Cycle Bede's Way and enjoy a great day out.
Cycle Bede’s Way

Cycle Bede’s Way and enjoy a great day out following the route of 6th century pilgrims. Bede’s Cycle Way has been devised to link the Twin Anglo-Saxon monastery of St Peter’s in Wearmouth and St Paul’s in Jarrow, now a candidate World Heritage Site.

Follow a well signposted route through the Great North Forest, covering 50 miles of rich landscapes, delightful views, winding streams, combining both on and off road cycling. This leaflet can be used to start the ride at either St Paul’s or St Peter’s churches and features an easy to use map along the route. Follow the B6350, Cycle Way and NCN 14 links.

Useful contacts and further information have also been included to help you discover other attractions along the way.

To explore our countryside, coast and culture visit the Great North Forest.

www.greatnorthforest.co.uk

The twin Anglo-Saxon monastery of St Peter’s & St Paul’s is bidding to become a World Heritage Site.

www.wearmouth-jarrow.org.uk

Benedict Biscop, a Northumbrian noble, founded the monastery of St Peter is 674 and its twin house of St Paul was built eight years later. The two sites were regarded as one, Bede described them as “sisters” and tells us that St Paul’s was built on the understanding that the two houses should be “bound together by the same spirit of peace and harmony”.

Monks would have travelled between the sites on foot or by boat, possibly following parts of this route between St Paul’s along the River to St Peter’s in the River Wear. Bede (673-735) was educated in the monastery from the age of seven. His writing, particularly The Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow and The Ecclesiastical History of the English People give us a unique insight into the monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow in the late 7th and early 8th centuries.

Bede was the most important European scholar of his age. He is most famous now as the founder of medieval historical writing and first compiler of the English, but also made lasting influential contributions in poetry, astronomy, mathematics and the reckoning of time.

Other productions of the community during Bede’s lifetime included the Codex Amiatinus, a complete Bible. It is a single volume, and a landmark in the development of European art.

Wearmouth’s foundation was the fulfillment of Benedict Biscop’s dream to build in the “Roman manner”, his desire to establish a perfect type of religious community was assisted by masons and glaziers from the Frankish lands, and the bringing of relics, books, paintings, teachers and wise from Rome. At all these buildings of the late 7th century, both standing and excavated, with stone sculptures and a wide range of excavated material that includes a unique collection of coloured glass. The buildings of the two monasteries were amongst the first stone buildings in Anglo-Saxon Northumbria, and St Paul’s contains the oldest church dedication in England.

This combination of rare material standing with its one of the most influential figures of contemporary culture makes the twin monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow a site of world importance.