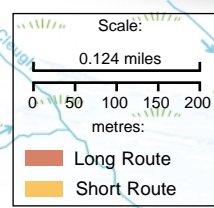


# In and Around the former lead mining village of Rookhope

Flued to its chimney up the hill,  
That smokes no answer any more  
But points, a landmark on Bolt's Law  
The finger of all questions. There in  
ROOKHOPE I was aware....  
New Year Letter (1941) W.H. Auden



curlew



Areas of old heather are burnt so  
new young shoots will grow.  
The mosaic of young and old  
heather, grass and bracken provide  
food and shelter for red grouse



Stone walls provide shelter  
and warm bedding spots  
for lizards and homes  
for stoats and weasels.



dipper

Fields used as pasture  
for sheep and cattle. Some are  
cut once a year for hay and silage.  
They support upland wading  
birds in the spring, such as lapwing and  
redshank. Also look out for grey partridge,  
thrushes, ring ouzels, kestrels and in the  
winter fieldfares.

Redburn Common is  
mostly mat grass which  
makes the hillside  
look white.

Look on rocks and under  
the heather for different  
types of lichen.

In summer the grass is  
sprinkled with yellow  
flowered tormentil and  
white heath bedstraw used  
for sheep pasture.  
Look for red grouse, curlew  
and short-eared owls.

The river bank here is being managed  
to protect water voles and encourage  
otters. Willows reduce bank erosion.  
Birds include heron, moorhen, dippers,  
wagtails and oystercatchers, plus  
summer visitors such as warblers  
and sand martins.

In earlier years, Lintzgarth Common was  
drained to improve grazing. Now part is  
being actively managed for wading birds.  
Ditches are being blocked and new shallow  
pools created to restore the wet upland  
pasture. Note the big tussocks of grass and  
rushes. Black grouse use this area, but they  
also need woodland for shelter and winter  
feed, so small areas in the cleughs (small  
valleys) are being planted with native  
trees such as rowan, birch and alder.

Follow the Mineral Valleys Walk signs



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water vole

mountain pansy

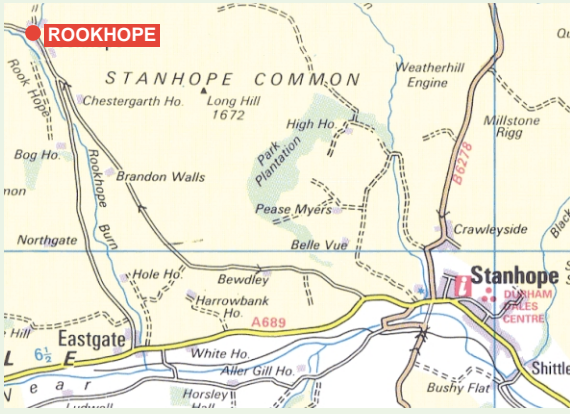




## Walking Information

The routes take you onto open moorland, you are strongly advised to:

- tell someone where you are going and your expected time of return
- carry an OS map and use in conjunction with this leaflet
- wear appropriate clothing and footwear (the longer route covers very uneven ground and crosses boggy land)
- respect the local wetlands nature reserve and grouse moorland by keeping dogs on a short lead. This is especially important from 1st March - 31st July as this is the nesting and lambing season.



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## Open Access

The walk in this leaflet follows public rights of ways however as from 28 May 2005, under the new right of access, many hectares of Rookhope's surrounding moorland became available for people to walk on (shown on the Ordnance Survey Explorer 307 map, published 2005). Management of ground nesting birds plays a big part in conserving this important and unique habitat therefore, at times, some open access areas will be subject to 'restrictions'. For more information about Open Access visit: [www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk)



This walk lies within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty [www.northpennines.org.uk](http://www.northpennines.org.uk)

## Amenities

Village Hall car park  
Post Office/shop  
You are welcome to use the toilets in the Rookhope Inn  
The Dales Centre, Stanhope  
Tel: 01388 527650

## Accommodation

The Rookhope Inn  
Tel: (01388) 517215  
The Vicarage  
Tel: (01388) 517335  
Nancy Sercombe B&B  
Tel: 01388 517577

This walk is brought to you by The Mineral Valleys Project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and led by Natural England, tel: 0191 2295500. Implemented by local communities in conjunction with Durham County Council, tel: 0191 3833239



If you require this information summarised in other languages or formats, such as Braille or talking tapes, please contact: (0191) 383 3239

Photographs: Darin Smith  
Illustrations: Jason Lowes

# Rookhope fields & fells



## A NETWORK OF WALKS OFF THE WEARDALE WAY

Short route: 3 miles/5km moderate  
Long route: 5 miles/8km strenuous

Starting from the former leadmining village of Rookhope in Weardale



## Farming and Wildlife

Use the map on your walk and you will once again get a glimpse into the lost industry of Rookhope, known to past mining generations as 'Towd Man'; If you would like to find out more about the lead mining industry and its legacy why not visit The North of England Lead Mining Museum at Killhope, [www.durham.gov.uk/killhope](http://www.durham.gov.uk/killhope), Tel: 01388 537505

Rookhope village lies in a North Pennine valley 320m above sea level. The highest point on this walk is nearly 500m. Farming has always been difficult due to the altitude and poor soils and is now limited to sheep and beef cattle. 'Traditional' farming methods such as late mowing for hay and lighter grazing result in an improved range of plants providing a good habitat for wading birds and small mammals. Some areas have been purchased privately and are now managed to improve their wildlife value. Small areas of native trees are being planted to increase biodiversity. In places the banks of the Rookhope Burn are being managed to protect water voles and encourage otters.

As you walk, look down in the valley bottom and across to the other side and you will clearly see how different management affects the landscape.

Look at it now and Rookhope is what you would expect it to be, a small hill farming community. So why such a large village? Why so many small houses up the valley sides? Why a vicarage that would do justice to a rich market town? The answer is in mining. Not long after the Normans invaded, the Scots also invaded but they only conquered a small part of the wild and largely uninhabited North of England. Hardly worth the bother you might think until you realise it contained Carlisle mint and many of the royal silver mining areas of the North Pennines. It did not, however, contain the Rookhope valley which the new and immensely powerful Bishop of Durham now held for the king. He wanted a mighty cathedral and for this he needed a lot of money. To get it he pushed men to mine for all the silver/lead they could find, the lead for the buildings and the silver to go to his mints for coinage. Some of them in turn moved from summer camps to living year round in the valleys and gradually the mining workforce of Rookhope was born.

## History and Industry

The above information has been gathered from a North Pennines Heritage Trust Publication called 'W H Auden, Pennine Poet' by Alan Myers and Robert Forsythe. Copies are available from The Dales Centre, Stanhope, Tel: (01388) 527650.



curlew

*The shafts are filled with water, the mosses grope over the washing floor. I look through the broken arms of waterwheels. I see lambs feeding. Trucks lie overturned. an old rail patches a gap in the wall. Rain falls through the gaping roof of sheds.*

He often describes the juxtaposition of industrial and natural landscapes. One of his early drafts of The Chase (1934) includes the following lines:

*Tramlines and slagheaps, pieces of machinery, That was, and still is, my ideal scenery.*

W H Auden was born in York in 1907. He visited Rookhope in his early childhood days and the moorland of the North Pennines provided Auden with inspiration for some of his earliest works. In 'Letter to Lord Byron' (1973) he writes:

## Literary Links