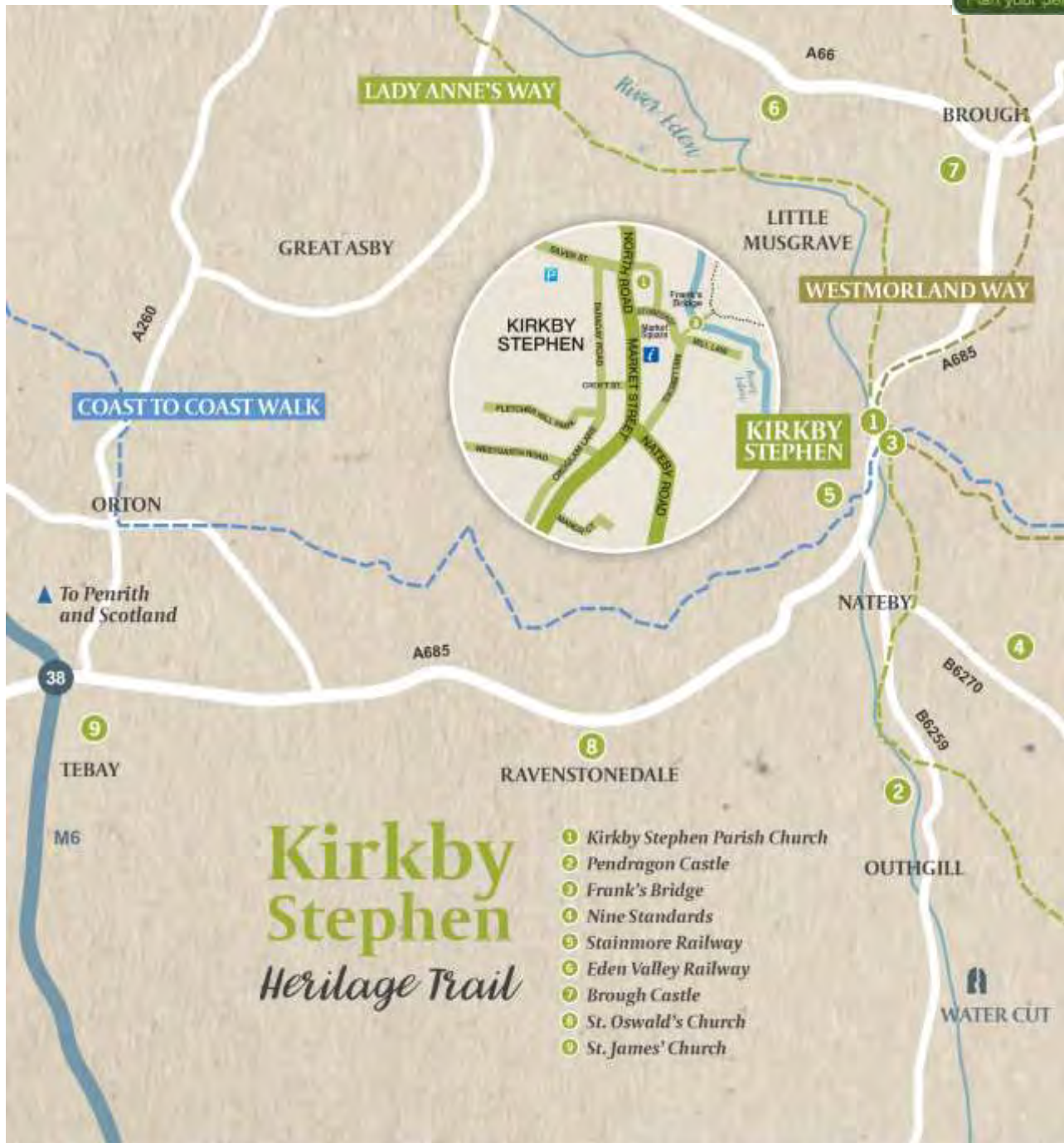


Kirkby Stephen Heritage Trail



This route is taken from the Kirkby Stephen Heritage Trail leaflet which we produced in partnership and with funding from Historic England. All the places mentioned here are open to the public, and most are easy to access by car, public transport or on foot. Some sites are free to visit; whilst others have an admission fee.

The map indicates the locations of all the key sites. The wording next to each entry indicates the facilities available. If an asterisk* is shown after a symbol it means that the facilities could have restrictions, eg limited wheelchair accessibility, parking nearby or dogs only allowed in certain areas. There is no suggested start point or trail to follow; rather the aim is for you to explore Eden's historic attractions at your leisure.

Explore Kirkby Stephen's Heritage

An air of historical intrigue pervades the landscapes around Kirkby Stephen, criss-crossed by age-old packhorse trails and the curving tracks of dismantled (and current) railways. Numerous castles and fortifications suggest this was an area that needed to defend itself. The castles were power bases for the Clifford, de Harcla, Wharton and Musgrave families who all played their part in the Anglo-Scottish Wars; sometimes to their detriment.



Kirkby Stephen's Conservation Area contains many 17th to 19th century buildings clustered around The Cloisters and old market place. The Kirkby Stephen Town Trail provides more detailed exploration of the town centre.

Kirkby Stephen is a market town and its charter was granted in 1353. A market is still held today and the ancient Cowper Day and Luke's Fair are still celebrated. Around the market place are traditional Westmorland buildings and elegant cloisters. Narrow passageways (wiends) and blocked tunnels are part of Kirkby Stephen's history, but the town's origins go back much further in time. Fragments of Anglo-Saxon crosses and Norse carvings suggest this area was occupied from at least 750 AD.

To the north is Brough, an important stopover for stagecoaches passing through the Stainmore Pass over the Pennines. The town developed in two halves: Church Brough with its Norman castle and church; and Market Brough with its coaching inns lining the main road. To the south, the Mallerstang valley oozes history with a wealth of prehistoric remains and ancient castles. A short distance away is the picturesque village of Ravenstonedale with its fascinating church and monastic remains.

At Stenkrith Park, the River Eden plunges into a deep gorge known as Coup Karnan hole. From here you can access the Northern Viaduct Trust Walk and the Poetry Path that celebrates a year in the life of a hill farmer. Two Eden Benchmark sculptures are located on the upper reaches of the River Eden, whilst Andy Goldsworthy's sheepfolds and pinfolds can be found at Brough, Warcop and Outhgill. The two Eden Benchmarks Sculptures (Water Cut and Passage) are located on the upper reaches of the River Eden.

Kirkby Stephen Heritage Trail

1. Kirkby Stephen Parish Church: Contrary to what you might think, there is no trace of a dedication to St Stephen or any other saint. Its origins date back to Anglo-Saxon times, but the church of today was built by the Normans around 1230. In the Victorian era, it was greatly enlarged and is now referred to as the Cathedral of the Dales. There are Anglo Saxon, Norse and Norman carved stones on display in the church.
(Dogs on a lead welcome, family friendly, parking*)

Kirkby Stephen's most famous relic is the **Loki Stone**. This is a depiction of the Norse God Loki bound in chains and dates back to the 10th century when the area was settled by the Scandinavians. It is one of only two such carved stones in the world.

The **Cloisters** were built in 1810 with funds left by John Waller, a Purser in the Royal Navy, to shelter residents on their way to church. The portico entrance was also used as the butter market on Monday mornings. There is a board giving details of old market charges which were paid along with tithes at the Trupp stone just inside the churchyard. Try to spot the dating mistake on this board.

Sir Richard de Musgrave is said to have killed the last wild boar in England on Wild Boar Fell in 1376. When his tomb was opened, a boar's tusk was found, now on view in a glass case in the church.

2. Pendragon Castle: A Norman Keep reputedly the home of Uther Pendragon, father of King Arthur. Uther unsuccessfully attempted to divert the waters of the River Eden into the moat around his castle, giving rise to the saying: '**Let Uther Pendragon do what he can Eden will run where Eden ran.**'



Sir Hugh de Morville (one of the knights who murdered Thomas à Becket in Canterbury Cathedral) is thought to have owned the castle around 1160. Pendragon castle was repeatedly attacked by the Scots and eventually restored by Lady Anne Clifford in 1661. Her grandson, the Earl of Thanet, subsequently dismantled the castle to re-use the stone elsewhere. Free entry.

Shrouded in mystery, **Lammerside Castle** stands in solitary isolation in a field near Pendragon Castle. No-one knows who constructed it or why it was abandoned, but it was probably built as defence against Scottish raids. Lammerside is thought to be the legendary Castle Dolorous, home of Sir Tarquin who was fond of eating little boys! Only accessible on foot.

Sir Andrew de Harcla of nearby Hartley Castle was a well-respected knight who attempted to broker a deal with Robert the Bruce. Edward II viewed this as treason and in 1323 had Harcla hung, drawn and quartered at Carlisle without trial. His sister Sarah collected the remains of his body and buried them in the church (Hartley Chapel). Hartley Castle was forfeited to the king and later sold to the Musgraves who dismantled it in 1735 to build their new mansion of Edenhall near Penrith (which itself was demolished in 1935).

3. Frank's Bridge over the River Eden is a particularly pretty picnic spot. Frank is believed to be Francis Birkbeck, a popular local brewer and philanthropist in the early 19th century. At the end of this packhorse bridge are two standing stones used for resting coffins on the way to the church. This bridge is said to be haunted by the ghost of Jaggling Anas who drowned as he escaped from Hartley Castle in chains. The river used to be much deeper at this point because of the weir for the mill. There has been a succession of water mills on four sites along this part of the River Eden, at Stenkrith, High Mill, Low Mill and Hartley Mill.

(Parking, dogs on a lead welcome, family friendly)

St Mary's Church, near Outhgill, was founded by Lady Ideonea de Veteripont in the 14th century (c.1311) and restored by Lady Anne Clifford in 1663. In the churchyard there is a

monument dedicated in 1997 to the memory of 25 of the builders of the Mallerstang section of the Settle-Carlisle Railway, who died during the construction of the line in the 1870s.

There are a number of tunnels under Kirkby Stephen which are attached to legends of hiding places, burial sites for plague victims and for transporting beer illicitly.

St Michael's Church, Church Brough, is an interesting building with Norman beakheads and chevrons, leper's squint and sloping floor where Lady Anne's Steward, Gabriel Vincent, is buried. Remains of Church Brough's market cross are in the churchyard.

4. Nine Standards: The nine stone cairns that dominate the skyline of Hartley Fell are shrouded in mystery. Some say they represent an army camped between the Stainmore and Mallerstang passes to deter Scottish raiders; others believe they merely mark the old boundary between Yorkshire and Westmorland. The Coast to Coast route passes directly over Nine Standards Rigg.

(Parking, dogs on a lead welcome, family friendly)



5. Stainmore Railway: Step back to the 1950s at this former station on the Stainmore Railway. Alongside the restored station buildings, you can see steam locomotives, vintage carriages and various railway memorabilia. A half-mile section of track enables the trains to run on special days. You can even have a go at driving a diesel locomotive under supervision (restrictions apply). Open weekends.
(Parking, accessible*, refreshments, WC, dogs on a lead welcome, family friendly)



The disused Stainmore Railway provides walking access into **Smardale Gill Nature Reserve**, noted for its flower-rich limestone grasslands. Stunning views over the reserve can be enjoyed from the magnificent 14-arched viaduct owned by the Northern Viaduct Trust. More information on Smardale Gill Nature Reserve is available on the Cumbria Wildlife Trust website.

Michael Faraday (1791 - 1867) was an English scientist who contributed to the study of electromagnetism and electrochemistry. His father was the local blacksmith at Outhgill in Mallerstang. His parents worshipped at the Sandemanian Chapel, now Faraday House in Arcade Royal, which is named after a visit by Victoria Princess Royal in 1900.

6. Eden Valley Railway: A partially-restored railway, currently 2½ miles in length, which was originally part of a link line between Kirkby Stephen and Penrith, constructed in 1862. Trips from Warcop Station are available for passengers on selected dates from April to October.
(Parking*, accessible, refreshments, WC, dogs on a lead welcome, family friendly)



7. Brough Castle: From afar, Brough Castle looks majestic on its elevated site, guarding the entrance to the Stainmore Pass (an ancient trade route over the Pennines). It was built on top of the Roman fort of Verteris around 1095 by William Rufus as part of his conquest of northern England. The castle was repeatedly attacked by the Scots and rebuilt with stronger defences each time. Lady Anne Clifford restored the castle in 1662, but a few years later it became a convenient 'quarry' for dressed stone and was systematically dismantled. Free entry. (Parking*, dogs on a lead welcome, family friendly)

8. St Oswald's Church, Ravenstonedale: A Georgian church noted for its oak furnishings including a three-decker pulpit (complete with sounding board) and unusual inward-facing tiered pews. One of the church windows is in memory of Elizabeth Gaunt who sheltered a fugitive from Monmouth's rebellion. He betrayed her and was pardoned; whilst she was burnt at the stake for her charity in 1685. Outside are the remains of a small monastic house established by Gilbertine monks in 1131. (Parking, accessible*, family friendly)

9. St James' Church, Tebay: Tebay's fine 'railway church' epitomises the village's golden era as a railway junction. The interior walls are lined with yellow bricks with a red brick trim, the pews resemble seating in a railway waiting room and the font cover is a replica of an engine wheel. The church is normally kept locked but a key can be obtained from the nearby post office. (Parking, accessible*, family friendly)



Further information

Upper Eden Visitor Centre, Market Square, Kirkby Stephen
Telephone: 017683 71199
Email: visit@uecp.org.uk

A copy of the Kirkby Stephen Heritage Trail and Heritage Trails for Appleby, Alston and Penrith are available from Eden's Tourist Information Centres.



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