord Byron met and married Anne Isabella Milbanke – a marriage that was to last for just one year. There is a fine sandy beach in Seaham and a new sculpture trail running between the harbour and Seaham Hall celebrating the town's heritage. A major feature of the coast is

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the **Durham Coastal Footpath**, an 11-mile route that runs from Seaham to Crimdon Park. It passes through dramatic clifftop scenery and deep ravines carved into the Magnesian limestone rock.

The Durham Dales

There are two great County Durham dales – Teesdale to the south and Weardale to the north. Of the two, Teesdale is the softer, particularly in its lower reaches, which share an affinity with the Yorkshire Dales. This isn't surprising, for at one time part of the River Tees formed the boundary between County Durham and Yorkshire. The lower dale is dotted with charming villages that nestle along the bank of the River Tees, as it winds its way between the historic towns of Barnard Castle and Middleton-in-Teesdale. Small farms, whitewashed in the local tradition, are surrounded by dry stone wall enclosures. Travelling up the dale the vista opens out into miles of open moorland, home to a multitude of wildlife and unique flora. Beyond Middleton-in-Teesdale the B6277 winds up and over some bleak but beautiful scenery until it finally arrives at Alston in Cumbria, England's highest market town.

The A689, which winds its way through Weardale further north, follows an alternative route to Alston, passing through a dale that was once the hunting ground of Durham's Prince Bishops. Life, at one time, must have been harsh here and the houses and villages seem grittier somehow than those of neighbouring Teesdale. The scars on the landscape expose the regions past as one of the most heavily

industrialised upland landscapes in England. Farming developed hand-in-hand with mining, as the miners supported their variable income with produce from their smallholdings. Methodism was very strong within the communities and many former Methodist chapels can still be seen in the area. There are plenty of attractions to see here, such as the lead mining museum at Killhope, the curious fossilised tree stump at Stanhope, and the village of Blanchland, a few miles to the north in Derwentdale.

Barnard Castle

Castle Market Cross Bowes Museum

This historic market town is a natural centre for exploring Teesdale and the Northern Pennines. Set beside the River Tees, 'Barney' is recognised nationally as one of the 51 most historically and architecturally important towns in Great Britain. The town gets its name from **Barnard Castle**, founded in the 12th century by Bernard, son of Guy de Baliol, one of the knights who fought alongside William I. The castle played an important role in the defeat of the Northern Earls who rose against Elizabeth I in 1569. Besieged by rebel forces for 11 days, the castle



Barnard Castle

was ultimately forced to surrender, but not before its resistance had provided time for Queen Elizabeth's army, under the Earl of Sussex, to speed to York and force the rebels to flee. Many were executed and those leading families who had supported the plans to overthrow Elizabeth I lost their lands.

The castle ruins, with the imposing round keep overlooking the River Tees, have a gaunt beauty. There are picturesque riverside walks through the woods that once formed part of the castle's hunting grounds. A narrow arched bridge, built in 1569, traverses the fast flowing River Tees. Formerly spanning the boundaries of two counties, and the lands of two bishops, illicit weddings were regularly conducted in the centre of the bridge, where neither bishop could object.

The town has an especially rich architectural heritage, with handsome houses, cottages, shops and inns dating from the 17th to the 19th centuries. The octagonal **Market Cross** is a most impressive building, which dates back to 1747 and has served numerous purposes such as courthouse, town hall and jail. Underneath the veranda (a later addition) a lively butter market took place. You can still see the bullet holes in the weather vane, resulting from a wager by two local men in 1804, shooting from outside the Turk's Head, 100 yards away, to determine who was the best shot. The building was fully restored in 1999.

The Bank was once the town's main commercial street and you can still see several Victorian shop windows. Blagraves House is the oldest inhabited building and it is here that Oliver

Cromwell is reputed to have stayed in 1648. The locality is now an excellent centre for antique collectors. At the bottom of the Bank glimpses of the town's industrial roots can still be found in Thorngate and Bridgegate. Weavers' cottages have been converted into modern dwellings and grassy slopes cover the remains of the riverside woollen mills.

A walk along Newgate will bring you to the **Bowes Museum**, surely one of the most spectacular buildings in England and one of County Durham's great surprises. Housed in a magnificent French-style chateau, the museum was the inspiration of John Bowes, an English aristocrat, and Josephine, his French actress wife. The architect was the Frenchman Jules Pellechet. The owners' love of the arts and a desire that people from all walks of life should be able to partake in such riches resulted in this superb legacy. Sadly both died before their dream could be realised. However, the museum was completed and opened to the public in 1892. Today, the museum houses one of England's finest art collections, which has received Designated status from the government and is unrivalled in the North. Artists displayed include El Greco, Tiepolo,



Bowes Museum

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Canaletto, Boucher, Goya and Courbet. The most famous and best-loved exhibit is undoubtedly the Silver Swan, a 230-year-old life-sized beautifully crafted mechanical bird that appears to pick up and swallow a fish from a silver stream to the backdrop of a tinkly music box. The museum, which is open from 11am to 5pm daily, boasts 23 acres of beautiful parkland, including a splendid parterre garden.

Around Barnard Castle

GRETA BRIDGE

4 miles SE of Barnard Castle on the A66

Mortham Tower Thorpe Farm Centre

Rokeby Park

Lovers of romantic landscape should make their way south of Barnard Castle to Greta Bridge on the A66 – the graceful old bridge immortalised in paintings by great English watercolourists such as Cotman and Turner. Footpaths run by the riverside, through the edge of **Rokeby Park**. Close by are the ruins of medieval **Mortham Tower**, subject of Sir Walter Scott's narrative poem of colourful chivalry and courtly love, *Rokeby*. The elegant Palladian house, where Scott stayed to write his poem, is open to the public during the summer months.

Just to the southeast of Greta Bridge lies **Thorpe Farm Centre**, a 17th-century farm complex that has been transformed into one of the area's main tourist attractions.

EGGLESTONE ABBEY

2 miles S of Barnard Castle, near the A66

Southeast of Barnard Castle the road leads over an old packhorse bridge to Egglestone Abbey. It is made up of the ruins of a

Premonstratensian abbey of which most of the nave and chancel, built in the 13th and 14th centuries, survives. Close by is the Meeting of the Waters where the river Greta joins the River Tees, creating splendid views.

BOWES

4 miles SW of Barnard Castle off the A66

Nicholas Nickleby Otter Trust Reserve

The ruined Norman castle of Bowes was built on the site of a Roman fort, guarding the approach to Stainmore Pass. In 1838 Charles Dickens visited the village to collect material for his third novel **Nicholas Nickleby**, and noticed an academy for boys run by William Shaw in the main street. The school became the model for Dotheboys Hall and Shaw was immortalised as Wackford Squeers. Shaw is buried in the churchyard of St Giles' church along with George Taylor, Dickens' inspiration for Smike. "I think," Dickens later said, "his ghost put Smike into my head upon the spot."

Three miles west of Bowes on the south side of the A66 is the **Otter Trust's North Pennines Reserve** (known locally as the Bowes Otter Sanctuary), a 230-acre wildlife reserve with British and Asian otters and bird hides overlooking wetland areas.

COTHERSTONE

3 miles NW of Barnard Castle on the B6277

Cotherstone is one of the most attractive of the Teesside villages. The River Balder flows into the Tees here and the foaming Meeting of the Waters is an impressive sight after a rainy spell. A delightful riverside walk leads westwards to Hury, Blackton and Balderhead reservoirs. Cotherstone Castle, licensed by King John in 1200, is now just a steep mound to the north of the village, but the village has a fine Victorian church, several greens and a



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Visit Teesdale Open Studios annual event each October, where local artists open their studios and sell direct to the public.

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To find out more please visit our website. For a free information booklet contact Ray Landon on 01833 650612.

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ROMALDKIRK

4 miles NW of Barnard Castle on the B6277

Between Middleton and Barnard Castle, the B6277 follows the south bank of the River Tees passing through a series of pretty, unspoiled villages to Romaldkirk whose impressive church is known as the Cathedral of the Dales. It is dedicated to the little-known St Romald or Rumwald, son of a Northumbrian king who could miraculously speak at birth. Beautiful stone houses are set around spacious greens and there are delightful walks close to the river.

EGGLESTON

6 miles NW of Barnard Castle on the B6281

Eggleston Hall Gardens

Within the grounds of Eggleston Hall are the **Eggleston Hall Gardens**, which are open to the public all year. There are four acres of garden here within the high wall that once enclosed the kitchen garden. The ornamental gardens are laid out informally, with many rare herbaceous plants and shrubs to be seen. Vegetables are cultivated using the traditional organic methods. Close by, the ruins of an old church can be explored.



The Old Church, Eggleston Hall Gardens

MIDDLETON-IN-TEESDALE

10 miles NW of Barnard Castle on the B6277

High Force Low Force Cauldron Snout

The Pennine Way

Middleton-in-Teesdale, the capital of Upper Teesdale, is a small working town in a dramatically beautiful setting with the River Tees running below, while all around is a great backcloth of green hills within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The town's links with the lead-mining industry can be seen in the Market Square, where there is a handsome cast-iron fountain, which was purchased and placed there in 1877 by the employees of the Quaker-owned London Lead Mining Company. The expense was covered from subscriptions raised for the retirement of the company's local superintendent, Robert Bainbridge. At the west end of Hude is Middleton House, the company's former headquarters.

Although the lead-mining industry disappeared at the beginning of the 19th century, Middleton still retains the strong feeling of being a busy working town. The surrounding hills still bear the scars, with the remains of old workings, spoil-heaps and deep, and often dangerous, shafts. The town's agricultural links remain strong, too, with streets bearing names such as Market Place, Horsemarket and Seed Hill. Like Barnard Castle, it is increasing in popularity as a base from which to explore Teesdale and the Northern Pennines.

Middleton is the centre for some magnificent walks in Upper Teesdale. The most famous of these is **The Pennine Way**, which passes through the town on its 250-mile route from Derbyshire to Kirk Yetholm in Scotland. Turning west along Teesdale the

stories and anecdotes famous people art and craft entertainment and sport walks

track passes through flower-rich meadows, traditional, whitewashed farmsteads and spectacular, riverside scenery, including the thrilling waterfalls at Low Force, High Force and Cauldron Snout.

The majestic **High Force** is England's largest waterfall in terms of water flow, with a dramatic 21-metre drop over Great Whin Sill at the end of a wooded gorge. After heavy rainfall its rumble can be heard over a mile away. Visitors can enjoy the pretty woodland walk, which twists and turns with a different view every few metres. Then the distant rumble turns into a roar, you peer through the trees and there it is. The sight will astound you. **Low Force** isn't so much a waterfall as a series of cascades, and while less spectacular than its upstream neighbour, it is arguably more beautiful. Further up the Dale is Cow Green Reservoir and below it **Cauldron Snout**, a 61-metre cascade down dolerite steps. Look out for the Blue Gentian, a rare flower dating back to the last Ice Age.



High Force, Middleton-in-Teesdale

About three miles west of Middleton-in-Teesdale, near the village of Newbiggin, is the Bowlees Visitor Centre, where information on the natural history and geology of the area can be obtained. A picnic area and car park have been provided.

STAINDROP

5 miles NE of Barnard Castle on the A688

Raby Castle St Mary's Church

Set in a magnificent 200-acre deer park on the outskirts of the village, **Raby Castle** is one of the country's finest medieval castles, a

romantic, fairy-tale building that was once the home of the powerful Nevill family.

Described as "the most perfect of all our northern castles", most of the present castle was built in the 1300s and is miraculously well preserved. There's a sturdy Gatehouse, complete with portcullis and conduits for pouring boiling oil on attackers, and a series of mighty towers, including Bulmer's Tower, which is unique



Low Force, Middleton-in-Teesdale

in England in having five sides. It also has an extraordinary, cavernous kitchen dating back to 1360, and a Garrison Room with walls between 10 and 20 feet thick. In rich contrast is the sumptuously furnished and decorated Octagon Drawing Room, added in the 1840s. The most breathtaking room, however, is the medieval Baron's Hall where, in 1569, 700 dissident nobles gathered to plot the doomed Rising of the North in support of Mary, Queen of Scots. The failed insurrection caused the downfall of the Nevills, and since 1626 Raby Castle has been the seat of the Vane family. Other attractions at Raby include its beautiful walled gardens, a deer park and a collection of wonderful old coaches. The Stable Tearooms serve tasty and fortifying refreshments.

Staindrop itself is a delightful, very typical, Durham village, with a long village green lined with Georgian houses. **St Mary's Church**, with its Saxon core, houses tombs of the Nevill and Vane families.

HAMSTERLEY FOREST

9 miles N of Barnard Castle off the A68

Hamsterley Forest

Hamsterley Forest is one of the Forestry Commission's most attractive forest parks. This huge area encompassing over 5,500 acres of mature woodland is managed for timber production, and has 1,100 acres available for recreation. A wide range of activities are on offer for visitors including informal or guided walks, orienteering, horse-riding and cycling (bikes can be hired). There is a visitors centre with displays on forestry, wildlife and timber



Raby Castle, Staindrop

usage, and large, grassy areas make splendid picnic spots.

Surprisingly, the forest is relatively recent in origin, having been planted only 40 to 50 years ago. Much of it covers areas once worked by the lead-mining industry. This is a good spot to discover a range of wild flowers and, in the damper places, fungi. Red squirrels can still be seen along with roe deer, badgers, adders and up to 40 species of birds including heron, woodcock, sparrow hawk, woodpeckers, fieldfare and goldfinch.

WYCLIFFE

6 miles E of Barnard Castle off the A66

Wycliffe is a picturesque hamlet nestling beside the River Tees, and was once the crossing point from Yorkshire into County Durham. It is believed to be the birthplace of John Wycliffe, the English theologian and proponent of the reformation of the Roman Catholic Church, who made the first translation of the Bible into English. The imposing stone church of St Mary's is an ancient building, rebuilt by Edward III in the 14th century.

Stanhope

🏰 Castle 🏠 Stanhope Old Hall 🌿 Heathery Burn

Stanhope, the capital of Upper Weardale, is a small town of great character and individuality, which marks the boundary between the softer scenery of lower Weardale and the wilder scenery to the west. The stone cross in the Market Place is the only reminder of a weekly market held in the town by virtue of a 1421 charter. The market continued until Victorian times. Today the town is still an important local centre for shops and supplies for the surrounding villages.

Enjoying an attractive rural setting in the centre of the dale, with a choice of local walks, Stanhope, in its quiet way, is becoming a small tourist centre with pleasant shops and

cafés. The town itself is well worth exploring on foot and a useful 'walkabout' town trail is available locally or from information centres.

Stanhope enjoyed its greatest period of prosperity in the 18th and 19th centuries when the lead and iron-stone industries were at their height, as reflected in the town's buildings and architecture.

The most dominant building in the Market Square is **Stanhope Castle**, a rambling structure complete with mock-Gothic crenellated towers, galleries and battlements. The building is, in fact, an elaborate folly built by the MP for Gateshead, Cuthbert Rippon, in 1798.

In 1875 it was enlarged to hold a private collection of mineral displays and stuffed birds for the entertainment of Victorian

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Stanhope is a pleasant little town on the A689 a few miles west of Bishop Auckland. Much of its architecture reflects the town's industrial heritage, but nowhere in the town gives a truer feel of the area both past and present than **Betty Podkins**, a super little shop specialising in Weardale Arts and Antiques.

Owner Kate Rees stocks her shop with all manner of local artefacts, particularly items that would have been found in a typical 19th century Weardale cottage: vernacular tables and chairs, country pottery, kitchenalia, oil lamps, clocks and fireplace paraphernalia including fenders, pokers, bellows, copper kettles, chestnut roasters and ale mullers. There's always a selection of paintings, prints and sketches by local artists of local scenes, and Kate also stocks fairtraded and recycled goods typified by felt brooches and flowers, rugs made from recycled sari silk and cards, writing paper and other products made from 'sheeppoo'. With the stock changing constantly, every visit to Betty Podkins is guaranteed to reveal new surprises. Shop hours are 10 to 5 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, also open 12 to 4 Sundays in summer and on the run-up to Christmas and Easter; closed all Thursdays.

Betty Podkins is a fictitious character created in the late 19th century by the Weardale historian William Morley Egglestone. His stories about her help to preserve the Weardale dialect and provide a fascinating insight into traditional Weardale culture.



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Around Stanhope

COWSHILL

8 miles W of Stanhope on the A689

🏠 Lead Mining Museum

In a hollow between Cowshill and Nenthead lies Killhope Mine. The Pennines have been worked for their mineral riches, lead in particular, since Roman times, but until the 18th century the industry remained relatively primitive and small scale.

Mechanisation, in the late 1700s and early 1800s, allowed the industry to grow until it was second only to coal as a major extractive industry in the region. Now the country's best-preserved lead-mining site, Killhope Mine is the focal point of the **North of England Lead Mining Museum**, dominated by the massive 34-foot high water wheel. It used moorland streams, feeding a small reservoir, to provide power for the lead-ore crushing mills, where the lead-ore from the hillside mines was washed and crushed ready for smelting into lead pigs. Much of the machinery has been carefully restored by Durham County Council over



Stanhope Old Hall

grouse-shooting parties. In the gardens is the Durham Dales Tourist Information Centre.

St Thomas's Church, by the Market Square, has a tower whose base is Norman, and some medieval glass in the west window. In the churchyard you'll find a remarkable **fossil tree stump**, which was discovered in 1962 in a local quarry.

Stanhope Old Hall, above Stanhope Burn Bridge, is generally accepted to be one of the most impressive buildings in Weardale. This huge, fortified manor house was designed to repel Scottish raiders. The hall itself is part medieval, part Elizabethan and part Jacobean. The outbuildings included a cornmill, a brew house and cattle yards. It is now a hotel.

One of the most important Bronze Age archaeological finds ever made in Britain was at **Heathery Burn**, a side valley off Stanhope Burn. In 1850, quarrymen cut through the floor of a cave to find a huge hoard of bronze and gold ornaments, amber necklaces, pottery, spearheads, animal bones and parts of chariots. The treasures are now kept in the British Museum.



North of England Lead Mining Museum

recent years, together with part of the smelting mill, workshops, a smithy, tools and miner's sleeping quarters. The Museum (01388 537505) also has a mineral exhibition.

FROSTERLEY

3 miles E of Stanhope on the A689

The village is famous for Frosterley marble, a black, heavily fossilised limestone that in former times was used extensively for rich decorative work and ornamentation on great public and private buildings throughout the north. The Chapel of the Nine Altars in Durham Cathedral makes extensive use of this stone, sometimes called Durham Marble.

IRESHOPEBURN

8 miles W of Stanhope on the A689

 Weardale Museum

At Ireshopeburn, between Cowshill and St John's Chapel, is the delightful little **Weardale Museum**, situated in the former minister's house next to an 18th-century Methodist chapel. High House Chapel, built in 1760, is thought to be the world's oldest Methodist chapel still in use. The displays include a carefully re-created room in a typical Weardale lead-miner's cottage kitchen, with period furnishings and costumes, and the Weardale Tapestry created in five large panels by Friends in Stitches. One room is dedicated to John Wesley, who visited the area on several occasions. The museum, which was established in 1985, is open during the summer months only.

POW HILL COUNTRY PARK

7 miles N of Stanhope on the B6306

 Pow Hill

Set in moorland overlooking the Derwent

Reservoir, **Pow Hill** lies on the south shore and has great views of the lake. Conserved for its special wildlife interest, this valley bog habitat is home to goldcrests, coal tits, roe deer and red squirrels. The western end of the lake is protected as a nature reserve. In winter, large flocks of migrant waders and wildfowl gather here.

ROOKHOPE

3 miles NW of Stanhope off the A689

Rookhope (pronounced Rook-up), in lonely Rookhope Dale, is on the C2C (coast to coast) cycle route, and has a history lost in antiquity, dating back to Roman times.

Another old-fashioned Dales village, Rookhope is set in a hidden North Pennine valley. The remains of lead and iron mine activity now blend into quiet rural beauty. At one point the road climbs past Rookhope Chimney, part of a lead-smelting mill where poisonous and metallic-rich fumes were refined in long flues.

ST JOHN'S CHAPEL

7 miles W of Stanhope on the A689

St John's chapel is named after its parish church, dedicated to St John the Baptist. Like many of the surrounding villages, it was once a lead-mining centre and is still the home of an annual Pennine sheep auction in September, which attracts farmers from all over the North Pennines. This is the only village in Durham to boast a town hall, a small building dating from 1868 overlooking the village green.

The road from St John's Chapel to Langdon Beck in Teesdale rises to 2,056 feet as it passes over Harthope Fell, making it the highest classified road in England.

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WESTGATE AND EASTGATE

4 miles W of Stanhope on the A689

The area between the lovely stone-built villages of Westgate and Eastgate was once the Bishop of Durham's deer park, kept to provide him with an abundant supply of venison. The villages are so called because they were the east and west gates to the park. The foundations of the Bishop's castle can still be seen at Westgate along with an old mill and water wheel. In 1327, the troops of Edward III camped at Eastgate en route to Scotland to face the Scottish army.

WOLSINGHAM

5 miles E of Stanhope on the A689

  Tunstall Reservoir

Wolsingham is one of the oldest market towns in County Durham and has its origins in Saxon times. The town has strong links with the iron and steel industries; Charles Attwood, who was one of the great pioneers in the manufacture of steel, founded the town



steelworks, which once cast a variety of anchors and propellers for ships.

Tunstall Reservoir, north of Wolsingham, and reached by a narrow lane, lies in a valley of ancient oak woods alongside Waskerley Beck. The reservoir was built in the mid 19th century, originally to provide lime-free water for the locomotives of the Stockton and Darlington Railway to prevent their boilers from scaling like a domestic kettle. It now forms part of a delightful area to stroll, picnic or go fishing.



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Teesdale Open Studio, Cotherstone pg 32
Betty Podkins, Stanhope pg 36

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Wold Pottery, Loftus, Saltburn-by-the-Sea pg 20
Betty Podkins, Stanhope pg 36

HOME AND GARDEN

Betty Podkins, Stanhope pg 36

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