

Haltwhistle Walking Festival – Spring 2017 – April 22nd to May 1st

Please note that minor changes to the programme often occur in the weeks leading up to the festival. Check the website for any changes to your walks, in particular meeting places and starting times.

Saturday 22nd April

1. High Cup Nick

This walk is one of the most spectacular in The Pennines and on a good day the views are amazing. The walk commences in the village of Dufton in the Eden Valley and follows a very diverse route. We walk through a delightful gorge, past old mining works, across farmland, fells and grouse moors. The highlight of the walk is the sight of the amazing High Cup Nick which is said to be the best glaciated valley in England. The valley is a deep chasm of dramatic geological formation which is part of the Whin Sill and is located in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This walk is a 'must do' on any walker's wish list.

Due to the anticipated demand for this walk there will be 2 walking groups, each traversing the route in opposite directions.

Meet at: Haltwhistle Market Place, GR NY 707640, at 08:20am. Coach leaves for Dufton at 08:30am.

Return coach from Dufton.

Distance: 12 miles

Grade: Strenuous plus

Ascent/Descent: 1940ft

Walk Fee: £15

Bring: packed lunch

Leaders: Harry Kay & Geoff Chrisp

2. Lake, Linn and Burn

From Haltwhistle there is a steady climb up the road to the hamlet of Plenmeller. We walk through pretty woodland to a delightful Alpine-like lake. The walk then takes us over moorland, leading to the lovely Lynnshield waterfall on the Park Burn. We continue on the moorland, then cross the South Tyne trail and take the riverside route back to Haltwhistle.

Meet at: Haltwhistle Market Place, GR NY 707640, at 10:00am

Distance: 7 miles

Grade: Moderate

Ascent/Descent: 516ft

Walk Fee: £7

Bring: packed lunch

Leader:

Sunday 23rd April

3. Kielder Dam to Bellingham

What could be a more spectacular start to a walk than crossing the amazing dam over Kielder Water, which is the largest artificial lake in the UK? The walk follows a varied route through the beautiful North Tyne Valley heading eastward towards the village of Bellingham. We walk through rarely visited parts of the Tasset Parish, pass a Buddhist Retreat Centre, and walk over fells and along a disused railway. We also follow a section of the infamous Pennine Way before our final descent into Bellingham takes us past the spectacular Hareshaw Linn waterfall. Much of this walk is in pastures new for the festival and offers us new challenges and opportunities within the beautiful North Tyne countryside.

Meet at: Haltwhistle Market Place, GR NY 707640 at 08:20am. Coach to Kielder Dam leaves at 08:30am. Return coach from Bellingham to Haltwhistle.

Distance: 15 miles

Grade: Strenuous

Ascent: 1679ft **Descent:** 1914ft

Walk Fee: £13

Bring: packed lunch

Leader:

4. A walk in the National Park (Stonehaugh Circular)

Our walk through the Northumberland National Park starts from the small village of Stonehaugh located on the outskirts of Wark Forest. Stonehaugh was purpose built in 1957 to house forestry workers. The route runs between Shields Pikes and the forest, before joining the Pennine Way National Trail at Ladyhill. We head north through woods and across fells and along the ridge of Ground Rigg. After crossing the delightful Warks Burn, we walk past the remains of an old peel tower and other settlements, before turning south-westerly through forest paths to rejoin the burn higher up the valley and finally back into Stonehaugh.

Meet at: Warksburn Forestry Commission Car Park, Stonehaugh village (free), GR NY 789761, at 10:00am

Grade: Moderate

Distance: 7 miles

Ascent/Descent: 727ft

Walk Fee: £7

Bring: packed lunch

Leader:

5. Can you Believe It?

Did you know that many of our festival volunteers have hidden talents? This walk gives you the opportunity to be learn more. The route is in the lovely countryside near to Slaley Village. There are regular stops to be entertained and hear amazing tales. Come along to find out more. Early booking is recommended for what promises to be a most unusual walk.

Meet at: Slaley Village, GR NY 973577, park in the Main Street, NE47 0AA, at 10:00am

Grade: Moderate

Distance: 7.5miles **Ascent/Descent:** 838ft

Walk Fee: £7 **Bring:** Packed lunch

Leader: Kevin Jones

Monday 24th April

6. West Hall Circular

The area to the north of West Hall is little walked despite its beauty. On a good day, there are fine views to the west, looking across to the Lake District fells. We walk north on the edge of Askerton Castle farmland, gradually gaining height to Rinion Hills. The climb is worth the effort. We pass places with fascinating names, like Torties, Spadeadam, Dunblar Rigg, Highstead Ash and Desoglin on our circular route. This is an area you will want to walk in again.

Meet at: North of West Hall Village, GR: NY 565683, at 10:00am. West Hall is a tiny village, 4.8 miles west of Gilsland, just off the B6318. Parking in the village is difficult, so we will park on the roadside to the north. The team will help you to find places to park.

Distance: 10.5 miles

Grade: Moderate Plus

Ascent/Descent: 877 ft **Walk Fee:** £7

Bring: Packed lunch **Leader:** Marj Baillie

7. Lises Burn (West Woodburn Circular)

Today's walk is a circular route commencing in the small village of West Woodburn. The village lies on the banks of the River Rede, which has its origins on the moors of the border lands. After leaving the village we walk over fields to the delightful old drovers bridge at East Woodburn and then meander along the banks of the river to Chairford Bridge. We then follow the Lises Burn valley up to Linnheads Weir with spectacular scenery all around us. The route crosses the old Scots Gap to Bellingham railway line several times, before we return to the River Rede and back to West Woodburn. On a clear day this walk affords excellent views up into the border hills towards Carter Bar.

Meet at: West Woodburn village, GR NY 892868, at 10:00am. There is a layby a short distance along the Bellingham road that can be used for parking, otherwise park in the village on the A68. Please park carefully and courteously.

Distance: 8miles

Grade: Moderate

Ascent/Descent: 749ft

Walk Fee: £7

Bring: packed lunch

Leader:

Tuesday 25th April

8. A Duo of Reservoirs

This is a circular walk from Colwell that has a diverse and varied route through farmland, across moorland, beside reservoirs and along old carriers' lanes. After passing the village of Great Swinburne, we walk past an old tithe barn and along a route that runs parallel to the old Roman road of Dere Street. We cross Folly Moss and walk along the banks of Colt Crag Reservoir, past an old tower at Great Swinburne. An old carriers' lane takes us to Hallington Reservoir. We then walk through the delightful village of Hallington before turning west across tracks and pasture land and back to Colwell village.

Meet at: Colwell Village, GR NY 953754 at 10:00am

Distance: 11 miles

Grade: Moderate plus

Ascent/Descent: 683ft

Walk Fee: £7

Bring: packed lunch

Leader:

9. Mines, Chimneys and a Dam (Blanchland Circular)

Starting in the historic village of Blanchland, this walk explores what are now peaceful and beautiful hills and valleys where once the Durham lead mining industry flourished. We pass through Baybridge where immigrants (from Cornwall) fought with the local miners and then to the attractive village of Hunstanworth. A steady ascent takes us to the site of the old Derwent Lead mine and on to the lake created by Sike Head Dam to provide water power for the mine pumps and machinery. The chimney venting the toxic gases from the smelter still stands near the lake. From here we move onto the highest point of the walk with tremendous views over the Derwent valley, before crossing the moor close by Belmont Farm, the site of a notorious and gruesome murder, to return to Blanchland.

Meet at : Blanchland Car Park (Honesty box for car park fee), GR NY 964054, at 10:00am

Distance: 8 miles
Grade: Moderate plus **Ascent/Descent:** 1261ft
Walk Fee: £7 **Bring:** packed lunch **Leader:**

10. Ecology walk north of Hadrian's Wall with Gill Thompson

Greenlee Lough, with its boardwalks and bird hide, has been a popular destination in previous walking festivals. Today we are accompanied by Gill Thompson who works as an ecologist in Northumberland National Park. Gill knows the area as well as anyone and she will open our eyes to many of the features of this important wetland area. Greenlee is the largest freshwater lake in Northumberland but it is only 1.8 metres deep at its deepest point. We may see curlew flying overhead, or if we are very lucky, osprey fishing on the lough.

The lough is the home to many creatures and to a number of unusual aquatic plants so prepare to be fascinated.

Meet at: Steel Rigg Car Park, (£4 in coins or pay by card), GR NY 750676, just north of the new Sill visitor centre on the B6318, NE47 7AN, at 10:00am. **Distance:** 7.5 miles

Grade: Moderate **Ascent and descent:** 580 ft **Walk Fee:** £12 **Bring:** packed lunch and extra layers of clothes to allow for standing and listening on a cold day **Leader:** Marj Baillie

Wednesday 26th April

11. West Allen to South Tyne (Whitfield to Haltwhistle)

We leave the West Allen valley near Whitfield and walk uphill to the fell road. Fell House Farm is near our route, before we cross Kingswood Common and then Plenmeller Common. We continue west to Low Todhillwood. From here, we turn to the north over grouse moors, before passing Webster's Lake and Broomhouse Common to descend into Haltwhistle.

Meet at: Haltwhistle Market Place GR NY 707640, at 08:50am. Coach for Whitfield leaves at 09:00am.

Distance: 12 miles

Grade: Strenuous

Ascent: 1138ft **Descent:** 1291ft

Walk Fee: £10

Bring: packed lunch **Leader:**

12. Catton Tea Walk

The circuit of Catton leaves the centre of the village and crosses fields to reach the river East Allen which we follow into Allendale. From the river path, we climb up beside the recreated Edwardian garden and Deneholme to the Dene. We cross Philip Burn and walk further uphill to Bulls Hill and Chats Lane. We should see panoramic views across the valley. A minor road takes us down to Housty Farm and to Catton where we enjoy a delicious tea prepared by members of Catton Women's Institute.

Meet at: Catton Villlage Hall, GR NY 828577, park in the street, at 11:00am.

Distance: 5 miles **Grade:** Moderate **Ascent/Descent:** 535ft

Walk Fee: £12 **Bring:** drink and light lunch **Leader:** Ann Potter

Thursday 27th April

13. Colleges, Limericks and Swans (Edmundbyers Circular)

Our longer walk today is from the village of Edmundbyers. It takes us across classic grouse moors, along valleys and through areas of our old industrial past. After leaving the village, we walk onto the moors to Swandale. We head past Cuthbert's Currick to Old Man's Grave. From here we see the old lead mining flue chimneys at Sikehead standing proudly in view above the old lead mines of Ramshaw. We cross Edmundbyers Common and along College Edge, before descending into the Burnhope Valley. From this valley we climb up towards Muggleswick Park before commencing the descent back into Edmundbyers.

Meet at: Edmundbyers Village, GR NZ 017500, at 10:00am. Please park carefully in the village. The walk will commence from the front of the Punch Bowl Inn

Distance: 11 miles

Grade: Strenuous

Ascent/Descent: 1267 ft

Walk Fee: £7

Bring: packed lunch

Leader:

14 .Around Broomlee Lough

After a short walk uphill, we pass by Housesteads Roman Fort and hear tales of the 800 strong infantrymen who were stationed here. We turn west on Hadrian's Wall Trail, along the only section of the Wall we are allowed to walk on, and then north across open access land. This may be boggy in places! The circular route winds north and east of Broomlee Lough, affording excellent views of this inland lake. There are tales to be heard of hidden treasure. Further east, the area around Queen's Crag and King's Crag is the site of prehistoric burials. After a short section southwards, we join Hadrian's Wall Trail at Sewingshields Farm and enjoy walking in an elevated position with good views to the north.

There will be time to visit Housesteads Fort after the walk if you wish to do so.

Meet at: Housesteads Car Park GR NY 794684, NE47 6NN, at 10:00am. Car Parking Fee £4 (please bring £1 coins). Housesteads is situated on the B6318 (The Military Road) 8.6 miles east of Greenhead and 8.5 miles west of Chollerford. Housesteads is an English Heritage Site so bring your membership card if you wish to visit the fort after the walk.

Distance: 7 miles

Grade: Moderate plus

Ascent and descent: 797ft

Walk Fee: £7

Bring: packed lunch

Leader:

15. Woodland Bird walk with Nick Leeming

The Spring Festival would not be complete without this very popular walk. Nick Leeming is a local bird expert who is happy to share his knowledge with walkers.

We usually see a lot of birds in Haltwhistle town itself before we leave via the riverbank and through the North Woods. Most of the migrants should have returned, and the resident birds should be breeding. Previous years highlights have been very close views of sleepy tree creepers, pied flycatchers and nuthatches. After our lunch at Park Burn Foot (dipper and grey wagtail) we walk up to Park Village and on to the higher fields, where redshank, curlew and lapwing should be calling. We may even be lucky enough to see snipe and buzzard. No one should be disappointed.

Meet at: Haltwhistle Market Place GR NY 707640 at 10:00am

Distance: 6miles

Grade: Moderate

Walk Fee: £7

Bring: packed lunch, binoculars, extra clothes for standing still on a cold day

Leader: John Robinson

Friday 28th April

16. Roman Round Day 1 – Haltwhistle to Newbrough

The Roman Round is a series of walks over 4 days that takes us more than 50 miles through the frontier lands of the Roman Empire around the Hadrian's Wall area. Although the World Heritage Site will be regularly in view, we will rarely follow its route. Our first walk commences from Haltwhistle market place and heads eastwards over Hollin Crag and along Cranberry Brow to where we pass close to the Roman Fort of Vindolanda. The route takes us to the summit of Barcombe Fell then down to the Haresby drovers' road where we hope to get fine views across the South Tyne valley towards Allenbanks and to the Pennines beyond. After passing through the old colliery hamlet of New Alston, we walk along Fell Lane and up to the old Roman road, the Stanegate, and on to our destination at the village of Newbrough.

Meet at: Haltwhistle Market Place, GR NY 707640, at 09:00am. Return from Newbrough by coach to Haltwhistle.

Distance: 13.5 miles

Grade: Strenuous

Ascent: 1264ft **Descent:** 1442ft

Walk Fee: £10

Bring: packed lunch

Leader:

17. Crammel Linn and the Popping Stone

The walk starts in the village of Gilsland, which lies on the Northumberland/Cumberland border. From there we take a gentle route alongside the river Irthing. If conditions allow we will cross by the stepping stones, otherwise a short uphill walk on a quiet road. Both alternatives enter in the lovely woods close to the Gilsland Hotel (of War Babies' fame). There is a short diversion to see the famous Popping Stone, where Sir Walter Scott proposed to his future wife. We continue alongside the river to the spectacular Crammel Linn. The return route to Gilsland takes us through woodland, and finally by road, passing the St Mary Magdalene church, where many of the War Babies were christened.

Meet at: Gilsland (old Railway Station), GR NY 636663, at 10:00am. Go up the lane between the railway bridge and the Samson Inn and park in the old railway station car park

Distance: 7 miles (either route)

Grade: Moderate

Ascent/Descent 906(992) ft

Walk Fee: £7

Bring: packed lunch

Leader:

18. Singing walk with Kat Davidson

For the first time, this very popular singing walk will be in Hexham. As usual we stop at various intervals during the walk to learn songs. We have a new leader, Kat Davidson, who conducts the Tynedale Community choir. Kat is a well-known Northumbrian folk singer, and the event promises to be great fun. The four mile route takes walkers around the town, along the riverside; through the Sele Park, and finally back to Hexham Abbey. We have been granted the privilege of singing our new repertoire in the Abbey. The event ends with afternoon tea.

Meet at: Hexham Abbey Main Entrance, Beaumont Street, GR NY 935641, postcode at 12:00 noon. There are free long stay parking places in the Wentworth Car Park in the white bays or at Hexham Railway Station (pay and display).

Distance: 4 miles

Grade: Easy

Ascent/Descent: 195ft

Walk Fee: £15 (including tea in Abbey rooms)

Bring: light snack and a drink

Leader:

19. Social Evening with buffet

Meet at: Comrades Club, Haltwhistle at 6.45pm (Please note time change from previous festivals)

Fee: £12

This is our regular chance to meet and chat with other walkers, enjoy the fine buffet and have a drink. Geoff Chrisp is providing a quiz to test our mental capacity (just a little!).

Saturday 29th April

20. Roman Round Day 2 – Newbrough to Steel Rigg

Day 2 of the walk begins at Newbrough where we head north along bridleways and across fells to the Vallum and Brocolitia Roman Fort. We visit the mysterious Temple of Mithras before crossing Hadrian's Wall Path where we leave the Empire. We head north over Simonburn Common and Harvest Green, before passing the delightful Folly Lake, built in Victorian times. In front of us now is a forbidding view of the mighty Whin Sill and the highest point on the Wall at Sewingshields Crag. We do not ascend to the Wall here, but turn westerly and head through the area between King's and Queen's Crag that hold legends and tales of King Arthur and Queen Guinevere. With the Wall hovering above us, we pass the beautiful Broomlee and Crag Loughs before ascending to our destination at Steel Rigg.

Meet at: Haltwhistle Market Place, GR NY 707640, at 08:50am. Coach to Newbrough leaves at 09:00am.

Return coach from Steel Rigg

Distance: 14 miles

Grade: Strenuous

Ascent: 1389ft **Descent:** 717 feet

Walk Fee: £13

Bring: packed lunch **Leader:**

21. Shire Delight (Whitley Chapel circular)

This walk takes us through some of the prettiest parts of Hexhamshire, between the Rowley and Dipton Burns. From Whitley Chapel, we walk down to the picturesque hamlet and ford and Whitley Mill and then climb steadily up to the site of the medieval village of Dotland. This is the highest point on the walk with extensive views towards Yarridge and to the valley of the Devil's Water and Slaley Forest. We then make our way through pasture land to Dotland Park and the Woodland Trust's Letah Wood. There are magnificent stands of beech and other hardwoods here. We walk back to Rowley Burn at Dye House and alongside the burn to Mollersteads on our way to Whitley Chapel.

Meet at: Whitley Chapel Village, GR NY 927577, at 10:00am

Distance: 7 miles

Grade: Moderate

Ascent/Descent: 635ft

Walk Fee: £7

Bring: packed lunch

Leader:

Sunday 30th April

22. Roman Round 3 – Steel Rigg to Gilsland

The penultimate day of our epic walk heads north from Steel Rigg over tracks and paths that were well trod by both Romans and Border Reivers. In this area the Romans built an aqueduct for their water supplies and left legacies in names such as 'Pont Gallon Burn'. We continue across the fells to the northern most point of the walk at Rotheryhaugh, which lies on the banks of the River Irthing, the border between Northumberland and Cumbria. From here we turn and head south westerly and walk along forest paths before re-joining the route of the River Irthing and onward to our destination in the village of Gilsland.

Meet at: Haltwhistle Market Place, GR NY 707640, at 08:50am. Coach to Steel Rigg leaves at 09:00am.
Return coach from Gilsland.

Distance: 13 miles

Grade: Strenuous

Ascent: 725ft **Descent:** 1161ft

Walk Fee: £13

Bring: packed lunch

Leader:

23. Castle Carrock Circular

The walk commences in the small village of Castle Carrock nestling in a corner of the North Pennines AONB. Alas the castle no longer exists! The route takes us northwards to the picturesque High Gelt Bridge carrying the road to the village. From here we walk to Talkin Village. Once a coal mining and quarrying area - perhaps its claim to fame is the excellent pub – the Blacksmiths Arms!

The walk continues through farmland and moor, affording views of the Carrock Fell and the North Pennines. We reach the reservoir of Castle Carrock built in 1909 to satisfy the thirst of the people of Carlisle. There is a possibility of seeing wild life before the return to the village.

Meet at: Castle Carrock village, GR NY 542554, at 10:00am

Distance: 7.5 miles

Grade: Moderate

Ascent/Descent: 976ft

Walk Fee: £7

Bring: packed lunch

Leader:

Monday 1st May

24. Roman Round Day 4 – Gilsland to Haltwhistle

The final day of our walk begins in the village of Gilsland that sits right on the route of Hadrian's Wall. We head south from the village passing the sites of old Roman Camps and join a section of the Pennine Way over Blenkinsopp Common and over farmland to the most southerly point on the route, Lambley. Here we will cross a footbridge over the River South Tyne almost underneath the towering viaduct that used to carry the trains on the railway line between Alston and Haltwhistle. We now follow the river passing the old POW camp and castle at Featherstone before meandering along footpaths to reach the historic market town of Haltwhistle.

Meet at: Haltwhistle Market Place, GR NY 707640 at 08:50am. Coach to Gilsland leaves at 09:00am.

Distance: 12.5 miles

Grade: Strenuous

Ascent: 1187ft **Descent:** 1248ft

Walk fee: £10

Bring: packed lunch

Leader:

25. Featherstone Circular

From Featherstone Station Car Park we follow the South Tyne Trail to Park Village. We walk to Broomhouse Fell, passing the beautiful Lynnshield Waterfall, then over Ramshaw Fell and farmland towards the Coanwood Quaker Meeting House. Here is the burial place of the Wigham family, who are local farmers. We cross more farmland with distant views towards Hadrian's Wall. A short, steep downhill takes us through the pretty Beaconhill Plantation. We finally arrive at Coanwood Station and walk back on to the South Tyne Trail.

Meet at: Featherstone car park, GR NY 681607, at 10:00am.

Distance: 8 miles

Grade: Moderate

Ascent/Descent: 694 ft

Walk Fee: £7

Bring: packed lunch

Leader: