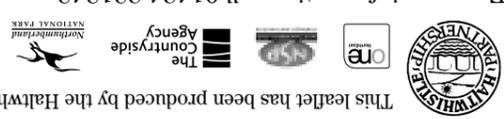




For further information on things to do in and around Hadrian's Wall Country call 01434 322002  
 Or visit [www.haltwhistle.org](http://www.haltwhistle.org) or [www.hadrians-wall.org](http://www.hadrians-wall.org)  
 In planning your transport, please refer to:  
 Journey Planner – [www.planner.org.uk](http://www.planner.org.uk)  
 Traveline – [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)  
 Walks designed by Mike Swan ([www.walkinghadrianswall.com](http://www.walkinghadrianswall.com)) Tel: 01434 382620  
 Photography by David G. Prakeel – 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

HADRIAN'S WALL  
COUNTRY

**Walk 10**  
Coanwood & Featherstone  
6 miles  
9.7 km  
Easy

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

**A 6-mile walk using part of the Pennine Way, down the picturesque valley of the Hartleyburn to the landscaped valley by the South Tyne through Featherstone Park and return by the old Alston to Haltwhistle railway and the superb Lambley Viaduct.**

O.S. Explorer OL 43 Lambey – Pennine Way – Burnfoot – Featherstone Bridge – South Tyne Trail – Viaduct

## ‘The Battling Prioress and an Historical Soap!’

**Start Point:** By Car.  
 From Haltwhistle take the road south off the A69 at Bellister Castle, signposted ‘Alston’. At the junction with the A689 at Lambley turn left and immediately right off the road to park on waste ground opposite the converted chapel.

**Did you know:** The village of Lambley – (‘lee’ or pasture where lambs are kept in the summer) – once had its own Benedictine Nunnery and a great story is told of the prioress of Lambley Convent in 1279. It seems she had a long-standing feud with the local Baron of Thirlwall. It was alleged that earlier her shepherd had burnt down the baron’s tower on the site of Wardrew House (Gilsland) and when she grazed some of her cattle on his land without permission the baron finally complained to the King’s assizes at Wark. The prioress denied the charges and challenged the Baron to single combat to decide the issue! However, it was not that she was a 13th century Lara Croft for in those days protagonists usually nominated a champion to fight for them, but when she discovered that her man was so much smaller than the Baron’s man she decided that she was guilty after all and paid a fine of £10.

**1.** Park at the junction of the A689 with the road to Lambley Village, opposite the converted chapel. Walk down through the village and past the church, turn left on the footpath, signposted, pass a white house on your right and on through a tunnel under the all-weather road. Cross two fields to a stile and through an alleyway to the right of a terrace of houses and out onto the road. Turn right and after 100m turn left over a stile signposted ‘Holy Rigg’ and walk diagonally right over a slag heap. Aim for a marker post between the ruined barn on the left and the house ahead on the right – Holly Rigg. At the marker post turn right (You are now on the Pennine Way) to cross the Black Burn over a stone slab bridge. On the bridge, with the house at ten o’clock, continue on at twelve o’clock along the stone flagged path over boggy ground aiming for a grassy knoll and then a low stone marker on the brow of a hill. (The path is not obvious here – but continue on at twelve o’clock.) Eventually you climb to join an old track that at first

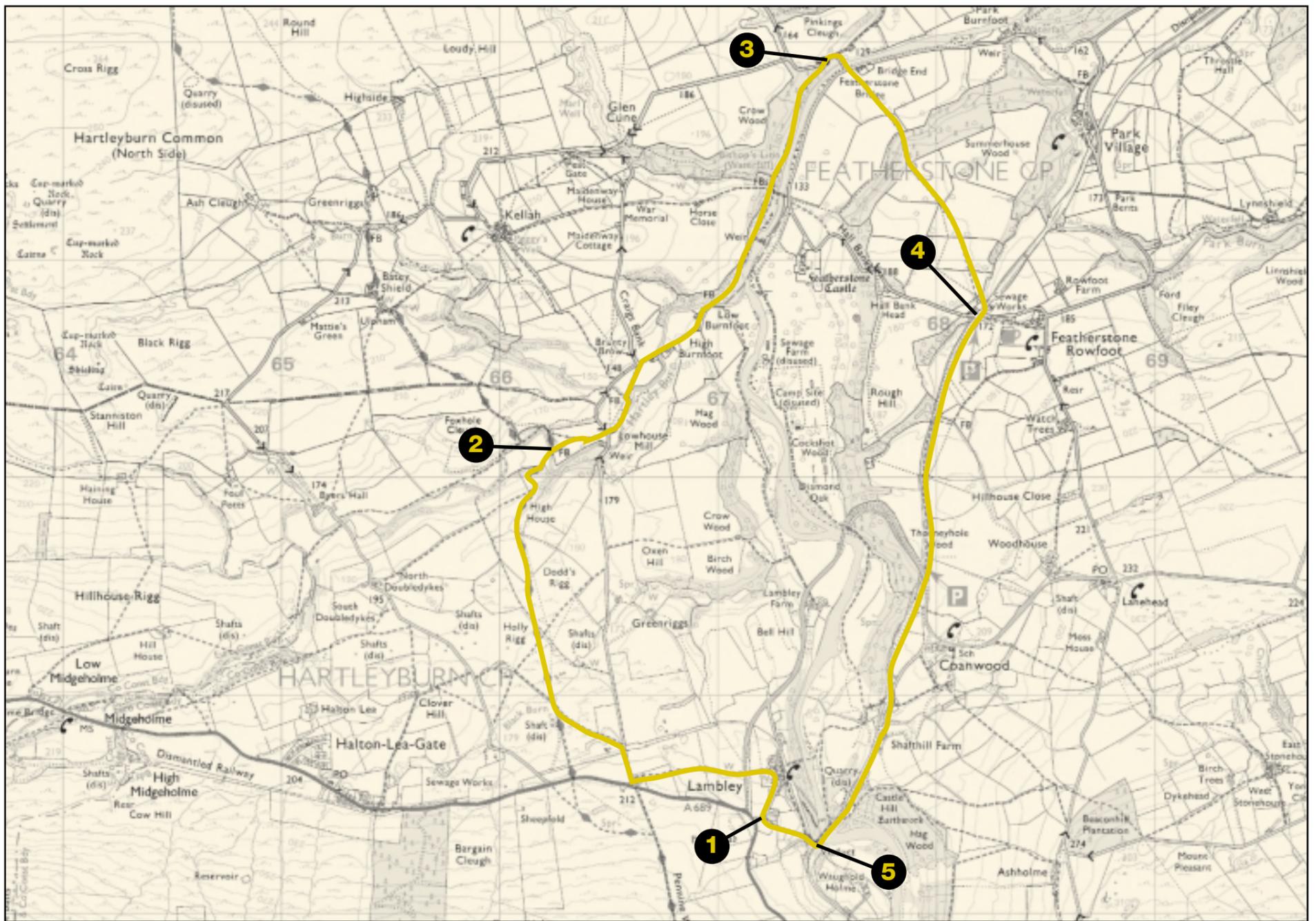
descends and then climbs up to a ruined barn ahead – High House. At the marker post by High House go right to descend a grassy spur and across a meadow to the bridge over Hartley Burn.

**2.** Having crossed the bridge – the Pennine Way goes left here – go straight across the field, through the gate, across the road, through a gate by a barn and follow the field boundary on your right to cross the next footbridge. Go diagonally left, over a stile and diagonally right across the field on a track to a stile and onto the road. Turn right and walk past High and then Low Burnfoot and where the track ends in front of a gate on your right go straight on – probably overgrown in the summer – to cross a footbridge. Turn right – ignoring minor paths to your right – to follow an obvious path that eventually joins the river South Tyne opposite Featherstone Castle, and goes past a weir, over swampy ground to a footbridge. Don’t cross the bridge but go straight on – slightly to the right, not the path up left, and then swing left beside a burn to cross another footbridge.

**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 of the bridal party were found dead in Pinkings Cleugh.

When you come to a swampy area where the path seems to disappear you will find the path to your left about ten feet above the river level. It’s a scramble to regain the path which has collapsed in places, but once attained it climbs gently up the bank to reach the road.

**3.** Turn right to go over Featherstone Bridge and across the road to your left to follow the footpath ‘Featherstone Rowfoot’ across two fields to climb up through Summerhouse Wood. At the exit from the wood go slightly left of straight on across three field boundaries following the direction of the signposts to descend to a stile beside a copse. Over the stile to descend by the copse to a stile on your right. Cross the stile and through the copse to the road. (The Wallace Arms is left here – ideal for a bite to eat or a drink.)



Copyright: Ordnance Survey (Explorer OL 43)

4. Turn right onto the South Tyne Trail to follow the old railway line south, over the road below Coanwood and over the viaduct (2km)

**Did you know:** The magnificent viaduct is over 100 feet high and was getting ruinous before a thorough repair and facelift in 1996, by the North Pennines Heritage Trust, restored its old strength but not its trains. It is a frequently ignored tribute to the great Victorian bridge builders. The Haltwhistle-Alston railway was opened in 1852 and the viaduct eighteen months later, but the line was never a commercial success. The lead mines in Alston were already in decline and it had to depend on lime, coal, agriculture and foundry products from Alston. The line remained open until 1976, when the Lambley-Coanwood road was opened, in order to guarantee access to Alston in the winter when the roads were frequently blocked by snow.

5. Descend the metal stairway on the south side to the footpath crossroads and turn left up the steps to a stile. Over the stile, up some steps and straight on – right will take you to the road through Lambley and the church – and up to pass a bungalow on your right and onto the road. Turn left to return to the parking area on the A689.

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.