

A BOOT UP DURHAM CITY

Philip Nixon

The Pixz Boot Up Series is fast becoming a phenomenon in local walks books that attract families and others to exploring the countryside in a leisurely way. It includes short walks for those living in or visiting popular areas of the country, written by those who know the area well. They provide a healthy hour or two of exercise, exploring parts of Britain's countryside that the casual visitor might otherwise miss, pointing out interesting features along the way. These are perfect walks for families.

Durham is a good place to live. Because of its small size it offers all the advantages of a city without the disadvantages. These ten country walks are all within the boundary of the city and each stands as a walk by itself but with a bit of careful planning parts of two or even more can easily be combined to give a longer walk. For the most part these footpaths are easy going although as with all walking it is probably safer to wear boots or stout footwear – most are dog friendly and have been thoroughly tested and approved by Archie, the author's Labrador.

The 10 walks included are centred on:

FINCHALE PRIORY • DURHAM RIVER
BANKS • HOUGHALL • SHINCLIFFE
WOODS • OBSERVATORY HILL •
KEPIER WOOD • FRANKLAND •
PITTINGTON AND RENNIE'S LANE •
SHINCLIFFE BRIDGE • BEARPARK

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

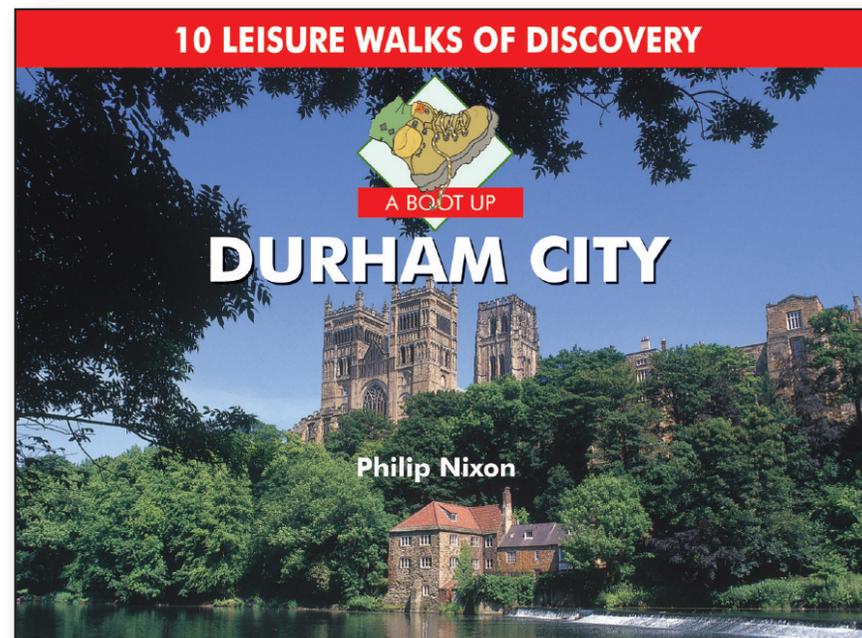
Philip Nixon has for many years led photographic walks throughout the County as part of Durham County Council's Walks Programme. For over 30 years he has enjoyed a successful multi-award winning career as a professional photographer and has been commissioned by companies and organisations all over Britain. He has his own photographic library of over 80,000 images and his work has been published worldwide in countless magazines, newspapers, calendars, brochures and books. His other books for Halsgrove include *A Portrait of Durham*.

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A BOOT UP DURHAM CITY



Shincliffe Bridge.



The Observatory.



Baths Bridge.



Kepier Hospital.



Brasside ponds.



Durham Cathedral.

1 Finchale Priory Walk

A sinister yew tree, put to use as a poison, used for assassination, suicide, as an arrow poison, and to poison fish and mammals. Nowadays its leaves are processed to extract Taxol, an anti-cancer drug which stops cell mutation. The berries have both a diuretic and laxative effect.

Eventually the path forks, just in front of a large tree stump

— take the path to the left to climb the rustic steps and a gentle hill to a wooden bench.

3 Bear left at the bench and continue on the woodland path, high above the river to

eventually exit onto a lay-by beside a minor road. Turn left between the walls and descend the steep steps to return to the riverside and cross the wooden bridge over the Wear back to the starting point.

Finchale Abbey Footbridge

2 Durham River Banks Walk
GR 273422

A walk around the wooded banks of the River Wear

This pleasant walk of just over two-and-a-half miles is rich in interest and should take about 45 minutes, not allowing for stops and diversions, to complete.

It starts from the north door of Durham Cathedral — note the striking knockers — grasping this would provide any felon with the right to 37 days' sanctuary from their persecutors, the only crime that did not qualify for the "peculiar sanctuary" offered by Durham Cathedral was, of course, sacrilege.

10

11

Example of a double-page spread.