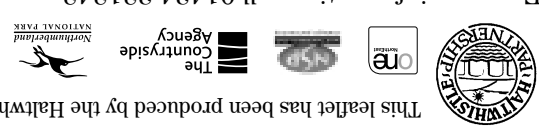




For further information on things to do in and around Hadrian's Wall Country call 01434 322002
 Or visit www.haltwhistle.org or www.hadrians-wall.org
 In planning your transport, please refer to:
 Journey Planner – www.planner.org.uk
 Traveline – www.traveline.org.uk
 Walks designed by Mike Swan (www.walking-hadrianswall.com) 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:

 For more information call 01434 321242

HADRIAN'S WALL
 COUNTRY

Walk 13
 Knarsdale & Kirkhaugh
 7 miles
 11.3 km
 Moderate Difficulty

The Haltwhistle Rings

22 Walks in the Historic Parishes of Haltwhistle, Northumberland

Rodney Makepeace has farmed in this beautiful valley since he wore short trousers and is the current master of Knarsdale Hall. His dog, Del Boy, tends to get lost on a regular basis chasing rabbits. Should you see him while walking the 7 miles in this outstandingly varied valley, tell him to use his mobile to phone home!

O.S. Explorer OL 43 Slaggyford – Williamston – Parsons Shields – The Bog – Eals – Glendue Burn – Pennine Way – Knarsdale – South Tyne Trail

'Del Boy and Rodney'

Start Point: By Car.
 From Haltwhistle take the road south off the A69 bypass at Bellister Castle, signposted 'Alston'. Turn left onto the A689 at Lambley to Slaggyford 2.5km south of Lambley. For good food and drink try The Kirkstyle Inn in Knarsdale. Turn right at the village hall as you leave Slaggyford for Lambley or call in during your walk (see below).

1. Park carefully in Slaggyford.

Did you know: Slaggyford was anciently know as 'Slagginford' and it is suggested that its name means 'muddy ford' but just where there was a 'muddy ford' is confusing as the bed of the River South Tyne is stone. Another suggestion is that the ancient village was further north where a ford crossed the Knar Burn on a bed of solidified clay know locally as 'slag' and hence its name. At one time it was the market town of the valley with its own Crown-granted annual fair every September but was eclipsed when Alston's wealth from mining made it the capital of 'Alstonedale'. When the railway arrived in 1850 things looked up for a while and a lot of coal and lime came from around the village. Tom Bell, the Stationmaster, in his book on the village in 1924 described it as 'a small place, but boasts a Post and Telegraph Office, a Temperance Hotel, a Reading Room, a Wesleyan Chapel and a Railway Station.' He also refers to the last annual fair in 1907 when 'a goodly number of cattle, sheep and horses exchanged hands, buyers coming from a considerable distance' and followed by 'a series of sports, pony racing, hurdle-leaping, running and wrestling and a hound trail, followed by dancing at the village inns.'

Walk south on the A689 past the caravan site on your left. Remember to walk on the right. Turn left across the bridge – signposted 'Barhaugh Hall' – and follow the road. After a sharp left hand bend go straight on at the 'T' junction (The road to Barhaugh Hall goes right) – signposted 'Parsons Shields & The Bog' – to Williamston Farm.

Did you know: Williamston Farm comes from 'ton' or homestead belonging to William. William the Lion once held this land, as did William Pratt in 1256.

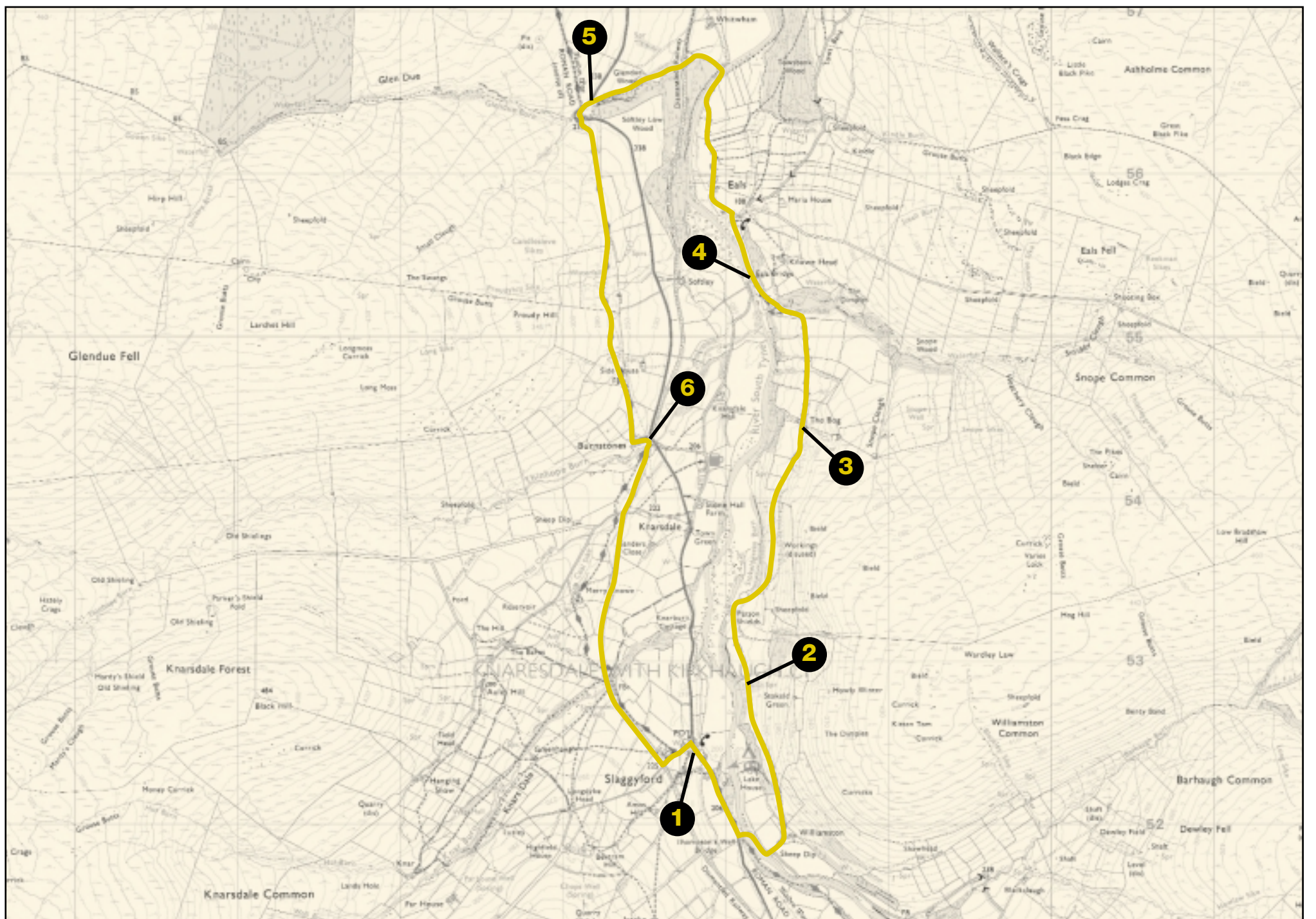
Enter the farmyard, turn left after the white farmhouse to a metal five-bar-gate and follow the bridlepath up to the right. Through another gate and at a marker post at a fork go left, parallel to the tree plantation, over a wooden bridge and, as you pass under power cables by a way-marked pole, you can see 500m ahead of you a gate into a tree plantation flanked by two conifers.

2. When you reach the plantation go through and emerge through two gates and straight on across the field with the fence on your left. After a gate descend by a wooded gully on your right towards Parsons Shields Farm.

Did you know: A 'shiel' or summer pasture and dwelling, which it was at one time, but in this case land providing for, or set apart for, service to the church. Parsons was originally 'person' meaning a person in the parish tending land for the church.

Pass the back of the farmhouse and just before the entry to the farmyard turn right off the track through a half gate next to an old netty (WC). Go diagonally right towards the remaining gable end of an old stone barn, and through the gate to the left of it. Follow the track up to an old lime kiln and then on the obvious path along the valley side. Note the views to your left up the Knar Burn, Glendue and Cold Fells and Knarsdale Hall and Church below and the remains of bell pits. Slaggyford did have quite a reasonable deposit of coal, and it had been mined around here for some considerable time as you will see on your right.

Did you know: Knarsdale: the present building is on the site of the tower built by Reginal Pratt in 1177 when he was appointed by the King of Scots William I – (this area was then what was known as the Tynedale Liberty and held by the Scots) – to be head forester of Knarsdale Forest, a royal forest where the principal task of the forester was, like today's gamekeepers, to stop locals pinching the game of lofty visitors. Things don't change much! Perhaps the Hall is more famous for 'The Spectre of Knaresdale Hall', a ghost of a long-haired young woman seen gliding from the rear door of the Hall to a pond in the yard on the anniversary of her death, leaving the door hanging on its creaking hinges. She was the niece of the Lord of the Manor and had discovered that her brother was having an affair with the Lord's young wife. Fearful that his sister would betray him, although she had no intention of so doing, she was drowned in the pond on a wet and windy night and has haunted the Hall ever since. Only no-one knows the date of her death! The kirk in this case is that of St Jude, patron saint of lost causes. It was built in 1838 on the foundations of a previous church, and its antiquity is indicated by tombstones



Copyright: Ordnance Survey (Explorer OL 43)

in the yard of two Jacobite sympathisers, and possibly by the epitaph of one Robert Baxter of Far House, who died in October 1796 and was buried here. Or was he? This epitaph, according to William Weaver Tomlinson in his little masterpiece, the 'Comprehensive Guide to Northumberland', first published towards the end of the 19th century, tells how Baxter was murdered up on the fell by being given a poisoned sandwich, and ends with the line: "I hope he will rewarded be / That laid the poison there for me." Very unusual, that a tombstone which carried a curse should have been allowed in a consecrated burial place. It was definitely there in 1840 but now it cannot be found. In a low evening light you can still see today, from the west of the valley, lines of circular depressions which were once the bell pits that the early miners used before they had the technology to venture far underground. They just dug a hole into a coal outcrop and went down and in until it ran out. They widened the hole only just as much as safety would allow, leaving a hole shaped like the inside of a bell. When the sides round the top looked like falling in, they moved on and dug another hole.

After one gate on this track come eventually through two gates in quick succession into the farmyard of The Bog Farm

Did you know: Bog Farm: soft muddy ground probably referring to the riverside land to the west of the farm -or possibly 'boggle,' meaning a place where goblins or phantoms are found!

3. Go diagonally left and then right to pass through the cobbled yard with the green-doored barn on your left and out of the yard onto a tarmac road. Very smart yard! Continue on this road/track for about 1km, descending to cross the Snope Burn on a gated bridge. Turn left up the track and then follow down to the road with Eals Bridge on your left.

If you want a pub lunch go left over the bridge past Knarsdale Hall to the Kirkstyle Inn (Closed Mon – Wed lunch times in winter.)

4. Turn right on the road for about 1km through Eals.

Did you know: Eals means an 'island' or 'floodable land.' Hodgson in 1840 saw it as 'gardens stocked with old plum trees, remain as evidence of its descent through a race of yeomen who tilled their own paternal farms ... into variegated stripes of land, after the old town-field fashion, speaks little of any increase of knowledge ...' The land is certainly 'floodable' – in October 1829 a major flood changed the course of the river leaving the southern part of the vale on the west side of the river.

Keep left at the fork by the telephone box and continue on as the road becomes a track after the last farm – Townfoot Farm – to the footbridge. Cross the bridge into a clearing

with conifer trees on your right and after 20m turn right to cross a bridge over Glendue Burn – from the Celtic, meaning dark or black valley. Turn left upstream to a marker post at the top of a slight incline and straight on to the stile and steps up to the old railway line. At the signpost here – left to Slaggyford, right to Lambley on the South Tyne Trail – go straight on, signposted 'Whitwam Walk', over the stile and diagonally left up across the field to a marker post. At the marker post continue on to a gate, with a wall on the right and fence to the left, through the gate and diagonally right aiming for the end of the trees on your left, which flank Glendue Burn.

5. Cross the road – A689 – by two ladder stiles and straight on up the field – west – to a marker post. Ignore the arrow pointing right, go straight on towards the wall and turn left onto the Pennine Way. After 20m cross the wall by a stone stile and turn left to follow the path by a wall and fence to a stile and onto the footbridge over Glendue Burn. After the bridge turn left and follow the path which curves up right to cross a step stile. Go straight on up the slope on a broad track – parts of the Roman 'Maiden Way' – and when the track narrows and becomes less obvious, keep close to the stone wall on your left. (You will never be far from this wall all the way to Burnstones.)

Did you know: Between Glendue Burn and Burnstones you will come across some paved parts of this Roman Road which ran from Whitley Castle to Carvoran near Walltown. Imagine the soldiers who came from many different parts of the Roman Empire walking this road 2000 years ago. The same technique of road building had been used to construct it as was being used in the Balkans, Turkey and the Middle East.

Cross a ladder stile over a fence and on to cross a step stile beside a gate. Continue on along the track to another ladder stile by a gate and straight on, avoiding the boggy bits as best you can. When you see two houses down in the next field on your left, veer slightly right past a marker post and round the top right hand side of a hollow, probably an old quarry. This leads to the gated track down to Burnstones – the cream building ahead of you – and turn left to the road by the viaduct.

6. Turn left at the road, 30m turn right to the parking area and right again to follow the South Tyne Trail – old railway – to Slaggyford Station and then left into the village.

Alternatively turn right under the viaduct over the bridge and left to the Kirkstyle Inn for refreshments.

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.