



## **A Guide to Cycling in Northumberland**

Northumberland, with its ruggedly beautiful coastline, robust inland hill country, and the wonderful Kielder Forest, offers the tourist some challenging and scenic cycling very much away from it all.

The Coasts and Castles Route that runs 192 miles from Newcastle to Edinburgh (85 miles within Northumberland) sweeps along the Northumberland coast as part of NCN1. Must-visits along this route include Amble, Alnwick, Craster, Bamburgh Castle and Holy Island. The causeway to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne that disappears beneath high tides is one of Britain's most awesome rides, but check timings carefully or you might be trapped in the emergency hut on stilts. NCN1 also takes you through characterful border town Berwick, with its fine rust-coloured 17th century bridge that you can cycle (one way) across.

Other long-distance routes show the county off – the challenging Pennine Cycleway, or Hadrian's Cycleway following (very approximately) the Roman Wall. The popular C2C route crosses the county too, featuring lofty Alston and Allenheads and some very remote-feeling Pennine roads.

[Link to some important cycling routes](#)

[\*\*Routes - Cycle Northumberland - Everything Cycling\*\*](#)

[\*\*Link to the Top Twenty Cycling Routes in Northumberland\*\*](#)

[\*\*Top 20 Bike Rides and Cycling Routes in Northumberland | Komoot\*\*](#)

Kielder Water & Forest, [20 miles \(30 minutes drive\) from Stonyfield Cottage](#), is a mountain biking centre, with its miles of tracks and lakes (a 26-mile trail circles Kielder Water, and is OK for children). Home to England's largest forest and the biggest man-made lake in Northern Europe, Kielder Water & Forest Park is a playground for cyclists, walkers and outdoor enthusiasts. A haven for wildlife, the best dark skies in England and award-winning art & architecture... Kielder will inspire, surprise and enthrall you. There are visitor centres and cycle hire places and a welcome at The Anglers Arms.

**[KIELDER CYCLE CENTRE: Kielder Village NE48 1ER - 27 miles from Rochester](#)**

**[Tel 01434250457](tel:01434250457) : [hire@thebikeplace.co.uk](mailto:hire@thebikeplace.co.uk)**

**[THE BIKE PLACE : The Stone Barn, Falstone NE48 1BT – 22 miles from Rochester](#)**

**[Tel 01434250144](tel:01434250144) : [hire@thebikeplace.co.uk](mailto:hire@thebikeplace.co.uk)**

[Link to more information](#)

### [Layout 1 \(visitnorthumberland.com\)](#)

The Deadwater Trails are among England's best single-track, and the Red Trail is the country's highest. It's a good place to see red squirrels. Off-road adventurers can also follow the recent Sandstone Way from Berwick to Hexham, 120 miles across the county. For families there are many quiet routes, such as the 10-mile Alnmouth/Warkworth Loop that's half car-free, but you need a car to get there!

Many relatively unsung places are great to visit by bike – Hexham, Morpeth, Rothbury for example – and good-food cafes and fine pubs are easy to find. Refreshment will be welcome: Northumberland can be a very, very hilly county.

[Link to set of six circular routes around Bellingham & North Tyne:](#)

### **A set of six do-in-a-day circular cycle routes around the market town of Bellingham.**

The routes range from 12-23 miles and take in some stunning scenic views of Northumberland National Park. This selection of Bellingham and North Tyne Circular Cycling Routes largely follow the existing National Cycle Network - Pennine Cycleway Route 68, Reivers Route 10 to Greenhaugh. The routes range from 12-23 miles and take in some stunning scenic views of Northumberland National Park. There are hills to negotiate on all the routes, nothing too steep, but there are some long climbs.

### [Bellingham & North Tyne Circular Cycle Routes - Cycle Northumberland - Everything Cycling](#)

[Link to mid-Tyne cycling routes near Wark:](#)

### **Three do-in-a-day cycle routes**

The Mid Tyne is an area of quiet country lanes, wooded valleys, and open vistas. The area is steeped in history, from the early Iron Age, the Roman Period and Hadrian's Wall, to the Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Periods with associated Bastle Houses, Peel towers and Castles. The countryside is dotted with the remains of this turbulent past.

### [Mid Tyne Cycling Routes - Wark - Cycle Northumberland - Everything Cycling](#)

## Otterburn Ranges and Upper Coquetdale

[This 61 mile circular route for the experienced cyclist is recommended by Roger Clarke.](#)

Roger Clarke regularly takes part in Cycling UK's 'British Cycle Quest' and reveals this lesser-known British cycle route in a beautiful part of Northumberland.

The Otterburn Ranges and Upper Coquetdale are two of England's hidden gems for cycling. A look at the OS map suggests that Upper Coquetdale is a dead end road which stops at the Roman Camp of Chew Green. Not so, as I discovered some 25 years ago on joining Tyneside Vagabonds Cycling Club, which organised an annual club ride over the Ranges. The Ranges are open on Bank Holidays and other times but access is restricted to when the Army isn't firing. (See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/otterburn-firing-times>.)

A remarkable number of roads cross the Ranges, including the Roman Dere Street. The MoD maintains the roads very well and there is very little traffic. Remote and with wild scenery this is an area not to be missed. Take a map and/or GPS route as there are few signs at the road junctions.

Roger started this circular route in Rothbury which has shops, cafés and parking. A few miles along scenic Coquetdale, the classic climb of Bilsmoor leads to the historic village of Elsdon, with its unique cyclists' cafe – called the Impromptu Cafe” run by Marion and Allen who opened the cafe over 40 years ago soon after the sad passing of Dorothy Dent in 1978 who had served cyclists passing through Elsdon with welcome refreshment since 1934. The next unspoiled 15 miles across the Ranges are mainly uphill, reaching 1,660 feet at Cottonshope before descending very steeply into Upper Coquetdale. Then it's 12 miles mainly downhill through this delightful, narrow and winding valley lead to Alwinton.

Following the base of the Cheviot Hills through Alnham leads to pretty Whittingham, where British Cycle Questers can collect a checkpoint. Quiet lanes lead back to Rothbury where Tomlinson's café is highly recommended for post-ride refreshments.

## Tips

The weather can be changeable and the route is remote, so go prepared to be self-sufficient. Cafés are only at Rothbury and Elsdon.

Food may be available at the pub in Alwinton or at Clennell Hall.

**[Link to Otterburn Ranges and Upper Coquetdale route](#)**

**<https://www.cyclinguk.org/download/file/fid/121991>**

**Some Cycling Groups in Northumberland:**

**Tyneside and Northumberland (Northumberland)**

<https://www.cyclinguk.org/local-groups/tyneside-northumberland>

**Northumberland Tearoom Explorers (Northumberland)**

<https://www.cyclinguk.org/group/northumberland-tearoom-explorers>

**Berwick Cyclists (Berwick)**

<http://www.cyclinguk.org/local-groups/berwick-cyclists>

<http://www.berwick-cyclists.co.uk/>

Holds rides for all, campaigns for better cycling and publicises routes and facilities

**Ednan Cycling Club (Northumberland)**

<http://www.cyclinguk.org/local-groups/ednan-cycling-club>

**Wooler Cycle Hub (Wooler)**

<http://www.cyclinguk.org/local-groups/wooler-cycle-hub>

<http://www.wooler.org.uk/cycling/373-wooler-cycle-hub>

Downloadable bike route suggestions in Glendale and the Cheviots, and information about cycle hire

**Cramlington CC (Northumberland)**

<http://www.cyclinguk.org/local-groups/cramlington-cc>

**Tyne Valley Cycling Club (Wylam)**

<https://www.cyclinguk.org/local-groups/tyne-valley-cycling-club>

<http://www.tynevalleycycling.com>

