

Waskerley Way - Originally built in 1834 to transport limestone ore from Weardale to Consett, the 37-mile railway was later owned by that most famous of railway companies, the Stockton & Darlington. It seems incredible today that the lofty, remote moorland hamlet of Waskerley was once a busy railway centre, having a locomotive shed that housed six engines. Only a few buildings survive from its heyday, amongst them the chapel. The line was closed in 1968. Commencing from Waskerley Picnic Site, DH8 9DZ, the 8-mile (with 705ft of ascent) **YELLOW** walk follows the track-bed to Castleside. The return journey passes through a variety of terrain including field paths, quiet lanes, moorland and woodland tracks. Hownsgill Viaduct towers some 46 metres above the tree canopy of Knitsley and High House Woods near Lydgett's Junction. This is one of the most impressive railway structures in the North East. There are stunning views across Smiddy Shaw, Waskerley and Hisehope reservoirs. The variety of habitats allows a great number of plants and animals to live here. Animals include red and black grouse, merlin, adder, slow worm and butterflies such as small pearl bordered fritillary, orange tip, dark green fritillary and dingy skipper. Some of the rarer plants include frog orchid, melancholy thistle and remotes edge.

