



GOSFORTH TO BYWELL VIA:

Ponteland	Stamfordham	Corbridge	Hexham	Alston
Garrigill	St John's Chapel	Westgate	Eastgate	Stanhope
Parkhead	Blanchland	Kiln Pit Hill	Hindley	Stocksfield

Sponsored by



**Route map and a historic overview of points
of interest along the way**

Phil Kirkland NV53 OBE (MGTF)

Welcome!

On behalf of MG Northumbria, I do hope you have a very safe and enjoyable day. Feedback and constructive criticism always welcome, in a spirit of continuous improvement. Please remember to drive courteously at all times, and importantly that you are representing our beloved club, MG Northumbria.

Today's run is approximately 100 miles in length from start to finish. A halfway point has been determined at Stanhope Railway station.

Arrivals at the nominated starting point should begin no sooner than 1000am please.

All cars must have left the nominated starting point no later than 1100am.

Your journey to the halfway point (lunch stop) should take approximately 90/120 minutes.

You should aim to leave the nominated halfway point by 1415hrs

The Award ceremony shall take place at the finish point between 1600 and 1630hrs.

Lunch at the midpoint will be taken in a First Class railway carriage, positioned specially for us in the Platform at Stanhope Railway Station (courtesy of British American Railways - Weardale Railway). (Place your order at Café 40).

Suggested timetable:

Time	Location	Activity
1000am		Arrivals at start point
1000-1100am		Breakfast / assembly
1100am		Departures complete
1230pm	Stanhope Railway Station	Arrive halfway point
1230 – 1430pm	Stanhope Railway Station	Lunch stop
1430pm	Stanhope Railway Station	Departures complete
1530 to 1600pm		Arrivals at finish point
1630pm		Awards ceremony
1700pm		Close

Navigation key:

NSP No Sign Post

SP Sign Post

TL Turn Left

TR Turn Right

SO Straight On

Gosforth Park



Border Minstrel, Gosforth Park

Steeped in history, the Border Minstrel is nestled in the heart of High Gosforth Park, an area of 812 acres of woodland that also includes Newcastle Racecourse and Parklands Golf Course. Named in honour of the winner of the 1927 Pitman's Derby, the Border Minstrel was originally the west pavilion of Brandling House. The stately home, initially known as Gosforth House, and completed in 1764 was designed by architect, James Paine and owned by local businessman and mine owner, Charles Brandling.

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
0.0	STOP	Zero trip meter at Exit to *****	BORDER MINSTREL GOSFORTH PARK
0.0	TR	TR on B1318	Signpost A1056 Wideopen Killingworth
0.1	SO	SO at Roundabout take 3 rd exit on A1056	McDONALDS ROUNDAABOUT 
0.3	TL	TL at junction bear left on B1318	
0.5	TL	TL at roundabout take 1 st exit on Coach Lane	WIDEOPEN  Signpost Hazelrigg Dinnington
0.8	SO	Continue straight on Coach Lane under A1 through Dinnington	HAZELRIGG
2.3	TR	TR at T Junction and continue straight on Main Road	AIRPORT BOUNDARY  DINNINGTON LOW FLYING AIRCRAFT!
4.9	TL	TL on Berwick Hill Road	HORTON GRANGE HOTEL Signpost Ponteland Cramlington

Horton Grange



Horton Grange Country House Hotel

Horton Grange Country House Hotel is a privately-owned, intimate Grade 11 Listed Country House Hotel set in the heart of Northumberland. The well-renowned Restaurant is the perfect setting for every day dining, and the luxurious lounge areas are a delight to enjoy Afternoon Tea. The venue is also available for private and/or exclusive hire.

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
5.1	SO	SO Berwick Hill Road	BERWICK HILL Signpost Ponteland Berwick Hill
7.9	TL	TL North Road	NSP
8.3	TR	TR at roundabout	PONTELAND Signpost Jedburgh (A696 (A68T))

Ponteland



The Blackbird, Ponteland

The name means 'island in the Pont', named for the river that flows through the village.

Ponteland's first settlement concentrated around solid ground within the marshland near St Mary's Church and the old bridge. Most of Ponteland's marshland is now drained to make way for housing. The River Pont flows from west-to-east and joins the River Blyth further downstream, before flowing into the North Sea. During the industrial era, Ponteland village enlarged to include residential developments in Darras Hall. It is home to many of the region's footballers and CEOs and is part of the North East's only safe Conservative parliamentary seat.

Reflecting Ponteland's proximity to Scotland it has suffered, sometimes enjoyed, several effects from Anglo-Scots conflict and the unclear Anglo-Scottish border. Owing to the asymmetric north–south line of the border, Geographically, Ponteland lies north of important Scottish towns such as Gretna Green, Stranraer, and Kirkcudbright. Much of Dumfries & Galloway, one of Scotland's border counties, actually lies south of Ponteland.

One fortunate outcome continues to the current era. While Ponteland Castle was never rebuilt as a military stronghold, it transformed into a public house. Known as The Blackbird, this still serves the Ponteland community, nearly seven hundred years after the destruction of its original purpose.

During the Second World War, parts of Darras Hall were used as a prisoner-of-war camp . The camp was designated number 69 of several hundred camps across Britain and held Italian and German prisoners of war. One of the oldest houses, or farms at the time, in the Darras Hall area is Little Callerton House.

The Old Mill, the house where Alan Shearer used to live, and various other dwellings in the area belonged to Little Callerton House, which is approximately 450 years old. On the edge of the estate at High Callerton, Rebellion House is a 16th-century bastle, altered and extended in the 17th century.

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
9.4	TL	TL on Limestone Lane	Signpost Dissington Dalton Stamfordham
11.6	TL	TL on Limestone Lane	Signpost Stamfordham Dalton Eachwick Dissington Hall
11.9	TR	TR on Paddock Lane	DISSINGTON Signpost Stamfordham Cheeseburn Dalton
13.7	Narrow bridge	SO from Paddock Lane B6309	CHEESEBURN GRANGE Signpost Stamfordham Matfen

Stamfordham



Stamfordham Village Green and Market Cross

Stamfordham is a village and civil parish in Northumberland, about 11 miles (18 km) west of Newcastle upon Tyne, 5 miles (8 km) west of Ponteland and 10 miles (16 km) east of Hexham. The population of the civil parish at the 2001 Census was 1,047, rising to 1,185 at the 2011 Census.

The place-name 'Stamfordham' is first attested in the Pipe Rolls for 1188, where it appears as *Stanfordham*. The name means 'village at the stony ford'.

The Church of England parish church of St Mary the Virgin was built in the 13th century, and over-restored under the direction of Benjamin Ferrey in 1848. In addition to St Mary's, there is a non-denominational Church on the Green.

The exceptionally-large village green contains both a market cross (the Butter Cross, dating from 1735) and a village lock-up which is Grade II listed and dates from the early 19th century, pre-dating the formation of police forces.

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
14.4	SO	SO B6309 past (RAF Ouston) Albermarle Barracks	HAWKWELL Signpost Whittledean Harlow Hill





RAF Ouston











RAF Ouston (now Albemarle Barracks)



Royal Air Force Ouston, or more simply RAF Ouston, is a former Royal Air Force station that was located near the village of Stamfordham and the village of Heddon-on-the-Wall on Hadrian's Wall near Newcastle upon Tyne. It was built as a Second World War aerodrome and is today used by the British Army. The station opened on 10 March 1941 as a Fighter Sector HQ under No. 13 Group RAF (13 Gp) to replace RAF Usworth, with its staff mainly being drawn from that station. The station's badge was a lion rampant in front of a Roman helmet. This was influenced by the nearby Hadrian's Wall and the lion is taken from the Percy family arms (the Percys being local landowners). The station motto underneath the badge was 'Persist'.

Residential RAF, RNSS, SAR and University Squadrons which served and operated in sequential dates from RAF Ouston with their allocated aircraft were:

317 Polish Air Force: Hawker Hurricanes 122 RAF Hawker Hurricanes 232 RAF Hawker Hurricanes 131 RAF Hawker Hurricanes	
81 RAF Supermarine Spitfires	
55 RAF Hawker Hurricanes	
242 RAF Supermarine Spitfires 72 RAF Supermarine Spitfires	

<p>281 RAF Boulton Paul Defiant Supermarine Walrus Avro Anson (Air Sea Rescue Squadron)</p>	  
<p>410 RAF Boulton Paul Defiant Bristol Beaufighter</p>	
<p>613 RAF North American Mustang</p>	
<p>226 RAF Douglas Boston</p>	

<p>804 RNAS Hawker Hurricane</p>	
<p>657 RAF AA Co. Auster</p>	
<p>198 RAF Hawker Typhoon 350 RAF Hawker Typhoon</p>	
<p>62 RAF Vickers Wellington</p>	
<p>22 RAF North American Harvard</p>	
<p>607 RAF De Havilland Vampire</p>	

<p>11 UAS (University Air Squadron)</p> <p>De Havilland Chipmunk</p>	
<p>641 UGS (University Glider Squadron)</p>	



During the Cold War, the main runway was extended to 600ft to accommodate V Bombers such as the Avro Vulcan, De Havilland Victor and Vickers Valiant. During the construction of Newcastle Airport, Civil flights used RAF Ouston.

(My own favourite boyhood recollection is twofold. Firstly going with my Dad to see a North American Sabre break the sound barrier, and secondly, to clamber over an almost intact Hawker Hunter which had pancake landed through the perimeter hedge near Whittle Dene ponds.



North American Sabre



Hawker Hunter 'belly up landing'

Motor Sports

There is a possibility that racing first took place at Ouston as early as 1961, but it is certain that the Newcastle & District Motor Club organised a race meetings there on 24 June 1962, 23 June 1963 and 21 June 1964, the last named being a joint car and motorcycle event.

Jackie Stewart was a competitor at the 1963 meeting driving a Jaguar E-Type; he won the race and this is believed to have been his first victory.

Jim Clark attended the meeting in 1964 (**I was there with me Dad!**) and was driven round the circuit in an open-topped Jaguar E-Type and then presented the prizes. It is possible that this may have been the last car meeting at Ouston as Croft Circuit in North Yorkshire had reopened in 1964.



Newcastle and District Motor Club event at RAF Ouston

In 1965, *Motor Cycle* magazine commented, when reporting on a motorcycle race meeting organised by the Newcastle Club held on Sunday 20 June, that there were 20,000 spectators present.

Albemarle Barracks is the current British Army barracks established, on the site of the former RAF Ouston airbase, in 1970. The barracks were occupied by Junior Signaller's Wing of 11 Signal Regiment in the 1970s, before they were handed over to the Junior Infantry Battalion in the 1980s.

The barracks were home to 39 Regiment Royal Artillery from 1995 until that regiment disbanded there in February 2015. On 13 July 2015 3rd Regiment Royal Horse Artillery started transferring from its former base in Bergen-Hohne Garrison, Germany. Its runways are used by Northumbria Police for driver training and as a stop-off point for nuclear warheads convoys en route via road between RNAD Coulport and AWE Aldermaston as part of the UK Trident programme.

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
17.4	TR	TR B6318 Military Road	WHITTLEDEAN RESERVOIR Signpost Chollerford

Whittle Dene ponds

Whittle Dene is 12 miles (19 km) west of Newcastle upon Tyne, England, straddling the B6318 Military Road, and is a complex of reservoirs and treatment works forming the last stage in the supply of drinking water to Newcastle upon Tyne and Gateshead.



Whittle Dene Reservoir

A major need for piped water within Newcastle was for fire-fighting, and it was a local insurance company, the Newcastle Fire Office, which provided some of the earliest water supply points. The fire office obtained much of its water from flooded colliery workings in the Coxlodge area, the water being pumped out by a windmill and run via a brick conduit to a reservoir on the Town Moor.

Better-planned proposals led to the Whittle Dene Water Company being established in 1845. Reservoirs were planned at Whittle Dene above the village of Ovingham. These reservoirs, completed in 1848, at last gave Newcastle and Gateshead a steady, clean and regular supply of water.. Following those early beginnings the Newcastle and Gateshead Water Company came into being, gradually extending its area of supply and increasing its supply points.

The complex forms part of a series of reservoirs along the A68 which are connected by tunnels and aqueducts from Catcleugh Reservoir in the west to Whittle Dene in the east, from where drinking water is supplied to Newcastle upon Tyne, Gateshead, and some surrounding areas.

The reservoirs that form the chain are,:

- Catcleugh Reservoir
- Colt Crag Reservoir
- Little Swinburne Reservoir
- Hallington Reservoirs
- Whittle Dene

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
19.2	TL	TL B6321 Aydon Road	WALLHOUSES Signpost Corbridge Aydon
22.2	SO	SO B6321	A69(T) overbridge
23.2	TL	TL B6321	CORBRIDGE Prince's Street

Corbridge

Known to the Romans as something like *Corstopitum* or *Coriosopitum*, wooden writing tablets found at Vindolanda suggest it was probably locally called *Coria* (meaning a tribal centre). Coria was the most northerly town in the Roman Empire, lying at the junction of Stanegate and Dere Street.



Corbridge looking east towards the A69



The bridge at Corbridge

The first fort was established c. AD 85, although there was a slightly earlier base nearby at Beaufront Red House. By the middle of the 2nd century AD, the fort was replaced by a town with two walled military compounds, which were garrisoned until the end of the Roman occupation of the site.

Corbridge suffered, as did many other settlements in the county, from the border warfare which was particularly prevalent between 1300 and 1700. Raids were commonplace, and it was not unusual for the livestock to be brought into the town at night and a watch placed to guard either end of the street for marauders. A bridge over the Tyne was built in the 13th century, but this original has not survived. The present bridge, an impressive stone structure with seven arches, was erected in 1674.

Residents of Corbridge have included:

- Alan Brown (footballer) (1914–96), professional footballer and manager
- Steve Bruce (born 1960), professional footballer and manager
- Catherine Cookson (1906–98), author
- Alan Pardew, professional footballer and manager

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
23.3	SO	Stop at Junction – take care! SO B6321 / A695	CORBRIDGE Signpost Gateshead Prudhoe Hexham
23.4	SO		Traffic lights on bridge across River Tyne
23.4	TR	TR (Roundabout 2nd Exit)	Signpost Hexham (B6321 / A695)
24.0	SO	SO Stop when lights flash!	DILSTON Level Crossing

Devil's water

Devil's Water is a river in Northumberland, England. A tributary of the River Tyne it joins that river from the south, near the village of Dilston about 1 mile (1.6 km) south-west of Corbridge. It is formed from the waters of several smaller burns and sikes between Embley and Hackford some 5 miles (8 km) to the south of Hexham.

Devil's Water is of historical interest, figuring in the Battle of Hexham. The Battle of Hexham (15 May 1464) marked the end of significant Lancastrian resistance in the north of England during the early part of the reign of Edward IV.

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
25.6	SO	SO Remain on A695 through town to west end	HEXHAM A695

Hexham



Hexham Moot Hall

Like many towns in the Anglo-Scottish border area and adjacent regions, Hexham suffered from the border wars between the kingdoms of Scotland and England, including attacks from William Wallace who burnt the town in 1297. In 1312, Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland, demanded and received £2000 from the town and monastery in order for them to be spared a similar fate. In 1346 the monastery was sacked in a later invasion led by King David II of Scotland.

In 1464 during the Wars of the Roses, the Battle of Hexham was fought somewhere to the south of the town; the actual site is disputed.

John Neville, later to be 1st Marquess of Montagu, led a modest force of 3,000-4,000 men, and routed the rebel Lancastrians. Most of the rebel leaders were captured and executed in Hexham market place., including Henry Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, and Lord Hungerford. Henry VI, however, was kept safely away (having been captured in battle three times earlier), and escaped to the north.

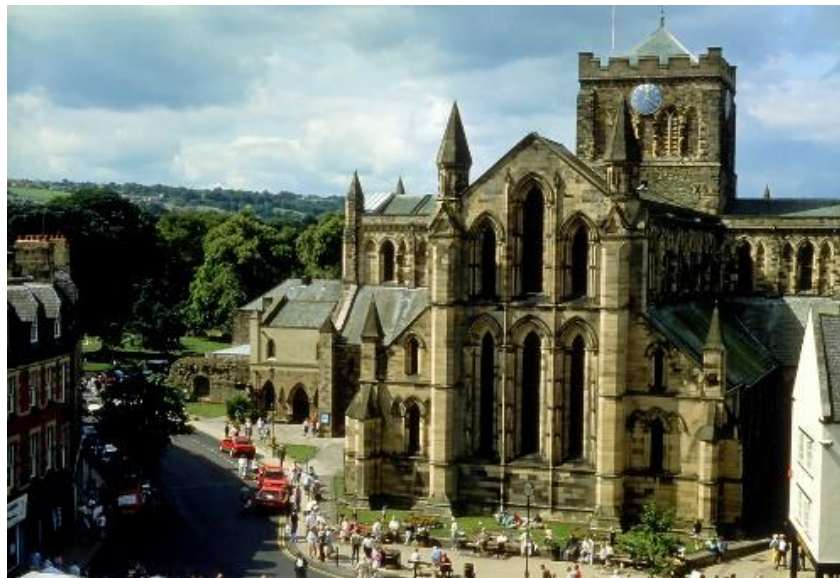
With their leadership gone, only a few castles remained in rebel hands. After these fell later in the year, Edward IV was not seriously challenged until the Earl of Warwick changed his allegiance from the Yorkist to the Lancastrian cause in 1469.

There is a legend that Queen Margaret of Anjou took refuge after the battle in what is known as The Queen's Cave, where she was accosted by a robber. The Queen's Cave in question is on the south side of the West Dipton Burn, to the southwest of Hexham.

In 1715, James Radclyffe, 3rd Earl of Derwentwater, raised the standard for James Francis Edward Stuart in Hexham Market place. The rising, however, was unsuccessful, and Derwentwater was captured and beheaded after the Battle of Preston.

In 1761, the Hexham Riot took place in the Market Place when a crowd protesting about changes in the criteria for serving in the militia was fired upon by troops from the North Yorkshire Militia. Fifty-one protesters were killed, earning the Militia the soubriquet of The Hexham Butchers.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Hexham was a centre of the leather trade, particularly renowned for making gloves known as Hexham Tans — now the name of a vegetarian restaurant in the town. Hexham had been long famous for its manufacture of leather. Tanning was a necessary allied industry and there were four tanneries, employing a score of men. In a year they dealt with 5,000 hides and 12,000 calf skins. They supplied local saddlers, bootmakers and cobblers. Hexham also had 16 master hatters, and the trade employed 40 persons. There were two woollen manufactories, worked by steam power, and two rope manufactories. There were corn water mills below the bridge. A windmill on the Sele was ruinous, but there was one still working on Tyne Green. It was, and still is a flourishing market, including a mart for cattle and other farm animals.



Hexham Abbey

Hexham's architectural landscape is dominated by Hexham Abbey. The current church largely dates from c. 1170–1250, in the Early English Gothic style of architecture. The choir, north and south transepts and the cloisters, where canons studied and meditated, date from this period. The east end was rebuilt in 1860.

The abbey stands at the west end of the market place, which is home to the Shambles, a Grade II* covered market built in 1766 by Sir Walter Blackett.

At the east end of the market place stands the Moot Hall, a c15 gatehouse that was part of the defences of the town. The Moot Hall is a Grade I listed building, and was used as a courthouse until 1838. The Moot Hall now houses the Council offices of the Museums Department.

The Old Gaol, behind the Moot Hall on Hallgates, was one of the first purpose-built jails in England. It was built between 1330 and 1333 and is a Grade I listed Scheduled Monument. It was ordered to be built by the Archbishop of York.

In Hexham the Subskimmer was designed and made by Submarine Products. The town is also the site of a chipboard factory owned by the Austrian firm Egger Retail Products GmbH, from which vented steam can be seen from miles away. Botanical brewery Fentimans is also based in Hexham.

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
27.2	TL	TL on B6305	HEXHAM WEST Signpost Alston (A686) Allendale (B6295)
28.9	BL	Bear Left	LOW GATE (B6305)
32.9	TR	Turn right – take care	SP Alston Langley (B6305 A686)
34.2	SO	SO at Crossroads	LANGLEY (B6305)

Langley

The village is on the A686 about 3 miles (5 km) south of Haydon Bridge. The skyline of Langley on Tyne is still dominated by the lead smelting chimney with its underground flue leading to the old smelt works, now a sawmill, where the old tracks for the ore wagons can still be seen. There are currently just over 100 residents.



Langley Castle

Langley Castle is a restored medieval tower house, and a Grade I listed building. It was built in the middle of the 14th century as a great H-shaped tower of four storeys. Before this the site was the seat of the Barons of Tynedale in the 12th century, from whom descend the Tyndall family. It was attacked and severely damaged in 1405 by the forces of Henry IV in the campaign against the Percys and Archbishop Scrope. It remained as a ruin until it was bought and restored by a local historian, Cadwallader Bates, in the late 19th century. He died in 1902 and his wife Josephine continued the restoration.

After she died in 1932 the building remained empty until it was used as a barracks in the Second World War, following which it was used as a girls' school. Inside Langley Castle are some of the best preserved Garderobes in Britain and these can be viewed from the main staircase. It has since been converted into a luxury hotel.

Langley Station (Hexham to Allendale railway)

The first train ran in 1867 to and from the lead line built to serve the smelt works in the Langley Woods – a considerable employer in its time.



Langley station and the Garden Tea Rooms

When the line was built an unusual bridge had to be constructed: the flue bridge, which still stands as a glorious arch, renovated by English Heritage and now marking the Eastern end of The Garden Station's Woodland Garden. The flue itself runs over a mile up the fields to reach the 100-foot Stublick Chimney on the top of the hill.

On 1st March 1869 the first passenger train ran from Hexham to Allendale. The 'Hexham Courant' of the time reports that, *'the journey was a pleasant one, the weather being extremely fine, old Sol shining in all his refulgence.'* For 61 years the passenger service continued. It made a profit on a Tuesday, when it transported livestock between the villages and the market in Hexham, where Tuesday is still market day today. At other times, barely a handful of tickets were sold, and the proposed continuation of the line to Allenheads never happened.

The ticket office at Langley doubled as the village post office, and this continued until 2000. No-one caught the last train in 1950. It was the largest ever to run on the line, and it was collecting the paraphernalia of the goods and parcels service which had continued after the passenger service had stopped (apart from occasional excursion trains). Fortunately the buildings remained, as they had been built to last.

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
35.1	TL	TL on A686 Remain on A686 via Starward Gorge and Whitfield to Alston	CART'S BOG Signpost Alston Whitfield (A686)
44.8	SO	County line	CUMBRIA

Staward Gorge

Allen Banks & Staward Gorge is a National Trust property.



Staward Gorge

Staward Gorge is a Victorian garden in a gorge of the River Allen. There are the remains of a medieval Pele tower. It is an area of Special Scientific Interest and the most northerly habitat of dormice in Britain, and while walking in the National Trust-owned Allen Banks and surrounding area, visitors may encounter deer and red squirrels.

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
48.5	TR	TR into station yard and car park Arr. 1115 Dep. 1130	ALSTON (Optional restroom stop at Alston railway station on your right)

MANDATORY ZERO RESET POINT

**SLOW DOWN OPPOSITE RAILWAY STATION ENTRANCE
IF YOU ARE NOT STOPPING, RECALIBRATE TRIPMETER NOW TO ZERO!**

**IF YOU ARE STOPPING,
REMEMBER TO RESET YOUR TRIPMETER TO ZERO AS YOU LEAVE THE
STATION ENTRANCE JUNCTION AND TURN RIGHT TO REJOIN THE A686!**

Alston

Alston is a small town in Cumbria, England, on the River South Tyne. It holds the title of the 'highest market town in England', at about 1,000 feet (300 m) above sea level,. Despite being at such an altitude and in a remote location, the town is easily accessible via the many roads which link the town to the Weardale valley, Teesdale, Hartside Pass (and towns in Cumbria such as Penrith) as well as the Tyne valley.

Historically part of Cumberland, Alston lies within the North Pennines, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is surrounded by beautiful views of the surrounding fells and the South Tyne Valley. Much of the town centre is a designated Conservation Area which includes several listed buildings.

The landscape of the area is built up from limestone, sandstone and shale. The area is rich in minerals, in particular lead deposits, and the landscape has been heavily influenced by the effects of varying methods of mining over the centuries.

The earliest evidence of population in the area comes from pottery fragments, a gold basket-earring and flint tools found in one of two barrows excavated in 1935 (2 miles (3.2 km)) NNW of Alston at Kirkhaugh, these were dated between 2000 BC and 1700 BC.

Evidence of Roman activity in the area comes from the earth remains of Whitley Castle, thought to be the Roman fort (Castra) of Epiacum built and rebuilt by the Sixth and Twentieth Legions between the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Whitley Castle would have guarded this central supply route to Hadrian's Wall, and may also have helped protect lead and silver deposits in the upper reaches of the south Tyne valley.

The name of the town is recorded in 1164–71 as Aldeneby and in 1209 as Aldeneston, and seems to mean "the settlement or farmstead belonging to [a Viking man named] Halfdan".

In the 10th century, Alston Moor was part of the Liberty of Tynedale, which was an

Despite the town being on the Tyne and being historically part of Tynedale, the area has never been part of either Hexhamshire or Northumberland but part of Cumberland and later Cumbria. This was probably because the mines in the area were at one time administered from Carlisle.

Historically the area has been mined for lead, silver, zinc, coal and fluorspar. The nearby Roman fort of Whitley Castle (Epiacum) may in part have been sited to control and protect the lead mines there.

The biggest mine owner in the area was the London Lead Company; this Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) organisation with enlightened employment policies established an interest in the area during the early 18th century. In 1745, it began construction of a school, a library, a sanitary house, a surgeon's house, a market hall with clock tower, a laundry and a 'ready-money' shop in Nenthead, four miles away.

Many of the last mines closed in the 1950s. A small drift coal mine (Ayle Colliery) was still active in 2013.

The town hall is a focal point for the community, being a venue for many local social events. It also contains the tourist information centre, the public library and some local administration offices. Until the late 1980s the town hall also contained a branch of the Trustee Savings Bank. The bank closed down but the library moved to premises in the Market Place, then moved back to the town hall in September 2008. Construction of the neo-gothic building started in 1857 when Hugh Lee Pattinson laid the foundation stone.

Market cross



Alston Market Cross

Although the town does not hold a regular market it still maintains the legal right to do so. The market cross, which acts as a focal point in the centre of town, was constructed in 1981 to replace one which was demolished by a wagon in January 1980. That earlier cross had itself replaced a cross of 1883 which was knocked down by a lorry in 1968. A regular producers' market now takes place in the town hall from April to September.

Nent Force level

During the area's peak of prosperity in 1776 John Smeaton began construction of an underground drain (the "*Nent Force Level*") to de-water the mines of the Nent Valley and assist with the transport of extracted materials as well as to locate new mineral seams. The canal took 66 years to construct at a cost of £80,000, and became known as "Smeaton's Folly". In the 1830s mine manager and engineer said that it could be visited "in boats 30 feet in length, which are propelled in four feet of water by means of sticks projecting from the sides of the level; and thus may be enjoyed the singular novelty of sailing a few miles underground". It was intended to be 9 feet square but in the softer terrain was extended to 9'x16', dead level for 3 ³/₄ miles (6.0 km) to allow boat use, with a rise of 35 fathoms (210 ft (64 m) at Lovelady Shield and then driven into the Nenthead ground. The amount of ore found was disappointing, though not insignificant.



Nent Force Level

Access to the Nent Force Level is currently extremely difficult although efforts have been made to develop a heritage centre to make this extraordinary piece of engineering accessible to the public.

The League of Gentlemen



The fictional town of Royston Vasey, the setting of the comedy series The League of Gentlemen, is based on Alston. The League of Gentlemen is a British comedy television series that premiered on BBC Two in 1999. The show is set in Royston Vasey, a fictional town in Northern England. It followed the lives of dozens of bizarre townspeople, most of whom are played by three of the show's four writers—Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton, and Reece Shearsmith—who, along with Jeremy Dyson, formed the League of Gentlemen comedy troupe in 1995. The series originally aired for three series from 1999 until 2002 followed by a film in 2005.



Alston railway station was formerly the terminus of a branch line from Haltwhistle. The town's rail link to Haltwhistle was completed in 1852 by the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway Company. The closure of the line was decided in the Beeching Report in 1962, but closure was rejected due to lack of a direct road link. After a road was built, closure was again proposed in 1973 and the line closed on 1 May 1976. It was one of the last enacted closures of the Beeching Report.

Part of the route, between Alston and Lintley, three miles in length, is now operated as the narrow gauge South Tynedale Railway. The Alston branch line, along which the South Tynedale Railway now runs, was inherited by British Railways from the London and North Eastern Railway company (LNER), but didn't last as long as British Rail themselves.

Modernisation and diesel traction – In November 1959 BR introduced a diesel-worked passenger timetable. The last scheduled steam-hauled passenger train pulled into Alston station (carrying 'Royal Train' headlights) on the evening of Saturday 27th September, 1959. Steam was replaced, at Alston, by Metro Cammell two car sets (later class '101s') and in the next few years these good looking and relatively comfortable diesel multiple units became familiar sights in the scenic South Tyne Valley.

In May 1965, German-built 4-wheeled railbus No E79964 was sent north for trials on the Alston branch. Built by Waggon und Maschinenbau in 1958, these German railbuses were part of a batch of five ordered under the BR modernisation plan. Whilst unsuccessful on the Alston branch these railbuses were transferred to other BR regions.



Waggon und Maschinenbau Railbus



Last train to Alston 1 May 1976

The final journey and closure – Saturday 1st May 1976 was a sombre, wet day, but the depressing weather did not deter an estimated 5,000 people from travelling north to ride on the last scheduled passenger services. The normal trains were filled to capacity, while hundreds of others travelled over the branch line in special trains.

Some people rode up and down the line for two or more trips, but finally, at 9:09pm, the time came for the last train to commence its melancholy journey from Alston to Haltwhistle. The train was greeted by little groups of people as it paused at the intermediate stations at Slaggyford, Lambley, Coanwood and Featherstone. The final journey came to an end at about 9:45pm, and as the last day travellers dispersed by car and train, everybody was conscious that 123 years of railway history had drawn to a close.

The formal consent to the closure of the Alston branch in January 1973 was the signal for everyone who wished to retain the branch to join together, and on 3rd April 1973 the South Tynedale Railway Preservation Society was formed.

The decision to build a narrow gauge line was taken at the Annual General Meeting of the Society at Haltwhistle on 2nd July 1977. As the County Councils had been given first options to purchase the trackbed, negotiations started with both Cumbria and Northumberland County Councils for agreements to enable the construction of a two-foot gauge line northwards from Alston.

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
0.6	TL	TL Pass Scale Bank farm on left Pass Ebenezer 1818 on left Pass Brownside House on right	Signpost Garrigill
1.9	SO	SO	LEADGATE Signpost Garrigill
4.7	SO	SO	GARRIGILL

Garrigill

Garrigill, Cumbria is a small village in the North Pennine region of the UK situated on the banks and close to the source of the River South Tyne. Historically part of Cumberland, today it is within the Garrigill ward of the civil parish of Alston Moor within the district of Eden.

The village's name should not be confused with the hamlet of Galligill in the Nent valley, also within Alston Moor.

The village's former name is Garrigill-Gate and it was earlier known as Gerard's Gill. (Gill is a Norse word for a steep-sided valley).

At its peak Garrigill was home to 1,000 people, mainly employed in the lead mining industry; now its population numbers less than 200. While those who live in the village were at one time mainly employed in local livestock farming, these days the population is fairly evenly divided between those in local employment, the self-employed and retirees.

Garrigill Post Office is a traditional village store which has not changed substantially since the 1950s and is an attraction to many visitors, although at one time the village had four shops including a Co-op store.

Both the Pennine Way, the oldest of the UK's National Trails, and the Sea to Sea Cycle Route (C2C) England's most popular long-distance cycle route, pass through the village.

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
4.9	BL	Bear left opposite Art Gallery Studio	Rose House Studio
5.0	TL	TL Nenthead Alston	GEORGE AND DRAGON INN, GARRIGILL
5.1	BL	Sharp left after bridge	
5.8	TR	TR Obscured junction and very steep hill	SP Nenthead Middleton
5.8	TR	TR B6277 Middleton in Teesdale Past Windy Hall on right	LOANING HEAD



Ashgill Force



Burnhope Seat

At Ashgillside and Beldy there are waterfalls namely Ashgill Force and Thortergill Force. Thortergill Force (formerly known to locals as Lady's Walk).

Burnhope Seat

Burnhope Seat is a moor in the North Pennines of England. It lies between the heads of the Rivers Tees and Wear. The summit is crossed by the boundary between County Durham and Cumbria (historically Cumberland). It is the highest point in historic County Durham.

The B6277 road between Alston and Middleton-in-Teesdale passes within 2 km of the summit, thus providing the easiest route of ascent. The hill may also be climbed from Weardale as part of high-level circuit of Burnhope Reservoir. The highest point of the hill lies in Cumbria, some 200 m west of a trig point on the border.

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
7.0	SO	Waterfall on right then cross bridge	ASHGILL FORCE WATERFALL YAD MOSS
10.4	SO	SO County Line	COUNTY DURHAM TEESDALE B6277
12.8	SO	SO	HARWOOD B6277
16.1	TL	TL on to Harthope Road	Signpost St John's Chapel Weardale
21.0	TR	TR to A689	ST JOHN'S CHAPEL Signpost Stanhope (A689)
21.5	SO	SO	DADDY SHIELD
22.1	SO	SO	WESTSGATE
25.2	SO	SO	EASTGATE

St John's Chapel

St John's Chapel is a village in County Durham, in England. It is situated in Weardale, on the south side of the River Wear on the A689 road between Daddy Shield and Ireshopeburn. The 2001 census reported a population of 307, of which only 43 were children under 16. In 1980 there were 160 children in the village.

Although this area has a high quality of life with low pollution and crime rates, in 2001 16 residents were unemployed and 26% of households were without a car. Originally St John's chapel was a medieval hunting stop, it then grew as a centre of lead mining after 1600.

St John's Chapel was the penultimate stop of the Weardale Extension Railway which opened on 21 October 1895, being mainly a freight line carrying limestone, iron ore, lead ore and fluorspar to the industrial areas of North East England. It closed to passenger traffic in 1953 and later to freight in 1963. The station was entirely demolished.



Westgate

Westgate is a village in County Durham, in North East England. It is situated in Weardale between St John's Chapel and Eastgate-In-Weardale. In the 2001 census Westgate had a population of 298. Westgate is also the entrance to Slitt wood and an old abandoned lead mine. At one time, the village was once served by a railway station, that was on the Weardale Railway (that once ran up the valley to Wearhead).

The line has now long been preserved and currently running between Bishop Auckland and nearby Eastgate-In-Weardale, whilst the former Westgate station itself, is now long closed and under different use.



Westgate Railway station (closed)

Eastgate

Eastgate is a village in County Durham, England. It is situated in Weardale, a few miles west of Stanhope. In the 2001 census Eastgate had a population of 163.

Eastgate originally marked the eastern border of the private hunting park of the Prince Bishops of Durham. This was second in extent only to the royal hunting park of the New Forest in Hampshire. Emerson Muschamp Bainbridge, the founder of the world's first department store, was born in the village.



Eastgate Railway station (closed)

In 2004 it was announced that a hot geothermal power plant would go ahead on the site of a former cement works. The geothermal plant was planned to heat the UK's first geothermal energy model village, the official working title being Eastgate Renewable Energy Village. But the plan fell through, and instead of the village a large outdoor set was built for the filming of the ITV series Beowulf: Return to the Shieldlands, first broadcast in 2016.



The former Blue Circle Cement Works at Eastgate

The exploratory geothermal borehole drilled in December 2004 was the first to be completed in the United Kingdom for more than 20 years. The water temperature at a depth of 995 metres (3,264 ft) was found to be 46.2 °C, and it was estimated that the water temperature of a production borehole with a depth of about 1,800 metres (5,900 ft) would be in the range of 75–80 °C, with a volume of water similar to that already being exploited in the existing geothermal energy scheme in Southampton.

The plans for the energy village included constructing a terminus for the Weardale Railway, which currently runs between Bishop Auckland and Stanhope.

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
28.7	TR	TR on Bondisle Way to Ind Estate and Weardale Railway Arr. 1230 Dep 1430	STANHOPE RAILWAY STATION
Parking in station car parks or kerb side east and west of station entrance. Overflow into Industrial estate.			

STANHOPE RAILWAY STATION – LUNCH STOP **MANDATORY ZERO RESET POINT**

REMEMBER TO RESET YOUR TRIPMETER TO ZERO AS YOU TURN LEFT AND REJOIN THE A689!

Stanhope

The civil parish of Stanhope has a population of 4,519 in 2001, and also includes Rookhope, Westgate, St John's Chapel, Ireshopeburn, Wearhead, Cowshill, Cornriggs, Eastgate, Frosterley all on the A689 road, along with Crawleyside, Hill End and White Kirkley. The parish council area is the largest in England with 221 km².



Stanhope Castle

Stanhope is surrounded by moorland in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – the second largest of the current 40 AONBs in England and Wales.

Features of interest include

- the Durham Dales Centre, which incorporates a tea room, tourist information and craft shops.
- The famous ford with a step-stone bridge for pedestrians.
- the eighteenth-century Stanhope Castle in the centre of the town stands on the possible site of a medieval castle.
- one of only two heated open-air swimming pools in the North East.

Weardale Railway



Stanhope Railway Station

Stanhope is also the current terminus of the Weardale Railway, a heritage railway operating primarily on weekends from Bishop Auckland with stations at Frosterley, Wolsingham and Witton-le-Wear.

The Weardale Railway is an independently owned British single-track branch line heritage railway between Bishop Auckland, Witton-le-Wear, Wolsingham, Frosterley and Stanhope. Weardale Railway services began on 23 May 2010, but decided to run special trains rather than a scheduled service for the 2013 season.

The railway originally ran from Bishop Auckland to Wearhead in County Durham, North-East England, a distance of 25 miles (40 km), built in the nineteenth century to carry limestone from Eastgate-in-Weardale, and provide passenger services to Weardale. Passenger services ceased in 1953, leaving only freight services to Eastgate until 1992. After the quarry's owner Lafarge moved to road transport in 1993, the line was threatened with closure by British Rail (BR), and it was taken over by a group of enthusiasts.

The Weardale Railway currently runs for 18 miles (29 km) between Bishop Auckland and the site of Eastgate-in-Weardale Station, making the line one of the longest preserved standard gauge heritage railways in Great Britain.

Lunch stop – Stanhope station, private carriage(s)



First Class dining

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
0.00	TL	TL on A689 and continue west through Stanhope on Front Street past Dales Centre and Fire Station (on right)	STANHOPE Signpost Town Centre Dales Centre
0.6	TR	TR on B6278	Signpost Edmundbyers (B6278)
0.8	SO	SO on B6278	CRAWLEYSIDE BANK

Crawleyside

Crawleyside is a village in County Durham, in England. It is situated to the north of Stanhope, in Weardale. In the 2001 census Crawleyside had a population of 170. The Crawley Edge Cairns, in a field to the west of the village are a series of forty-two Bronze Age cairns.

Crawleyside Bus disaster 14 August 1969



An event on August 14, 1969, an awful scene.

The bus contained 42 members and friends of the Blackhall pensioners' bowling team who were returning home after playing their annual fixture against Consett. Their elderly bus, made of aluminium and wood and which required skilful double declutching to regulate its speed, had hurtled out of control down the notorious one-in-six bank towards Stanhope. As it hit roadside houses and walls, it disintegrated, the bulk of it coming to rest upside down embedded in a building.

It was local garage owner and rally driver Fred Henderson's job, with his Scammell tow truck in attendance, to lift the coach without toppling his new recovering vehicle down the steep hill. Fortunately, there were no further casualties beneath the wreckage – but still the death toll was 20. Fred also assisted removing the broken bits of bus to the bottom of the bank for analysis. In Blackhall, population 7,000, the accident naturally had a devastating effect on the close knit mining community.

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
1.1	SO	SO on B6278	NORTH PENNINES
3.3	SO	SO on B6278	PARKHEAD STATION
3.6	BL	TL on unclassified road	MEADOWS EDGE Signpost Blanchland
8.8	SO	SO on unclassified road	BAYBRIDGE Signpost Baybridge Blanchland
9.3	SO	SO on unclassified road	NORTHUMBERLAND CLAP SHAW
9.4	TR	TR on B6306 past Lord Crewe Arms	BLANCHLAND Signpost Shotley Bridge Edmundbyers

Blanchland



Blanchland is a village in Northumberland, England, on the County Durham boundary. Set beside the river in a wooded section of the Derwent valley, in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Blanchland

Blanchland was formed out of the medieval Blanchland Abbey property by Nathaniel Crew, 3rd Baron Crew, the Bishop of Durham, 1674-1722. It is a conservation village, largely built of stone from the remains of the 12th-century Abbey. It features picturesque houses, set against a backdrop of deep woods and open moors. Located near the Derwent Reservoir, it provides facilities for sailing and fishing.

The Lord Crewe Arms Hotel has a vast fireplace where 'General' Tom Forster hid during the Jacobite rising of 1715. W. H. Auden stayed at the Lord Crewe Arms with fellow student Gabriel Carritt at Easter 1930, and later remarked that no place held sweeter memories. Blanchland may have been the model for the village in which was set the opening and closing scenes of Auden and Isherwood's play *The Dog Beneath the Skin* (1935). Another celebrated poet Philip Larkin used to dine at the hotel when staying with Monica Jones in Haydon Bridge. In July 1969, Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears stayed at the Inn.

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
9.6	SO	SO on B6306	COUNTY DURHAM
10.8	TL	TL on unclassified road	Signpost Hexham 
11.0	SO	SO on unclassified road	DERWENT RESERVOIR Kodak moments 

Derwent Reservoir

Derwent Reservoir is a reservoir on the River Derwent, on the border between County Durham and Northumberland, in England. It is west of Consett and is one of the biggest inland waters in England. It is 3.5 miles (5.6 km) long) and covers an area of 4 km² and has a maximum depth of 100 ft (30m) and when full, holds 11,000 million gallons (50,000,000m³).



Derwent Reservoir (MG country...Kodak moment....)

The reservoir is a key part of the water supply network in north east England (which is owned and managed by Northumbrian Water), as it is the principal water source for the Tyne and Wear metropolitan area supplying 28,000,000 imperial gallons (130,000,000 litres) per day.

The reservoir was first proposed in 1957 when the Sunderland and South Shields Water Company promoted the Derwent Water Order. Building work began on the reservoir in 1960, and it was opened in July 1967 by HRH Princess Alexandra. Unlike other reservoirs in Northern England that are flooded valleys with a dam head, Derwent was dug out of the ground and the earth removed was used in its dam head.

The flow of the River Derwent can be supplemented, when necessary, by water transferred from the much larger Kielder Water in Northumberland. However this cannot top up the reservoir itself.

Derwent Reservoir also hosts a sailing club, which holds many events throughout the year, including windsurfing, sailing, running and triathlons. The area around the reservoir hosts the annual Tour of the Reservoir cycle race and is a great route for your classic car! The reservoir also has hydroelectric plant installed, with a rating of 97 kilowatts.

Minestracres

Minsteracres is an 18th-century mansion house, now a Christian retreat centre, in Northumberland, England. It is a Grade II listed building. The house was built in 1758 by George Silvertop. Originally erected with two storeys, a third storey was added in 1811 and a new North wing was built in 1865.



Minestracres Christian Retreat Centre

The Silvertops were a Roman Catholic family. George Silvertop was in 1831 the first Catholic appointed High Sheriff of Northumberland following the repeal of the penal law. His nephew Henry Charles Silvertop, High Sheriff in 1859 built a Catholic chapel adjoining the hall, and dedicated to St Elizabeth of Hungary in 1854. The chapel is a Grade II listed building. The Silvertop family sold the House in 1949 for conversion to a Passionist Monastery.

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
15.0	TR	TR on unclassified road	BARLEY HILL Signpost Kiln Pit Hill Whittonstall
15.2	SO	SO on unclassified road	
16.1	SO	SO at crossroads over A68 Beware high speed traffic approaching both ways	KILN PIT HILL Signpost Whittonstall Ebchester
16.5	SO	SO on unclassified road	SHOTLEYFIELD
17.5	TL	TL on unclassified road	Signpost Stocksfield
18.4	TR	TR on Lead Road	Signpost Stocksfield
19.0	TL	TL on B6309 (A691)	Signpost Stocksfield
19.6	BR	Bear right on B6309	HINDLEY (Wheelbirks)
21.1	TL	TL on A695	Cross railway bridge Signpost Corbridge Hexham

Stocksfield

Stocksfield is a small, yet sprawling commuter village situated close to the River Tyne, about 14 miles (23 km) west of Newcastle upon Tyne and 10 miles (16 km) east of Hexham in the southern part of Northumberland and is a very vibrant community orientated place to live.....



Stocksfield Cricket Club

Lives [or lived] in Stocksfield

- Peter Armstrong, poet and psychotherapist
- Rowan Atkinson, comedian
- Alan Clark, ex Dire Straits Keyboard Player
- Brendan Foster, ex athletics 10,000 m record holder
- Frances Hardcastle (1866-1941), mathematician and women's activist
- Ernest John Hunter (1912-1983), shipbuilder
- Alan Milburn, politician
- Sir Richard Pease, 3rd Baronet (born 1922), banker
- Lee Cattermole Sunderland footballer



Alan Clark



Rowan Atkinson



Brendan Foster



Alan Milburn

Mileage	Direction	Notes	Location / POI
21.2	TR	TR on A68	STOCKSFIELD Signpost Stamfordham Belsay
21.6	TR	Roundabout A69 THIRD exit for Brockbushes farm.	BROCKBUSHES FARM

Thank you for supporting the MG Northumbria 2018 Heritage Run today, and do hope you have enjoyed the experience. As always, constructive feedback is always welcome in the spirit of continuous improvement.

Sincerely,

Phil Kirkland (MGTF NV53 OBE)