



# Prosperous Lead Mine, Greenhow



## Introduction

Hidden in a quiet valley by Ashfoldside Beck lies a clue to our industrial past. The Prosperous Lead Mine was one of a number of mines in the area exploiting the rich geology of Upper Nidderdale. Its remains have recently been conserved as part of the Upper Nidderdale Landscape Partnership. There are two circular trails to choose from, either starting from Pateley Bridge or Greenhow, to explore this fascinating piece of industrial heritage.

## Map

OS Explorer 298:  
Nidderdale

## Distance/Time

From Pateley Bridge - 5.8 miles (9.3km)  
3-4 hours  
From Greenhow - 4.6 miles (7.5km)  
2-3 hours

## Starting Point

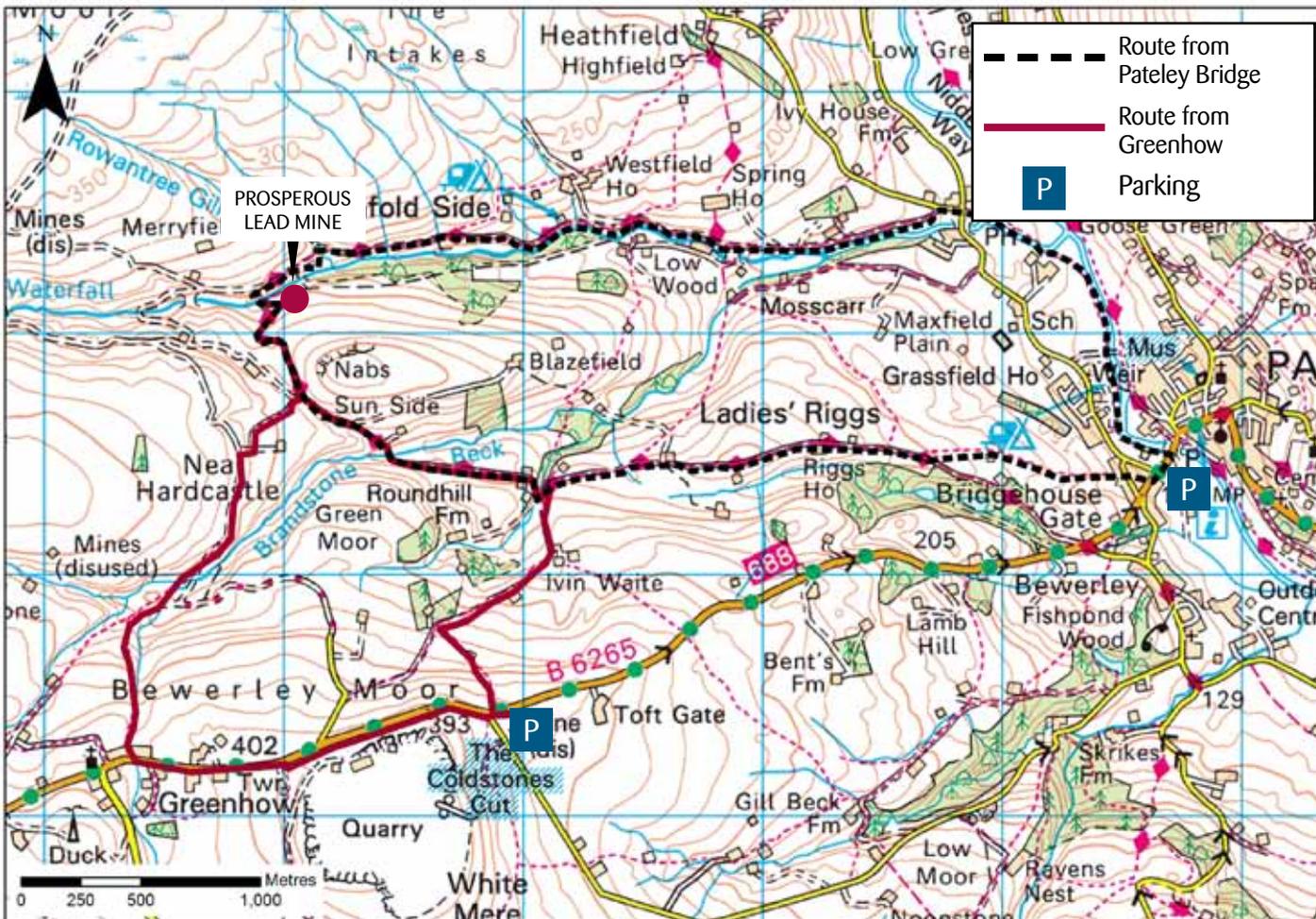
Prosperous Lead Mine lies on the Nidderdale Way. You can either walk from Pateley Bridge or park at Toft Gate car park at Greenhow.

## Terrain

Both routes are moderate with tarmac roads, gravel tracks and fields. Walking boots are advisable as some parts of the trail can be wet, muddy and rough underfoot.

## Useful Information

- There are toilets in Pateley Bridge.
- Refreshments are available from Toft Gate Barn Cafe at Greenhow or in Pateley Bridge.



## A bit of history

Hidden in a quiet valley by Ashfoldside Beck lies a clue to our industrial past. The Prosperous Lead Mine was one of a number of mines in the area exploiting the rich geology of Upper Nidderdale.

Over 200 years ago, miners dug deep to make a profit from the lead they extracted from ores beneath this landscape. The Prosperous and Providence Lead Mines were two of several lead mines in the Greenhow area.

Today a landscape of abandoned mine working reflects only part of a long history. What survives above ground is only the tip of the iceberg. A maze of tunnels and enormous underground waterwheels lie hidden beneath the surface.

It is likely that lead has been mined in the Greenhow area since the Roman period (almost 2000 years ago). Throughout the Medieval period, documentary sources point to the exploitation of this resource, most notably by Cistercian orders, and the nearby Providence vein was mined from at least AD1225.

No evidence can be found on the ground for these early workings, and it is likely that the later,

more extensive workings and accompanying structures have masked the earlier evidence.

The Prosperous Lead Mine, as it survives today, represents a comprehensive late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century lead mining and processing complex. The extensive remains of the spoil heaps and the upstanding walls of the smelt mill provide a tangible link to an industry that was so influential in this part of Upper Nidderdale.

It is not known exactly when the mine was first in operation; the earliest lease of the mine dates to 1781.

The smelt mill is thought to date from 1785, although it has also been suggested that it was built in 1814. It served not only the Prosperous mine but also the Providence and Stoney Grooves mines to the west.

Despite its name, the profitability of the Prosperous Lead Mine was variable. In 1786 Woods and Co. worked the mine. Lupton and Barker who held the lease in the late 18th century found the profitability of the mine to decline and between 1789 and 1793 had to give up the lease.

By 1816/1817, the Wood leases passed

to John Honer who sunk a shaft near to the smelt mill, to access the Wonderful Level some 27m below ground.

A downturn in the price of lead during the 1830s meant that the fortunes of the mine took a turn for the worse and the mine fell into disrepair and remained so for about 30 years.

In the 1860s, the Nidderdale Lead Mining Company took over the mine and hoped that, with some investment, they could make the mine profitable. Unfortunately this was not the case and in 1873 the mine's plant was sold and reused at the neighbouring Stoney Grooves and Merryfield mines.

Bewerley United Lead and Barites Mining Company Limited, who held the mineral rights towards the latter part of the mine's life, ceased activities in 1889 and the mine was abandoned.

Since abandonment there have been attempts to rework the spoil for various minerals and a number of concrete and timber structures can be seen across the site along with abandoned equipment.

Prosperous Lead Mine is one of four flagship heritage sites being conserved and brought to life under the Heritage Lottery funded Upper Nidderdale Landscape Partnership Scheme (2014–2018). This has included conserving the remaining wall of the smelt mill.

Visit: [www.uppernidderdale.org.uk](http://www.uppernidderdale.org.uk) to find out more

The HLF funded Upper Nidderdale Landscape Partnership is a £1.8 million scheme to look after and help people get involved with Upper Nidderdale's historic landscapes, cultural heritage and wildlife habitats. The Partnership is led by Nidderdale AONB and brings together a wide range of organisations who are working with land managers, farmers and local communities.