

Top to bottom: Llamas above Redesmouth. Kirklington Hall ruins. Near Newcastleton. Kielder Forest



Weekender

The Reivers Route

This 170-mile route is the least ridden and most challenging of Sustrans' coast-to-coasts across northern England. **Alf Alderson** rode it



ALF ALDERSON

Alf is an adventure travel writer, covering everything from skiing and surfing to mountain biking and cycling

Named after the border country cattle raiders who inhabited this area between the 13th and 17th centuries, the Reivers Route runs through some of the wildest countryside in England. As it meanders between Whitehaven on the Irish Sea coast and Tynemouth on the North Sea coast, it takes in the northern fells of the Lake District, the wild and remote uplands of Northumberland and the Scottish border, the deep green depths of Kielder Forest, and the open moorland of the north-western Pennines.

The riding varies from quiet country lanes to forest fire-roads and cinder tracks. When I rode it last May we enjoyed stretches for miles at a time without seeing another vehicle of any sort.

The ride can be done in two days if you want to push yourself, but is better suited to a long weekend or even four easy days. While it can be ridden in either direction, west-to-east generally makes more sense since you'll likely have the prevailing wind behind you.

You can use the train to get back to your starting point or ride back on one of the other Sustrans coast-to-coast routes if time permits.

There & back again

Return via the C2C or Hadrian's Cycleway:

cyclinguk.org/cycle/coast-coast-alternatives

