



THE HALTWHISTLE RINGS



WALK 01

‘Beech and Burn’

Length: 4.5 mls/7.5 km

Grade: 2 Moderate

Ascent/descent: 778ft/237 m

OS explorer OL 43 Hadrian’s Wall

gpx file:

This walk passes through beautiful beech woods and open moorland. Although not steep, the climbs are quite long and the ground can be muddy, so a moderate level of fitness is required. Remember to look behind you occasionally as you gradually gain height, and you will be rewarded with some wonderful views. Stout footwear is recommended.

Start Point: By Car, Bus, Train.

For bus timetable: www.arrivabus.co.uk for AD122: www.gonortheast.co.uk

For train timetable: www.northernrailway.co.uk

Start in Haltwhistle Market Place.

Bus users: stop at the Market Place.

Train users: follow signs ‘Town Centre’ to the Market Place.

Car users: park at the supermarket accessed by turning into Aesica Road off Main St. – signposted ‘Swimming & Leisure Centre’ – and following the blue ‘P’ signs. Follow footpath opposite main entrance, signposted ‘Market Place’.

1. Pause by the large block of stone before going down the cobbled lane past the Black Bull public house.

Did You Know?

Most of the buildings surrounding the Market Place are at least 200 years old and many much older. This was the scene of fairs and hirings, hangings and bull baiting which may be how the ‘Black Bull’ acquired its name. In 1623 the landlord, John Ridley was tried by Church Courts for keeping his cattle in the churchyard. and using it as a stockyard. Or maybe the name derives from the Ridley family crest and coat of arms which features a rampant bull.

Turn left past the Black Bull down another cobbled lane, and then turn left into the churchyard by a small iron gate below the church.

Did you know?

The Holy Cross Parish Church dates from the early 13th century and has many interesting architectural features. It is said that in 1311, the vicar of the parish Robert de Pykewell, was taken hostage by Robert the Bruce in a cross-border raid, and a ransom demanded. The people of Haltwhistle responded by stating the demand would not be met, and they could keep the vicar!

Carry straight on along the footpath to the eastern end of the church yard, through the gate and along the path to the road. Turn left and almost immediately, cross the road and pass behind the Working Men's Club. Follow the path round eventually through a kissing gate, and then to cross a small stream. At the end of a low, stone wall look up to your left at a wooded mound known as Castle Hill.

Did you know?

One theory is that this mound gave Haltwhistle its name. 'Hal' was Old English for a height or hill. 'Twistle' comes from two Old English words, 'twise' (meaning the division into two) and 'wella' (a stream or brook). The combination of words suggests "a high tongue of land between tow streams where they join". The two streams in this case being the Haltwhistle Burn and the River South Tyne.
(visithaltwhistle.com)

Continue along the path eventually to pass a commercial building on the left, and then turn left along a cobbled lane to reach the road.

Did you know?

This area is known as Townfoot. A narrow-gauge tramway ran from Cawfields Quarry on Hadrian's Wall to bring whinstone down to Townfoot. From here it was loaded onto a standard gauge track to link up with the main Newcastle-Carlisle line.

If you look across the road, to the left of Bridge Cottage, you can see the remains of the stone abutments of Castle Bank Bridge. The bridge was removed in 1940. It was no longer being used and there was an increasing need to improve the amount of headroom for vehicles and for the wartime scrap metal drive.
(Cawfields Quarry and Railway, John Parker, 2008)

At the turn of the century, it was a regular venue for 'pitch and toss' – a suitable place where a lookout could be kept lest police should disturb their gambling!

2. Cross the road and turn right on the pavement to go down to the bridge over Haltwhistle Burn. Cross the road (Shield Hill). Follow the road downhill and almost immediately, turn left to walk up the drive of Briarwood House, signposted 'Oakey Knowe'. At the top of the drive pass through a metal field gate. Bear right uphill and after 22 yds/20 m bear hard right uphill to reach a step stile. Continue to an electricity pole with a stone wall beyond. Here turn left and walk down to a step stile, turn right and descend some steps with wooden rails on each side to a footbridge. ~~Once over this,~~ cross the field to a metal field gate opposite. Turn right down the farm track and over the bridge. Where the lane bends right, go straight ahead by the fence, and turn left down a grassy slope, through a wicket gate to a sleeper bridge over a burn. The path continues the other side following the course of the burn through a magnificent beech wood. It is well worth exploring, especially during the autumn.

3. Retrace your steps through the beech wood and turn right on the farm track. Walk up to the farm and just inside the gate bear sharp right. Keep the farm buildings on your left, cross the concreted yard and through several gates. Cross two fields keeping the stone wall on your left and then through a gate in the top left corner. Straight on in a third field to the far end and then turn left through a metal gate. Bear right around some sheds following the wall. Where the track divides, bear right keeping the wall on your right.

Continue up the track until you see a ladder stile to cross, pass behind an old ruined farmhouse and bear diagonally left up to another ladder stile. Cross that stile and you will see a pylon in front of you. Pass to the left of the pylon and continue up the field, keeping the wall on your left hand side, to a gate in the top left hand corner. Pass through the gate and follow the track past the crag on your right.

Did You Know?

There is a fine view of Hadrian's Wall to the north, and beyond it Wark Forest which is the southerly tip of Kielder Forest, the largest working forest in England. The straight line of the Military Road in the foreground is not a Roman road but was planned by General Wade in 1746 as a speedy marching route across the country.

4. Look for a ladder stile in the wall on the left and cut down the slope to go over it. Follow the path across rough grassland initially right but start veering gradually away from the wall so that you are eventually walking in a

westerly direction parallel to another wall on your right. Keep straight and cross a ladder stile to reach a road. (Shield Hill) (GR: NY714657)

5. Cross the road and turn left to reach a cottage on the right (Doors Cottage). Just beyond, go over a ladder stile on your right. (GR: NY 713656) Bear right to follow the path. Ahead you see the corner of a stone wall at the top of a slope. First make towards it then veer to the right. Contour the small hill on the right staying just below the summit, following the well-defined path down the slope until you meet another track. Turn left and take the stone stile, almost where the stone wall meets a fence. This is not easy to spot! (GR: NY709653) Once over the stile go down the field keeping near the wall and the trees on your right until you spot the ladder stile over the wall at the bottom, just below the farm. Cross the next field and go through the kissing gate in the bottom right corner and down the footpath and steps, locally known as the 'Cat Stairs', which lead onto the Haltwhistle Burn footpath. Turn left along the path, leading to a bridge near the old brickworks' chimney.

Did You Know?

The South Tyne Fireclay Brickworks was once a thriving local industry; one of many that existed up the Burn including two woollen mills, a coal mine, tile works, lime kilns and whinstone quarry on Hadrian's Wall.

Cross the bridge, then go left along the road that brings you to the bottom of Fair Hill, almost opposite the entrance to the car park.