

Alston Cycle Route: Nenthead and Garrigill



The high rolling fells of Alston Moor separate the two deep valleys which hold the upper reaches of the River South Tyne and the waters of the River Nent. Both valleys display a classic North Pennine landscape; that magical mixture of walled, valley bottom pasture hay meadows backed by rough open fell and interspersed with hamlets. They are both a delight to explore, particularly by bike, as they are endowed with quiet roads and lanes that traverse differing levels allowing both intimate and far reaching views. Conveniently linking both valleys together are ancient traffic free tracks. The ride starts at the Nenthead Mines car park and kicks off with the stiffest climb of the day, up over the wild and lonely Flinty Fell. It then heads down to Garrigill and follows the River South Tyne by a valley side fell lane to Leadgate. A short detour on foot to see Ashgill Force Waterfall (between points 2 and 3) is well worth it. A brief encounter with the A686 leads on to an old high level track on the side of Brownside Moss with views down into Alston. A visit to Alston allows a bit of a refuel at one of the pubs or cafes before another high level section leads back to Nenthead via the southern flanks of Newshield Moss and Wellhope Moor.

For more information on the Eden area, visit www.visiteden.co.uk

CAUTION: this route features a steep descent to Blackburn Bridge, approaching Leadgate. Care must also be taken on the final steep descent into Nenthead Village.

- Start/Finish: Nenthead Mines car park GR NY 781 435
 - Distance: 18 miles (29km)
 - Grade: Medium - Challenge
 - Terrain: Bridleway, country lane, ford
 - Refreshments: Cafés: Alston, Nenthead
 - Pubs: Alston, Nenthead, Garrigill
1. From the car park go through the gate to the R of the Mines Heritage Centre and follow the track to the bunkhouse. Follow the bridleway sign posted for Priorsdale (NCN 7).
 2. At a fork turn R and cross a beck (corrugated roof building). Follow the track up to another fork this time bear L (sign posted bridleway). Follow this down to a road, which in turn is followed down to the B6277. Turn R and follow the road to a L turn (C2C sign). Descend the loose track down to a ford which is crossed to reach Garrigill. Note: there may be the odd occasion when the river is in spate and the roadway is covered by water. It is not advisable to cross in these conditions. Go back up the hill, turn left and left again at the crossroads to rejoin the route in Garrigill.
 3. Turn R and follow the road through Garrigill and on to Leadgate. At the T-jct turn L and follow the road uphill to a track on the R. Turn onto it and follow it to the A686, which is carefully crossed to a track on the other side. Follow this NNE, then NE down hill to a jct. Turn L, then immediately R onto the main road.
 4. Head through Alston on the A686 then turn R (signed for Coatlith Hill and North Loaning) and climb the steep hill to a T-jct. Turn R and follow the B6294 E to join the A689.
 5. Turn L onto the A689 (take care) and pass through Nenthall. Over the bridge turn L and climb the hill to a jct. Turn R and follow the road around the fell side and back to Nenthead.

This map is provided for guidance only. You are strongly advised to take appropriate maps with you on all cycle rides and walks. The OS map covering this area is OL31 North Pennines.

Further information

Alston Tourist Information Centre (Local Links), Town Hall, Alston, CA9 3RF
Telephone: 01434 382244
Email: Alston.LocalLinks@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Penrith Tourist Information Centre Middlegate, Penrith
Telephone: 01768 867466
Email: Pen.TIC@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk