



# THE HALTWHISTLE RINGS



## WALK 09

### ‘Coal Mines and Prison Camps!’

**Length:** 7.8 mls/12.5 km

**Grade:** 2 Moderate

**scent/descent:** 715ft/218 m

**OS explorer OL 43** Hadrian's Wall

**gpx file:**

A pleasant and varied walk beside the Hartley Burn from its source to the River South Tyne. It offers good views, changing vistas and wooded valleys. There are also features of the area's mining history.

**Start:** The Lay-by south east of Halton-Lea-Gate. ([NY 65755845](#))

**By car:** From Haltwhistle go west along the A69, and take the second turning left signposted 'Alston, Halton-Lea-Gate and Coanwood', passing Bellister Castle. Follow the road to a T-junction at Lambley then turn right onto the A689. Halton-Lea-Gate is approximately ½ ml/1 km. The Lay-by is on the right hand side just before the village. If you must park in the village, please park considerately and be aware that this is a fast, busy road.

#### ***Did you know?***

*The earliest railway in this area was Lord Carlisle's 19<sup>th</sup> century wagonway which carried coal from Hartleyburn Common. It linked the collieries of Lambley, Midgeholm and Roachburn with Brampton. Sections of the line were still in use in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and evidence of it can still be seen. George Stephenson's famous 'Rocket' spent its final working days here in Halton-Lea-Gate when it was used as a stationary haulage engine on the steep slope of the track. The line was eventually linked to the Alston-Haltwhistle line at Lambley.*

1. From the lay-by head to the edge of the village, keeping a sharp look out for a fingerpost, well hidden in a tall hedge, signposted "Clover Hill" and heading down a slope to your right. Walk down the path then the drive of a white house. Pass by the gable end of the white house on your right, over a footbridge and over two stiles. **BEWARE: THIS FIELD IS EXTREMELY MUDDY IN THE WINTER AND IN WET WEATHER.** See below for an alternative route. Continue up the field with the wall on your left until you reach a half gate entering Clover Hill Stud Farm track. Go straight across the track through another half gate into the farmyard. Keep to the left of the farmyard to a gate in the bottom left hand corner. Head straight down the field to a stile. **BEWARE: THIS IS BOGGY GROUND IN THE WINTER OR WET WEATHER.** Go straight ahead up to a stile onto the road. Turn left and continue on the road past Doubledykes Farm and down the hill to a bridge over the Hartley Burn.

#### **An alternative route from the lay-by to the bridge over the Hartley Burn:**

Take the track from the south eastern end of the layby through to the road, turn left and continue past Doubledykes Farm to the bridge over the Hartley Burn. **Note: this will add 0.8 miles if done on both the outward and inward journey.**

2. Turn left just before the bridge and take a stile signposted "Midgeholm". Go straight across the field to the footbridge. Turn left and continue along the bottom with the bank on your right. After about 470 yds/430 m pass between 2 trees (one of which is fallen) to cross a stile. Once over continue to a redbrick bunker, noticing the relics of the railway scattered about. Turn right and go up the hill through some trees heading diagonally left to a marker post at the top. Turn left, cross a stile then follow the fence up to a gate then diagonally left to Hill House Farm.

3. Follow the track through the gates of the farmyard and onto a cattle grid with a gate beyond it. At the cattle grid face right looking towards the house on the far side of the valley. Go straight down to the field to pass through a gate then diagonally across the field towards the bottom right hand corner. You will see the footbridge as you head down the slope. Descend to cross the footbridge over the Haining Burn, then a stile. Go diagonally left across a small paddock and cross another stile. Proceed up the hill, slightly diagonally left, aiming for the right of a group of conifers next to Haining House.

4. At the top of the field at the right hand side of the conifers, go through a gate and walk across the paddock to go through a gate to the right of the farmhouse and into the farmyard. Go through another gate to the left of a black corrugated iron barn and then diagonally right to a wooden gate in the corner of the field. Once through the gate, go diagonally right, passing the corner of a stone wall 22 yds/20 m to your right. **BEWARE:** The ground here can be boggy. Aim for a stone wall, above which you can see a signpost. Turn left on the road and immediately right onto the bridleway signposted, 'Burnfoot'. The path is initially like a ditch but then runs alongside a stone wall field boundary.

***Did you know?***

*There are fine views from here, the highest point of the walk.*

Cross two more field boundaries until meeting the Pennine Way at the third.

5. At the gate where you meet the Pennine Way go straight on, do not follow the Pennine Way. The remains of a field boundary are on your left, pass through some trees and remain on the ridge continuing for approximately 546 yds/500m. Featherstone Castle can be viewed to your left.

***Did you know?***

*The oldest part of Featherstone Castle still standing, is a tower built by Thomas de Featherstonehaugh in the 1320s. The most recent additions were built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Featherstonehaugh family retained the ownership of the castle until the 18<sup>th</sup> century with only one gap in direct descent, which occurred in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, with the death of Abigail Featherstonehaugh. Was this the same Abigail Featherstonehaugh who, along with her bridal party, haunts the castle each 17<sup>th</sup> January? The legend says that 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. The new bridegroom put up a good fight, however, and all were killed in the affray. At midnight, the sound of horses' hooves was 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 bridal party were found dead in Píkings Cleugh the following day.*

Go down the spur with the land sloping away to your right and left to proceed through a gate onto the road. Turn left and continue until the road turns sharp left. Go straight on the track past High Burnfoot on your right and past Low Burnfoot on your left. Where the track ends in front of a gate on your right, go straight on, off the track, to a footbridge. Don't cross the bridge but go straight on with the burn on your left to a photogenic gate. **BEWARE: this short section of path can be tricky if the river is high.** With the fence on your right, continue straight to a stile by the river. Continue beside the river, opposite the remains of the WWII POW camp on the other side.

**Did you know?**

*The remains of World War II Prisoner of War Camp – No. 18 are situated in Featherstone Park. It housed thousands of German officers during and after the Second World War. Captain Herbert Sulzbach was a German Jew and officer in the German Army who fled to Britain in the 1930s. He was an interpreter in the Camp and was awarded an OBE because he, “dedicated himself to making this camp a seedbed of British-German reconciliation.” Prisoners worked at local farms and many became highly thought of in the area. Some of them returned briefly to Germany only to return and continue working.*

Continue to a stile by a gate. Go into the wooded area, over a stream running through a large pipe and continue, with the fence, trees and river on your left. Cross another stile, go through another gate and across a meadow to a gate in a dry stone wall.

6. Lambley Farm is ahead of you and to your left is the road bridge over the river.

**Did you know?**

*The village of Lambley had its own Benedictine Nunnery, founded by Adam de Tindale and his wife Heloise in 1173. It was on the site of what is now Lambley Farm. It was destroyed by the Scots in 1296 during William Wallace’s biggest marauding venture into England, during which large parts of Northumberland were laid to waste. The convent was restored although there were only six nuns in residence when Henry VIII suppressed the place in 1538. Its bell still hangs above the 19<sup>th</sup> century church in Lambley village. What remained of the convent was sold to one of the Featherstonehaughs (of Featherstone Castle) in 1553 and it was converted into a farmhouse, using much of the remaining stone.*

Turn right onto the farm track, through a gate to ascend through Crow Wood. Go straight ahead through a gate at the top of the track and proceed on to the next gate. Continue straight on to descend past a sheep pen and up to the road. Turn right along the road and continue to the bridge over Hartley Burn. Turn left off the road opposite a barn (signposted) and walk diagonally right to the far corner of the field. Cross the stile and go up the bank to a marker post. You are now on the Pennine Way. Go diagonally left to reach a stile. The Pennine Way goes right here. Cross the stile, go over the footbridge and aim to pass a copse on your right before descending diagonally left down the hillside into a river-level meadow. Go through a gate near the point where the field boundary meets the river. Continue alongside the river until it bends left, then straight over the field to meet the road by the bridge at Byers Hall.

Retrace your outward route to return to Halton-Lea-Gate.