

# Walk the Way in a Day

## Walk 8 Hareshaw and Troughend Commons

Starting at the historic settlement of Bellingham, the varied route follows the Pennine Way across open moorland before returning on farmland and along the banks of the River North Tyne, using quiet roads where necessary.

Pennine Way

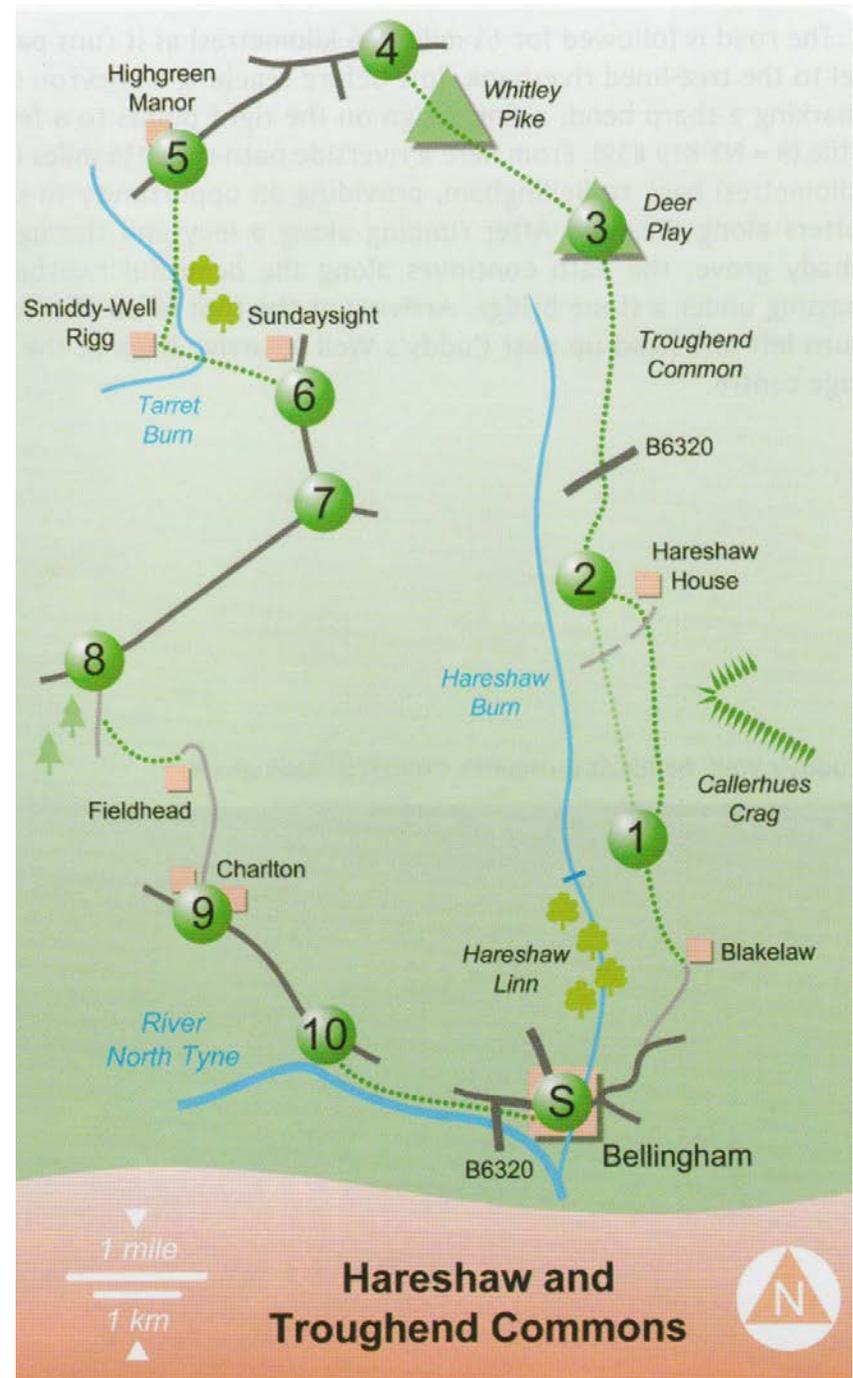
50 YEARS



- Length: 16 miles (26 kilometres)
- Ascent: 1,558 feet (475 metres)
- Highest Point: 1,184 feet (361 metres)
- Map(s): OS Explorer OL Map 42 ('Kielder Water, Bellingham & Simonside Hills') (East Sheet)
- Starting Point: Bellingham village centre, North Tynedale (NY 838 833)
- Facilities: Full range of services.
- Website: <http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/pennine-way/route/walk-way-day-walk-8-hareshaw-and-troughend-commons>

### Hareshaw Common

Bellingham is on the B6320, about 12 miles (19 kilometres) north of Hexham, and offers plenty of on-street parking. Heading up the front street from the Boer War memorial, turn onto the West Woodburn road, passing the start of the Hareshaw Linn Nature Trail and the site of a medieval castle. Veering left as the road forks, continue past the heritage centre. When the pavement gives-out it becomes necessary to walk on the road, although a finger sign soon shows the Pennine Way turning onto a tarmac track leading to Blakelaw farm. Through the farmyard, head uphill on pasture, with marker posts confirming the route. Passing through a gate, ahead is the rough moorland of Hareshaw Common, with a finger sign showing a choice of ways covering the next 1½ miles (2½ kilometres) (1 = NY 845 854).



*Bellingham - The Capital of North Tynedale*  
*Bellingham (pronounced 'bell-in-jum') is a place steeped in history. For example, St. Cuthbert's Church dates from the 13th century, and was built upon the spot where the saint's remains were rested. The church is usually open, providing an opportunity to examine the barrel-vaulted, stone slab roof. Next to the churchyard is Cuddy's Well, the waters of which are said to have miraculous healing properties, and which are still used for baptisms. The churchyard itself is home to the infamous 'Lang Pack' grave, which marks the resting place of a would-be thief, killed while attempting to gain access to a nearby hall by hiding in a peddler's pack.*

The alternative route runs north-north-west beside a boundary. It offers easier navigation, but is otherwise less appealing. The standard route heads north on a faint path, aiming for a point to the right of a belt of scots pine. Off to the right is a prominent line of rock outcrops (Callerhues Crag). Crossing a wall by a ladder stile, the route drops into a gully before heading north-west across rough grazing. Over a tarmac track, a couple of ladder stile lead through a walled paddock beside Hareshaw House farm, towards the point where the two routes converge (2 = NY 841 875).

### **Troughend Common**

Heading north along an old wagonway, this passes the site of the former Hareshaw Head Colliery before continuing down towards the B6320. Crossing straight over the road, the next part of the walk is on Troughend Common, with another 3 miles (4¾ kilometres) of rough moorland ahead. Initially the path is interrupted by broad drainage channels as it heads north over tussocky grass. As it starts to climb the heather-clad slopes of Lough Shaw, a few marker posts confirm the route. Passing a finger sign, the path heads north-west towards Deer Play - the highest point on the walk, offering fine views over Redesdale (3 = NY 841 903).

### **Hareshaw Head Colliery and Hareshaw Iron Company**

*Hareshaw Head Colliery closed during the 1950s, after operating for*

*200 years. A wagonway ran from the colliery down to Bellingham, supplying the Hareshaw Iron Company. The ironworks boasted three blast furnaces, twenty kilns and fifty coke ovens, and employed around 500 people. Iron from here was used to construct Robert Stephenson's magnificent High Level Bridge on Tyneside. After the ironworks closed in 1849, the colliery continued to operate, exporting its coal via the Border Counties Railway.*

From here the path can be hard-going as it runs over boggy ground towards Whitley Pike, which is marked by a cairn surmounted by a pole. This might be a good place to stop for lunch, being just a little short of the half-way point. Crossing a fence stile, continue north-west, with flagstones providing safe passage of a cottongrass mire. Arriving at an unclassified road, it is here that we leave the Pennine Way (4 = NY 824 917).

### **Charlton**

Turning left, head along the quiet road, which is followed for 1¼ miles (2 kilometres) to Highgreen Manor, where the second of a pair of finger signs shows a route to Smiddy-Well Rigg. Heading south over tussocky grass, cross a small stream to join a rough track running towards Blackcrag Wood (a pleasant little birch grove beneath rock outcrops). Crossing a footbridge, Tarret Burn is then followed downstream, with a faint path running over meadows towards Smiddy-Well Rigg farm. From here the route turns east-south-east, following a line of electricity poles towards Sundaysight farm. Re-crossing the burn, head up some fields, initially parallel to a tree-lined clough, before exiting onto an unclassified road beside the farm (5 = NY 817 890).

The next 2 miles (3¼ kilometres) is on quiet roads, heading south to a 'T'-junction (6 = NY 820 880), then south-west towards the edge of the map. Here a gate on the left leads to a hardcore track, running beside a walled plantation (7 = NY 801 869). A marker post soon indicates a turn onto a path heading south-east over tussocky grass. Through a narrow gate, the route crosses the rushy trough of Grassleapote Sike before continuing towards the remote Fieldhead farm with its wind turbine. Here there are

wide views over the valley of the River North Tyne. Another marker post shows the route joining a rough track, hooking around the head of a tree-lined clough above a small waterfall. From here the track runs south-south-east, down towards the hamlet of Charlton, where an unclassified road is met (8 = NY 810 848).

The road is followed for  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  kilometres) as it runs parallel to the tree-lined riverbank. Just before reaching a chevron sign marking a sharp bend, a finger sign on the right points to a fence stile (9 = NY 819 839). From here a riverside path runs  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles ( $2\frac{1}{4}$  kilometres) back to Bellingham, providing an opportunity to spot otters along the way. After running along a levy and through a shady grove, the path continues along the beautiful riverbank, passing under a stone bridge. Arriving at the foot of an alleyway, turn left and head up past Cuddy's Well to arrive back at the village centre.

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