

A Traveller's Guide to Coquetdale

Coquetdale is the gateway to the National Park. The majestic landscape and rich cultural and religious heritage of this area really lend it an air of mystique. Tread the lesser trodden path and explore by bus and on foot to uncover the secrets it has to offer. Plus, spending just one day without your car can help to look after this beautiful area.

This traveller's guide is designed to help you leave the confines of your car behind and immerse yourself in this tranquil haven. So, find your independent spirit and let the journey become part of your adventure.

Top Tips, Accommodation and Tourist Information!

The website www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk is a wealth of information about the local area and things to see and do.

Weather

It is important to be warm, comfortable and dry when out exploring so make sure you have the appropriate kit and plenty of layers.

Nexus Live Travel Map

Visit www.Nexus.org.uk for timetables, ticket information and everything you need to know about bus travel in the North East. You can even use the live travel map to see which buses run from your nearest bus stop and to plan your journey.

Travel Information on the Go

Traveline is a great source of information whilst you are out and about.
txt 84268
www.traveline.info
0871 200 22 33
For information on places to stay visit

Northumberland Tourism's website at www.visitnorthumberland.com

Free maps and guide inside!

Discover days out and walks by bus

Buses to and through

16 Rothbury - Holystone (Coquetdale) PCL Travel: 01661 834 955
Runs Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays



M1 Metrocentre - Morpeth - Scots Gap - Longhorsley - Thropton PCL Travel: 07800 849 916
Runs Morpeth-Thropton Monday to Saturday & Metrocentre-Thropton Sunday only.



X14 Newcastle - Regent Centre - Morpeth - Rothbury - Thropton Arriva www.arrivabus.co.uk/north-east
Runs Monday to Saturday



15 Thropton, opp Three Wheat Heads - Lionheart Enterprise Park PCL Travel: 01661 834 955
Runs Monday to Sunday



Services are subject to change so always check before you travel. You can find the most up to date timetables at www.Nexus.org.uk.

Tickets and Passes

Discover North Northumberland Tickets

These tickets offer unlimited travel on all Arriva and PCL Travel services north of Amble. You can buy them from the driver on the day.

There are a number of tickets available that cover this area. To find out which one is best for you visit www.nexus.org.uk/tickets.

- One-Day Ticket £6.40
- Three-Day Ticket £14.50
- Seven-Day Ticket £22.30
- Arriva Family Day Ticket* £13.50
- PCL Family pass* £10.00 valid for all PCL Travel Services

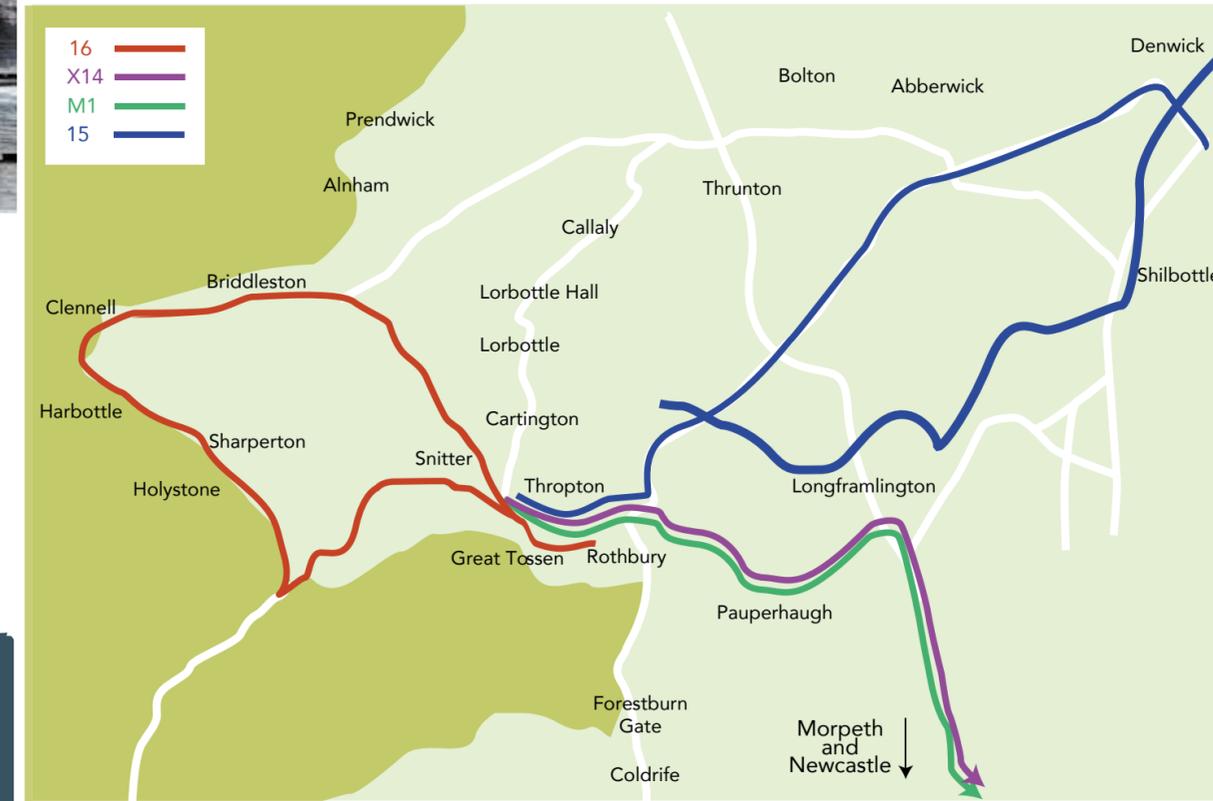
*These tickets are only valid on the services run by the company mentioned and not on all services in the area. They are valid for two adults and up to three children.

North East Explorer Tickets

- Adult £9.50
- Concessions £8.50
- Child (13 or under) £8.50
- Family (2 adults & up to 3 children) £19.10

Valid anywhere in the North East on most services.

Terms and conditions apply, please check with the attraction for details. Not valid with any other offer. Prices correct at time of going to print but please check before you travel.



In this guide



Win a Hamper full of Northumberland Goodies

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DAY OUT ONE

Ramble to Rothbury

Distance: Approx. 4.5 miles
Time: Approx. 2.5 hours
OS map: Explorer maps OL42 and 332

This walk starts in the small village of Thropton and takes you along the old Carriageway Drive to the Town of Rothbury; affording stunning views across the valley to the Simonside Hills along the way. The walk is published courtesy of Shepherds Walks who provide a range of self-led walking routes, guided walks, courses and walking Holidays. Find out more at www.shepherdwalks.co.uk

From Thropton walk back down the footpath heading towards Rothbury. As you reach the road bridge you will find a small footbridge to the left of it. Cross the footbridge and head up the hill towards the Cross Keys public house. Walk in front of the pub (or call in and have a quick drink if you are not driving) and continue heading towards Rothbury.

After a few yards you have a small metal railing on your right, turn left here leaving the road and climb up some steps. On your right you will see the remains of an old pill box that was built to overlook the bridge. As you reach the top of the steps continue up the road and as you reach the T junction at the top, turn left.

You are walking up Physic Lane. Legend has it that the Knights Hospitallars of St. John of Jerusalem had a hospital at the bottom of Physic Lane during the 13th and 14th centuries. They probably gathered wild flowers, herbs and rose hips which are a very good source of vitamin C, calcium, phosphorous and iron. The Knights may have gathered the rose hips here to make a tonic to fend off coughs, and treat sore throats and bleeding gums. The leaves of elder, which also grow here were used in an ointment to ease swellings and bruises.

As you walk up the lane you will see a wonderful drink fountain on the left and then you reach and pass through a gate at the end of the houses. Continue up the lane and ignore the paths either side until you reach and go through another gate. Pass through it and you initially have a wall on your right with a wood behind it.

Follow the path as it follows the wall on your right hand side. At the top you reach and go through a large wooden gate. Once you have passed through the gate, turn left and continue to follow the wall on your right for a short while before this bears off.

Follow the main path passing a large tree on your left and eventually you reach the Carriageway Drive. Once you reach the Carriageway Drive (wide track) turn right along it.

After a little while Simonside can be seen on the opposite side of the valley. The distinctive flat top is very easily recognisable and as it stands away from the true 'Cheviots' it is very well known in the walking world.



ROTHBURY TO THROPTON BY BUS

SERVICE	JOURNEY TIME	FREQUENCY
16 M1 X14	5-10	UP-HOURLY

PROVIDERS: **arriva**, **PCL TRAVEL**

The Carriageway Drive is reasonably level as it was made for the horse and carriage era, it winds around so that it keeps to level ground. Continue along the carriage drive for some distance and you will pass some communication towers on your right.

After a little while you then reach and go through a small kissing gate located to the right of a large wooden gate as you enter the woods. The path then gradually rises up as you pass over 'Addycombe Hill'. Ignore the footpath going off to your right but stay to the main carriageway which narrows a little in a few places.

As you drop down you go through a few hairpin bends. Stay on the main track ignoring all other paths. Eventually the trees stop on your right and you follow a fence, with a field the far side of it. From here you are again treated to another fine view of Rothbury, but this time from a very different angle.

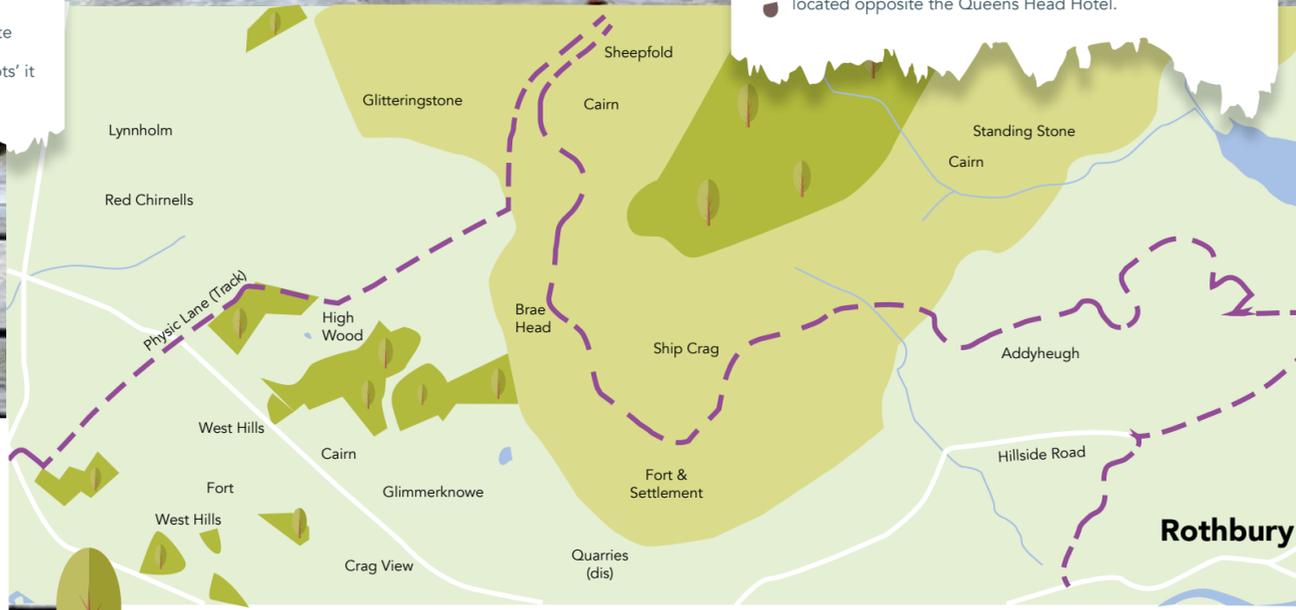
As you continue on you reach a large tall marker post with a red band around the top, this post is marking the route of the gas main into Rothbury. At this post turn through the kissing gate on your right and follow the fence on your left, dropping down through the field.

Pass through the next kissing gate and follow the path down to a small wooden gate which then drops down some steps to the track and turn right along it. Continue along the track and after a little while it turns to tarmac underfoot and you start to get some houses up to your right.

Take the footpath on your left (Public Footpath - Rothbury 1/4) and follow the gravelled fence lined path as it drops down steeply to Rothbury village. At the bottom you go through a small kissing gate and after passing a couple of bungalows on your left you reach the road. Turn right along it.

As you walk down the road you have Addycombe Cottages on your left which are the old workers cottages for the staff on Cragside Estate. The road drops steeply and bears around to the left before reaching the T-junction.

Turn right and you will see the bus stop straight away, this is located opposite the Queens Head Hotel.



Maps are for illustrative purposes only. Always take an OS map and compass and know how to use them.

DAY OUT TWO

Discover the Ancient Drake Stone

A lovely walk up to the ancient Drake Stone, a mythical place from where there are stunning views over the surrounding countryside and over to the ruins of Harbottle Castle.

- Follow the road out of the village and past the ruins of Harbottle Castle on your right. The Castle is well worth looking around. Continue along the road to the Forestry Commission Car Park which is on your left.
- From the Forestry Commission Car Park follow the forest track, signed 'Drake Stone,' uphill through the wood. Go through the gate, and turn right to follow the footpath over the heather moorland (Harbottle Crags Nature Reserve, managed by Northumberland Wildlife Trust).
- Pass through the kissing gate and continue uphill along the sandy footpath, making for the cairn ahead on the left.
- The path splits just after the cairn. Take the left fork which leads up to the Drake Stone - this is a huge Fell Sandstone boulder, which local legend suggests has ancient healing powers!
- Retrace your steps back down to where the path split near the cairn, and turn left following the main path uphill then towards the right hand side of Harbottle Lake.
- Cross the stile and continue on the path along the edge of the lake. Please note: The bog surrounding the lake is dangerous with very deep water underneath it, so please keep to the footpath.
- At the fence turn right, heading uphill towards the trees, keeping the fence on your left. Go into the woodland and keep following the footpath straight ahead, until you come out of the wood at a gate.
- Go through the gate and turn right, following the track downhill to the road.
- Turn left onto the road, walking towards Alwinton. Once you get to Alwinton you can either retrace your steps or rest your tired legs on the Coquetdale Circular back to Harbottle. Just look out for the bus stop by the phone box.



Distance: Approx. 4 miles
Time: Approx. 2 hours
OS map: OS OL16 1:25000

The 16 (Coquetdale Circular) runs Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, always double check times before you travel at www.nexus.org.uk

Alwinton to Harbottle by Bus

SERVICE	JOURNEY TIME	FREQUENCY	PROVIDERS
16	41	TWICEDAILY	arriva, PCL TRAVEL

DAY OUT THREE

Wander in Holystone Woods

Holystone is tucked away in a quiet corner of Coquetdale. The peace and tranquillity of the area attracted a religious order (the Augustinian Canonesses) that built a nunnery here in the twelfth century, around which Holystone village grew. The priory buildings were demolished during the reformation in 1541, but the tranquil surroundings remain, offering some beautiful walks and lots of sites of historical interest.

On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays you can catch the Coquetdale Circular bus service from Rothbury and many surrounding villages to Holystone. You can sit back and enjoy the view as the bus winds its way through stunning countryside, to the pretty rural villages which typify this area. Alight at Holystone and head through the village to the Forestry Commission car park in the woods, roughly 0.4 miles after the village. There are two waymarked routes through the woods.

Lady's Well (Green Walk)
Distance: 0.5 miles
Time: approx. 20 minutes

The Green Walk offers a short stroll to visit Lady's Well, a pool of water that marks the spot where St. Paulinus supposedly baptised 3000 Northumbrians during Easter week, AD 627.

Dove Crag (Red Walk)
Distance: 5 miles
Time: approx. 4 hours

The Red Walk passes along the southern edge of North Wood - a semi-natural oak wood now designated as a Nature Reserve. The trail continues onto Holystone Common, a reserve jointly managed with Northumberland Wildlife Trust. The Common comprises upland heather moor and juniper scrub, with atmospheric oak and birch woods.

The 16 (Coquetdale Circular) runs Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at approx. 11:15 and 15:15, always double check times before you travel at www.nexus.org.uk

Rothbury to Holystone by Bus

SERVICE	JOURNEY TIME	FREQUENCY	PROVIDERS
16	5	TWICEDAILY	arriva, PCL TRAVEL