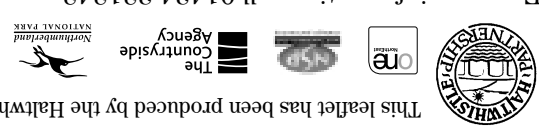




For further information on things to do in and around Hadrian's Wall Country call 01434 322002  
 Or visit [www.haltwhistle.org](http://www.haltwhistle.org) or [www.hadrians-wall.org](http://www.hadrians-wall.org)  
 In planning your transport, please refer to:  
 Journey Planner – [www.planner.org.uk](http://www.planner.org.uk)  
 Travelling – [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)  
 Walks designed by Mike Swan ([www.walking-hadrianswall.com](http://www.walking-hadrianswall.com)) Tel: 01434 382620  
 Photography by David G. Praker – PhotoWorkshops Partnership  
[www.photopartners.co.uk](http://www.photopartners.co.uk) Tel: 01434 322595  
 This leaflet has been produced by the Haltwhistle Partnership and part-funded by:  
  
 For more information call 01434 321242

**Walk 04**  
 Haltwhistle & Featherstone  
 6 miles  
 9.7 km  
 Moderate Difficulty  
 HADRIAN'S WALL COUNTRY

# The Haltwhistle Rings

22 Walks in the Historic Parishes of Haltwhistle, Northumberland

**Much of the first half of this 6-mile walk is through attractive woodland. Look out for a lovely display of bluebells in May and orchids in July. There are fine views of the river down below the Woodland Way, and a number of seats at special vantage points. The walk continues via a picturesque burn and across moorland from where there are good views of the Pennines to the south and Hadrian's Wall to the north.**

O.S. Explorer OL 43 Bellister Castle – Woodland Way – Park – Lynnsields

## 'Reivers, Ghosts and Celts'

**Start Point:** By Car, Bus, Train.  
 Start in Haltwhistle. at the Market Square on Main St. If you have arrived at the station follow the signs to the market square. Car users park at the supermarket accessed by turning into Aesica Road off Main Street, signposted 'Swimming & Leisure Centre', and following the blue 'P' signs then take the footpath opposite the main entrance 'Market Square'.

**Did you know:** The square is the ancient heart of the town, with the 14th century Centre of Britain Hotel to the east, the 13th century Holy Cross Church to the south and the Market Place itself which has been the venue of fairs, hiring, bull-baiting and hanging in years gone by. It was also the scene of a major raid in 1598 by the notorious 'Reiver' gang – the Armstrongs of Liddesdale. They entered Haltwhistle in daylight, burnt houses, killed or captured many residents and drove off cattle. Satisfaction for this raid was demanded from King James VI of Scotland, who replied that the Armstrongs from Liddesdale were no subjects of his and the Warden, Sir Robert Carey, could take his own revenge. This he did by a retaliation raid into Liddesdale, during which Sim Armstrong of the Cathill was slain by one of the Riddleys of Haltwhistle. This led to yet another raid on Haltwhistle by the Armstrongs, during which Wat Armstrong, a Clan Leader, was shot through the eye with a longbow arrow by Alec Ridley. A Final Solution was found by Sir Robert Carey, warden in 1601, when he laid siege to the Tarras Moss stronghold of the Armstrongs. By skilful strategy, the leaders were captured, but released on condition they never again raided into his Wardenry. This was a huge success and, in 1603, there was a Union of the Crowns of England and Scotland. The ballad penned by Sir Walter Scott commemorates the raid, called "The Fray of Hautwessel".

**1.** Take the cobbled path down past The Black Bull, turn left and with the church on your left take the next right – signposted 'Station' – and follow the path down to the road – now the Avenue St. Meen – turn right, cross the road and then left under the railway bridge. After crossing the Tyne Bridge look east and you will see the Haltwhistle landmark of Alston Arches.

**Did you know:** This viaduct once carried the Haltwhistle/Alston branch line, one of the most picturesque lines in England, but sadly the line was closed in 1976. The cast-iron bridge over the river, known as the Tyne Bridge, was built in 1875 by George Gordon, Son of Thomas Page, who built Westminster Bridge in London. It was the first Road Bridge across the river at Haltwhistle, until it was relegated to pedestrian-only status in the 1950s. It has been restored by Northumberland County Council in 2003, at a cost of £200,000.

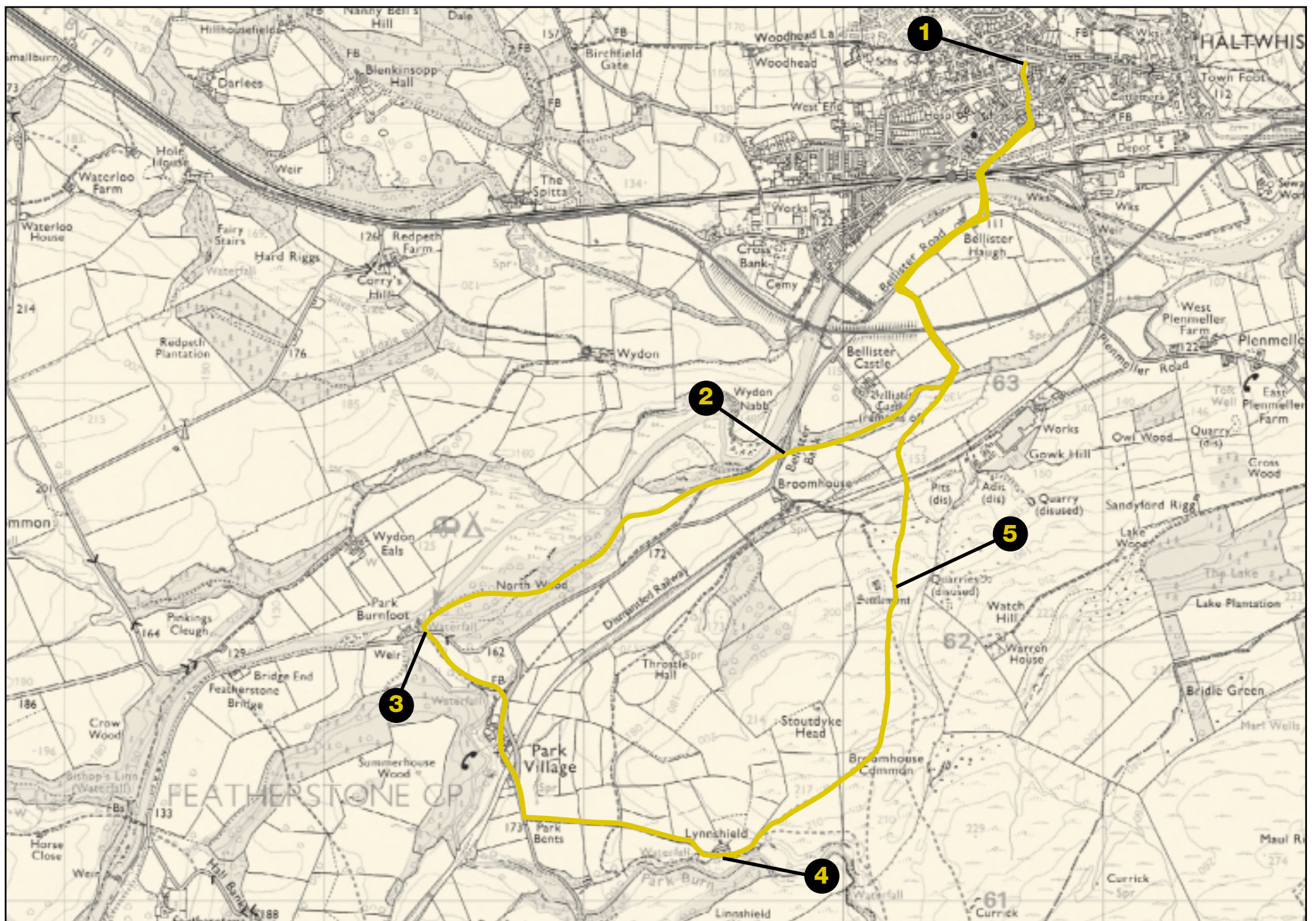
Turn right at the 'T' junction onto Bellister Road. After about 200m turn left onto a footpath – signposted Broomhouse Common – and straight on to cross the A69 after passing what appears to be a sheep pen but is in fact a watering hole. Continue straight on with the fence on your left before going diagonally right to a step stile into a wooded slope. Continue up a slope through the wood to another stile at the top. Turn sharp right and keep close to the fence to reach another stile allowing you to re-enter the wood. Follow the clearly defined path – this is a 'permissive path' on National Trust property – right through the wood, with fine views of Bellister Castle through the trees on the right until you reach the highway. (Walkers should note that paths through National Trust property are 'permissive' and, as such, the landowners have the right to close the route from time to time. You may have to negotiate fallen trees through here!)

**Did you know:** Bellister Castle was named by its first owner, Robert de Roos, in 1191. In Norman French it translates as 'a fine site' for a castle, the tower of which is now a ruined shell. The Blenkinsopps built a comfortable house next to the tower in 1669 which was rebuilt by John Dobson in 1826 but it was damaged by fire in 1901. Now owned by the National Trust, it is still inhabited and the mound on which it sits is shared by an old gnarled sycamore tree, known locally as the 'Hanging Tree', which was once used as a gallows. Ghost stories abound around a castle like this. The 'Grey Man of Bellister' was a minstrel mauled to death by the master's hounds as he tried to flee for his life, and visitors can testify to scary manifestations inside. Why not make up your own ghost story?

**2.** Continue straight over and enter the Woodland Way which is a clearly defined path through the woods. In late spring this path takes you through a most impressive display of bluebells. Keep to this National Trust path ignoring another path to the left over a step-over stile, and after about 30 minutes you come to the road just above Park Burnfoot Farm.

**3.** Turn right, and almost immediately, before reaching the farm, cross the road and take the footpath – signposted 'Park Village' – on the left. Skirt around the high ground on the left then climb up to the meadow above Park Burn gorge on the right. Go through a wicket gate over a footbridge up a flight of steps by the water treatment works on the right to reach the highway. Turn right and right again to walk through Park Village. Park





Copyright: Ordnance Survey (Explorer OL 43)

Village has changed little over the years. Turn right at the main road and after a short distance turn left onto a farm track. Follow the track to Lynnshield Farm, and turn right through two barns, just before the main farm buildings – signposted – through a gate and over a stile.

**4.** Turn sharp left and keep close to a stone wall with a deep gorge on the right, passing a cottage on the left. After passing the farmhouse on the left you reach a step stile on the corner of a tree plantation. Go over and head diagonally up the hill between a stone wall to the left and the plantation on the right, to pass a marker post. Continue over the brow of the hill, still in a north-easterly direction, until you come to a ladder stile over a stone wall. Go straight on, at first aiming for a small dense wood on the far hillside. Then turn left to walk in a northerly direction when the slope to your left is starting to lose height and a wall is visible below the wood. There should be a marker post here. You eventually continue down a small gully to cross a boggy area in the bottom. Once across the water make your way up the slope facing you. At the top you will come to a marker post on the right of the track.

**5.** To the left is the site of a Celtic settlement.

**Did you know:** There are few documented pre-Roman sites in the area. The landscape was very different then; the valley of the South Tyne was very marshy, the hillside to the north was a tangled mass of low shrub and forest but to the south – here – less forested. Indeed a nearby moor (east of here) called Plennmeller is a surviving Celtic name meaning ‘bare hill’. This, then, was an ideal site for a settlement of the Brigantes, an iron based Celtic society, and one can imagine here a stockaded pound with sunken hut circles inside. – you may just discern the line of the boundary walls.

At the marker post veer to the northeast at first heading towards the plastics factory below – a large expanse of roof surrounded by trees. When the wall below comes into sight look for the ladder stile and make towards it. Once over, go down a fairly steep slope aiming for a metal field gate. At a marker post you join a bridle way coming down from the left. The gate leads onto a disused railway – the branch line from Haltwhistle to Alston, which closed in 1976 and is now a cycle route. Cross the line to go over a ladder stile, then straight up the field to a stone stile next to a field gate. Bear diagonally right across the meadow to reach a stile on the edge of the wood. Then retrace the earlier part of the walk back to Haltwhistle.

Whilst Walking in and around Hadrian's Wall Country please remember that “every footstep counts” particularly during the wet winter months. You can help protect Hadrian's Wall Country and one of the great wonders of the world by following the simple advice below:

- Many of the routes are permissioned by landowners - enjoy the countryside and respect the livestock and the land
- Always follow the signed paths
- Guard against risk of Fire at all times
- Fasten all gates
- Keep dogs on a lead
- Remember walking on Hadrian's Wall can cause it to collapse
- Try to avoid walking alongside the wall in very wet conditions.