

Walks around Redesdale
Redesdale Forest



- ① Three Kings
- ② Hindhope Linn Waterfalls
- ③ Byrness Hill
- ④ Byrness Village and St Francis Church
- ⑤ Forestry England Wildlife Hide

Hidden amongst the great conifer plantations of Redesdale Forest, are the secrets of this valley's ancient past as well grandiose Victorian structures of Catcleugh Reservoir, which still play an important part in the region's water supplies.

St Francis Church

Built in 1793, this was once the smallest parish church in the Diocese of Newcastle. The presence of medieval grave slabs suggests an older chapel once stood nearby.

In 1834, a National School in the building taught 34 pupils. Alnwick architect F.R. Wilson restored the church in 1884. He redesigned the windows in a Gothic style along with many of the fittings inside.

The church is best known for a commemorative stained-glass window that shows workers building the nearby Catcleugh Reservoir. Installed in 1903 this was the first window in England funded by subscriptions raised by and dedicated to a workforce. It remembers the 64 men, women and children who died during the reservoir's construction. Look closely and you can spot the narrow-gauge railway built to bring supplies to Byrness from West Woodburn station.



Stained glass window



St Francis church

Photos: James Innerdale

Byrness Village

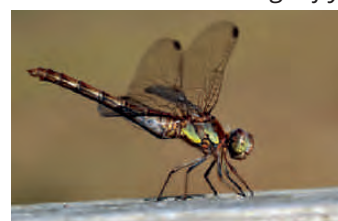
At times during the construction of the reservoir over 600 men and their families lived in two shanty towns near Byrness. Once Catcleugh Reservoir was complete workers from this camp assisted with forestry work. After the war, this work was undertaken by forestry staff who were provided with a purpose-built village. Designed by Dr Thomas Sharp, the village of Byrness is similar to the ones at Kielder and Stonehaugh. The houses were sold off as private residences, as increased mechanisation reduce the number of forestry employees.

The Pennine Way

Part of Walks 4 and 5 follow the Pennine Way and are the end of the penultimate, and start of the last days of the walk. The 268-miles long Pennine Way was England's first National Trail. It was created in 1965 thanks to journalist and rambler, Tom Stephenson, who was inspired by routes like the Appalachian Trail in the USA. He lobbied parliament for an official National Trail in England.



Bilberry bush



Common Dragonfly

Photos: Natural England



Byrness village today



Reed bunting

Hindhope Linn Waterfall and the Three Kings

Hindhope Linn is one of the small, secret valleys that you can discover across Redesdale. The old Scots Pine and Larch are living reminders of the ancient border forest that once thrived here.

The Three Kings is an important Bronze Age site about 3,500 years old. This striking monument includes the remains of a four poster stone circle to mark the burial of a once important person. One of the stones has now fallen, which is why the site became known as 'The Three Kings'.

The Three Kings was deliberately erected at a site which once commanded extensive views, but was not easily visible from the valley below.

At the centre of the stone circle the remains of an earlier round cairn were uncovered. At the centre of which was a stone lined elliptical space used to deposit cremated bones in an urn.

Local Wildlife to Look Out For

In the summer look out for darting dragonflies, and bilberry bushes heavy with fruit around Hindhope Linn on **Walk 2**. As well as the regular mewing of buzzards over head, if you are lucky you may also spot one of the Kielder ospreys from spring to late summer. Keep an eye out for shy red squirrels too as Kielder forest has the largest population in England. From the wildlife hide on **Walk 5** in the wetland

you might see a reed bunting or sedge warbler, as well as mallard, teal and mandarin and maybe a blackcap moorhen.

Photo: Natural England
Andrew McOrlew



Hindhope Linn



Osprey



Walk 1: Three Kings

Distance: 2.75 miles / 4.4 km (1½ hrs)

Grade: Moderate

Start & Parking: Blakehopeburnhaugh car park

1 Turn left out of the car park and then turn left up the Forest Drive. Keep to the side of the Drive, as the track is open to traffic coming from both directions. You will pass a turning on the right where the end of the walk will bring you out, ignore this turning.

2 As the Drive flattens out and bears to the left, take the right hand turning off the main Drive. The forest track is used for forestry operations so keep an eye out for vehicles.

3 The track eventually opens up to an area of the forest that has been felled, providing striking views across the valley. Where the track forks turn right, descend gently to follow the contour before bearing to the right.

4 As the track flattens out there is a narrow and steeply rising slate gravel path on the left. Follow this up to a level grass path along to a lone birch tree where you will find the standing stones known as 'The Three Kings'.



Summit of Byrness Hill, looking towards Catcleugh

5 From the stones return to the main forest track by heading to the right, down a stepped and winding gravel path. Then turn right onto a grass track which joins the main gravelled track.

6 Turn left on the main gravelled forest track, then right at the next junction to follow the Three Kings Trail. Continuing to the left will join in the route of **Walk 4**, offering an alternative way back to the car park. The track runs roughly parallel with the River Rede below to the left; this section can be wet and boggy. As the track continues it changes character, with an increase in bracken and wildflowers on either side.

7 Continue through a further section of forestry before reaching the main Forest Drive again. Turn left to return back to the parking area.

Walk 2: Hindhope Linn Waterfall

Distance: 1.25 miles / 2 km (¾ hr)

Grade: Easy

Start: Blakehopeburnhaugh car park

1 From the car park turn right, cross the bridge and follow the surfaced track.

Shortly after passing the farmhouse to the right look out for a gap in the fence on the right-hand side with an orange arrow waymarker pointing to Hindhope Linn Trail.

2 Turn right and follow the winding gravel track through a mix of low-level vegetation, small trees and some larger pines and conifers. The path rises gently through the wood before bearing left and levelling out. You will pass a turning on the left where the end of the walk brings you out.

3 Turn right down some timber steps, being careful as the steps can be slippery after rain. At the bottom follow the orange arrow left to the waterfall. The level track then takes you up to the base of Hindhope Linn.

4 Retrace your steps back to the base of the steps and turn left down more sets of steps to reach a bridge across the stream. Cross the bridge and follow the path along the riverbank before turning left up some steps.

5 At the top of the steps continue on the narrow path as it meanders between the low-level vegetation before descending down some steps until level with the stream. Follow the path to reach a footbridge which crosses the stream before gently climbing, with further steps up the far side.

6 The path then turns back parallel with the stream at a higher level before steps down join the path you came in on. Turn right and retrace your route back to the car park.

Walk 4: Byrness Village and St Francis Church

Distance: 5 miles / 8 km (2 hrs)

(3 miles / 4.8 km shortened route from car park to link with Walk 1)

Grade: Moderate

Start: Blakehopeburnhaugh car park

1 Turn left out of the car park. Walking past the Forest Drive to your left, follow the road right over the bridge. Shortly after the bridge is a wide track on the left, with a timber barrier and finger post waymarked the 'Pennine Way'.

2 Turn left down the track to follow the Pennine Way. The path passes through some tall pine trees before a section with a mix of deciduous trees and taller spruce and pines either side.

3 As the track leaves the forest to come out into a more open section, the wider footpath finishes at a way marked post. Follow a now narrower path that bears to the left through the trees and over a stretch of marshy ground alongside the river.



Three Kings Stone Circle
Photo: James Inverdale

Walk 3: Byrness Hill

Distance: 2.5 miles / 4 km (1½ hrs)

Grade: Strenuous

Start: St Francis Church, Byrness

This walk can also be done as an extension of Walk 4, the Byrness village loop.

1 From the church turn left onto the main road and follow the surfaced path alongside the A68 for 100m before carefully crossing the road at a tarmacked crossing point.

2 Once on the other side follow the waymarked path as it gently rises away from the road to join the tarmacked drive up to Byrness Cottage and the Old Rectory. Turn left along the level road to reach a Pennine Way waymarker post and wicket gate in the hedge on the right-hand side.

3 Go through the gate and diagonally up through the field to a further gate in the right corner. Follow the Pennine Way waymarkers through the gate, up some steps to cross a forest track and into the forest.

4 The path rises up through the wood, briefly levelling out and dipping down to some steps to reach a sleeper footbridge over a beck just before crossing a second forest track.

4 With the river to the left follow the path over a timber footbridge. A wall to the right is eventually replaced by fencing as the path follows the line of the river. Follow the path to reach a gate out onto a wider track opposite Border Forest Holiday Park. This stretch of the path can be quite boggy in places after rain.

5 Turn left through the gate to cross the bridge over the River Rede. Follow the track to reach a T-junction with a more surfaced track.

To continue to Byrness village turn right. Turning left the track joins with the return link of the Three Kings trail, **Walk 1**.

6 Turning right the path passes through an area of recently cleared forest following storm damage. The felling has opened up a view to the right across to the summit of Byrness Hill, **Walk 5**.

7 The track gently rises to meet a track coming in from the right. Your return route brings you back here after visiting Byrness church; but the route to Byrness village continues to the left.

8 Follow the track past Raw farmhouse on the right. The path continues through an area of tall slender Scots Pine. The track can be muddy and there are often stacks of felled timber on either side of the path.

9 Keep to the main forest track as it gently descends and winds its way through the forest. Byrness village can be seen ahead through the trees as the track skirts the south side of the village to emerge from the forest.

10 Immediately after emerging from the forest turn right down a narrow path towards the village and over a footbridge. Follow the footpath along the left side of the village to join a wider track.

11 Turn right around the southern side of the village green, coming out at South Greens, with Byrness village Hall to the left.

12 Turn right along the gravel track passing a row of timber garages before the footpath heads back into the forest. Continue through the forest to exit in front of St Francis Church. The church is usually open and well worth a visit.

13 Follow the track to the right of the church, dropping down to skirt around the bottom of the churchyard until a waymarked bridleway post directs you left. Follow a grass track and flagged footpath to a footbridge over the River Rede. Once over the bridge follow the wider forest track round to the left as it rises to a T-junction.

14 At the junction turn left to retrace your steps back along the Pennine Way to the car park at Blakehopeburnhaugh.

WALK 5
Please see
overleaf

Walk 5: Forestry England Wildlife Hide

Distance: 1.75 miles / 2.8 km (¾ hr)

Grade: Easy

Start:

Blakehopeburnhaugh car park

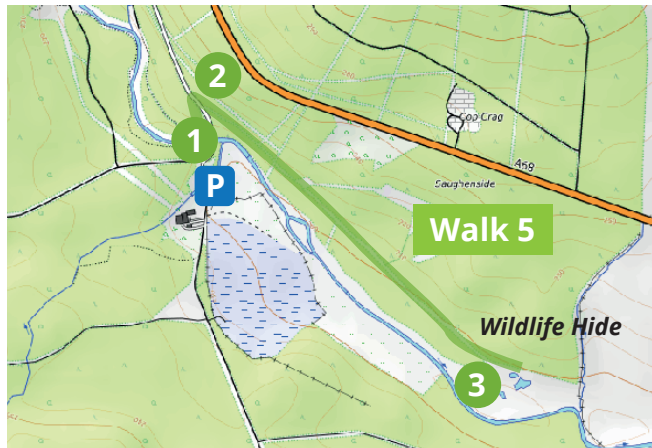


Wildlife hide

1 Turn left out of the car park, walking past the Forest Drive to your left, head right over the bridge across the River Rede.

2 Shortly after crossing the bridge turn sharp right and follow a gravel track. At a fork in the track keep straight on through a mix of pine forest and younger deciduous trees.

3 At the turning head at the end of the track, off to the right you can see the hide though the trees. To return, retrace your steps back to the car park.



Other Places to Visit in Redesdale

This is one of 6 walk leaflets created by the Revitalising Redesdale Landscape Partnership Programme that ran from 2018 to 2022.

There are many wonderful sites to explore in Redesdale.

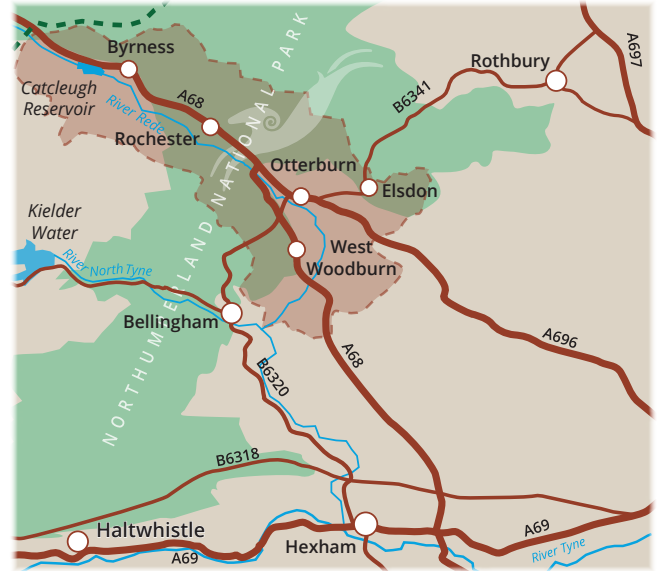
For more information on these sites, please visit

www.revitalisingredesdale.org.uk

Scan Me



Where is Redesdale - how to get here



Travelling to Redesdale

Redesdale is easily reached by road on the A68 or by the A696 from Newcastle. Options for parking are identified as part of each walk description. For public transport options see www.travelinenortheast.info for details.

Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy of the walk descriptions and maps but changes can occur. We recommend using the relevant Ordnance Survey maps which show more of the surrounding area. This leaflet is covered by OL16 (The Cheviot Hills) and OL42 (Kielder Water & Forest) 1:25,000/Landranger 80 (The Cheviot Hills and Kielder Water). Please follow the Countryside Code, check the weather before you set off and wear appropriate outdoor clothing.

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