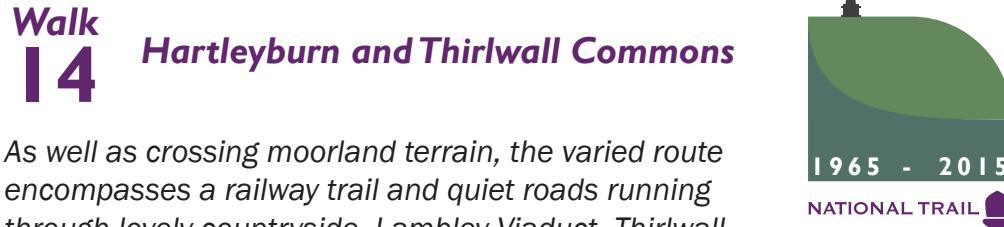


# Walk the Way in a Day



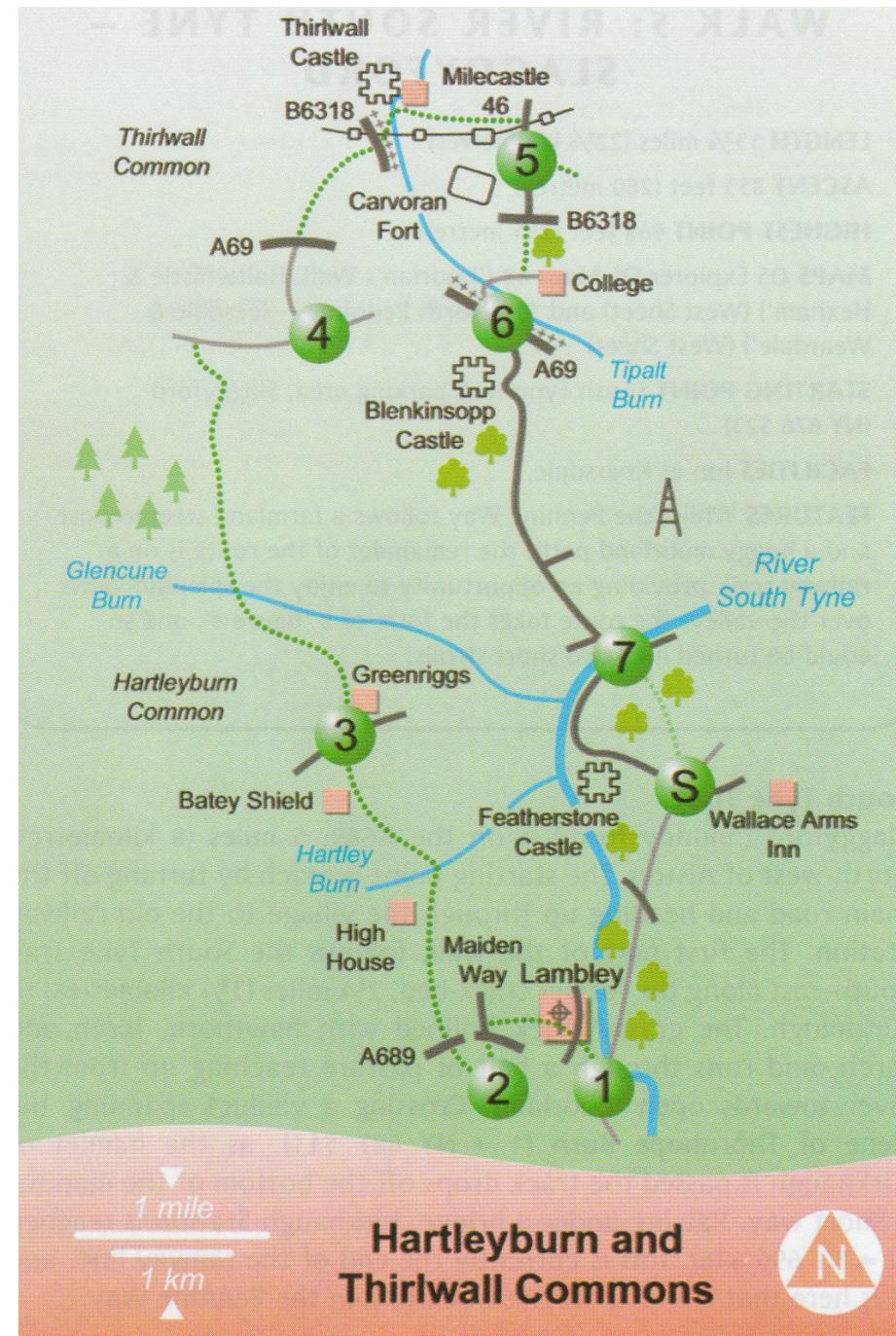
## Walk 14 Hartleyburn and Thirlwall Commons

As well as crossing moorland terrain, the varied route encompasses a railway trail and quiet roads running through lovely countryside. Lambley Viaduct, Thirlwall Castle and Featherstone Castle are just some of the historical points of interest along the way.

Length:	14½ miles (23 kilometres)
Ascent:	1,821 feet (555 metres)
Highest Point:	948 feet (289 metres)
Map(s):	OS Explorer OL Map 43 ('Hadrian's Wall, Haltwhistle & Hexham') (West Sheet)
Starting Point:	South Tyne Trail car park, Rowfoot (NY 682 607)
Facilities:	Inn.
Website:	<a href="http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/pennine-way/route/walk-way-day-walk-14-hartleyburn-and-thirlwall-commons">http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/pennine-way/route/walk-way-day-walk-14-hartleyburn-and-thirlwall-commons</a>

### Lambley

The starting point is reached by turning off the Haltwhistle bypass (A69) near Bellister Castle and following an unclassified road signed for Coanwood. Arriving at Rowfoot, a side road runs past the Wallace Arms Inn to the former railway station. The first part of the walk follows the South Tyne Trail for 1½ miles (2½ kilometres), with the route of the former branch line heading south-south-west towards Lambley. Passing through another car park, cross straight over a road and continue along the pleasantly shaded track, which runs above steep, wooded slopes. Eventually the track runs onto Lambley Viaduct, which offers breathtaking views - although vertigo-sufferers will be in a hurry to cross. At the end of the viaduct are locked gates - Lambley Station being privately owned - so the route turns down wrought iron steps to follow a path along the wooded



valley side. At a crossroads of paths (1 = NY 674 583), a finger sign shows the way to Lambley, which heads up a stepped path.

### **Lambley Viaduct**

Lambley Viaduct was designed by Sir George Barclay-Bruce as one of nine bridges carrying the Haltwhistle to Alston branch line over the valley of the River South Tyne. Sandstone from quarries at Slaggyford and Bardon Mill was used in the construction of the viaduct, which opened in 1852 and stands 110 feet (34 metres) high, with nine arches of 58 feet (18 metre) span and seven of 20 feet (6 metre) span.

Arriving at a choice of ways, ignore steps leading up to a gate and instead turn right, following a path running above the valley side. Below is the course of a spur off the branch line, which ran to Lambley Colliery until its closure in 1958. Emerging onto a road at the centre of the village, cross over and look for a finger sign pointing to a grassy track between the churchyard and a terrace of stone-built cottages. Passing through a tunnel, a faint path heads west across fields, with the remains of the colliery off to the right. Heading down the side of a row of cottages, an unclassified road is met.

This follows the course of Maiden Way, a Roman route running over the Pennine ridge (the name means ‘great ridge way’), and offers a good alternative to the unappealing mix of boggy moorland and cattle-churned pasture that is the next section of the Pennine Way. If the road-walk is preferred, turn right and head north for 2 miles (3 kilometres), before following the Kellah road for 1 mile (1½ kilometres), rejoining the Pennine Way near Batey Shield. Otherwise, turn left and head towards the junction with the A689. Crossing straight over the road, a rough track runs up to meet the Pennine Way as it drops down from Lambley Common (2 = NY 667 585).

### **Hartleyburn Common**

The next 1¼ miles (2¼ kilometres) covers some difficult terrain. Crossing

a fence stile, follow a faint path through the heather, with a marker stone confirming the route. Arriving back at the main road, a finger sign shows a path heading north beside a drystone wall, then through a rushy mire. The route becomes indistinct as it runs over tussocky grass towards a ruin (High House). Heading down beside a gully, Hartley Burn is crossed by a footbridge. From here the route runs over pasture towards Batey Shield farm. Arriving at the farm, a waymarked gate leads to a field, at the bottom of which a small footbridge leads to an unclassified road (where the alternative road-walk joins the Pennine Way) (3 = NY 654 611).

Crossing straight over the road, follow a hardcore track towards Greenriggs farm, where a ladder stile leads to a field. Over another stile the route runs onto the grassy moorland of Hartleyburn Common. Heading west, follow the crest of a low ridge, keeping to the right of a rushy trough. Arriving at a fence, follow this north, crossing Glencune Burn by a footbridge. Over a ladder stile, a narrow path runs through rushes towards the highest point on the walk, close to an OS pillar. Although at only 948 feet (289 metres), extensive views are coupled with a real sense of remoteness. Continuing north, the A69 comes into view as the faint path runs downhill, passing an old brick building to arrive at a hardcore track. Here a finger sign shows the Pennine Way heading east along a causeway until another track is met (4 = NY 652 644).

### **Thirlwall Common**

Turning left, follow this track down to the busy A69. Carefully crossing the road, at the top of the embankment a finger sign points diagonally across a field (ignore ladder stiles off to the right, which allow golfers to retrieve stray balls). Looking ahead, the Great Whin Sill can be seen, while to the left is the valley of the River Irthing. Over a couple of ladder stiles, the route eventually turns to follow the vallum across the golf course. Crossing the B6138, a path runs in front of a terrace of cottages to arrive at the Tyne Valley railway line. Ignoring a path signed for Greenhead, follow the tree-lined banks of Tipalt Burn towards Thirlwall Castle. Crossing the burn by a footbridge, the route climbs a steep track before following the defensive ditch across pasture. Arriving at an unclassified road, turn right

and head past the entrance to Walltown picnic place, where we leave the Pennine way (5 = NY 668 660).

### **Thirlwall Castle**

Thirlwall Castle was built 1330-50, using stones looted from Hadrian's Wall (the name appropriately means 'gap in the wall'). Although now in a ruinous condition, it was once a substantial hall-house, home to the Thirlwall clan, who despite being charged with protecting the area from raiding Scots were themselves recorded as being inclined to theft. Sir Walter Scott visited in 1797, and it was here that he composed his poem 'To a Lady, with Flowers from the Roman Wall'. Following extensive consolidation work, the castle is now open to the public.

### **Featherstone**

Continuing along the road, the entrance to the Roman Army Museum is on the right. Arriving at the junction with the B6318, cross straight over to where a finger sign points through a gate. Heading down the side of a field, to the left is a dene with a thick undergrowth of bluebells and garlic. Passing through a gate, follow a stream down to College farm, where a hardcore track is joined. Just after this crosses Tipalt Burn, a ladder stile on the right leads to the railway line and the A69 (6 = NY 666 645). From here the remainder of the route is on quiet roads, 3½ miles (5½ kilometres) back to the starting point. Joining an unclassified road signed for Featherstone, this passes the entrance to Blenkinsopp Castle before starting a long climb as it heads south through pasture. Ignoring turns for Haltwhistle and Lambley, the road runs down a steep wooded bank to Featherstone Bridge (7 = NY 675 619).

### **Carvoran (Magnis) Fort**

Magnis ('rocks') stood at the junction of Stanegate and Maiden Way. The first fort on the site predated Hadrian's Wall, and was rebuilt AD 136-137 to house a mixed garrison of cavalry and infantry. Unusually, it is located to the south of the vallum, there being boggy ground beside the Wall. All that remains is the outline of the

ramparts, although the site is home to the Roman Army Museum, which includes exhibits of what life was like for troops stationed on the northern frontier.

This was built in 1778, and is famous for its distinctive hump. On the south side of the bridge there is a choice of ways, with the easiest option being to stay on the road. This follows the wooded banks of the River South Tyne, passing the entrance to Featherstone Castle. A track continuing along the riverside to the former POW camp is worthy of investigation if there is time. Otherwise, follow the road as it zigzags steeply up a wooded slope and continues back to the starting point. For those who are tired of road-walking, a path runs south-east for about 1 mile (1½ kilometres) from the bridge. Straight across the road, a finger sign points to a step stile, from where a path crosses the flood plain. Heading up steps cut into the steep wooded slope, continue over fields punctuated with knots of oak trees. The path runs down the side of a conifer stand before emerging onto the road near the former Featherstone railway station.

### **Featherstone Castle**

Featherstone Castle is a mixture of medieval and later construction, with a defensive tower at its heart built by Thomas de Featherstone in 1290. One of his descendants, Sir Albany de Featherstonehaugh, was killed in a feud with the owner of nearby Blenkinsopp Castle in 1530. The estate was forfeited by Sir Timothy Featherstonehaugh when he supported King Charles II during the invasion of 1651. Later it was acquired by the Wallace family. From 1945-48, the grounds were home to 7,000 German POWs.

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