

10 Leisure Walks of Discovery

A Boot Up THE DURHAM DALES

Anthony Toole

The scenery and history of Weardale and Teesdale owe everything to geology, from the granite bedrock, through the sandstones, shales and limestone of the Carboniferous period to the dolerite intrusions of the Great Whin Sill. The North Pennines lead mining industry was once the most productive in the world, accounting for one-third of Britain's output, in this most industrialised region in the country. Its legacy remains in countless shafts, drifts, quarries and ruins that impart a unique strength of beauty to an already wildly beautiful landscape.

As industry dominated the valley floors, agriculture was forced onto the hillsides, leading to the evolution of an ecology, favoured by damp, cool conditions, that is now rare in Europe. The resulting hay meadows are the colourful spring and summer glory of the Durham Dales. Most of the walks, of between 3 and 7½ miles, follow valley tracks and public rights-of-way, with a few venturing onto the more open moorlands, and are generally suitable for families. They are ideal for visitors who wish to acquaint themselves with the Durham Dales, either on a short trip or a more extended holiday to the region. Together, they paint a comprehensive picture, yet will tempt the walker into wanting to see more. The ten walks are: Baal Hill Wood; Frosterley and Harehope Quarry; Rookhope and Bolt's Law; St John's Chapel and Ireshopeburn; Killhope Law; Monk's Moor and Hudeshope Valley; Coldberry Gutter; High Force and Holwick Scars; The Circuit of Widdybank Fell; Blackton Reservoir; Baldersdale;

Halsgrove's new-format guidebook, containing maps, photographs and useful information will ensure a great walking experience. Packed with colour, the book is an ideal reminder of a visit to the area.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

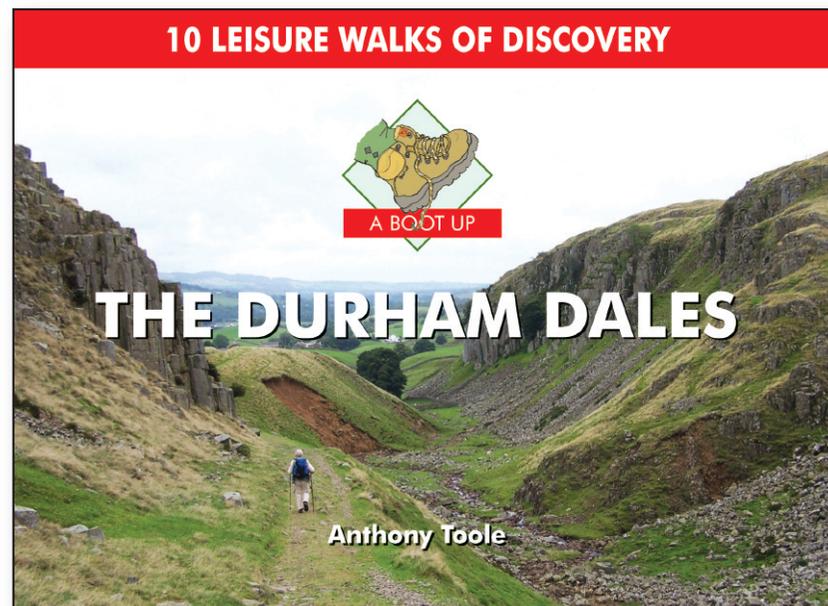
Anthony Toole lives in Newcastle upon Tyne, and spends much of his time walking in and writing about the hills of the north-east. He contributes walk descriptions regularly to *BBC Countryfile Magazine* and also contributed to the AA publication, *50 Walks in Durham and Northumberland*. He writes outdoor features for *The Northumbrian*, *The Countryman* and *North-east Life* magazines. He is a prizewinning member of Outdoor Writers' and Photographers' Guild and Writers and Photographers Unlimited. He has also written *A Boot Up the Northumberland National Park* and *A Boot Up the Northumberland Coast*, also for Halsgrove.

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A BOOT UP THE DURHAM DALES



High Force.



Bolt's Law summit.



Right: Lintzgarth Arch.



Rookhope from the Winding House.



Monk's Moor and Hudeshope valley.

2 Frosterley and Harehope Quarry

7 Go through a gate and up a narrow track beyond. This swings round to the right, joining a broader track past a wooden marker post. At the top of the hill, go through a gate (Western Valley Walk) and across a field (NE) to 300 metres to a fence at the edge of a water-filled quarry. There are views of Frosterley village across a large, grass-covered quarry to the north.

8 Turn left (NW) and descend toward the River Wear. Turn left (W) at the bottom of the slope, and continue for 350 metres to a farm track. Turn right (SW) onto this and follow it to a junction with the road. Turn right, across the bridge over the river and railway track, back into the village. A further 200 metres brings you to the car park.

The Roperley Mine, situated in a quarry to the north-west of Frosterley, is the only UK mine, operated commercially solely for the collection of mineral specimens.

Wood sculpture

Lintzgarth Arch

3 Rookhope and Bolt's Law
A beautiful 5-mile moorland walk out of perhaps the wildest tributary valley of Woadale.

During the nineteenth century, Rookhope was no more than a scattering of cattle farms. From the early nineteenth century, as the mining industry developed, the metal ores and fluxes were transported by rail from Rookhope on the 4-mile journey to Park Road, on the Stanhope and Tynemouth Railway. Coal, to power the engines and boilers, was carried as freight on the return journeys. The Coast-to-coast cycle track, which coincides with the first section of this walk, follows the old railway line. The poet W H Auden (1907 - 1973), who drew much inspiration from the relics of the North Pennines lead mining industry, described Rookhope as "the most wonderfully desolate of all the dales."

Carving on quarried face

Level: 5 miles
Terrain: Hillside of heathery and grassy moorland and valley tracks.
Park & start: Car park at the western edge of Rookhope village, beside the Community Hall.
Start ref: NY 328428
Public transport: Bus services from Bishop Auckland to Rookhope. Bus from Stanhope to Rookhope.
Website: www.stjst.org

Swainson Green

Rookhope and Bolt's Law

Example of a double-page spread.