



THE HALTWHISTLE RINGS



WALK 12

‘A Walk on the Wild Side’

Length: 9.5 mls/15 km or 7 mls/11 km **Grade:** 2 Moderate

Ascent/descent: 941 ft/287 m

OS explorer OL 43 Hadrian's Wall and **OS explorer OL 31 North Pennines**

A varied 9.5 or 7-mile walk up the beautiful valley of the Knar from the old village of Slaggyford, and for the longer route, on to Kirkhaugh through pastures and the South Tyne Trail and return by the landscaped park of Barhaugh. Stout footwear is recommended.

Start Point: By Car, Train.

Start from: The car park next to Slaggyford Station. (Grid reference: [NY676523](#))

Car Users: 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. Turn left onto the A689 and proceed to Slaggyford which is 4 miles south of Lambley. In Slaggyford, turn right at the signpost to the South Tynedale Railway car park.

Rail Users: The South Tyne Railway operates a limited service. Slaggyford station is the last stop on the line which begins at Alston. Check timetables. (phone: 01434 382828; www.south-tynedale-railway.org.uk)

Did you know?

Slaggyford was anciently known as "Slagginford". It is suggested that the name means "muddy ford", but just where there was a muddy ford is confusing, as the bed of the South Tyne which runs through it is stone at this point. Another suggestion is that the ancient village was further north, where a ford crossed the Knar Burn on a bed of solidified clay known locally as "slag", hence the 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".

1. From the car park, go down the hill towards Slaggyford, turn left onto the Pennine Way signposted at Yew Tree Chapel ([GR: NY678524](#)). Follow the Pennine Way, keeping to the right and avoiding the various paths that link to the South Tyne Trail. Cross a small footbridge and follow the path down to the footbridge over the Knar Burn (photo A), beneath the railway arches. Once over the footbridge turn right through a five-bar gate, over a culvert emerging from a stone wall on your left and turn left to go through a tunnel under the railway line. Continue to follow the Pennine Way, which bends to the right and through a gate, to follow the main track across the field up to Merry Knowe.

Did you know?

One explanation for the name 'Merry Know' is "merry night" - a place where festivities were held. These may have been the "Kirn Suppers", when farmers celebrated the cutting of the corn and the "Guisers" dressed up, playing a variety of musical instruments and celebrated late! Indeed, "The Barns" is close to here, a place where corn was stored. The farmers needed mills to grind the corn, and there were mills at Burnstones, Lintley, Barhaugh and Kirkhaugh, though little remains of these today.

2. Through the five-bar gate and turn right following the sign beside a fence to a stone stile in the wall, to the right of a stone barn. This takes you through the back yards of the houses, over another stile in a wall, left by the garage and then immediately right over a stone stile in the wall. Continue north across the fields to a wooden gate in a stone wall, a ladder stile, a stone stile, a footbridge and then a gate to take you onto the road.

Leave the Pennine Way at this point, and turn left up the road. Take the first track, an old drove road that goes to the right by a copse. This is not signposted. (GR: NY671538) The track climbs steadily west for about 1km/ until you turn left down another drove road. (GR: NY661536) This is clear to see, though also unmarked; it follows the line of a stone wall and goes downhill towards The Hill. When you reach The Hill (a fine house where another track joins from your left), go straight ahead across a cattle grid, and through a gate. Turn left onto the road and follow it over a cattle grid to a bigger road.

3. Turn right and follow the road past Slate House. (GR: NY665530) Where the road bends right and its surface turns to gravel, go left through a gate onto the bridleway towards the Knar (signposted 'Knar 1'). You follow a track above the valley that reveals the real Knarsdale.

Follow the track across the fields diagonally right, towards a gate opening; immediately before it, bear right to reach a metal gate in the corner of the field. Go through and continue up the valley through fields and gates, following frequent waymarks. You reach a grassy track and pass a point where the footpath from Hanging Shaw joins from the right at a marker post, above The Knar Farm.

4. Follow the track down and through a gate between the farm (Knar Farm) and the barn. Turn left onto the road and follow it to the bridge over the Knar Burn. Follow the road over the bridge and up the hill, continuing along the more prominent road heading north east above the valley for about 1000 yds/914 m, passing Luzley and High Luzley Barn. Just past High Luzley Barn, and virtually opposite the house called Longdyke Head, take a footpath off to the right, signposted 'Low Thornhope'. You cross a stone stile, which is tricky as barbed wire runs along the top. Walk straight across the field to cross another stone stile, also quite a tricky one. Walk towards a gate in the stone wall to your right, but do not go through it. Instead join a track down to a gate. Go through the gate, where you will see a marker post, (GR: NY672518) and there turn immediately right towards another gate and another marker post. Go through the gate then diagonally left here, heading for the far corner of the field, go over a stile at the end of a grassy track. Turn left to cross a burn, and then diagonally right across rough pasture. Go over a stile in a stone wall (waymarked) to pass Intake Farm on your right. Do not follow the track into the farmyard but walk through the field to a stone stile by a group of trees.

5. Continue across the field ahead, over a ladder stile, past a barn in the field and follow the stone wall on your left to a gate at the far end of the field. Go diagonally left to the stone stile in the corner, just to the right of the railway bridge. Turn left onto the road and turn immediately right onto the main A689. ⚠ Follow the road – WITH CARE - for a very short distance until it bends sharply to the right. At the bend opposite Lintley Farm, take the track on the left towards Lintley Holt (signposted). Follow the track towards the railway bridge. A sign indicates a car park for users of the South Tyne Railway.

Did you know?

Lintley Farm derives its name from 'lint' or "flax", and "lee", meaning pasture. Hence, a field where flax was grown.

At this railway bridge, you can either return to Slaggyford (7 mls/11 km) or go on towards Kirkhaugh (9.5mls/15 km).

To return to Slaggyford, you have two options:

6A (i) Turn left to join the Pennine Way (signposted). Descend to cross a footbridge, turn right under the viaduct and through a gate. Ascend the bank ahead and follow the path round the edge of the field then through a gate. Descend to another gate and follow the track ahead, with the wooded slope on your left, to come to the bank of the river. Go through a gate and climb the steps to another gate. Descend to a meadow and follow the bank of the River South Tyne to a further gate. Use the bridge to your right to join the road then turn left. Almost immediately, turn right on to the main road, signposted 'Pennine Way, Slaggyford', to return to Slaggyford.

6A (ii) Turn right to join the South Tyne Trail. Climb up the embankment and, just before Lintley Halt platform, cross the railway to join the well-marked trail along the eastern side of the railway. Turn left and follow the track along to the railway car park at Slaggyford.

To continue to Kirkhaugh:

6B. To extend the walk via Kirkhaugh and Barhaugh, turn right to join the South Tyne Trail. Climb up the embankment, and just before Lintley Halt platform, cross the railway to join the well-marked trail along the eastern side of the railway. Turn right and walk in a southerly direction. When you reach the bridge at Kirkhaugh Station, turn left onto a path marked, 'Isaac's Tea Trail'. Follow the track through the field to the footbridge.

Did you know?

The previous Kirkhaugh Footbridge stood from 1953 but was destroyed by floods in 2018. Replacing the bridge was a great challenge for the engineering team. Roads and tracks had to be improved to allow vehicles and machinery to access the remote site. Conditions imposed by the Environment Agency to help safeguard the important river ecosystem limited the size of plant and equipment which could be used. It took four months to complete the project and was formally re-opened in October 2020.

Turn right to visit Kirkhaugh Church.

Did you know?

It is the only church in England dedicated to the "Paraclete of the Holy Spirit". It is modelled on a Bavarian Church, with a steep sloping roof to allow snow to slide off, and a very distinctive slender spire.

Retrace your steps then turn left. Climb the road, and after about 457 yds/418 m, turn left onto a footpath (signposted). Go through the open gate to avoid climbing over the stone stile. Follow the track through fields, and across three ladder stiles. After the third, go diagonally right to ascend to the road. Turn left onto the road and follow it past a disused coal mine on your right. (GR: NY698508) Cross the first stile on your left, to follow a signposted track across the fields. Head diagonally right, walking downwards through Barhaugh Park, passing Barhaugh Hall on your right. You eventually descend into a clearing with steps up to a footbridge over the Barhaugh Burn. (Grid Ref: NY691514) Cross the bridge and turn left onto the road. Follow it along the bank of the River South Tyne, past Williamston Farm on your right, until it joins the main A689. ⚠ Turn right and follow the road – WITH CARE - into Slaggyford.

Did you Know?

The railway line ran from Alston to Haltwhistle. The track closed in 1976 but re-opened as a volunteer run railway in 1983. The station buildings at Slaggyford were reconstructed by the South Tynedale Railway Preservation Society in 2017 and the station was formally reopened in 2018. If the trains are running, you can make use of the toilets and buffet car!