



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
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Walk 08
 Haltwhistle & Featherstone
 9 miles
 14.5 km
 Moderate Difficulty
 HADRIAN'S WALL
 COUNTRY

The Haltwhistle Rings
 22 Walks in the Historic Parishes of Haltwhistle, Northumberland

A beautifully varied 9-mile walk in the outstanding South Tyne Valley along the banks of the river, through woods and farmland, with views of old castles. Though easy walking it is fairly long, but alternatives are suggested for those desiring a shorter walk.

O.S. Explorer OL 43 Featherstone Bridge – Kellah – Low and High Burnfoot – Bellister Wood

'A Unique Bridge, a family Memory and Fine Site'

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'.

1. From the supermarket car park take the footpath opposite the main entrance signposted, 'Market Square'. At the square 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 turn right at the 'T' junction onto Bellister Road. Continue along to the end of the road passing through a half gate next to a full gate – signposted Bellister Castle – and follow the track under the A69 beside the river, curving up left, through another half gate (opposite the entrance to Bellister Castle) and keep left to cross the river beside the A69 and on over the Tipalt Burn to reach the track to Wydon Farm.

2. At the farm pass barns on your left and the farmhouse and farm buildings on your right. Pass through a field gate and along the farm track up the slope. At the top ignore the gate to your right and take the one straight ahead. Go through the field keeping close to the hedge on the right, then through another gate. You are now on rough pastureland. Turn right to go diagonally across the field aiming for the bottom right hand corner where a step stile leads you into the adjacent field. Follow the edge of the wood until you come to another step stile on your left. Once over and into the wood bear diagonally right aiming for a small gully leading down to a ford over a small stream. Go through the field gate opposite and follow the wall on your left round to another field gate leading into Wydon Eals farmyard.

Did you know: The area you have just come through is known as 'Deadmanshaw', where the Ridleys clan murdered Sir Albany Featherstonehaugh, High Sheriff of Northumberland, in a border feud.

Bear right across the yard, through another gate on to the farm road. This leads you to Featherstone Bridge.

Did you know: Featherstone bridge was built in 1778 after a great flood destroyed several bridges over the Tyne. Featherstone, in its idyllic setting, has a rather lopsided appearance with its strange, off-centre key stone. This is a necessity when you consider that the bridge has to drop 50 feet in order to span the river.

Alternative Route (A): Those wishing for a short walk could cross the bridge, then turn left and walk along the road to Park Burnfoot Farm, then follow the directions in the last section of the main walk.

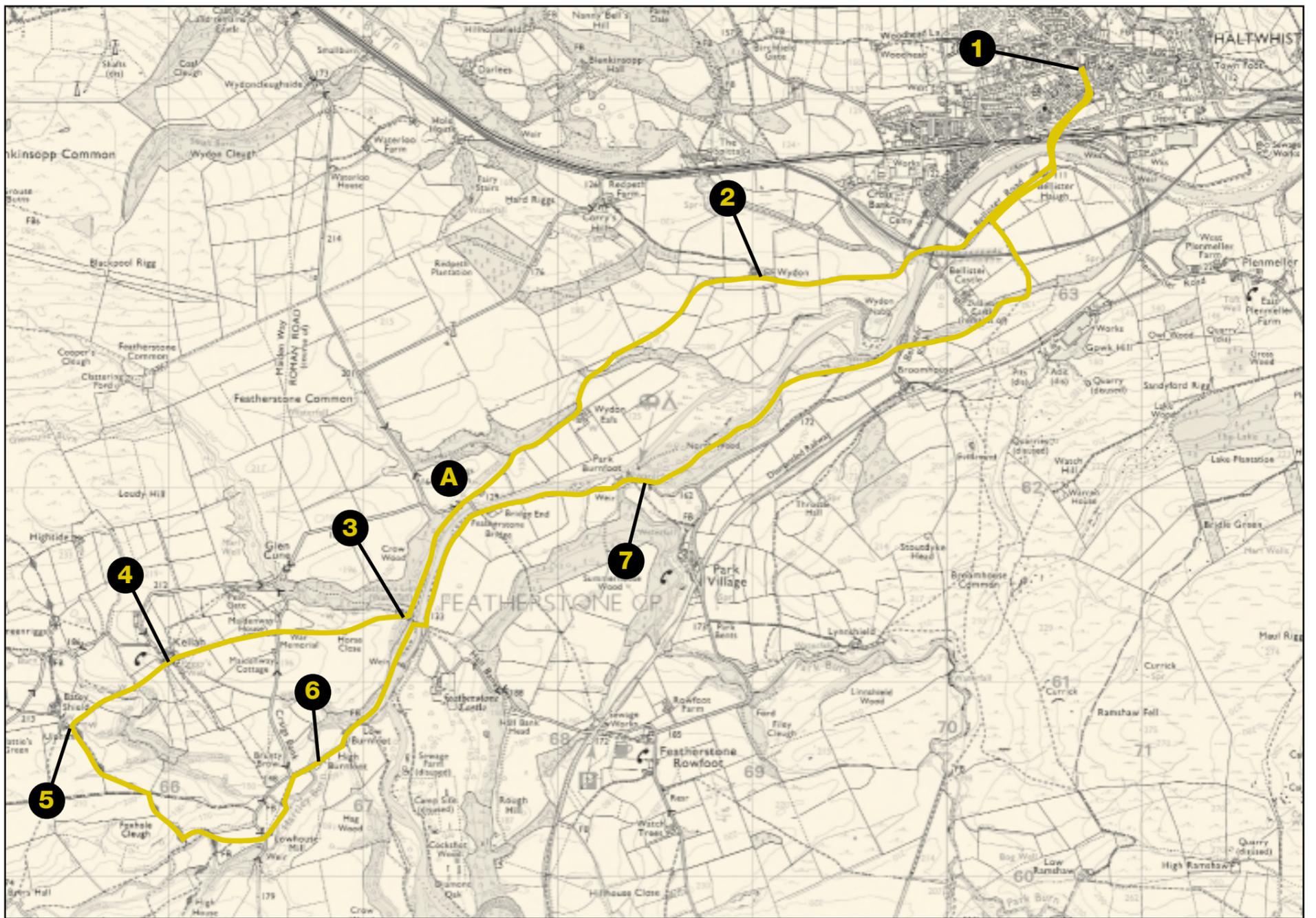
Otherwise: at the main road – with the bridge to your left – cross over, bear right as if to go up the hill but turn left almost immediately on to a footpath – signposted 'Low Burnfoot' – going through woodland with the South Tyne River on your left. Keep on this path until you reach a footbridge over the River South Tyne.

3. Do not go over the bridge unless you wish to return to Haltwhistle, but turn right to climb up the hillside where you will discover some very old wooden steps cut into the ground. Pass through a wicket gate and continue climbing up to the top of the hill. From here there is a good view back along the valley. Ahead you will see an old farmhouse called Horse Close, now used as a summer cottage. Make for this house and pass to the right of it. A rough track leads from the house to the road. 30m along this track bear right across the rough pastureland, heading for the far right hand corner of the field, where two step stiles bring you on to the road.

Did you know: Here there is an interesting monument erected by the Hope Wallace family in memory of their father who lost his life in the First World War. This spot was chosen for the monument as it was here that he said good-bye to his beloved wife.

Cross over the road to go through the left hand field gate opposite. The road here is actually on the line of the Maiden Way – an ancient Roman road, which joined Kirby Thore to Carvoran, now the site of the Roman Army Museum. Go straight on, keeping close to the hedge on the right until you reach Kellah Farm and hamlet after passing through two other gates. Kellah: 'The Hill where Calves were turned out.'

4. First you come to a barn on your right, the track goes round this and brings you to yet another gate leading into the farmyard. Do not go through this gate, but turn left and follow the garden walls on your right to a stone stile. Once over it, turn right then immediately left at the corner of the barn. You again walk alongside garden walls to your right. A gate brings you into a very large sloping field. Go straight down across this field with a stone wall on your right. You are aiming for a wooden bridge over a small stream at the very bottom of the field but this is hidden in the hollow until you have almost reached it. Once over the bridge follow the contour round the steep bank



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into another valley. You may find it easier at this point to climb to the top of the slope. You will see the ruins of an old well ahead and also a bridge down below. Cross this bridge, turn right then, 20m on, veer left to climb up the hill towards a stone stile in the wall at the top. From here you have a good view of the countryside behind you and of Batey Shield Farm ahead. (Bateyshield: 'Batey' belonging to the family of de Bataille; 'shield' summer dwelling.) Go straight ahead, keeping by the hedge on the left, to a field gate between two barns. This leads on to a track which you leave almost immediately by the first field gate on your left. You are now on the Pennine Way.

5. Go straight down this field keeping to the hedge on the right. In the dip at the bottom you cross a ford, turn left and climb diagonally up the hill on the other side. Once on top, keep going in the same direction until you reach a field gate in the corner of the field on your right. A signpost here indicates the route of the Pennine Way. After passing through the gate, bear right and continue down the hill keeping to the hedge on your right. Bear left just before reaching the corner of the field and walk above the woodland overlooking Hartley Burn. When the burn turns sharply to flow in a southerly direction, you also turn right to descend a steep slope to a step stile leading into a meadow. You turn left here, making for a field gate at the far side – a nearby barn across the road indicates the spot to aim for. Cross the road, pass the barn and head for a wooden bridge at the far side of the field. Over the bridge turn left to cross a step stile almost immediately. You cross the next field diagonally to your right, aiming for a stile in the hedge at the top of the field. This stile is barely visible and is little more than a narrow wooden fence – it is well before the building at the right hand side of the field. Turn right on to a farm road which becomes a track once you have passed High Burnfoot Farm on your right.

6. Continue along the track to Low Burnfoot House. You pass the house on your left and continue straight down over rough ground to a bridge over Hartley Burn. Go over the bridge and turn right along a footpath that proceeds along the north bank of the Tyne. You need to keep near to the hillside on your left. From this path you have a good view across the Tyne to Featherstone Castle.

Did you know: The oldest part of the castle still standing dates back to the 14th century which is a tower built by Thomas de Featherstonehaugh in the 1320s, and the most recent additions were built in the 19th century. The Featherstonehaughs retained the ownership of the castle until the 18th century with only one gap in direct descent, which occurred with the death of Abigail Featherstonehaugh in the late 17th century. Was this the same Abigail Featherstonehaugh who now haunts the castle on the 17th January along with her bridal party? The legend says she was to marry a neighbouring Baron's son, but was in love with a local Ridley. As the bridal party rode the bounds of the estate, the spurned lover made an attack, but the new bridegroom put up a good fight and all were killed in the fray. At midnight the sound of horses hooves were heard outside the castle and, as the door opened into the banqueting hall, the ghostly apparition of Abigail and the rest of the party entered. The Baron fainted at this spectral procession and the next day all the bridal party were found dead in Pinkings Cleugh.

Did you know: Featherstone Prisoner of War Camp No. 18. Remains are immediately to the west of Featherstone Castle and can still be clearly seen. It housed thousands of German officers during and after the Second World War. The late Queen Mother visited the camp and many of the prisoners became very well thought of locally. An interpreter in the camp, Captain Herbert Sulzbach, a German Jew and officer in the German Army who fled to Britain in the 1930s, was awarded an OBE because he "dedicated himself to making this camp a seedbed of British-German reconciliation."

Eventually you arrive back at the footbridge where you were earlier. As you cross the bridge, see if you can spot trout or salmon in the water below. Beyond the bridge, go over a step stile and turn left along the road. This road runs along the south bank of the South Tyne and you stay on it, past Featherstone Bridge, and Park Burnfoot.

7. A little way up the hill you pass the entrance to a campsite on your left, and just beyond a step stile leads you into the woods of Bellister Estate, which is National Trust property. Follow the footpath through the woods with lovely views down on to the South Tyne. (Do not divert from the National Trust Path). Walkers should note that paths through National Trust Land are 'permissive' paths and, as such, the landowners have the right to close the route from time to time. Any inconvenience caused is much regretted. You eventually come out onto a road. Cross over, through another wicket gate into more woodland overlooking Bellister Castle itself.

Did you know: This 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 that was once used as a gallows. Ghost stories abound around a castle like this. The 'Grey Man of Bellister', a minstrel mauled to death by the master's hounds, can be seen outside the ruins at dusk and many other visitors can testify to scary manifestations inside. Why not make up your own ghost story?

This path leads you to a step stile into a field above the wood. Bear left along the edge of the wood and at 80m a step stile on your left takes you down through the wood and into a field. Go straight across the field to enter a small tree plantation and then across the A69. Following the field boundary on your right, join the Bellister Road, turn right along the road, turn left to cross the Tyne Bridge and return to the town centre.

Note: Apart from the alternative given it is also possible to start the walk at Featherstone footbridge. Just before the bridge there is space to park one or two cars by the road side. Then you would walk over the bridge and follow the directions in the main walk, starting at the section Featherstone Footbridge to Kellah.

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.