

Discover TEESDALE



'Dales on Rails' Itinerary

Itinerary 1: Dales on Rails

Our 'Dales on Rails' itineraries include;

Itinerary 1 Dales on Rails

Take this route to combine visits to Locomotion, Cockfield Fell, the Weardale Railway. There's an opportunity for a spot of shopping and refreshments at the Durham Dales Centre in Stanhope and you will also see the Stanhope and Tyne Railway and the Waskerley Way.

Itinerary 2 Railways Great and Small

Start with morning coffee near Bowes and explore railways in and around Barnard Castle. ride on the miniature railway at Whorlton Lido and finish the day at Locomotion.

Itinerary 3 Scenery and Steam

Combine sightseeing and fine food with a spot of history and a ride on a steam train. This route takes in Teesdale and Weardale.

Itinerary 4 Trains and Castles

Start by riding the Wensleydale railway then tour Castle Bolton, Richmond Castle, Barnard Castle ending at Darlington Railway Centre and Museum to see the engine that opened the world's first passenger railway in 1825: Locomotion no. 1.

Tour itineraries are prepared for Teesdale Marketing by Jan Williams, Northumbria Blue Badge Guide. The information is correct at the time of writing. Group organisers are advised to confirm opening times and arrangements for groups with individual attractions/organisations. A free guiding service is also available (availability is limited, please check with Jan). Contact: Jan Williams Tel 0191 383 0988 Janwildurh@aol.com

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Download other itineraries from www.teesdalediscovery.com/tours.htm

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Itinerary no 1

Route Plan

Scotch Corner – A1 north – exit on A68 (signed Corbridge) – A6072 – Locomotion the National Railway Museum at Shildon – A6072 – West Auckland – A688 (signed Barnard Castle) – Cockfield/Gaunless Valley (brown signs from A688) – Cockfield circuit – B6282 – Toft Hill – A68 north – A689 – Wolsingham – Stanhope – B6278 via Crawleyside – Edmundbyers - A68 south – Scotch Corner

Coach Timings

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Scotch Corner - Locomotion/Shildon | = | 25 minutes |
| Locomotion/Shildon – Cockfield | = | 25 minutes |
| <i>(Cockfield Fell circuit</i> | = | <i>15 minutes)</i> |
| Cockfield – Wolsingham | = | 25 minutes |
| Wolsingham – Stanhope | = | 10 minutes |
| Stanhope – A68 | = | 35 minutes |

Commentary

Travellers coming up the east side of England who wanted to reach Scotland quickly in days long gone by would begin their journey north west from this very point – hence its name of **Scotch Corner**. And even earlier than that Roman legionary soldiers marching north from Eboracum (York) would follow what is now the modern A68 towards their fort on the Stanegate frontier near Corbridge.

But what would any of those early travellers have made of the super modern facilities and displays which make up **Locomotion: the National Railway Museum at Shildon**? Leave plenty of time to explore this fabulous new – and free entry - attraction housed in a one kilometre long site (fully accessible). The historic buildings and workshops of the Timothy Hackworth Museum are complimented by the modern design of the new building housing 60 vehicles, workshops, café and shop. And the star of the show? The locomotive “Sans Pareil” was built by Hackworth at Shildon and is recognised as one of the most important locomotives in the world. It took part in the famous Rainhill Trials of 1829 running against George Stephenson’s “Rocket”. “Sans Pareil” has now returned to the region and takes pride of place to welcome visitors to this terrific new attraction.

Definitely “without parallel.....”

West Auckland and nearby **Bishop Auckland** were once in the centre of a giant network of railway lines radiating out into the surrounding countryside. Economic need drove forward the

development of wooden wagon ways in the 17th century and then, as technology improved, wooden rails gave way to iron rails and horse power gave way to steam power and steam power was harnessed to produce sufficient energy to pull wagons of coal and limestone smoothly and, eventually, reliably.

But it was a long process of evolution to get to the achievements of Timothy Hackworth and George Stephenson in the early 19th century. And that journey to steam can be traced in the landscape surrounding the villages of **Cockfield, Butterknowle, Woodland, Copley and Cockfield** all nestling in the pretty **River Gaunless Valley**.

From the A688 follow the brown signs for **Gaunless Valley Visitor Centre** and **Cockfield**. Continue through Burnt Houses to The Slack.

There is then a choice of routes:

*At the junction in the village **cars and mini-buses** only should turn left on the B6282 towards the village of **Copley**. A short stop should be made at the Visitor Centre adjacent to the disused Stag’s Head pub (check for opening times. Parking for cars and mini buses only in front of building). There is an excellent series of illustrated leaflets available in the Visitor Centre (and also from Barnard Castle TIC) which explain the local history and will help you identify all that is interesting in the landscape.*

Cars and mini-buses can then continue past the Visitor Centre and in the village of Copley a left turn (signed Barnard

Castle and Car Park) leads downhill to a small car park on the left of the road. This is the access point to explore **Copley Lead Mill Chimney** which can be discovered by taking the path uphill in the adjacent woodland. The smelt mill building no longer survives but the interpretation board in the car park explains the busy industrial scene which once dominated this part of the valley.

And if you read the board carefully you can find out why the Steele Road was so named.....

Return uphill to the junction with the main street in Copley, turn right and then look for a left turn signed **Lynesack Church** and **Butterknowle**. The church is delightful (please park considerately) and is the last resting place of one Edward Smith who died in 1884. The novelist Charles Dickens based the character of Smike in his novel "Nicholas Nickleby" on this very person.

Continue through **Butterknowle** village (look out for the sheep sculpture outside the village hall on the left) and return to The Slack and join the route given below.

For full sized coaches the following route is recommended:

From the A688 the road to Copley reaches a high point with far reaching views across the Gaunless Valley just before the descent to **The Slack**. At the crest of the hill there is a bus turning area on the left with a car park close by which gives a great view across the landscape. In the car park is an interpretation panel to set the scene.

Cockfield Fell is England's largest scheduled ancient monument. Agricultural activity stretching back over 2000 years can be traced around the remains of the Fell's Iron Age settlements. And beneath the soil which provided for ancient man lay the mineral wealth which was to sustain his descendants.

On the left of the road look for the pockmarks in the landscape which are evidence for the early bell pits sunk as early as the 12th century to reach the coal seams beneath. Drift mines followed at a later period. Coal led to improved transport. Wagon ways, tramways and railways – including a branch of the famous Darlington and Stockton railway - turned the open

space into "a knotted bundle of shoelaces". Coke ovens sprang up. Brick works followed. Quarrying activity wasn't far behind.

Staggering to think of so much industrial continuity and human endeavour in such a small area.

Continue downhill to **The Slack**. At the t-junction turn right to cross a cattle grid and bear right (signed Toft Hill B6282). At the next crossroads turn right for Esperley and Cockfield passing through **High Lands** and **Low Lands**. Evidence for the old Haggerleases quarry can be seen far off to the right on the side of Cockfield Fell with the tell tale fan shapes of the old spoil heaps. At the next crossroads turn right again. On the approach to Cockfield's main street look for the pigeon crees in the fields to the right. The main street leads up to a t-junction. Turn right again to return through The Slack and take the B6282 again but this time continuing on to **Toft Hill** and the A68.

After all this talk of railways wouldn't it be nice to actually take a ride on one?

Wolsingham has just the thing. Climb aboard the newly opened and restored **Weardale Railway** and take a five mile ride through the delightful countryside flanking the lovely River Wear. One hundred goods trains a week trundled their way down the dale in the late 19th century moving limestone and, eventually, passengers down the dale. Today's passengers can enjoy a steam hauled heritage service between Wolsingham and Stanhope (Check for train running times. Contact info@weardale-railway.org.uk for times/dates).

Refreshments and an opportunity for local shopping can be built into a stop at the **Durham Dales Centre** in **Stanhope** before continuing up the B6278 road north through the aptly named **Crawleyside**. As the open fell land is reached towards the top of the hill look for the clues to Crawleyside's railway heritage. A narrow grass covered track is visible running parallel to the road over to the right. This marks the route of the **Stanhope and Tyne Railway** (1834-1951) which transported lead, iron and limestone to South Shields some 37 miles away. Robert Stephenson, son of the famous railway pioneer George

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Stephenson, was the consultant engineer for the Stanhope line. And what a feat of engineering it was. The highest standard gauge railway line in England included a very challenging 1 in 8 incline. Stationary winding engines had to rope-haul wagons groaning under the weight of limestone up the steepest gradients in two stages.

Keep a look out for walkers striding out along the moor land ahead. They are enjoying the **Waskerley Way** a 10 mile

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walk which follows the original route of the western part of the Stanhope and Tyne Railway. The C2C cycle route shares the path with hikers. The heather moor land provides the perfect habitat for upland birds such as grouse and hen harriers.

Acknowledgements:

Gaunless Valley Visitor Centre
www.traintrail.co.uk