



THE HALTWHISTLE RINGS



WALK 20

‘The Moss, the Reivers and an Aqueduct’

Length: 8.5 mls/13.7 km

Grade: 3 Energetic

Ascent/descent: 696 ft/ 212 m

OS explorer OL 43 Hadrian's Wall

A walk north of Hadrian's Wall from Cawfields with the opportunity to view the Wall from the wide and lonely land on the 'Barbarian' side to the north and return along the Wall from Walltown Gap over Mucklebank Crags and Aesica Fort. Stout footwear is essential.

BEWARE: Crossing the stream at **GR: NY717676** can be tricky following periods of prolonged wet weather.

Start Point: By car, bus,

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

Start: National Park car park, Cawfields

Bus users: Stop at The Milecastle Inn. Follow road signs to Cawfields.

Car users: From Haltwhistle Centre take Main Street east. At the bottom of the hill turn left up the road for 1 ml/1km to reach the B6318, next to The Milecastle Inn. At the crossroads, go straight ahead (signposted Cawfields) and follow the road north to reach the National Park car park at Cawfields. A parking charge is payable. Facilities include information point, picnic area and toilets.

1. From the car park at Cawfields, take the path on the left-hand side of the quarry lake up to a kissing gate at Hole Gap. After the gate turn left to reach a farm road and turn right up it.

Did You Know?

Impressively sited on top of Whin Sill crags to your right, you can imagine the impact that Hadrian's Wall would have had on the Brigantes and other local tribes, upon and across whose territories the Wall ran.

Enter the farmyard of Cawfields Farm and exit through a metal five-bar-gate on your right. Turn left onto the farm track passing the farmhouse on your left. Continue along the track to go through double metal gates, and on towards East Cawfields farm. Leave the track to the farm just in front of the barn, keep the buildings on your left and go on through a five-bar gate into a field. Go diagonally down to cross a footbridge over Caw Burn and bear right up a bank towards the house ahead (Low Close a Burns). Turn left here to climb gently up the slope following the line of a row of trees and an old field boundary to cross a ladder stile with High Close a Burns on your right. Keep the fence line on your right and work your way up the slope to a marker at the left edge of the

trees you see in front of you. (GR: NY719679) At the marker post (and facing the post), turn about 120° left and you should see a marker post on the mound ahead of you. Walk to this marker (GR: NY719678) and then go downhill to cross a ladder stile over a stone wall ahead. (GR: NY717677)

Did You Know?

By Cleughfoot, you can still see the line of the Roman Aqueduct, a channel used to supply fresh water to the Fort at Aesica. Given that 500 infantrymen were stationed here, an ingenious feat of engineering ensured an adequate water supply. It ran from 'Fond Tom's Pool' on the Caw Burn to the east, only three miles from the fort as the crow flies, but it snakes around following the contours for six miles, creating sufficient gradient for a steady flow.

2. Turn left along the wall. Cross the stream. BEWARE: THE STREAM CAN BE TRICKY TO NEGOTIATE FOLLOWING PERIODS OF HEAVY RAIN. Go over the ladder stile beside a gate and diagonally right to go through a way-marked gate between the farm buildings. Cross a concreted area, keep Cleughfoot farmhouse on your right, and follow the farm track down to the road. PLEASE BE CONSIDERATE WHEN USING THE FARM TRACK. USE IT AS A THROUGH ROUTE ONLY AND DO NOT STRAY ON TO THE GRASS VERGES. Turn right onto the road up the hill, over a cattle grid and on over the next cattle grid.

Did You Know?

This is the land of the Border Reivers, kinships of thieves and rustlers who terrorised the region for 200 years in the middle ages. A lawless society, rustling cattle and escaping on surefooted ponies known as hobbies, that could pick their way safely through the treacherous Mosses, had become a way of life. Family groups banded together, and still today there are almost 100 names, from Aynslie to Young, which are recognized as Reiver families. Their legacy remains in border ballads and words such as 'bereaved' and 'blackmail'.

3. Turn left here, signposted Low Tipalt, on open rough moorland. (GR: NY706682) Go through the five-bar-gate and follow the line of the wall on your left. Come to another five-bar-gate, go through and keep ahead in the same direction as the wall. Cross a track and pick up a faint track ahead across the moorland, to reach a prominent post with a way mark. (GR: NY697679) Go straight on here, gently ascending across the Moss. Eventually, Low Tipalt Farm can be seen ahead to the right. Look for a marker post to your right and when you reach it, go diagonally right to a five-bar-gate. (GR: NY691679) If you miss the marker post, turn right when you reach a fence and follow until you come to the five-bar-gate.

Did You Know?

It is said that the women served their menfolk a spur on a plate instead of dinner when it was time to go reiving. The message was clear - go or go hungry. Riding with a flaming torch of peat on the tip of a lance, was known as a 'hot trod', the signal for the group to get ready for action. However, the Reivers were not invincible. During the planting of Kielder forest to the north, bones of both men and their 'hobbies' have been found; testament to the fate befalling the Reiver who was caught 'red-handed', which again is a phrase still in use today.

4. After the gate turn right and then left along a farm track. Follow this until it joins a tarmacked lane which takes you past Low Tipalt Farm on your right. The road bends left and goes uphill, across a cattle grid and continues until you come to a signpost on your left to Hadrian's Wall. (GR: NY675673) Turn left to cross a footbridge, up the slope and over the ladder stile on Collar Heugh. Go diagonally left, after avoiding the gully on your left, up and over the rough pasture, aiming for the lowest dip in the skyline ahead where the tops of trees are visible. Descend to go through a wall opening with an unsecured gate. (GR: NY679668) Note: it is often very wet and muddy here. Follow a rough farm track onto Walltown Gap and King Arthur's Well where you will see flag stones leading to a ladder stile over a stone wall on your left. (GR: NY680666)

Did You Know?

Arthur, a legendary Celtic king is said to have fought in battle against the invading Anglo-Saxons in the vicinity of Hadrian's Wall – hence the well.

5. From here, the path turns to go steeply uphill on a pitched path and follows the National Trails along the crest of the ridge which is well marked. There are several descents and ascents before reaching a ladder stile at the tree plantation at Cockmount Hill. (GR: NY695669) Continue down past the farmhouse on the left, through Aesica Roman Fort to a ladder stile in the wall just beyond Great Chesters Farm. (GR: NY704668)

Did You Know?

Standing at 690 ft/210m, Aesica is the name the Romans gave to the fort at Great Chesters. It was built around 132 AD and was home to the 2nd Cohort of Asturians from north-west Spain. Like other forts along Hadrian's Wall, it had a civilian settlement outside its walls. Not much remains, save parts of the walls and the underground strong room vault in the centre. The remarkable thing is its aqueduct, used to supply water to the fort and bathhouse, which was described earlier.

Continue eastwards with the line of the Wall on your left, crossing several ladder stiles before descending past Burnhead Cottage, to cross a stone step stile on your left to reach the road. Turn right over the bridge and then left back to the car park.