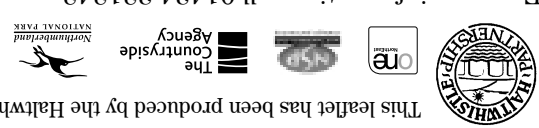




For further information on things to do in and around Hadrian's Wall Country call 01434 322002
 Or visit www.hadrianwall.org or www.hadrians-wall.org
 In planning your transport, please refer to:
 Journey Planner – www.planner.org.uk
 Traveline – www.traveline.org.uk
 Walks designed by Mike Swan (www.walkinghadrianswall.com)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

Walk 06
 Haltwhistle Parish
 2.5 miles
 4 km
 Easy


The Haltwhistle Rings

22 Walks in the Historic Parishes of Haltwhistle, Northumberland

An easy stroll around the sights of this historic border town for those without walking boots and a preference for tarmac. A leaflet entitled 'Haltwhistle's Reiver Trail' from the Tourist Information Centre will enhance much of the information accompanying this walk.

O.S. Explorer OL 43 Haltwhistle Town

'Bastles and Burn, Railways and Reivers'

Start Point: By Car, Bus, Train.
 Start in Haltwhistle. Bus users start at the Market Square. Train users follow signs 'Town Centre' to start at the Market Square. Car users start and park at the supermarket accessed by turning into Aesica Road off Main Street – signposted 'Swimming & Leisure Centre' – and following the blue 'P' signs.

1. From the Market Square, cross the main street to go under the archway between two 'bastle' houses.

Did you know: An Act of Parliament in 1555 made it compulsory for everyone living in the twenty mile Border Zone to build their own defences against Reivers and cross-border raiders, although some already had as this was a rough and lawless place. There were no government grants for this so they were pretty basic structures; all were oblong with the gable ends shorter than the side walls, all had just two chambers – store room downstairs, living room above – and all had a high pitched roof. These structures were called 'bastles' and in all cases the walls were more than three feet thick and contained a fair bit of stone taken from Hadrian's Wall. The ground floor door was in the centre of one of the gable ends and only 27 inches wide – so that only one man could enter at a time. The upstairs door was in one of the long sides and reached by a removable ladder. There were just two slits for ventilation in the ground floor and a trap door into the living quarters above for the person who barred and bolted the ground floor entrance. In the living room were two small barred windows, and provision was made for a fire.

2. Walk through to the car park admiring the stone-built houses to your right. You come to the car park in front of the supermarket.

Did you know: The sheltered accommodation on the left is called "The Mart", commemorating the fact that this whole area was the site of the old cattle market. Only late in the 20th century did a monthly market cease to be held here.

Walk through and turn left when you come to the road and pass Willia Road to your right, which leads to Haltwhistle Burn.

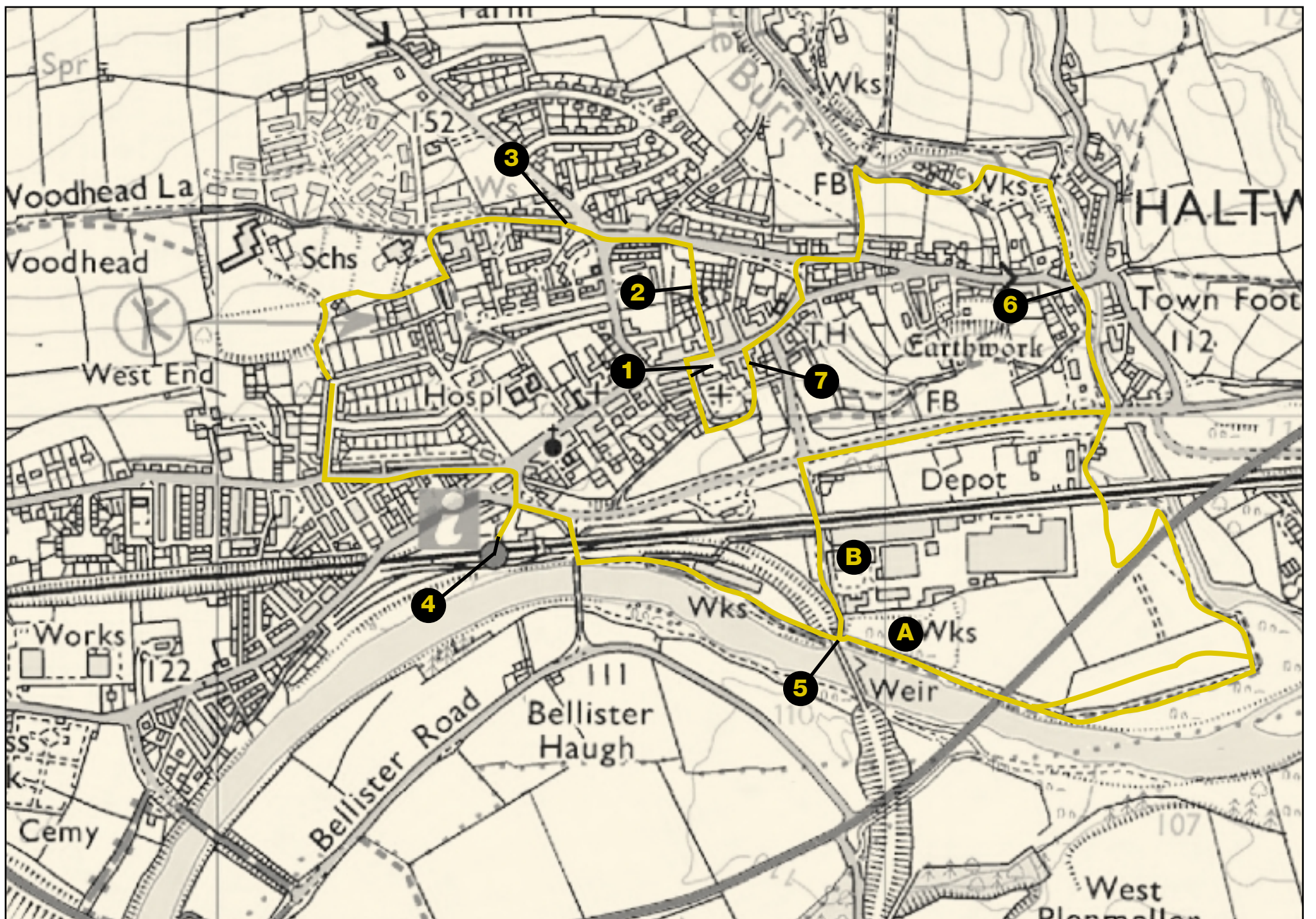
On the corner is the 19th century Church School now converted into four private houses. Do not go along Willia Road but continue straight on to where the road bends round to the right and Aesica Road goes off to the left. Continue round the bend and on your right you will see a small low stone building with its windows bricked up. This is another former school, the very first one in Haltwhistle. In 1719 Lady Dorothy Capel, Baroness Dowager of Tewkesbury, gave an endowment of £37.10 per annum to set up this school.

3. Take the road on the left opposite this – Woodhead Lane. You pass the back of Greenholme Aged Person's Home, then turn left down a very narrow passage between the home and Haltwhistle First School. At the end turn right and pass the Sports Hall to walk along a footpath with the school playing fields to your right and the open-air swimming pools to your left. This leads on to the drive of Haltwhistle Middle School. Turn left, walk down out of the school grounds and continue straight down to a T-junction opposite a tall, stone building which is a former mill transformed into flats. Turn left and at the next T-junction turn right and walk down to the Railway Station.

Did you know: The railway line between Newcastle and Carlisle was one of the earliest main lines in the world dating from the 1830s. It retains many features dating from that time including the stationmaster's house, now a private residence, the water tower, the signal box and the booking office. The latter is now the Tourist Information Office and is well worth a visit. Once inside you will find that the old ticket office has been preserved and by pressing a button you can listen to the recorded history of the station. The signal box is unusual in design because it had track on both sides of it. The line to Alston went on the south side of the box.

4. On leaving you can either go over the old railway bridge then down the ramp to the left, or retrace your steps to the road, turn right then right again under the railway bridge to reach the South Tyne River. The bridge in front of you was built in 1875 by George Gordon Page the son of Thomas Page who built Westminster Bridge in London. It was the first road bridge across the South Tyne at Haltwhistle and had major refurbishment in 2003 by Northumberland County Council. Turn left and walk along the bank of the river passing Kilfrost Factory. You come to the Alston Arches viaduct.

Did you know: The Alston Arches viaduct was built to carry the branch line from Haltwhistle to Alston which was opened in 1852 and closed in 1976. The South Tyne flows under the arches then down a weir where salmon can be seen leaping in the autumn returning to the 'Head Waters' where they were spawned. The hen fish digs a depression in the gravel, lays her eggs and the cock fish moves alongside her and fertilizes them with his milt. She then covers them with gravel. There they remain until Spring when they hatch as parr. The survivors stay in the river for two to three years before returning to sea as smolts. After several winters at sea they make the long hazardous journey back to their native river. The land and buildings to the left were the property of the former Crown Paint Works, manufacturers of paint and varnish exported all over the world. As early as 1850 varnish works had been established in Haltwhistle by Smith and Walton. Akzo Nobel took over the factory from Crown late in the 20th century and closed it in 2002. At the time of going to print the future of this site is, as yet, unknown.



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5. At the arches you have two options. The first is slightly longer in distance and goes over stony tracks and grassland which can be muddy after rain.

Option A: – Signposted ‘Townfoot 1 mile’.

Continue along the bank of the South Tyne. After going under the road bridge and through a kissing gate you can either go along the wide grassy track alongside the football pitch or take the narrow footpath closer to the Tyne. This might be the more interesting path as you might spot a heron or ducks on the Tyne and in the summer, oyster catchers. When you reach the confluence of Haltwhistle Burn and the South Tyne turn left to follow the Burn upstream to a wide track which goes under the road bridge then winds first left, then right under the Railway Bridge and eventually comes out on the Avenue St. Méen. Cross the avenue and take the footpath signposted ‘Townfoot 1/4 m’. The buildings on the other side of the burn used to house a brewery and the tall building was another mill. With Haltwhistle Burn on your right continue until you come to one of the three remaining cobbled streets in the town, which leads to Townfoot at the bottom of the Castle Hill.

Option B: – Signposted ‘Town Centre 1/2 m’. Turn left along the road next to the old paint works, go under the railway bridge and on to the Avenue St. Méen. Cross this road and turn right along the pavement. Straight after the diesel station on the left take the footpath signposted ‘Townfoot 1/4 m’. With Haltwhistle Burn on your right you come to one of the three remaining cobbled streets in the town, which leads to Townfoot at the bottom of the Castle Hill.

Did you know: Castle Hill was once the location of an early tower – believed to have dated from 1415 – unfortunately it became unsafe and was demolished in 1963 – and an even earlier Celtic earthworks. One theory is that this mound gave Haltwhistle its name. In Old English, ‘twisla’ meant the meeting of a tributary with a main river, that is Haltwhistle Burn and the South Tyne, and the land within the fork, and ‘Halt’ was Norman French for a height or hill. Close by on the hillside you can still see the remains of the stone abutments of the railway bridge, which used to go over the road. This was the line built to bring stone down from the quarry at Cawfields by the Roman Wall and coal from the mines up the Burn. 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.

6. Do not go up the hill but cross the road to take the narrow road with the Burn to the right. The lane leads to a row of miners cottages built in approximately 1830 with very attractive gardens sloping down to the Burn. Continue along the track, pass two houses on your right, ignoring a road off to the left.

The next house on the right used to be the Manager’s house and is all that remains of the Gas Works. The Haltwhistle Gas Light Company was set up in 1856 to “Light the flourishing and increasing Town of Haltwhistle”. Continue in the same direction but now on a narrow footpath. When you reach the footbridge turn left up the steps, through a kissing gate, and straight on up the path to another kissing gate. This leads on to Fair Hill. Turn right to pass a housing development built on the site of the old Haltwhistle District School, demolished in 1990 – a stone slab in the wall commemorates the year the

school was opened. When you have read this cross the road to go down a narrow lane just past the last of the old stone houses opposite. This is another of the old cobbled streets and is all that remains of the pig market. Walk down to the Main Street and turn right. On your right is Town Hall Crescent, so named because the last building on the right was once the Town Hall. Ahead of you see the Centre of Britain Hotel; if you turn down the lane on the right you can see the old entrance to the hotel under an archway. Previously called the Red Lion, it was mentioned in surveys in 1415 and 1541. Back in the main street observe the old Pele Tower which forms part of the hotel to the right of the entrance.

7. Refer to the Reiver Trail leaflet to identify two other bastle houses on the other side of the street. Go under the archway next to the far one just before the Manor House Hotel. Continue down past the cottages on the left and turn right, round the house at the bottom. Follow this footpath into the churchyard and past the door of this 13th Century church open to the public on Thursday and Saturday afternoons.

Did you know: The Holy Cross Parish Church dates from the early 13th century and has several historic connections and many interesting architectural features, but a favourite anecdote relates to its incumbent vicar of border warfare days. It is said that the vicar of the parish Robert de Pykwell in 1311 was taken hostage by cross-border raiders and a ransom demanded. The good people of Haltwhistle responded by stating the demands would not be met, and that they could therefore keep the vicar! The inside is worth a visit if the door happens to be open. The stained glass windows in the east gable are by William Morris a pupil of Burne Jones. If you are not in too much of a hurry, perusal of some of the gravestones to either side of the path is an interesting insight into times gone by.

Leave the churchyard and turn right up another cobbled lane leading back to the Market Square.

Did you know: This is the ancient heart of the town, with the 14th century Centre of Britain Hotel to the east, the 13th century Holy Cross Church to the south and the Market Place itself which has been the venue of fairs, hiring, bull-baiting and hanging in years gone by. It was also the scene of a major raid in 1598 by the notorious ‘Reiver’ gang – the Armstrongs of Liddesdale. They entered Haltwhistle in daylight, burnt houses, killed or captured many residents and drove off cattle. As they were about to leave one Alec Ridley, hiding in one of the houses, fired his long bow and killed Wat Armstrong with one shot through the eye! The Armstrongs were not very happy about this and vowed to return for vengeance. Their threat was taken seriously by the authorities and led ultimately to the killing, capture and end of the gang forever. (Did one of their descendants end up on the moon?)

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.