

The Etape Pennines Challenge



Harthope Moor (Chapel Fell) and Middlehope Bank

*Within a small area of Weardale and Teesdale are some of the toughest climbs in the North Pennines. This circuit covers most of them all in one day. **The two highest climbs in England and some leg breakers thrown in. Not for the faint hearted! Small gears essential!***

This route is an ideal training ride for the Marie Curie Etape-Pennines sportive.

Most of the climbs are tackled in the opposite direction to the Etape Pennines but are much more difficult in this direction.

The North Pennine Challenge "The Hell of the North" 49 miles

- 1 Leaving the Dales Centre at Stanhope turn right onto the A689 main valley road.
- 2 Continue through the village of Eastgate until reaching Westgate
- 3 Turn RIGHT in the centre of the village at sign marked Rookhope.
- 4 Climb the 1 in 4 bank of Peat Hill until the T junction at the summit of Scarsike Head
- 5 Turn LEFT onto descent
- 6 Stay on local road descending through the hamlet of Newhouse to Ireshopeburn
- 7 Turn left at T junction on A689, on arriving at St John's Chapel turn right before village square to Langdon Beck.
- 8 After the climb of Hartstop (*Chapel Fell*) descent into Tees valley.
- 9 Turn RIGHT at T junction and take valley to road to Alston climbing gradually over Yad Moss to the head of the Tees Valley.
- 10 After 10 miles turn RIGHT onto unclassified road to Nenthead climbing Nunnery Hill.
- 11 At Nenthead (*Nenthead Mines*) turn RIGHT on A689 to the climb of Killhope

Moor (2056ft)(Killhope Mining Visitor Centre)

12 Continue down the valley through Wearhead towards Ireshopeburn (Weardale Museum)

13 At 30 mph sign before Ireshopeburn turn LEFT to West Blackdene

14 Continue over bridge climbing Carway Bank to road junction.

15 Turn RIGHT to hamlet of Newhouse.

16 Turn left at T Junction

17 Climb Well Bank and continue for 200yds take LEFT turn after cottages to summit, descend Middlehope Bank

18 After descent into valley climb up to the summit of Scarsike Head

19 After descent to T Junction at Lintzgarth turn right towards Rookhope passing the Lintzgarth Arch

20 After half a mile turn left to St John's Church and over the climb of Brandon Walls

21 Turn LEFT at junction with A689 returning to Stanhope.

Elevation Profile: Hell of the North, total gain 7874 ft

The Hills

Name	Height	Length	Steepest Section	Notes
Peat Hill (Scutterhill Bank) to Scarsike Head	2050 ft	1.5 miles	1 in 4	Peat Hill or its other name of Scutterhill Bank is possibly the steepest and hardest climb in Weardale, this hill starts with a very difficult 1 in 4 section right from the start. The rest of the climb is long and steep up to the summit at Scarsike head at 2050 ft.
Middlehope Bank	2000 ft	Quarter of a mile	1 in 4	From the top of Scarsike Head the view of this hill looks really daunting. The climb is short and steep with a section at 1 in 4. A real leg breaker straight after climbing Peat Hill.
Harthope (Chapel Fell)	2056 ft	approx 2.5 miles	1 in 5	From St John's Chapel the road climbs steeply out of the valley. The sign at the bottom of the climb warns cyclists of poor conditions at all times. This sign should not be taken lightly. I have been blown off the bike by the high winds and freak weather conditions that can occur towards the summit. Climbing into the Helm with the wind gusting at up to

				50mph is no joke. This is a tough climb with a sting in the tail towards the summit as the gradient increases.
Yad Moss	1958ft ft	approx 5 miles	1 in 15	The long climb from Langdon Beck over Yad Moss to the head of the Tees Valley and summit of the Alston Hills is a wide exposed road that can be busy at weekends.
Nunnery Hill	1670 ft	1.25 miles	1 in 5	Turning of the main valley road onto an unclassified road towards Nenthead. Nunnery Hill is a narrow single track climb.
Killhope Cross	2056 ft	1.5 miles	1 in 5	The highest climb on a classified road (A689) in England. The climbing starts from the village of Nenthead and goes up in stages with several false summits to its peak at Killhope Cross. <i>It would spoil the fun to mention how many false summits there are on the way!</i>
Carway Bank		300 yds	1 in 5	Starting as soon as you cross the bridge in West Blackdene, a short sharp hill with a 1 in 5 section before the right hand turn.
Well Bank (New House Bank)		1 mile	1 in 5	A steep 1 in 5 section to start with a couple of tight corners thrown in before the long straight section to the summit of Middlehope.
Scarsike Head	2050 ft	0.75 mile	1 in 5	Straight and steep leg breaker at the start dragging out to a long exposed climb to the summit.
Brandon Walls & Hill Top	1570ft	2 miles	1 in 5	After leaving Rookhope there is a left-hand turn marked St John's Church, The road climbs steeply from the start over the hills in short sharp climbs to Hill Top before descending into Stanhope.