

Weekend ride

BRITAIN'S TOP PUB RIDE

• **Start/finish:** Tan Hill Inn, North Yorkshire (NY 896 066) to Marsden Grotto, Tyne & Wear (NZ 399 649).
 • **Maps:** OS Landranger 92; 93, briefly; 88. • **Ride length:** 111km (69 miles) – or 137km (85 miles) between Kirkby Stephen and Sunderland train stations. • **Climbing:** 700m (2,300ft), not including the climb from Kirkby Stephen to Tan Hill, but 1,300m (4,260ft) of descending. • **Bike type:** any. • **Ride level:** regular in 1-2 days, beginner in 2-3 days. • **GPX file:** cyclinguk.org/weekender-top-pub-ride



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1 GRAVEL TRACK
 About 4km (2 miles) after leaving Tan Hill, look out for the rusty post on the left bearing only a sign back to Tan Hill. Turn left (north) onto the gravel track. It plunges you thrillingly down from the windswept moor-top to those green plains you saw from the pub.

2 Barnard Castle
 If your eyesight's up to it, admire the castle and the market cross. Tan Hill Inn breakfast worn off? Snack here. Follow signs for NCN165/W2W east past stately Bowes Museum, a bit of Versailles in North Yorkshire. At Whorlton, follow NCN715/W2W.

3 Bishop Auckland
 Still following W2W signs, the approach to the town is on patchy bridleway. Keep faith: the uneven or muddy bits don't last long. Cross the river via the Newton Cap viaduct and join the decent rail-trail that runs almost all the way to Durham.

4 Durham
 The historic centre is like York but with hills. Maybe have lunch here. Head east following signs for NCN14 by the river, or shortcut via Gilesgate. At Sherburn, follow signs for NCN70/W2W past two picturesque lakes to Sunderland's big metal bridge.

5 Sunderland
 Go north over the bridge and turn right along the riverside following NCN1 (or shortcut via Dame Dorothy St). NCN1 runs up the coast on car-free paths, past a lighthouse, past Seaburn's seaside, past a windmill in a housing estate, and, at last, to...

6 MARSDEN GROTTTO
 A car park and functional-looking white building are actually the entrance to the pub way below. Take the lift down and wheel your bike out to the patio, right on the beach, by smugglers' caves and monumental, seabird-infested rock stacks. Any lower down and your feet get wet. Maybe treat yourself to dinner and a drink. Sunderland station is five miles back the way you came.



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