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WALKS AROUND HAYDON BRIDGE

Farms, Romans and Countryside

Choose between a full day's walk of 13 miles, taking in Northumberland National Park and Hadrian's Wall, or a shorter 7 mile loop. Both take advantage of the beautiful countryside, with fine views of the wall to the north and the Tyne and Allen valleys to the south.

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Walk Summary

Full Hadrian's Wall circuit:
13 miles, 720 ft of ascent, max height 919 ft

Shorter loop, taking in Chesterwood and Haresby:
7 miles , 604 ft of ascent, max height 732 ft

Introduction

This leaflet offers two walks in one, exploring the hills and moors to the north of Haydon Bridge. The longer loop is a challenging 13-mile walk leading from the Tyne Valley to Hadrian's Wall, while the shorter walk offers the same expansive views for a little less effort.

Both lead through beautiful and little-known countryside rich in the area's agricultural and Roman heritage. The Bastle houses of Chesterwood hamlet and the Roman fort of Housesteads illustrate the need for protection in earlier, more turbulent times, while the vistas towards the Cheviot Hills and North Pennines show why this is now such great walking country.

If you liked this walk

Why not explore further by trying another walk from the village? Look out for other leaflets in this series taking you through more of our beautiful countryside. and make sure not to miss the John Martin Trail, making its way through the landscapes which inspired the famous Victorian artist.

The Haresby Road

Look out for...

A The former congregational chapel to your right replaced the house on the left opposite as a place of worship when the latter became too small for the purpose. It then served as the village's first bank.

B The remains of about 5 Bastle houses can be identified in the houses and barns in the settlement of Chesterwood. Bastle Houses were small fortified agricultural dwellings designed to keep family and livestock secure from border raids.

The building with the external stone stairs was used as a golf clubhouse early in the last century; remains of the course itself can be seen among the gorse in the fields to the right.

The golf clubhouse, Chesterwood

C Spoil heaps uphill to the right mark the site of the Honeycrook lead mine. A well-preserved limekiln stands at the top of the field below these.

D Further along the road a footpath leads to 'Tony's Patch' Nature Reserve, named in memory of Tony Clissold, a local naturalist.

Bluebells in Tony's Patch

E After crossing the road, look for a good view of Housesteads Roman Fort ahead, and the glacial lake of Grindon Lough to your left.

F Signs of Roman occupation are now all around. Look back down the hill to see the ditch and mounds of the Vallum, the Wall's southern defence.

The wall you are walking along follows the line of Hadrian's Wall but is not necessarily all Roman. For much of its length Roman stones have been reused to form a very uniform dry stone wall, but genuine stretches of Hadrian's Wall are distinguished by their much greater breadth.

Housesteads is the best preserved of the Wall forts and is well worth a visit if time allows.

© National Trust

The granary at Housesteads Fort

G On no account let your steps wander to the left when crossing this fell. Muckle Moss is a valley mire composed of deep sphagnum bogs and, as legend would have it, capable of swallowing a WW2 tank.

H Before going through the gate, take a slight diversion to the next stone wall to the west. The ditch and earthwork you see is the mysterious Black Dyke, which can be seen in various parts of the county between Cheviots and Pennines. Its exact date and purpose of construction are uncertain.

I In the hollow look to the right, towards the farm 'High Meadow'. The centre building is a barn with a steeply pitched turf thatched roof. This form of construction using local materials was once common.

J Admire the views from the top of the hill. The river Allen joins the Tyne below to the southwest.

K At the end of the lane note the stone plinth on the left verge built for milk churns.

L The farm through which the route passes was built for the school to offer an agricultural curriculum for rural children, and includes a dairy and classrooms.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Haydon Bridge has been an important crossing of the South Tyne since the 14th century, and the village grew around the river as the turmoil of the Border wars receded. Only Haydon Old Church, above the village to the north remains as a reminder of the ancient settlement of Haydon which it replaced, while the lawless times of the Border Reivers are recalled by the imposing bulk of Langley Castle to the south.

In more peaceful times Haydon Bridge has grown through agriculture and industries associated with coal and lead mining. Its importance as a transport link saw the arrival of the railway in 1838, and increasing road traffic necessitated a new bridge in 1970 and a bypass in 2009. Today it is a peaceful place to visit with beautiful surrounding countryside that has inspired poet Philip Larkin and renowned local artist John Martin.

NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK

On the way to Hadrian's Wall from Haydon Bridge you will cross the southern edge of Northumberland National Park, which protects and helps manage much of the distinctive Northumberland countryside which surrounds you. The Park was designated in 1955, and covers in total 405 square miles of some of the most remote countryside in England; only around 2,000 people live within its boundaries. Add to this a rich heritage dating from Roman times and earlier, and unique environmental and landscape features, and you may rightly think that it is worthy of further investigation. On a clear day, you should be able to see some 50 miles to the Park's northern edge and highest point, the summit of The Cheviot at 815m.

Sycamore Gap, Hadrian's Wall

©NNPA

HAYDON BRIDGE

The Bridge

This Community Library, Visitor Information Centre and Internet Café is on Church Street next to the railway station. As well as providing library services and a focal point for the local community, it offers visitors friendly advice and a range of leaflets and information on local tourist attractions and facilities.

For more information:

www.haydon-bridge.co.uk

www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk

Getting to Haydon Bridge

By road
A69 from A1 at Newcastle 28 miles
A69 from M6 at Carlisle 31 miles

By rail Newcastle – Carlisle service www.northernrail.org

By bus 685 service Newcastle – Carlisle www.arrivabus.co.uk

By air from Newcastle Airport

Northumberland National Park Authority

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas.

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↓ ⑤ Turn left and then cross a stile on the right signposted Moss Kennels/Hadrian's Wall, just past a cottage. Bear left across the field, initially following the line of electricity poles, then veer right towards a lime kiln and cross a stile. Follow the waymark here diagonally left towards a ladder stile.

↓ ⑥ Cross the stile and head across the field to a barn which is skirted by means of three stiles. Head uphill, with the fence on your left to meet a wall with a ladder stile. Cross the stile, then turn right, climbing uphill to a gate leading into woodland. Go through this and another gate straight ahead, then descend, going left behind an agricultural building to enter the farmyard. Proceed straight out of the farmyard, to a main road.

↓ ⑦ Cross the road with care, cross a stile and follow the track to a second stile. Cross this and climb steeply to join the Hadrian's Wall Path. Turn left and follow this through a wood into a dip with a roman gateway.


Houseteads Fort

↓ ⑧ Bear left to walk round the bottom side of the fort. Head towards the farm buildings and take the farm road just below these until you come back to the main road.

↓ ⑨ Cross the road with care, go over the stile and follow the path over the hill. At the top bear right following waymarks to pass through two gates to the left of the farm and onto a track leading to another road.

Turn left on this road and follow it to the next farm, taking care of traffic. At the farm look right to find a stile set at the back of a parking area opposite the farm buildings, and cross it onto the fell.

•••••••••• Walk route

○○○○○○○○○○ Hadrian's Wall loop

Northumberland National Park boundary

A Feature of interest (see other side of leaflet)

→ ⑩ The terrain here is rough and overgrown, and wayfinding can be difficult, but a path can be found leading along the first ridge and down the western edge of the fell. From the stile follow the signpost across tussocky ground with no visible path to the first ridge, where you meet a faint path. Follow this to the right along the ridge, as it improves in definition and winds its way through heather. Coming to a field wall on your right, look for a crossing of paths about 50m along, and turn left to follow this diagonally downhill to within about 50m of the wall which bounds the road where a path joins from the right. Continue downhill and around the end of the crag, then through rocks to a gate and stile followed by a gate in the bottom corner of the field leading onto Haresby lane at its junction with the road.

Turn left and follow the lane for about a mile until it meets a coniferous plantation on your left where you rejoin the route of the shorter walk.


Looking towards Haresby Road from Muckle Moss

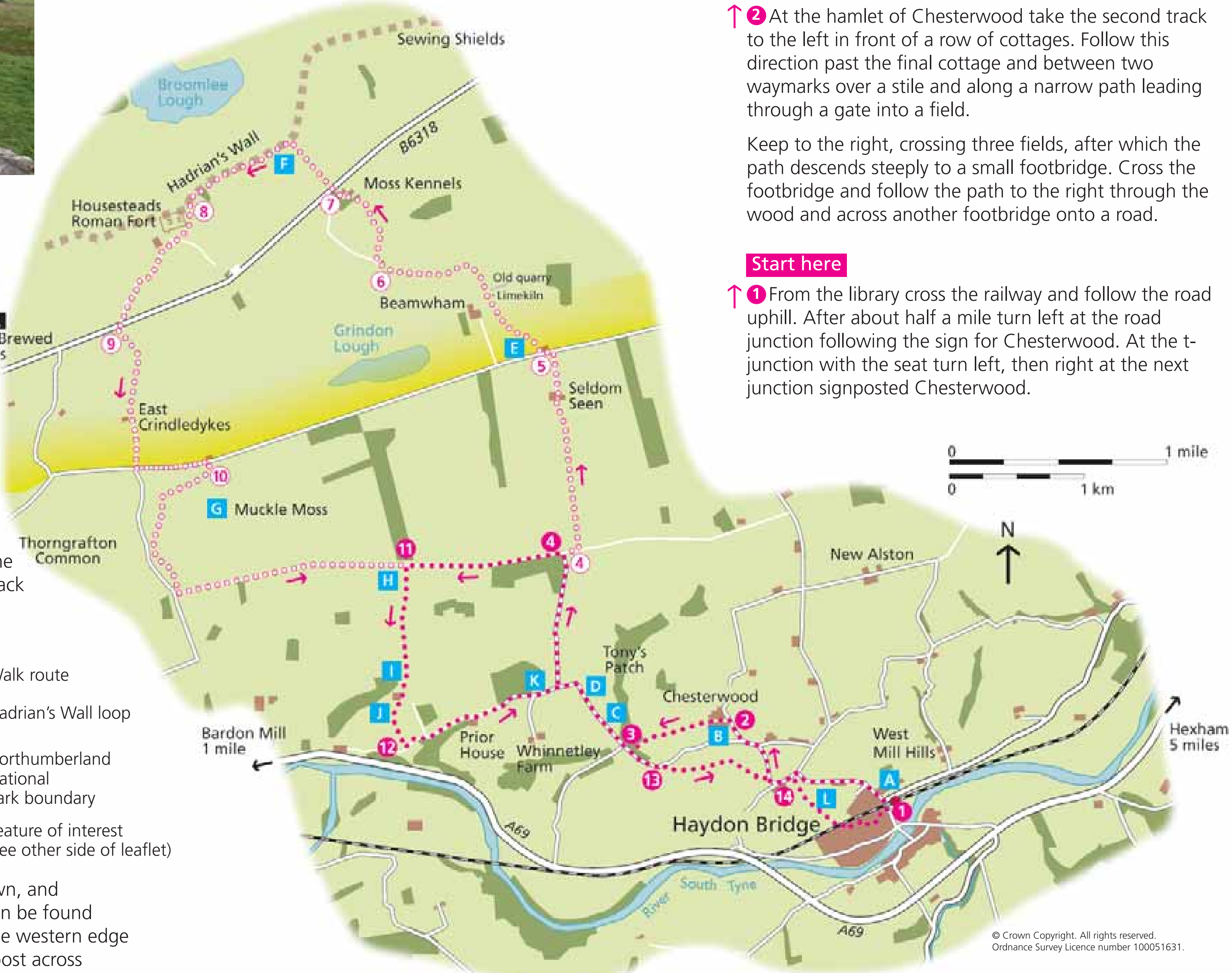
For the full Hadrian's Wall circuit…

← ④ Turn right along the lane to a footpath sign on the left for 'Sandyford/Hadrian's Wall'. Go through the gate to follow a grassy track across the fell until you reach a farm. Go through the farmyard and straight on up the track to a road.

For the shorter route…

↓ ④ Turn left and follow the track to a conifer plantation on the right hand side. Follow the instructions from ⑪ below.


The path north from Haresby Road (Hadrian's Wall route)



→ ⑪ Opposite the plantation is a waymarked gate. Go through the gate and follow the waymark diagonally downhill to the gate in the bottom-right corner of the field. Some diversion from a straight course may be necessary to avoid wet ground at times.

Go through this gate and follow the footpath line straight down the field to the next gate. At this gate follow the track across a ford and then bear slightly right uphill to pass a cottage on your right. Follow this line downhill to a gate just on from an electricity pole.

Go through the gate and follow the hedge straight downhill to meet a track. Turn left through a gate.


Below Peelwell


Road to Standalone

↖ ③ Turn right onto the road and go straight on across the bridge and passing the cottage on your left ('Standalone'). Follow this road round a left hand bend (a stile on the right here offers an optional diversion to Tony's Patch nature reserve).

At a road junction signposted Haresby Road turn right and follow the road uphill to a T-junction.

↑ ② At the hamlet of Chesterwood take the second track to the left in front of a row of cottages. Follow this direction past the final cottage and between two waymarks over a stile and along a narrow path leading through a gate into a field.

Keep to the right, crossing three fields, after which the path descends steeply to a small footbridge. Cross the footbridge and follow the path to the right through the wood and across another footbridge onto a road.

Start here

↑ ① From the library cross the railway and follow the road uphill. After about half a mile turn left at the road junction following the sign for Chesterwood. At the t-junction with the seat turn left, then right at the next junction signposted Chesterwood.

↓ ⑫ Follow the track to another gate and then keep straight on on the grassy track at the bottom of the field. The next gate takes you onto a muddy track, to a road, with Prior House on the right. Follow the road past a turning to Whinnetley until you meet the junction for Haresby. Retrace your steps to Standalone and keep to the road up the hill. At the top bear left and look for the stile on the right signposted Peelwell.

↓ ⑬ Cross the stile and walk diagonally up the field then left along the hedge and through two gates to a stile on the right. Cross this and descend diagonally to a gate by an electricity pole. Cross the next field to the road and turn right down the hill.

↓ ⑭ After some houses go over a small stone squeeze stile in a wall to the right and follow the path through a wood. Descend through a field, cross a stile in the bottom-left corner and follow a narrow path to a track. Pass some farm buildings. Where the main farm track turns sharp left towards the school, go down an almost hidden path into some trees on the right. Follow this path down to the railway line and cross with care into a housing estate.

Turn left here and follow the path turning left twice to return to the railway crossing.