

My perfect weekend

in Northumberland

An adventurous and romantic retreat for two...

I'd stay at **Aln Valley Cottages** for three nights. They are quiet, spacious, luxurious cottages with four poster beds and wood burning stoves in the grounds of the Dour House near Whittingham, where quite often you will see owls, herons, birds of prey, hares and deer.

On Saturday I'd get an early start and take a trip up **Windy Gyle from Barrow Burn**. The walk has spectacular views into Scotland and leads your through some of the most remote countryside in Northumberland. It's essential to be properly equipped with good boots, waterproofs, OS Map: Explorer OL16, a compass, survival bag, warm clothes, food, drink and a first aid kit, I'd travel back through Rothbury and stop by the river at my favourite tea shop, **Tomlinsons**, for cake and coffee.

Next I'd pop in to see the most amazing National Trust house in the country - **Cragside** - the first house to be powered by hydro-electricity. Dinner would be at the **Tankerville Arms, Eglingham**, just down the road from the cottages. It has open fires, great real ale and fab food in a quiet county village.

Sunday morning would be spent out on the stunning Northumberland coast, squeezing into a wetsuit and going coasteering near Hawick with **Adventure Northumberland** and then down to my favourite pub, **The Ship in at Newton by the Sea** for lunch. I'd follow that with a walk on the beach towards **Dunstanburgh Castle** then finally for dinner that evening I'd enjoy some of the finest seafood in the country at the **Old Boathouse House in Amble**.

Clive Gray CEO, Blyth Tall Ship

