

## Wildlife and Landscape



The majority of access land within the North Pennines AONB is designated Special Protection Area and Site of Special Scientific Interest, in recognition of its internationally important habitats and species.

The access land of the North Pennines is important for many special birds, including black grouse, merlin, golden plover, curlew, and ring ouzel. Seventy five percent of the remaining upland moorland in the world is found in Britain, making conservation of the moors of the North Pennines a critical objective.

Ground nesting birds when threatened will display defensive behaviour such as flapping their wings, feigning injury and distracting people away from nest sites. It is best to ignore anything unusual that a bird is doing and continue walking, giving the area a wide berth.

Access land is managed for upland farming and shooting. These activities have helped to form the landscape, which we consider so important today. Please respect the role of the people who depend on access land for their livelihoods. Bear in mind that fires on access land may be controlled as part of the management of heather moorland: such fires are restricted by law and are only allowed between October and mid-April.

## Where you can go, what you can do



You can walk, sightsee, bird-watch, picnic, run and climb on access land. There is no new right to ride a cycle or horse (except on bridleways crossing access land), camp, drive vehicles (except on byways open to all traffic or other legal routes crossing access land), hanglidge, paraglide, use a metal detector, use boats, collect stones, plants or wood, light or cause fires or swim in any non-tidal rivers. Existing access rights are unaffected.

Please use the public rights of way network or other signposted routes to get to and from access land – look out for the access symbol.



When you see this symbol it shows that land may be open for public access on foot. Access rights for other activities may also exist.



This symbol shows there are no public access rights beyond the point where it is displayed. (public rights of way are not affected).



The right of access on foot also applies to wheelchair users. Where reasonable, gates have been provided to allow access although please note that access land is often very rough terrain.

## Dogs on Access Land



The rights on access land extend to walking with dogs. However, they must be on a fixed lead no more than 2m long between 1st March and 31st July to limit disturbance to ground nesting birds. They must also be on a short fixed lead at any time near livestock and nesting birds. Please follow local information signs.

- On access land used for the rearing and shooting of grouse, there is likely to be a total exclusion on dogs, visit [www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk) or ring 0845 1003298 for current information.
- Dogs may also be excluded for up to 6 weeks a year on land used for lambing and in areas important for ground nesting birds.
- Dog restrictions do not apply to trained guide/hearing dogs and dogs on the land with the landowner's permission.
- Your rights to take dogs on public rights of way are unaffected by access land restrictions, but dogs must be kept under close control on public rights of way, preferably on a fixed short lead.

### Dogs and cattle

- Cattle may be inquisitive and approach you, especially if you have a dog.
- Avoid walking through a herd of cattle and never come between a cow and her calf.
- If you have a dog with you and feel threatened by cattle, let the dog go and retreat.
- In any other circumstances, dogs must be kept on a short lead near livestock.



## Some areas are restricted

Access land is not necessarily available for you to walk on at all times. Permanent restrictions may be in place for a wide range of reasons, including nature conservation, land management and public safety. In addition, local restrictions may be in force.

Details of restrictions including those relating to dogs can be found at [www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk) or call 0845 100 3298. Information on local restrictions may also be posted at the main access land primary information points at the locations shown on the map overleaf, or at the main points of access onto specific areas of land.

### Some basic rules

There is no right of access to quarries and active mineral workings, Ministry of Defence training areas while they are in active use and land within 20m of a house or building, even if it is mapped as access land.

In some areas, local information signs are provided to advise you of suggested routes across access land, and areas to avoid in the interests of nature conservation and safety; please follow this advice.



## North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of the finest landscapes in the country. It was designated in 1988 and at almost 2,000 sq. kilometres is the second largest of the 41 AONBs and is one of the most peaceful and unspoilt places in England. It is nationally and internationally important for its upland habitats, geology and wildlife, with much of the area being internationally designated. The North Pennines AONB became Britain's first European Geopark in 2003 in recognition of its internationally important geology. A year later it became a founding member of the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network. For more information call 01388 528801 or visit [www.northpennines.org.uk](http://www.northpennines.org.uk)

The North Pennines AONB Partnership is a strategic alliance of almost 30 public, statutory and voluntary sector bodies with an interest in the future of the AONB. The work of the Partnership is carried out by a small AONB Staff Unit, guided by the statutory AONB Management Plan, the staff unit takes action to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area and helps to co-ordinate the work of others.

## With rights... ...come responsibilities

You are welcome to explore access land in the North Pennines but please remember that most of the area is privately owned, is internationally important for wildlife and is a home and place of work for many people. Please exercise your rights responsibly.

You should always follow local restrictions and signs and follow the Moorland Visitor's Code.



### The Moorland Visitor's Code Respect... Protect... Enjoy

- Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs.
- Keep dogs under close control.
- Prevent uncontrolled moorland fires.
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home.
- Leave gates and property as you find them.
- Consider other people.

**Be careful. Access land may involve rough and challenging terrain. Keep your eyes open for hidden holes and old mine workings.**

### Safety on Access Land

Access land in the North Pennines is remote and often challenging terrain. Your walk will require forward planning to ensure that you keep safe.

- Take a map and compass (and know how to use them!), spare food, drink and clothing.
- Tell somebody where you are going and when you will return.
- If you are inexperienced or unsure of your own ability, never walk alone.
- Check the weather forecast, but be aware that the weather in upland areas can change quickly.
- Keep an eye out for potential dangers such as mine and quarry workings.



## How to find out more

If you are intending to walk on access land, it is important that you have up-to-date information about what you can do and where you can go. Use:



- **Ordnance Survey Explorer series maps**  
The Explorer series of maps printed after May 2005 will show access land. The main maps that cover the AONB are OL19, OL31, and OL43, other areas of the AONB are covered by maps OL5, OL30, OL307 and OL315.
- **Visit [www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk)** for current information on any restrictions to walk on access land, and for general countryside access information.
- **Access Helpline (0845 100 3298)** gives current information, including any restrictions.
- **Primary and Secondary Information Points**   
The Primary Information Points shown on the map and additional secondary information points provide general information on access land, and may include information on local restrictions.
- **Contact the relevant County Council** for further information or to report a problem on access land:
 

Cumbria County Council	01228 601022
Durham County Council	0191 3706000
Northumberland County Council	01670 533000

Full time Rangers and Voluntary Wardens and other access staff are helping to manage access land within the North Pennines.
- **To find out more about the North Pennines AONB/UNESCO Global Geopark**, visit [www.northpennines.org.uk](http://www.northpennines.org.uk) or call 01388 528801. For accommodation, places to visit and things to do in the North Pennines, ring 01388 528801 to request a North Pennines Discovery Guide, or contact a Tourist Information Centre.

## Self-guided Walks

The walks shown on the area map and described here have been devised to allow you to explore access land responsibly and with confidence.

- You will need an Ordnance Survey map to follow these routes on the ground, as this leaflet is not detailed enough to use alone.
- The routes may be subject to restrictions at certain times of year, please check before attempting to walk them.
- Access land is difficult terrain - note that these are not easy or surfaced routes.
- The access land that these routes cross is managed for grouse. As a result, dogs are permanently restricted.

### Route 1: Hartside to Tom Smith's Stone

*Start/finish: Hartside Cafe (A686)*  
Approx distance: 4 miles, 6.5 kilometres

From Hartside Cafe → head north along the westside of the allotment boundary → cross onto the eastern side of the boundary at Hartside Height → follow the boundary north across Black Fell, to Tom Smith's Stone → return via the same route.

### Route 2: Shacklesborough and Goldsborough

*Start/finish: Balderhead Reservoir*  
Approx distance: 6 miles, 10 kilometres

From Balderhead reservoir → follow the public right of way to Water Knott → head uphill to Shacklesborough → head east across Cotherstone Moor to Goldsborough → return to Balder head along the Pennine Way and the public right of way via Blackton.

### Route 3: Coldberry Gutter

*Start/finish: Bowlees Picnic area*  
Approx distance: 5 miles, 8 kilometres

From Bowlees → follow the public right of way east and then north to the west end of Coldberry Gutter → head east either through the gutter or across the southern edge → follow the public rights of way to Newbiggin returning to Bowlees.

### Route 4: Blanchland and Acton Fell

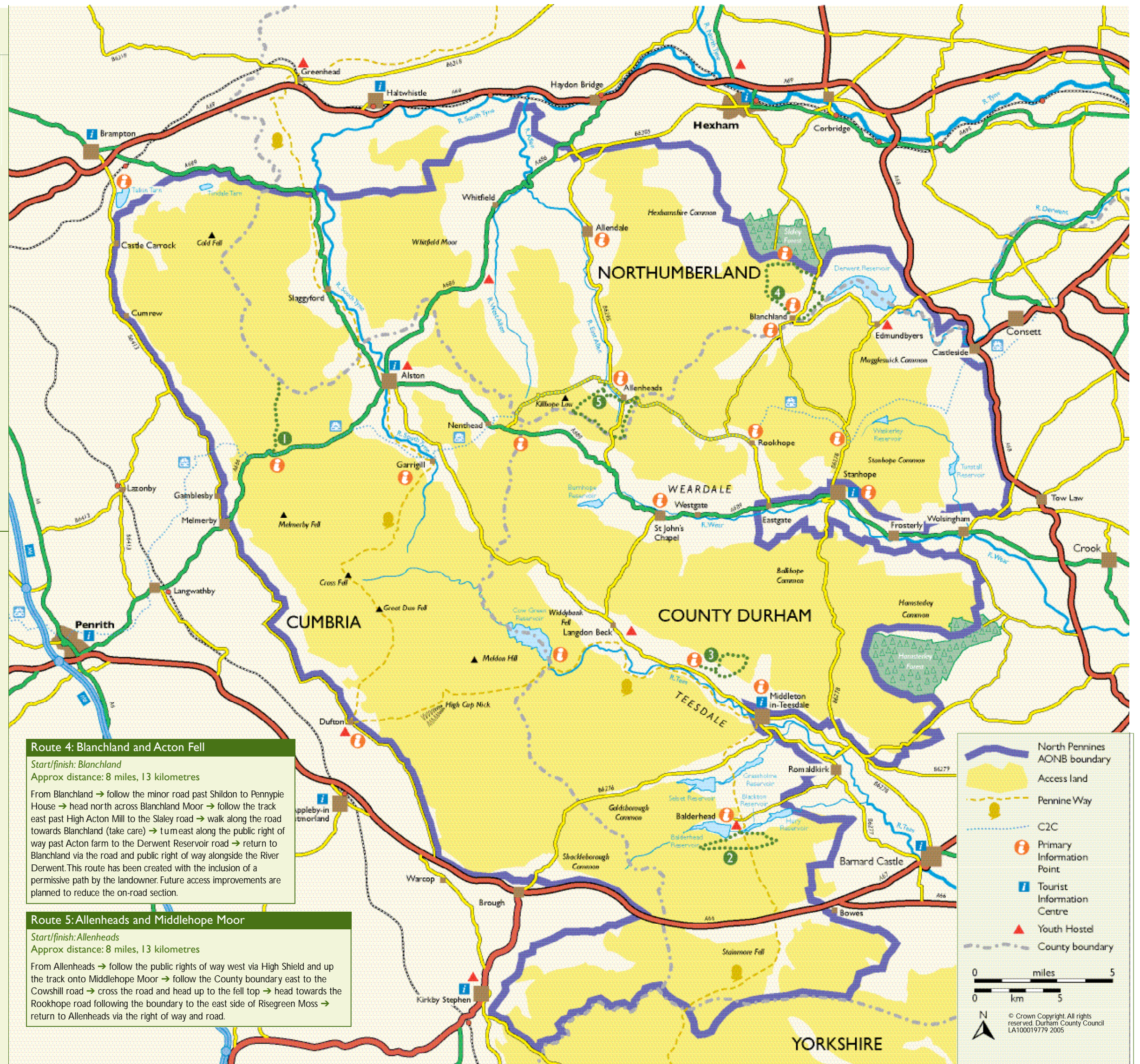
*Start/finish: Blanchland*  
Approx distance: 8 miles, 13 kilometres

From Blanchland → follow the minor road past Shildon to Pennypie House → head north across Blanchland Moor → follow the track east past High Acton Mill to the Slaley road → walk along the road towards Blanchland (take care) → turn east along the public right of way past Acton farm to the Derwent Reservoir road → return to Blanchland via the road and public right of way alongside the River Derwent. This route has been created with the inclusion of a permissive path by the landowner. Future access improvements are planned to reduce the on-road section.

### Route 5: Allenheads and Middlehope Moor

*Start/finish: Allenheads*  
Approx distance: 8 miles, 13 kilometres

From Allenheads → follow the public rights of way west via High Shield and up the track onto Middlehope Moor → follow the County boundary east to the Cowhill road → cross the road and head up to the fell top → head towards the Rookhope road following the boundary to the east side of Risegreen Moss → return to Allenheads via the right of way and road.



North Pennines AONB boundary  
 Access land  
 Pennine Way  
 C2C  
 Primary Information Point  
 Tourist Information Centre  
 Youth Hostel  
 County boundary

0 5 miles  
 0 5 km

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