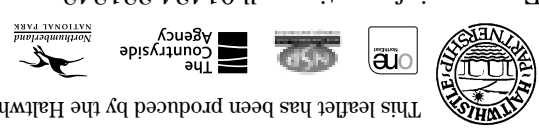




For further information on things to do in and around Hadrian's Wall Country call 01434 322002
Or visit www.haltwhistle.org or www.hadrians-wall.org
In planning your transport, please refer to:
Journey Planner – www.planner.org.uk
Traveline – www.traveline.org.uk
Walks designed by Mike Swan (www.walkinghadrianswall.com)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


Walk 05
Haltwhistle & Greenhead
8 miles
12.9 km
Moderate Difficulty



22 Walks in the Historic Parishes of Haltwhistle, Northumberland

The Haltwhistle Rings

A fairly long walk of 8 miles, but not very demanding, apart from two steep, but short slopes. The countryside varies from pastureland to moorland with great views of the rugged landscape on Hadrian's Wall.

O.S. Explorer OL 43 Birchfield Gate – Greenhead – Carvoran – Walltown – Comb Hill

‘The Roman Wall ... and the vast solitude to the north’

Start Point: By Car, Bus, Train.
Start in Haltwhistle. Train users follow signs ‘Town Centre’ to start at the Market Square and take the arched alleyway 20m to the left of The Centre of Britain Hotel to the supermarket car park. Bus users start at 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.

1. Leave the car park by the main vehicle entrance and turn left. Take the second turning left signposted to Greenholme Aged Persons Home. Just beyond the signpost look out for the low, stone building with windows bricked up at the bottom of the hill. It was the old Dame School dating back to 1722 and endowed by Lady Capel. The building is now the home of Haltwhistle’s Silver Band. Continue past the home and the school to the last school gate. A signpost indicates the start of the footpath to Birchfield Gate Farm. At 300m along the path, cross over a step stile into pastureland. Keep close to the hedge on the left to reach the field gate ahead. On a clear day there is a wide panorama to the south of Glendue and Cold Fell (at a height of 621m). This is the northern tip of the Pennines. Through the next two fields keep to the right hand side till you come to a very large barn on your left at the end of the second field.
2. Go through the field gate next to the barn then turn right to pass through another field gate with a way-mark on it. Turn immediately left along the edge of the farm buildings until you reach a step stile ahead of you. Once over this go over another step stile a short distance further on the left. Turn right to walk in a westerly direction through three fields keeping to the hedge on the right. At the end of the third field, before the land descends sharply to a small stream, go over a step stile in the fence to your right, then across a small footbridge. Turn left to descend to another footbridge in the dip, then go straight up the slope facing, towards the farm.
3. On arriving at Birchfield Gate Farm carry straight on in the same direction through the farm gates, past the farm buildings to the road. Turn right and continue along the

road for a good fifteen minutes until at the end of a wood you see a ladder stile and signpost on the left hand side of the road indicating, ‘College, Wrytree’. For a few minutes you now walk over rough pasture land with no clearly marked footpath. Make for the pylon but pass to the right hand side of it. Once past it you will see a disused drift mine down on the left in a hollow, and ahead of you a stone wall, then fence, leading down to a farm. Wrytree Drift was one of the last coal mines in the north east to close. This rich seam ran down under the A69 and Tipalt Burn. Make for the farm track running alongside the wall and turn left down it. At the first farm building there is a field gate on the right. Go through it and alongside the barn on your left, then go diagonally left down the field making for a step stile next to two trees at the bottom left-hand corner. Once over, again go diagonally left to another step stile just below leading on to the farm road. Descend the road and leave it via a field gate on your right just before reaching the next farm. You now pass through very pleasant pasture land leading westerly, parallel to the A69 on your left. As the land begins to rise, instead of continuing in the same field, go through another field gate straight ahead of you. There is a small wood at the far side of the field, make for this, keeping to the top right hand side of the field. Go over the stile in the top right hand corner. This brings you on to a narrow footpath which winds its way alongside the edge of the wood, then along the bank of the Tipalt to Greenhead.

Did you know: Greenhead is a pretty village with a simple, early English style church (John Dobson 1826–28), and a former station of about 1836. In the 1840s the passenger trains used to stop at Greenhead for half an hour on Sunday morning to allow passengers to attend services in the church. There is a tea room and a hotel here – please make use of them.

4. Turn right on to the road B6318 and walk up the hill – be careful this is a busy road. About 300m up when the road bends to the right, you will see on the left a signpost to the Pennine Way. Once through the gate, gradually bear right up the field. You are aiming for a stone stile in the wall which borders the field on your right. Beyond the wall the ground rises fairly sharply and you climb up the field aiming for another stone stile in the top left hand corner of the field. Pause for breath at the top and admire the lovely view over towards Cumbria. At this stile you will see another one just a few metres away on your left. Proceed over this one and go straight on across rough ground to a ladder stile over the far wall. Once over you come to the vallum – the ditch on the south side of The Roman Wall which marked the limit of the military zone. Turn right along the edge of it until you find an easy crossing point, then continue along the top in an easterly direction to a step stile leading onto the road at Walltown.
5. Turn right and then left into the quarry car park. (There are toilets here and sometimes the small kiosk is open). The Roman Army Museum is just a few yards down the road on your right. Carvoran (Magna) Roman Fort predated the building of the Wall as it was one of the forts, like Vindolanda, built on the earlier Stanegate Road. It has not been



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excavated. The vallum of the Wall swings north to avoid something so it seems to suggest – as does its Roman name – that something larger lies beneath. It was a place of great strategic importance as it was the junction of the Stanegate with the Maiden Way from the south, and today houses the Roman Army Museum. Walk through the picnic area and follow the path to the left of the pond and up right to the far right hand corner of the quarry. Cross the stile and turn left to ascend steeply with the stone wall on your left, to join the Wall and turn right to walk on the path beside the Wall. You are now on Walltown Crag, the first of the ‘Nine Nicks of Thirlwall’ – in fact there are only seven! Continue on past a turret, with superb views, the sharp scarp of a disused quarry and along the line of the Wall to descend into a gully to the track to Walltown Farm. Ahead of you the Wall path goes over a ladder stile but your path goes right on the track to the farm. Do not pass in front of the farm but turn left onto the farm road.

7. Just after Dunholme Farm, go over the ladder stile on the left and head for another stile just below a farm. Then gradually bear left downhill towards the line of trees above a small gorge. Keep to the edge of the gorge to descend the hill. At the bottom, jump across the stream to go over the step stile on the other side. Go diagonally left across the next field to climb over a stone stile near a white cottage. This brings you on to Willia Road. Turn right along it to come out at Fair Hill almost opposite the entrance to the car park.

Did you know: Walltown Farmhouse is a handsome structure with a complex history, largely built of Roman stone. An early tower was replaced here at some stage: Hodgson, the historian recorded a date of 1713 above one of the doors. Though the house may have changed at various periods it is interesting to read a quotation from Hodgson of about 1820. “The beauty spot of this old gentleman’s place is however, the broad dark green meadow before it, environed with a tall and healthy growth of forest trees, the wild woods ... the Roman Wall ... and the vast solitude to the north”. It is comforting to observe that some things remain unchanged. In 1555 Bishop Nicholas Ridley was burnt at the stake at Oxford. He wrote his last farewells from there to his relatives one of whom was his brother-in-law John Ridley of Walltown who was married to the Bishop’s sister Elizabeth.

6. About 150m along this road a signpost down on the right signed to ‘Fell End’ indicates the continuation of the walk through two field gates past Lowtown Farm to the right. The path, which is a bridleway, veers round to the left, then turns right to follow the course of the wall on the left. Eventually it turns sharp right again then veers gradually to a southerly direction to bring you to a field gate. Here way-marks indicate that beyond the gate the bridleway goes off to the right, whilst a footpath goes off to the left in a south-easterly direction, very gradually climbing the slope. A ladder stile in the distance gives you a good point to aim for, though you turn off to the right before reaching it, climbing up the hill in a southerly direction to a wicket gate. Once through, continue to the top of the hill then make for a step stile into a small plantation next to a bungalow. Walkers are very welcome – even a bench and a picnic table are provided plus an information board. A ladder stile at the far end brings you on to the road. Cross over it and go down the road towards 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.