

# Northumberland

Taking its name from the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria (the land north of the River Humber), Northumberland is one of the largest and wildest of England's counties. The vast and starkly beautiful Cheviot Hills – the northern part of the Pennines – make up much of the western part of the county, now protected as Northumberland National Park.

The eastern side of the county is marked by the equally beautiful (and, some would say, equally stark) Northumberland coast, also justifiably protected as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). These wide stretches of sand are rarely crowded, leaving a wild and windswept shore relatively untouched for walkers to enjoy.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the coast and the hills of Northumberland is the number of castles and battlefield sites, providing vivid reminders of long and bloody struggles between the English and Scots, and between powerful barons and the Crown. In the south of the county are older remains of even earlier battles from the time of Roman occupation – villas and forts, plus of course Hadrian's Wall, one of Britain's best-known ancient monuments, now a World Heritage Site.

In this chapter we describe a wonderful seven-day walk along the southern edge of the national park following Hadrian's Wall, leading into neighbouring Cumbria, plus a shorter walk along the coast, taking in empty sands, fishing villages and two dramatic castles overlooking the sea. The hills and beaches of Northumberland may be wild and empty, but that's their very attraction, and a visit here is unlikely to disappoint fans of the outdoors.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Following the River Tyne through the reborn centre of **Newcastle upon Tyne** (p217)
- Admiring the ramparts, forts and castles of **Hadrian's Wall** (opposite)
- Feeling small in the wild and empty big-sky landscape of the **Cheviot Hills** (p233)
- Discovering northern Cumbria's **Solway Firth** (p229) – a forgotten corner of England
- Enjoying empty sands and sea air along the **Northumberland coast** (p229)

## INFORMATION Maps

Northumberland is a big county covered by several Ordnance Survey (OS) Landranger 1:50,000 maps. Those most useful to walkers include Nos 74 *Kelso & Coldstream*, 75 *Berwick-upon-Tweed*, 79 *Harwick & Eskdale*, 80 *Cheviot Hills & Kielder Water* and 86 *Haltwhistle & Brampton*.

For more detail, Harvey Maps produces the very useful 1:40,000 *Cheviot Hills*. Other detailed maps for the individual walks in this chapter are listed in the route descriptions.

## Books

General walking guidebooks on the whole of Northumberland include *Best Walks in Northumberland* by Frank Duerden. The *Northumbria Walks* Pathfinder Guide, published by Jarrold, also has a good selection of routes of varying lengths, combined with extracts from OS maps. *The Inn Way to Northumberland* by Mark Reid describes a circular route broken into stages you can do as day walks combing excellent footpaths and traditional pubs. For beverages of a different sort, try *Best Teashop Walks in Northumbria* by Stephen Rickerby.

## Guided Walks

Guided walks (ranging in length from a few hours to all day) are organised by rangers within Northumberland National Park and by guides or historians along Hadrian's Wall. You can get details from tourist offices or the national park website ([www.nnpa.org.uk](http://www.nnpa.org.uk)).

## Information Sources

For general information, there are many tourist offices in Northumberland; those most useful for the walks described in this chapter are listed in the relevant sections.

Online, you can also check [www.visitnorthumbria.com](http://www.visitnorthumbria.com) and [www.ntb.org.uk](http://www.ntb.org.uk). For specific information on Northumberland National Park, the park website, [www.nnpa.org.uk](http://www.nnpa.org.uk), has a particularly good walking section.

## GATEWAYS

To reach Northumberland from other parts of Britain, the main gateway cities and towns are Newcastle upon Tyne, Carlisle, Alnwick and Berwick-upon-Tweed. All have good

train and coach links with other parts of Britain.

Trains and buses run between all these major towns, through the national park and via several places recommended as walking bases. For details see p458 and p456.

## HADRIAN'S WALL PATH

<b>Duration</b>	7 days
<b>Distance</b>	84 miles (135km)
<b>Difficulty</b>	moderate
<b>Start</b>	Wallsend
<b>Finish</b>	Bowness-on-Solway (p218)
<b>Nearest Town</b>	Newcastle upon Tyne (p217)
<b>Transport</b>	bus, train

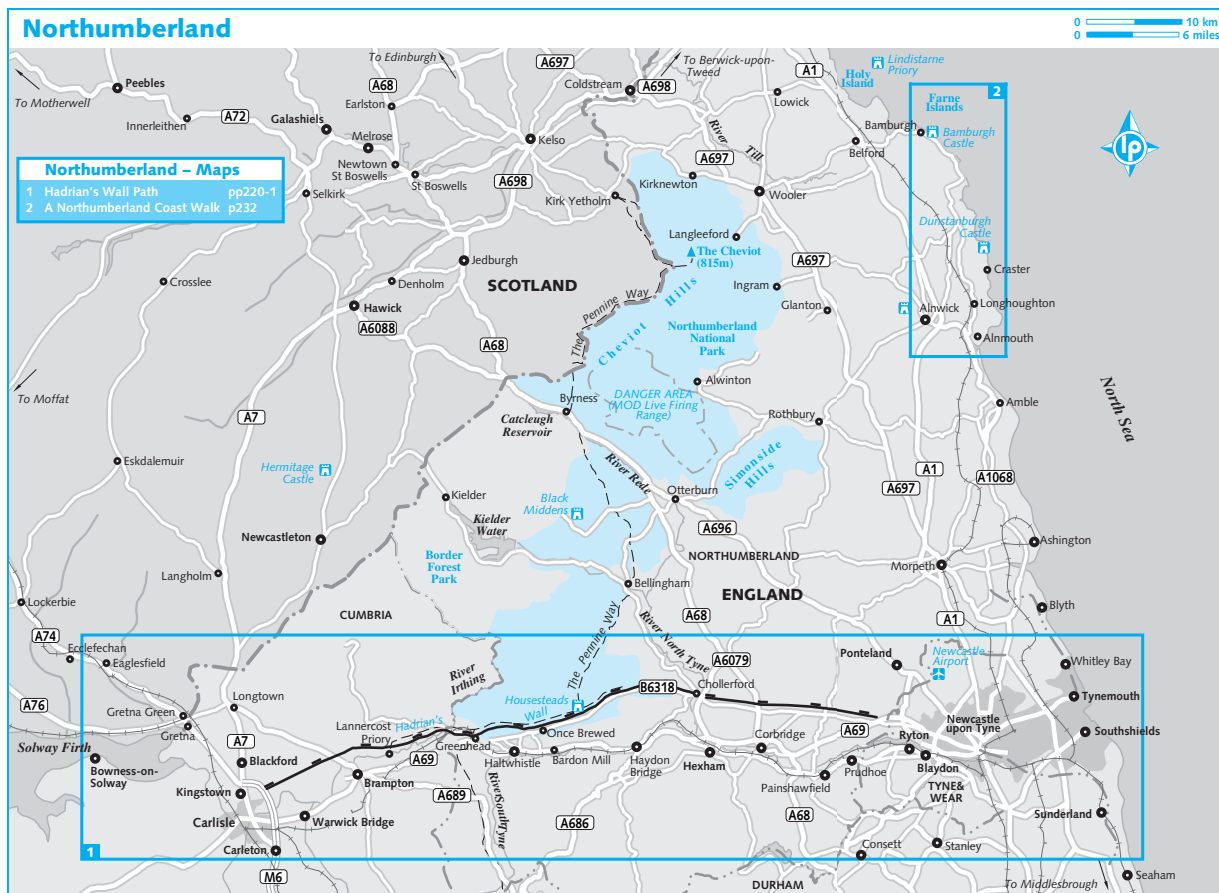
**Summary** A fascinating walk through history – clear and easy to follow, strenuous in parts, with many sites of interest along the way.

Hadrian's Wall is one of the finest and most dramatic historic monuments in Britain. It was built by the Romans in the early centuries of the 1st millennium, and crosses a neck of northern England, virtually from coast to coast, for about 75 miles between the modern-day cities of Newcastle upon Tyne and Carlisle.

An amazingly impressive feat of military engineering, Hadrian's Wall effectively marked the outer limit of the great Roman Empire that stretched across much of Europe and into North Africa (see the boxed text, p216). Today, despite the passing of almost 2000 years, various sections of the wall remain visible; some parts are in a poor state of preservation, but others have survived the ages remarkably well and are a fascinating sight.

In recognition of the area's important archaeology, culture and landscape, Unesco – the UN cultural body – incorporated Hadrian's Wall into a new pan-European World Heritage Site in 2005, together with a similar Roman fortification in Germany called the Limes. The wall's official (and slightly cumbersome) title is now Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site: Hadrian's Wall. It is anticipated that the Antonine Wall in Scotland will be added to this site.

Raising the monument to global status was not without controversy, as some local farmers and landowners resisted



Day	From	To	Miles/km
1	Wallsend	Heddon	15/25
2	Heddon	Chollerford	15/25
3	Chollerford	Once Brewed	12/19
4	Once Brewed	Gilsland	8/13
5	Gilsland	Walton	8/13
6	Walton	Carlisle	11/17
7	Carlisle	Bowness-on-Solway	15/25

As with all LDPs in Britain, you don't have to do the whole route. You can follow it for just a day or two, or enjoy a circular day walk taking in a stretch of the main route. If you only have a few days to spare, we recommend following the central sections between Chollerford and Gilsland (Days 3 and 4), where the wall itself is most visible and dramatic.

### Maps

The *Hadrian's Wall* strip map, published by Harvey Maps, is an excellent companion, showing the route at 1:40,000 scale with several detailed inset maps to make things even clearer, plus some very useful background information.

If you want to get beyond the strip, from east to west you'll need OS Explorer 1:25,000 maps No 316 *Newcastle*, 43 *Hadrian's Wall*, 315 *Carlisle* and 314 *Solway*.

### Books

The official National Trail Guide is *Hadrian's Wall Path* by Anthony Burton, covering the route east to west. Other guides include *Hadrian's Wall Path* by Mark Richards, describing the route in both directions, and *Hadrian's Wall Path* by Henry Stedman, published by Trailblazer, full of information and using walker-specific hand-drawn line maps.

The prolific Mark Richards has also written *Wall Country Walks*, with suggested routes along and around the wall, and *The Roman Ring*, describing two walking routes north and south of the wall, providing year-round alternatives to the national trail itself, and helping reduce the erosion in the wet winter months.

Look out too for *Walking around Hadrian's Wall*, a series of 'walk packs' each containing around 10 leaflets describing different walks between 3 and 8 miles long in the areas along and around Hadrian's

wide-ranging plans for conservation and development, but despite this latter-day battle between the wall's guardians and the restless natives thereabouts, the best way to experience Hadrian's legacy is to walk its length, striding out in the shadow of the ramparts, Roman-soldier-style.

The Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail is a waymarked long-distance path (LDP) that was finally established in 2003, crossing the country from appropriately named Wallsend (known as Segedunum by the Romans) in the east to Bowness-on-Solway (Maia) in the west. Much of the route goes through the magnificent scenery of Northumberland National Park, taking in turrets, temples and forts from

the Roman era, including top-class Housesteads and Vindolanda, and some excellent museums. Also nearby are several historical sites from other ages, including Thirlwall Castle and Lannercost Priory – although even these medieval structures have a link to the wall, as they were constructed from recycled Roman masonry.

By 'marching in the footsteps of bygone shadows' (as the route is described in one local guidebook), it's easy to enjoy Hadrian's Wall and its unique atmosphere. You can look out across the austere landscape, unchanged for millennia – except for the addition of a few farmhouses and the lack of rebellious tribes – just as the centurions must have done all those years ago.

### PLANNING

The Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail can be walked in any direction, but history dictates a westbound route. The wall was built from east to west, the milecastles and turrets are numbered from east to west and most detailed guidebooks to the wall also proceed this way. We have gone with the flow.

If you're a real mile-eater, you could cover the route we describe here in five or six days, but you wouldn't be leaving yourself much time to see the historic sites along the way. If you're a history fan, then doing the walk in eight to 10 days would be better. The daily stages that we suggest are as follows:

Wall. These include: *Walks around Newcastle*, focusing on the area around the eastern end of the trail; *Walks in Northumberland, from Oxen to Opencastr*, with wide coverage of the central area of Hadrian's Wall; *Walks in East Cumbria* and *Walks on the Solway Coast*, covering the area around the western end of the trail; and *Tyne Valley Train Trails*, listing walks to and around the wall from stations on the railway line between Carlisle and Newcastle.

The East Cumbria Countryside Project and the Solway AONB publish a range of excellent local walk guides in the area around the trail in Cumbria, available from tourist offices.

A little background reading will help to unravel the wall and its landscape. The excellent illustrated *Hadrian's Wall* by David Breeze (published by English Heritage) covers the wall itself, plus associated earthworks, forts, roads and other infrastructure. For more thorough detail see *Hadrian's Wall* by David Breeze and Brian Dobson (Penguin).

### Information Sources

For a comprehensive insight into the national trail and its landscape, with accommodation listings, frequently asked questions and up-to-date news, go to the official website: [www.nationaltrail.co.uk/hadrianswall](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/hadrianswall). For general tourism matters see [www.hadrianswallcountry.org](http://www.hadrianswallcountry.org).

At either end of the trail, there are tourist offices in **Newcastle** (☎ 0191-277 8000; [www.visitnewcastlegateshead.com](http://www.visitnewcastlegateshead.com)) and **Carlisle** (☎ 01228-625600; [www.historic-carlisle.org.uk](http://www.historic-carlisle.org.uk)), each covering their surrounding area. The central area, and the entire wall, is covered by the Haltwhistle tourist office, also called the **Hadrian's Wall Information Line** (☎ 01434-322002; [info@hadrians-wall.org](mailto:info@hadrians-wall.org)); this office stocks a comprehensive selection of books and maps, and offers a mail-order service.

All tourist offices stock a range of inspirational and informative brochures and leaflets, including the exceedingly user-friendly *Hadrian's Wall Country Walking & Cycling Accommodation Guide* (free), listing a wide range of places to stay along

the route and also containing some general tourist information.

Also useful is the small but comprehensive *Essential Guide to Hadrian's Wall Path*, covering the entire route with details of things to see, bus and taxi information, useful phone numbers and so on.

### Baggage Services

The **Walkers' Baggage Transfer Company** (☎ 0870 990 5549; [www.walkersbags.co.uk](http://www.walkersbags.co.uk)) is a Brampton-based firm covering the entire Hadrian's Wall route, charging £5 per bag per transfer. Other baggage services are listed on p437.

### NEAREST TOWNS

The 'nearest towns' to the start and finish of the Hadrian's Wall Path are the large city of Newcastle upon Tyne at the route's eastern end, and the tiny village of Bowness-on-Solway in the west.

### Newcastle upon Tyne

Dominating the northeast of England, Newcastle upon Tyne (often shortened to

simply Newcastle) – along with the neighbouring cities Gateshead and Sunderland – is one of the largest urban areas in the country. Formerly a major shipbuilding centre, the region hit hard times in the 1980s and 1990s, but is now enjoying a cultural and architectural renaissance, making the inhabitants of Newcastle – known as Geordies – as proud of their city as they have ever been.

### SLEEPING & EATING

As befitting a major city, there's a wide choice of places to stay. In the centre, budget choices include **Newcastle YHA Hostel** (☎ 0870 770 5972; [www.yha.org.uk](http://www.yha.org.uk); dm £18) in the suburb of Jesmond, and the more central and lively **Albatross Backpackers** (☎ 0191-233 1330; [www.albatrossnewcastle.co.uk](http://www.albatrossnewcastle.co.uk); dm from £17, d £45).

Very near the start of the trail in Wallsend are two useful walker-friendly options: **Hadrian Lodge Hotel** (☎ 0191-262 7733; [www.hadrianlodgehotel.co.uk](http://www.hadrianlodgehotel.co.uk); s/d £41/59) and the highly decorated **Imperial Guesthouse** (☎ 0191-236 9808; [www.imperialguesthouse.co.uk](http://www.imperialguesthouse.co.uk); s/d from £33/60).

### HADRIAN'S WALL – BACKGROUND & HISTORY

The Romans occupied and dominated Britain for about 350 years from AD 44, but the island remained a constant headache for the invaders. The Pict peoples of the north (today's Scotland) constantly rebelled against the Romans, and vast military expenditure was required to ensure the safe exploitation of the mineral-rich territories.

Eventually the costs could not be justified – about 10% of the empire's entire army was committed in Britain, probably the least important colony – so in AD 122 the Emperor Hadrian decided that rather than conquer the Picts he'd settle for simply keeping them at bay. Accordingly he ordered a great wall to be built across the country. To the south would be civilisation and the Roman Empire; to the north would be the savages.

His plan became the Roman Empire's greatest engineering project. The wall took over six years to build, with some evidence suggesting work continued for almost 10 years, from AD 122 to 132.

The wall followed the course of an already-established coast-to-coast military road, the Stanegate, and incorporated the north-facing cliffs of the Whin Sill, a geological feature that also crossed the country at this point, providing extra natural defences.

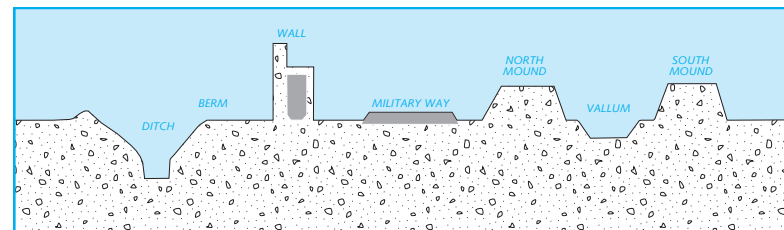
The wall is 80 Roman miles long (about 75 modern miles or 120km) and follows a standard pattern for its entire length: at every Roman mile there was a milecastle, and in between every two milecastles were two turrets. Later historians allocated numbers to these defences, starting with Milecastle 0 at Wallsend (now a suburb of Newcastle upon Tyne) and ending with Milecastle 80 at Bowness-on-Solway, west of Carlisle. The intermediate turrets are tagged A and B, so Milecastle 37 is followed by Turret 37A, Turret 37B and then Milecastle 38.

After the wall's completion it was decided that larger forts were also necessary and 16 of these were built. The prime remaining forts include Vercovicium and Banna (more commonly known today by their English names: Housesteads and Birdoswald). In addition there are several other forts that predate the wall and stand some distance behind it, including Vindolanda (Chesterholm).

The wall also followed a standard pattern in cross section. It was intended to be about 10ft (about 3m) wide at the base and somewhere between 12ft (roughly 4m) and 20ft (6m) high,

although budgetary constraints later forced parts to be built with a narrower 8ft (2.5m) width. Immediately to the north a protective ditch was dug, except where the wall runs along the top of the Whin Sill cliffs. To the south of the wall is a wider ditch known as the vallum, with embankments on each side. This sometimes runs close to the wall, and sometimes some distance away. In many places where all traces of the wall itself have disappeared (it made a fine source of stone for later generations), the ditch or the vallum still remains as clear as ever. Wall walkers soon develop a keen eye for signs of these irregularities in the landscape.

After completion, the wall brought stability to this area of Britain and settlements sprung up around the forts. Over the following centuries the garrisons steadily became more British and less Roman. Meanwhile, the remote outposts were gradually forgotten by Rome, which was busy fighting fires closer to home. Pay came less frequently and farming began to replace soldiery as a source of income. It's generally accepted that Britain was abandoned by Rome around 410 and the wall and its settlements went into steady decline. Population numbers fell, and the border zone between Scotland and England became unstable and dangerous, a bitterly contested battlefield known as the 'Debatable Lands' until the start of the 17th century, when unification of the two countries finally brought fighting to a stop. There can be few bloodier frontiers on the planet; certainly few where the struggles continued for 1500 years.



## DIGGING THE WALL

Your walk along Hadrian's Wall will be further enhanced by getting some archaeological and historical background at the fascinating museums near the start and finish of the route.

In Newcastle, the **Museum of Antiquities** (☎ 0191-222 7849; www.ncl.ac.uk/antiquities; The Quadrangle, University of Newcastle upon Tyne; admission free; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Sat) contains many items found along the wall and a reconstruction of a Roman temple. One of the most interesting exhibits is a model of Hadrian's Wall at a scale of 6 inches to 1 mile, neatly reducing the whole walk to 36ft (about 10m).

**Segedunum Roman Fort** (☎ 0191-236 9347; www.twmuseums.org.uk; adult/child £4/free; 🕒 10am-5pm Apr-Oct, 10am-3pm Nov-Mar), at the start of the trail in Wallsend, is well worth a visit before you start walking. The museum gives a deep insight on Roman life, and a highlight is the observation tower overlooking the ruined fort and the more recent remains of the nearby shipyards along the River Tyne.

In Carlisle the award-winning **Tullie House Museum** (☎ 01228-534781; www.tulliehouse.co.uk; Castle St; adult/child £5/3; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Sat Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Mon-Sat Nov-Mar, slightly shorter hr Sun) has a good Roman collection, including a reconstructed section of the wall. It also has exhibits from the 1000-year period of clan warfare and general unrest after the Romans pulled out, when the border country between England and Scotland became 'the Debatable Lands'.

In the city centre, **Premier Travel Inn** (☎ 0870 990 6530; www.premiertravelinn.com; d £63) is a modern chain hotel, on the Quayside near the historic Tyne bridges, a mere step from the national trail. Breakfast is an extra £5.

Instead of staying in Newcastle, some trail walkers stay two nights in Heddon (the end of Day 1; p221) and come into Newcastle by bus in the morning, then walk back. Others stay two nights in Newcastle and do it the other way around.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

Getting to Newcastle upon Tyne is very easy. This major city is served by train and National Express coach from all parts of Britain.

## Bowness-on-Solway

The little village of Bowness-on-Solway sits on the ruins of Hadrian's Milecastle 80 – although the only visible evidence is the large number of Roman bricks used in more recently constructed houses and barns. Around this village, and in nearby Port Carlisle, look out for reminders from another historic period: nets on wide cross-like frames used by locals for *haaf-netting*, a style of fishing unique to the area that was introduced by Vikings a millennium ago.

## SLEEPING & EATING

The nearest campground is at **Chapel Side** (☎ 016973-51400; sites per person £5), 2 miles away in Port Carlisle. In Bowness itself, accom-

modation includes the inevitably titled **Wallsend Guesthouse** (☎ 016973-51055; www.wallsend.net; s/d £40/60) in the former village rectory, offering a lift service back to Carlisle and long-term car parking.

On the main street, **Old Chapel** (☎ 016973-51126; www.oldchapelbownessonsolway.com; B&B per person £20) offers very comfortable, no-frills B&B; there's a self-catering kitchen and the price includes a light breakfast and packed lunch for the following day. In Port Carlisle, friendly and flexible **Hesket House** (☎ 016973-51876; heskethouse@onetel.com; r per person from £25) is a lovely old farmhouse built partly with Roman masonry, with singles, doubles and family/group rooms.

For food and drink there are two pubs; the friendly and refreshingly no-frills **King's Arms**

## PASSPORT TO SUCCESS

The Hadrian's Wall National Trail Passport is obtainable (free) from most sites and tourist offices along the wall. As you walk the wall, the passport is stamped at checkpoints along the way. The passport season runs from 1 May to 31 October. A full set of six stamps entitles you to buy an exclusive souvenir badge and certificate. This scheme is immensely popular, with about half of all long-distance wall walkers judiciously collecting stamps and sending off for the badge and certificate.

on Bowness-on-Solway's main street, or the welcoming **Hope & Anchor** in Port Carlisle.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

Leaving Bowness-on-Solway by public transport means heading for Carlisle, about 15 miles to the east, from where you can get to anywhere in Britain by train or National Express coach. Your choice is pretty much limited to bus 93, running about six times between Bowness-on-Solway and Carlisle every day except Sunday. If you need to get back to the start (or another point along the wall) you can use the Hadrian's Wall Bus (bus AD 122); see below. Your other option back to the start is a train (there are several each day) between Carlisle and Newcastle along the Tyne Valley line.

## GETTING TO/FROM THE WALK

From Newcastle's main train station in the city centre the quickest and easiest way to get to the start of the trail at Wallsend is by Metro (the city's urban train network), changing at Monument station. Have change ready to pay at the ticket vending machine.

For reaching points along the trail, from the end of May to the end of September, the seasonal Hadrian's Wall Bus (AD 122) cruises the roads parallel to the wall. There are actually two routes: from Carlisle eastwards, stopping at all the important places, such as Brampton, Birdoswald, Greenhead, Once Brewed, Vindolanda and Housesteads; and from Newcastle westwards, with the two routes overlapping in the central (and busiest) part of the wall.

The Hadrian's Wall Bus runs about five times per day in each direction, making it

## CANNY CODE

The Geordie dialect is among the most difficult to understand in Britain, giving rise to many jokes and apocryphal tales. One story relates how all British troops fighting in WWII had to use code when communicating by radio to avoid enemy interceptions. All troops, that is, except the Newcastle regiments. As Geordies were unintelligible to most other native English speakers, the reasoning went, the Germans wouldn't have a hope.

## BUSSING THE WALL

Maybe to prove that the Hadrian's Wall Path is easily accessible by public transport, in 2003 a canny Geordie managed to walk the entire trail, using bus and train to get to/from start points and returning home every night!

easy to get back to your starting point each day if you don't want to carry a heavy pack, or if you're just doing day walks. Note however that drivers will pick up and drop off only at official bus stops.

Fares on the Hadrian's Wall Bus are very reasonable – no more than a pound or two for each stage of the trail. An all-day unlimited travel ticket is also available. You can get a timetable (also containing two-for-the-price-of-one vouchers to various historical sites along the wall) from local tourist offices, or check details at www.hadrians-wall.org.

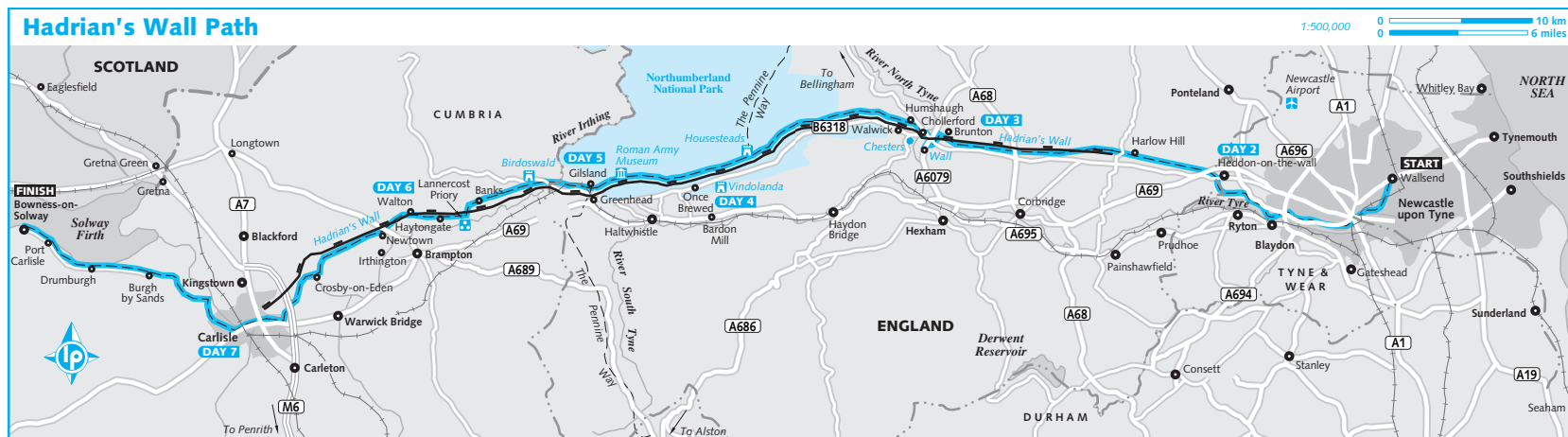
Alternatively, bus 685 runs several times a day (three times on Sunday) throughout the year between Carlisle and Newcastle, on a route close to the wall or a few miles south, via Heddon, Hexham, Greenhead, Bardon Mill, Haltwhistle and Brampton. If you're heading for Once Brewed, get off bus 685 at Hexham or Haltwhistle then catch the Hadrian's Wall bus AD 122, or get off at Bardon Mill and walk (or taxi) the 2.5 miles.

And finally, there are several trains each day between Carlisle and Newcastle along the Tyne Valley line, stopping at Brampton (the train station is about 2 miles southeast of the town), Wylam, Haltwhistle and Bardon Mill – all within a few miles walk or taxi ride from the trail.

## THE WALK

**Day 1: Wallsend to Heddon-on-the-Wall**  
5–7 hours, 15 miles (25km)

*Today's walk, though very urban in character, is almost traffic-free and never very far from the historic River Tyne, following a combination of landscaped disused railway lines and river-side promenades out to the edge of the city and the start of the countryside. There's only a couple of steep gradients, the longest being a haul into Heddon-on-the-Wall at the end of the day.*



The Hadrian's Wall Path starts (or ends) appropriately at Wallsend, a former town with a proud history of mining and ship-building, today a suburb of Newcastle upon Tyne. Wallsend is also proud of its Roman heritage; the metro station, only two minutes' walk from the start of the trail, is unique in the world in having its signs in English and Latin.

Near the metro station is a **supermarket**, so you can fill up with *bait* (local slang for snack or packed lunch) before setting off. There's also a good **café** at Segedunum Roman Fort – well worth looking around; in addition to that, it's passport-stamping station No 1.

From the official start of the national trail at Segedunum Roman Fort, follow signs down to the former railway, now a cycle and footpath called Hadrian's Way, aim southwest and begin your march. (For most of this first stage the signs say Hadrian's Way, but be assured this is also the Hadrian's Wall Path – indicated by the usual acorn waymarks.) It has to be said that after leaving Segedunum you won't see much more of the wall today. The attraction instead is the **River Tyne**, still very much a working river despite an industrial decline in recent years. The Hadrian's Way path leads through (frankly unattractive) suburbs away from the river, then after about 2 miles drops down a river-side path called Walker Promenade. You're very close to the city centre but you wouldn't think so, with

just the occasional dog-walker and perhaps a cormorant or two for company. At low tide, look for the limbs of a Victorian wherry stretching out of the shore sands where it has lain abandoned since the end of its working life.

The route passes the tall, white Spillers flour mill, and by far the most interesting and attractive section of today's route begins. As you follow the river around a bend, the **Gateshead Millennium Bridge** comes into view with its large, delicate arch framing the other famous Tyne bridges. Ocean-going ships no longer dock along the quaysides, and the area has been transformed in recent years into a cultural centre, the latest addition being the bulbous glass Sage music venue on the Gateshead side. The bridge also marks the halfway point on today's stage, so it may be time to find a river-side bench and enjoy the view with your *bait*. Alternatively, along the embankment are numerous coffee bars, cafés and pubs. Our favourite pub was the **Quayside**, with good-priced food and drink, plus outside tables overlooking the river.

With lunch and the bridges behind you, carry on along the river-side embankment. Plenty of information boards explain the local history of this area. Look out for the long wooden structure of **Dunstan Staithes** on the south bank of the river, a monument to the coal era where *chaldrons* (wagons) of coal were once loaded onto *colliers* (coal-carrying ships) for export.

A little further and the trail leaves the river, following first the Scotswood Rd, immortalised in the Geordie folksong 'Blaydon Races' but now a busy urban highway, and then another former railway turned cycle and footpath. After a mile or two the trail passes through some patches of green and a footbridge takes you over the busy A1 dual-carriageway. You then go through the suburb of Leamington, where the good **café** at the glass-fronted community centre, right next to the trail, enthusiastically welcomes walkers. Next comes the outer suburb of Newburn; shortly after passing the **Boathouse** pub you reach the car park, public loos and information centre marking the start of Tyne Riverside Country Park. If you need sustenance or accommodation, the **Keelman** (☎ 0191-267 1689; www.biglampbrewers.co.uk; s/d £39/52) is highly recommended for its food, own-brewed beer and comfortable rooms.

From Newburn, the trail finally leaves the urban flavour behind and runs along a

short stretch of peaceful river-side path. About 12 miles from Wallsend, the path heads away from the river and across the **Wylam Waggonway**, only 800m from the birthplace cottage of train pioneer George Stephenson. The earliest locomotives were trialled along the waggonway, now an important relic of railway archaeology. Finally, cross the Close House golf course and the promised long haul uphill takes you into Heddon-on-the-Wall.

#### HEDDON-ON-THE-WALL

In the little town of Heddon, places to stay include the very friendly **Houghton North Farm** (☎ 01661-854364; www.hadrianswallaccommodation.com; dm £22), an excellent independent hostel with four-berth bunk rooms and good facilities; a light breakfast is included in the rate. There's also **Ramblers Repose** (☎ 01661-852419; 8 Killibrigs; s/d from £35/45), a small house in a modern housing estate with good views over the surrounding countryside.

#### TOP TIPS

Before setting out on your walk – short or long – read the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail Conservation Tips attached to stiles and gates along the route. These have been produced to inform walkers about ways they can help look after the World Heritage Site. It is all about spreading the visitor load and protecting the grass, because the grass is the best way to protect the soil, which in turn is the best way to protect still-buried archaeological artefacts. The tips ask that people help avoid the emergence of worn lines, simply by walking side-by-side instead of in single file, quite the opposite to the advice given to walkers in places such as the Lake District, where a narrow eroded line is better than a wide eroded line.

For food in Heddon, there is the friendly **Dingle Dell** tearoom and deli, and the **Swan** pub, plus a general store and a **Spar** shop attached to the Shell garage.

If you plan to stay two nights in Newcastle, bus 685 runs hourly back into the city. The bus stop is conveniently next to the Three Tuns pub.

## Day 2: Heddon-on-the-Wall to Chollerford

5–7 hours, 15 miles (25km)

*Today is not everyone's idea of a national trail; the path is mostly within earshot of a busy main road. However, it has its rewards – and a landscape feast is only a few miles away! Another plus is a good batch of places to eat along the way.*

Leave Heddon aiming northwest; the trail runs beside the main B6138 for much of today. To take your mind off the traffic, tune your eye into the Roman landscape; there are plenty of clues, and it adds depth to your journey when you know the meaning of those lumps and bumps in the fields.

Briefly, as well as the wall itself, the military structure included a defensive ditch on the north side, while on the south side was a road, known today as the Military Way, then a double bank and ditch called the vallum. (See also the boxed text, p216.) It's these earthworks that are mostly visible today – look for slight changes in the level of the fields, they will become more obvious as time passes – as, for about 20 miles beyond Heddon, Hadrian's Wall is out of sight *beneath* today's B6318, constructed on the orders of General Wade following the Jacobite uprising of 1745. It clearly made a good foundation; as you step into the first field west of Heddon, look along this stretch for the occasional piece of Roman masonry still supporting the modern road.

About 4 miles from Heddon, you pass Whittledene Reservoir Nature Reserve, and a bird hide kindly provided by Northumbria Water. It's a good place for a rest, although the cosy **Robin Hood Inn** (passport station No 2) and excellent **Vallum Farm Café** are only 1 mile further. Your next refuelling points are the **Errington Arms** (☎ closed Mon) and nearby **Shop on the Wall Café**, on the junction with the A68 at the 10-mile mark.

Around 13 miles from Heddon friendly **St Oswald's Farm Café** (☎ closed Mon) also offers

B&B. Nearby is the site of the Battle of Heavenfield, a place of holy pilgrimage, where an oak cross commemorates the victory of 7th-century King Oswald of Northumbria over Cadwallon of Gwynedd.

At the end of the day, approaching Chollerford, you get your first sight of Hadrian's Wall – well, a 25m length – at an English Heritage site called **Planetrees**. There's also a minor diversion to **Brunton Turret**, another relic and a taste of the great forts to come.

## CHOLLERFORD

Budget accommodation in the village of Chollerford is limited to the appropriately named **Riverside Campsite** (☎ 01434-681325; sites for 2 £10), a friendly place with a flat field and good modern shower block; the attached café is open daily and offers good filling meals and snacks, plus free internet access. Nearby is the large, comfortable and well-appointed **George Hotel** (☎ 01434-681611; www.swallow-hotels.com/hotels/george-hotel-chollerford; d from £100-150) with beautiful gardens overlooking the River North Tyne. Rates vary according to the season, and bargains can be had at quiet times.

Just to the north of Chollerford, in the larger village of Humshaugh, the **Crown Inn** (☎ 01434-681231; www.crowninnhumshaugh.co.uk; d £55) offers comfortable B&B and substantial evening meals. You can stock up on lunch stuff at the delightfully old-fashioned **post office shop**.

About 1 mile southeast of Chollerford, in the tiny settlement of Wall, **Hadrian Hotel** (☎ 01434-681232; www.hadrianhotel.com; d with/without bathroom £65/58) has a consistently good reputation for food and accommodation. About 2 miles west of Chollerford, just north of the trail, everything a weary walker could want is provided at friendly and welcoming **Greencarts Farm** (☎ 01434-681320; www.greencarts.co.uk; camp sites for 2 £10, camping barn £10, bunkhouse £20, B&B s/d £30/50); as well as a range of rooms and optional evening meals, there's a laundry and drying room.

## Day 3: Chollerford to Once Brewed

4–5 hours, 12 miles (19km)

*For history fans the wait is over, as Hadrian's Wall proper is a major feature of this stage, with the impressive vallum and ditch more than just a sideshow. Walkers too will love this day; the trail is now in Northumberland*

## RESPECT

The Hadrian's Wall National Trail Officer, along with several organisations representing walkers, archaeologists, farmers, traders and other local inhabitants, has developed the following Code of Respect for visitors. Please abide by its principles:

- Avoid walking *on* the wall; you may cause it to collapse
- Keep to signed paths at all times
- Respect private land and livestock
- Keep dogs under close control
- Visit organised sites (forts, museums etc) as these can handle larger visitor numbers
- Use local shops, restaurants and other facilities
- Take public transport where possible
- Consider circular walks instead of an out-and-back along the wall; this reduces path damage, especially in winter months when the ground is waterlogged

Note that all the land next to the wall and in the surrounding area is privately owned. Some of it is owned by the National Trust and open to the public. You are not allowed to cross enclosed or cultivated land, apart from on legal rights of way. If in doubt, keep to paths, follow signs, and use only stiles or gates to cross walls and fences, and you should be OK.

*National Park, becoming more elevated and bumpy as the day progresses. If there has to be a downside, there are no cafés or pubs for lunch directly en route (not even a water tap), so carry all the bait you need.*

From the roundabout at Chollerford take the pavement alongside the road towards Housesteads, soon calling into **Chesters Roman Fort** (an English Heritage site) to collect your third passport stamp. Chesters was the home of John Clayton, pre-eminent among the originators of the conservation movement; in the mid-19th century he bought up several miles of Hadrian's Wall, including Housesteads Fort, with the specific aim of preserving it.

The trail beside the road heads uphill to the settlement of Walwick, turning right along a narrow road. Follow this for about 300m, then take the stile on the left and follow paths across mostly pasture fields for a few miles, passing a remnant of the wall at Black Carts, to reach a notable bend in the trail (and the nearby road) called **Limestone Corner**. It's tempting to imagine a Roman auxiliary looking for his *bait* box, accidentally lost down one of the cracks in the rock. Make sure you hang onto yours.

The trail remains on the easy-going level for about 4 miles, crossing and recrossing the B6318 near the Mithraic temple at Broc-

titia (where followers of Mithras still leave offerings on the altar). Soon after this, you get your first proper views of the **Whin Sill**, the rocky ridge with a sharp north face – almost a cliff in some places – that crosses England at this point. Hadrian's Wall was built along the top of this cliff wherever possible, taking full advantage of the natural defences.

You pass a fine section of buried wall, then the remains of Milecastle 33, Turret 33B, Milecastle 34 and Turret 34A, and finally gain the crest of the Whin Sill at **Sewingshields Crags** – a grand view point, well worth a pause to take in the impressive scenery and tangible sense of history. If you really want to linger, nearby is the **Old Repeater Station** (☎ 01434-688668; www.hadrians-wall-bedandbreakfast.co.uk; d with/without bathroom £50/45) with clean and tidy accommodation and a very friendly café; evening meals and drinks are also available.

From here it's 2 miles of energetic walking along the Whin Sill switchback to **Housesteads Fort** (see the boxed text, p225). If you need food, there's a refreshment kiosk in the car park near the main entrance to the fort.

From Housesteads, continue west along this finest section of the wall, with superb views to the north and along the wall in both directions. Don't forget to look back

as well as forward: the view of the wall from Housesteads Crags and Milecastle 37 is superb.

A mile beyond Housesteads, the Pennine Way joins the wall and shares the route for the next 8 miles, so you may see fellow long-distance walkers going in the other direction.

The trail drops down to Milking Gap, then up and over the dramatic cliffs of Highshield and Peel Crags, past the much-photographed tree in **Sycamore Gap** (a stretch of wall that featured in the movie *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves*, even though the characters were supposedly walking from Dover to Nottingham) and Milecastle 39 to reach Turret 39A, with yet more superb views. Before the next milecastle a lane crosses the trail; take this southwards down to Once Brewed.

#### ONCE BREWED

The tiny settlement of Once Brewed, on the B6318 northeast of Haltwhistle, consists of only three or four buildings. One of these is the excellent **Once Brewed tourist office** (☎ 01434-344396; tic.oncebrewed@nnpa.org.uk; ☹ closed winter). The **Northumberland National Park Centre** (☎ 01434-344396; www.northumberland-national-park.org.uk; ☎) has helpful staff who can make accommodation bookings and provide all manner of tourist information. It also sells refreshments and has free internet access.

About 500m west along the main road, campers can pitch their tents at **Winshields Farm** (☎ 01434-344243; camping barn £6, sites for 2 £10). Next to the tourist office is the large, modern and friendly **Once Brewed YHA** (☎ 01434-344360; www.yha.org.uk; dm £15, d with shared bathroom £35), which also serves two-course evening meals to nonguests. About 800m east of the tourist office, in East Twice Brewed, there's friendly, basic B&B at the **Crows Nest** (☎ 01434-344348; s/d with shared bathroom £24/48), while in West Twice Brewed (about the same distance west) is the well-run and pleasant **Vallum Lodge** (☎ 01434-344248; www.vallum-lodge.co.uk; s/d £50/66; ☎).

Around 1 mile north of Once Brewed, **Saughy Rigg Farm** (☎ 01434-344120; www.saughyrigg.co.uk; s/d £35/70, dinner £15) provides good accommodation and serves a four-course evening meal. Your only other option for dinner or a drink is the **Twice Brewed Inn**

(☎ 01434-344534; www.twicebrewedinn.co.uk; s/d with shared bathroom £28/48, d from £60; ☹ breakfast, lunch & dinner; ☎), back on the main road. Despite the fairy lights around the bar and the friendly staff, it's less than sparkling.

If you can't find a place to stay around Once Brewed, the market town of Haltwhistle (about 4 miles to the southwest) has more options, and makes a good base if you want to linger longer, with neat transport connections, banks, shops, cafés, pubs and a wide selection of places to stay and eat. Haltwhistle claims to be at the centre of Britain; a signpost on the main street points to the far (and equidistant) corners of the land. The tourist office can provide details, and local taxi firms can ferry you to and from the wall for a few pounds each way.

#### Day 4: Once Brewed to Gilsland 3–4 hours, 8 miles (13km)

*Today's stage is short, to allow time to visit historic sites and museums along this excellently preserved section of the wall – and to recover from several steep climbs along the switchback of the Whin Sill. Today also has three possible food stops.*

From Once Brewed, cross the B6318 and walk up the lane to reach the trail near the site of Turret 39B. From here head west, following the route as it strides over the impressive **Winshields Crags** – at 375m the highest point along the wall.

The trail crosses two minor roads and continues on to the remains of **Aesica Fort** (also Milecastle 43), now partly occupied by a farmhouse called Great Chesters.

The next section of the trail is particularly fine as the wall roller coasts up and down a row of cliffs called the **Nine Nicks of Thirlwall** (from 'nick', an old English word for 'cut', referring to the gaps between the cliffs). Today, only six cliffs remain, the rest having been quarried away, but who's to quibble? Then, just past Turret 45A, the Roman remains end abruptly at **Waltown** – a former quarry, now a nature reserve, with a sculpture park, visitors centre, public toilets and a friendly little refreshment kiosk.

Just beyond Waltown, there's no sign of Magnis Fort, which once stood here, but instead the **Carvoran Roman Army Museum** (☎ 016977-47485; www.vindolanda.com; adult/child £4/3, combined ticket with Vindolanda £7/4; ☹ 10am–5pm mid-Feb–mid-Nov, 10am–6pm Apr–Sep) gives an

excellent impression of life on the wall for the troops. There's a café inside the museum, but you have to be a paid-up museum visitor to use it. Popping in just to buy food is not permitted.

Go back to the lane and turn left to pick up the route of the path along the wall, which drops down rather circuitously to Thirlwall Castle Farm and charming **Holmhead Guesthouse** (☎ 016977-47402; www.bandb.hadrianswall.com; s/d £43/66), steeped in history, standing on the wall and reusing the Roman stonework (note the Latin inscriptions on the kitchen wall). Nearby are the ruins of **Thirlwall Castle** (built with more recycled Roman masonry) from where you cross a field, a river and the railway to reach the Greenhead–Gilsland road.

Turn right (not straight on, that's the southbound Pennine Way) and follow the road for a short distance. Ignore the road to the golf course and Wall End Farm, then take a path up some steps on your left, crossing fields, stiles and a small footbridge, running parallel to the wall mound. Continue west across fields, past Chapel House Farm, then through its next-door-neighbour's garden (look out for Dennis the Menace and friends) and towards a lane on the edge of Gilsland. Go straight on, through another garden (aren't rights of way amazing?) and

a few more fields to reach another lane near a shed decorated with a Roman shield. Go right, and down the lane to reach the **Samson Inn** (☎ 016977-47220; d £50), a friendly local pub with good beer, bar food and bedrooms. Go left, and up the lane to reach **Bordersyde** (☎ 016977-47613; bookings@bordersyde.co.uk; d £50), offering B&B at weekends only when we passed through, although with plans to expand to weekdays soon; the friendly people here can also advise on camping.

The trail leads on past the very fine **Poltross Burn Milecastle** (No 48), wedged incongruously up against the railway embankment. The burn (stream) itself is the border between Northumberland and Cumbria. The trail runs next to the railway, then crosses the lines and skirts the primary school to meet a main road on the western edge of Gilsland.

#### GILSLAND & GREENHEAD

In Gilsland, walker-friendly B&Bs include the long-standing and popular **Howard House** (☎ 016977-47285; s/d from £30/55), on the north-west side of the village. Slightly to the west, on the road towards Birdoswald, is friendly and welcoming **Brookside Villa** (☎ 016977-47300; www.brooksidevilla.com; d £60). There's also the **Hill on the Wall** (☎ 016977-47214; d £60), a large house with a tranquil atmosphere.

#### HOUSESTEADS & VINDOLANDA FORTS

**Housesteads Fort** (☎ 01434-344363; adult/child £4/2; ☹ 10am–6pm Apr–Sep, to 4pm Oct–Mar), correctly but rarely called Vercovicium, is without doubt the finest fort along the wall. It's well preserved and certainly has the most impressive location, perched atop the Whin Sill ridge. The long stretches of wall leading to it from either direction add to the grandeur and sense of history. A prime attraction is the fort's huge flushing latrine, but there's a host of other structures, including the hospital and four fine gateways.

At **Vindolanda** (☎ 01434-344277; www.vindolanda.com; adult/child £5/3; ☹ 10am–5pm mid-Feb–mid-Nov, to 6pm Apr–Sep), still occasionally known by its English name of Chesterholm, you can see the impressive remains of walls and buildings spread over a wide area. There are also reconstructions of a stone turret, an earlier wooden turret and houses from the Roman-British period. Most interesting is the museum, which contains pristine pottery, some early travel gadgets (including a portable comb and a midge net) and some extraordinary written records – the Roman equivalent of stray memos that escaped the office shredder. The evocative fragments include a birthday-party invitation to the commander's wife, an officer's complaint that his men didn't have enough beer, a soldier's mention of the 'wretched British', a note accompanying a parent's present of warm socks and underpants, and a child's piece of school work with the teacher's acidic comment: 'sloppy'.

If you plan to visit the Roman Army Museum at Carvoran (opposite) – passed on Day 4 of this route – a combined ticket for this and Vindolanda costs £7/5. Vindolanda entry days and times are variable; phone or check the website for details.

Bang on the trail and steeped in history, **Willowford Farm** (☎ 016977-47962; www.willowford.co.uk; d/f £60/80) is another very friendly place; evening meals are available. Gilsland also has a **post office shop** and the **Bridge Inn** for evening drinks and food.

In nearby Greenhead, there's budget accommodation at **Greenhead YHA Hostel** (☎ 0870 770 5842; greenhead@yha.org.uk; dm £14), while campers can head for small-n-neat **Roam-n-Rest Caravan Park** (☎ 016977-47213; sites for 2 £4). The freshly modernised **Greenhead Hotel** (☎ 016977-47411; d £60) offers good food and beer and a friendly welcome to walkers, while the **Olde Forge Tearoom** serves snacks and meals from lunchtime to 5pm, sometimes later in the summer.

### Day 5: Gilsland to Walton

3–4 hours, 8 miles (13km)

*Today's stage is your last chance to see the masonry sections of the wall, so savour it while you can, but on the upside the terrain is gentle and on a clear day you will get your first views into Scotland. There are two food stops on this stage.*

From the outskirts of Gilsland, the trail follows a well-preserved section of the wall down to **Willowford Farm** (with accommodation; see above). In days gone by the wall was seen as a handy source of construction material, and locals simply used the Roman stonework to build their own farms and houses. Willowford Farm was no exception: a plaque indicates a Roman inscription on a brick that now forms part of a barn.

From the farm another stretch of wall leads down past Turret 48B to the remains of a large bridge built by Roman engineers across the River Irthing. The river has since shifted its course and today there's a modern and award-winning footbridge to take you to the north bank.

Beyond the footbridge a stiff uphill section takes you to Milecastle 49 and then to Banna Fort, more commonly known by its English name, **Birdoswald** (☎ 016977-47602; adult/child £4/2; ☎ 10am–5pm Apr–Sep, 10am–4pm Mar & Oct). The fort is also passport station No 4, and has a wonderful café and an interesting little museum, displaying numerous fascinating finds and a reproduction of a section of the wall as it would have looked, complete with watchtower and guards. (There is also a life-size statue of

Tony Wilmott, the archaeologist who, in the 1990s, excavated part of the fort.) If the weather's fine, head for the picnic area at the southern edge of the fort, with good views over the River Irthing valley. If you're tempted to stay longer, **Birdoswald YHA Hostel** (☎ 0870 770 6124; birdoswald@yha.org.uk; dm £15) has good facilities, and must be one of the most atmospheric places to spend a night along the wall.

Leaving Birdoswald, take the path signed from the road into the restored Victorian orchard, leaving it via a kissing gate into a large pasture field, bearing right towards Hadrian's Wall. The next 4 miles are all easy-going, and the route is simple to follow. For now at least, the landscape and atmosphere remain as upland, although this is about to change.

From the hamlet of Banks there is a short stretch along a quiet road passing the last existing, as well as the tallest, piece of the wall – so it may be time to reflect on the route so far as you continue past Hare Hill Farm and across several fields. This is a pretty section and the trail is clear, with the buried wall remains to your right, but it's well worth pausing to take in the 360-degree views from the summit of Craggle Hill. On a clear day you can see your ultimate destination, the Solway coast, as well as the north Pennines, the Galloway Hills and even the mountain outline of the Lake District. Another day, another walk...

But it's time to refocus on Hadrian's route, as you drop steeply to Haytongate and the oasis of a self-service **refreshment point** situated in a garden shed. While you're sipping your tea, read the many 'thank you' notes pinned to the wall by grateful customers.

The trail ahead presents only a couple of minor bumps, mere excuses for hills. You're well into Cumbria now – notice how much longer the grass is here, and the temperature is likely to be warmer than yesterday's stride across the high Whin Sill. The rest of today's walk meanders through fields, almost always accompanied by the wall in the form of a mound or ditch, and takes you into Walton.

### WALTON & BRAMPTON

The village of Walton has only one amenity: the **Centurion Inn** (☎ 016977-2438; d from £50), offering good B&B, and well worth the walk

for its good beer, fine food and a garden just perfect for relaxing in if you've been lucky with the weather and had a hot day.

About 800m west of Walton, and right on the trail, there's a range of accommodation at **Sandysike Farm** (☎ 016977-2330; camp sites per person £5, bunkhouse £15, B&B per person from £25).

Your other accommodation options are all in Brampton, a 3-mile walk south, although some B&Bs offer a drop-off and pick-up, with the **Centurion Inn** making the perfect rendezvous...

The small town of Brampton has an old market square surrounded by shops, banks, some historic buildings and several pubs (most doing food), plus Chinese, Indian, pizza and fish takeaways.

Campers can pitch at the neat and low-key **Irthing Vale Caravan Park** (☎ 016977-3600; sites for 2 £10) on the outskirts of town. Other places to stay include peaceful and walker-friendly **Oval House** (☎ 016977-2106; www.ovalhouse.demon.co.uk; s/d £35/60) and the delightfully old-fashioned **Oakwood Park Hotel** (☎ 016977-2436; s/d £35/56) in its own grounds on the northern edge of Brampton.

For more accommodation ideas contact the tourist offices in **Brampton** (☎ 016977-3433) or **Carlisle** (☎ 01228-625600; www.historic-carlisle.org.uk).

### Day 6: Walton to Carlisle

4–5 hours, 11 miles (17km)

*If there is such a thing as a rest while still on the hoof then today is it. The uplands are behind you and this stage is a level, easy-going walk, mostly through fields. Lunch stops are limited, so plan the route, or bring sandwiches.*

From Walton, the sign on the wall of the Centurion Inn points the way out of the village towards Sandysike Farm, from where the trail leads to Swainsteads and down through a field, with the remains of the Roman ditch to your left, towards the Cam Beck footbridge. Look out for kingfishers here.

The next mile passes through pasture, skirting three farms. You're still faithfully following the wall and ditch, and you should by now be expert at recognising its course in the hedgerows – after almost two millennia Hadrian's Wall still serves to define the boundaries of land ownership hereabouts.

Pass through quiet Newtown (like many settlements in this area, part of the Carlisle commuter belt), where **Newtown Farm** (☎ 016977-2768; susanraice@tiscali.co.uk; d £50) is another possible overnight option, and then continue following the well-waymarked trail over fields and across a road at Old-wall. About 1 mile off the route is Carlisle airport, where plane fans will enjoy Solway Aviation Museum (there's also a **café** at the terminal building).

Keep on the straight-as-a-die route alongside several fields, past Bleatarn (pronounced Blè-trun), joining a minor road sitting on top of the wall, then turning left down Sandy Lane and into Crosby, where the sturdy old **Stag Inn** provides excellent drinks (tea, coffee or beer) and food.

The trail leads down a short stretch of road, then through a kissing gate onto the bank of the River Eden. After about 350m, aim away from the river to reach a footbridge across a tributary stream, then rejoin the main river-bank path before cutting across to Linstock village.

A short stretch of minor road leads over the M6 motorway then onto a footpath-cycleway beside the road into Rickerby Park on the edge of Carlisle itself. The last mile or so is parkland, crossing the River Eden over the Memorial Bridge before a river-side walk takes you to Sands Sports Centre, just before the main road bridge over the river. Look out for the statue of the cormorant – maybe the first you've seen since leaving the Tyne. The centre's **café** is passport station No 5 and this is a convenient place to leave the trail and go into Carlisle.

### CARLISLE

As one of the larger cities in northern England, there is ample scope for accommodation in Carlisle. There's also some rich history, including the dramatic red-stoned **castle**, the stunning **cathedral** (both built with, you guessed it, reused Roman masonry) and the award-winning **Tullie House Museum** (see the boxed text, p218). For more history see the boxed text, p209.

Campers will have to keep on walking; the nearest useful site is **West View** (☎ 01228-526336; sites for 2 £10), a friendly, low-key place, 3 miles beyond Carlisle and about 1 mile off the trail near Grinsdale. The best budget



option is **Carlisle YHA Hostel** (☎ 0870 770 5752; www.yha.org.uk; s £18), part of the university residences in a central position next to the castle, with single rooms in flats.

For B&B, there's a handy cluster along Victoria Pl, conveniently positioned between the trail and the city centre, including **Abberley House** (☎ 01228-521645; www.abberleyhouse.co.uk; 33 Victoria Pl; s/d £35/55), **Brooklyn House** (☎ 01228-590002; 42 Victoria Pl; d £50) and **Cartref Guesthouse** (☎ 01228-522077; 44 Victoria Pl; d £50).

On nearby Warwick Rd, options include **Ivy House** (☎ 01228-530432; 101 Warwick Rd; d £44), **Cornerways Guesthouse** (☎ 01228-521733; www.cornerwaysbandb.co.uk; 107 Warwick Rd; s/d £35/60) and **Craighead** (☎ 01228-596767; 6 Hartington Pl; d £48), just off Warwick Rd. If you're staying here, Victoria Pl and Warwick Rd are most easily reached by leaving the trail on a footpath about 300m after leaving the Memorial Bridge.

On the west side of the city, in the suburb of Newtown, **Vallum House Hotel** (☎ 01228-521860; 75 Burgh Rd) is another walker-friendly option.

For food, the centre of Carlisle is teeming with options, from takeaways and pubs to café-bars and restaurants. For unusual surroundings try the **Priory Kitchen** in the old vaults of the ruined cathedral. For an evening meal, a quick stroll and perusal of the menus will soon find something to suit your taste and budget.

## Day 7: Carlisle to Bowness-on-Solway

5–7 hours, 15 miles (25km)

*This final stage is fairly long, but is mostly at sea level so the going is easy. The landscape changes once again and this little-known corner of England, peering out across the Solway Firth into Scotland, presents itself as special without making any kind of fuss. Typically Cumbrian, some might say...*

Today's stage starts at the Sands Sports Centre, next to the River Eden. Information boards tell the history of 'the Sands', which is a former island, and also indicate the start of the Cumbria Coastal Way, another LDP. For much of this day, the Hadrian's Wall Path follows the route of the Cumbria Coastal Way and you will see waymarks for both.

Keeping the river on your right, go under the road bridge that also crosses the river, and continue through Bitts Park, crossing

the tributary River Caldew, then past the athletics stadium and along the river-side path. The trail goes under two rather unsavoury concrete railway bridges then, about 800m later, under an older and more graceful (though now disused) viaduct, finally leaving the remnants of the city behind as it ascends a flight of timber steps and continues through fields along the bank of the Eden. There are steep drops where the path crosses a handful of steep-sided ghylls (little valleys) entering the main river, but apart from that the going is easy.

At Grinsdale the trail leaves the river, then (still on the line of the wall) passes through fields to Kirkandrews and along another stretch of river side to Beaumont, before aiming west through farmland to meet the main road just east of Burgh by Sands (pronounced – presumably to confuse tourists – Bruff by Sands). The trail follows the pavement beside the road through this long linear village, where the **Greyhound Inn** is a very good lunch option – with an inviting garden just perfect for sunny days.

Beyond Burgh, at Dykesfield, you may be surprised to see a coastguard station, but it's here for a very good reason: the next 2 miles are at sea level, the nearby river is tidal and the road periodically floods. It's important to check the tide predictions on the notice board before continuing – then it won't be you who needs the lifeboat.

A few flat miles beside the road brings you to Drumburgh (pronounced, naturally, Drum-bruff). There's a self-service refreshment point at **Grange Farm** that trail walkers are delighted to find, with drinks, snacks, and somewhere to sit and rest.

From here, you head southwest along the rough road towards Drumburgh Moss National Nature Reserve, turning right for Walker House Farm then over a small footbridge and through fields to Glasson village, where the **Highland Laddie** pub – a reference to the neighbours on the other side of the river – is another possible refreshment option with food and drink every day (except Tuesday). Opposite the pub, follow the track (which is constructed on top of the Roman vallum) to reach **Glendale Holiday Park**, where the shop may be a handy place to resupply for the last few miles of walking.

## SOLWAY TIDES

The Solway Firth has a capricious edge – the land is flat, tides can be high, storms can brew up at any time of year, and parts of the trail (Dykesfield to Drumburgh, Port Carlisle to Bowness-on-Solway) may flood – so it's important to check the tide predictions before you set out on the final stage of the trail.

For checking on the spot, see the information panels beside the road at Dykesfield and Bowness. You need to know the times of high tides of 9m and above, as that's when you may find water lapping round your ankles (or higher!).

For a longer forecast go to www.ukho.gov.uk and select the port of Silloth, about 10 miles down the coast from Bowness. Once you've found the high tide times at Silloth, add one hour in winter time (Greenwich Mean Time) and two hours in British Summer Time to get the time of high tide on the affected parts of the trail. For an hour either side of high tide you should avoid walking this section.

Do bear in mind that the tide tables give predictions only and that many conditions (such as wind speed and atmospheric pressure) can influence the likelihood of the Solway marshes flooding. The water can and does rise very quickly. You have been warned!

The trail runs next to the road, past Kirkland Farm and **Chapel Side Campsite** (☎ 016973-51400; sites for 2 £5), then takes you into **Port Carlisle**. This sleepy village was once an important harbour, as the crumbling masonry testifies. Centuries ago, ships docked here, from where barges carried their cargo into the city of Carlisle.

The trail crosses the now-silted-up canal basin; it was replaced in the 19th century by the railway, only for that to disappear into distant memory too, remembered now by some old photos on the wall of the **Hope & Anchor** pub, just off the trail, a friendly place with good beer and food (except some Mondays).

The final leg of the trail follows the edge of the marshes, alongside the road then on the road into the town of Bowness-on-Solway. There's little to indicate the exact position of the Roman fort of Maia that stood here at the end of Hadrian's Wall, but many of the modern roads follow the original Roman layout.

Enter the village, pass a few houses, then turn off the main street to reach, at the **Banks**, a restored Edwardian promenade and lovingly maintained natural garden with a Romanesque shelter, plenty of on-site information boards, a lovely view over the river, and the final passport stamping station (there is another in the nearby King's Arms pub). Best of all, it is somewhere peaceful to sit down and rest, and reflect on your walk through history over the past seven days.

## A NORTHUMBERLAND COAST WALK

<b>Duration</b>	5–6½ hours
<b>Distance</b>	13 miles (21km)
<b>Difficulty</b>	easy
<b>Start</b>	Bamburgh (p230)
<b>Finish</b>	Craster (p231)
<b>Transport</b>	bus

**Summary** A beautiful coastal route via pretty fishing villages and imposing medieval castles. The walk isn't too strenuous, although if a cold wind is blowing off the sea it can be tiring.

The Northumberland coast has some of the longest and sandiest beaches in Britain, but you won't find busy seaside resorts or the bucket-and-spade brigade here. The reason for this is the weather – probably one day in three the coast is shrouded by a sea mist, known locally as a 'fret', so the sun and fun seekers go elsewhere, leaving the beautiful, wild and windswept shore relatively untouched for walkers to enjoy.

It's not completely deserted, of course. Along the coast are some small fishing villages (many with good pubs), a small port town, plus a few charming hotels and low-key camp sites. Also here are several bird reserves and two of the county's most spectacular castles: Bamburgh and Dunstanburgh. Not surprisingly, this area has been declared the Northumberland Heritage Coast and is protected as an AONB.

Even if you're not especially into bird life, you'll be impressed here. The cliffs, rocks,

islets, pools and beaches are home to cormorants, shags, kittiwakes, fulmars, terns, gulls and guillemots. You are also likely to see seals bobbing about in the waves.

This walk takes in the finest section of the Northumberland coast and neatly links the castles of Bamburgh and Dunstanburgh. From the small port of Seahouses, about one-third of the way along the route, the off-shore Farne Islands – world-famous for their sea-bird colonies – can be reached by boat. So with a full day at your disposal you could combine walking, boating and birding.

## PLANNING

This linear route could be done in either direction, but we describe it north to south. The total distance by coastal footpath between Bamburgh and Craster is 13 miles, but this can sometimes be a bit shorter if you walk on the firm sand of the beach (only possible at low tide). Paths are mostly in good condition, but you should allow extra time for looking around castles, lunch, swimming and bird-spotting.

## Alternatives

Good local transport along the coast gives various options for reducing the distance without missing the highlights. For example, you could walk from Bamburgh to Seahouses, then go by bus to Embleton and walk the final stretch to Craster, reducing the walking distance to about 6 miles.

You could also extend this walk by continuing south from Craster to Alnmouth, adding another 7 miles (11km) and three to 3½ hours, bringing the total walk up to 20 miles (32km) and eight to 10 hours. This is possible for fit walkers on a long and fine summer's day, but could also be spread over two days (see p233).

## Maps & Books

The walk described here is covered on OS Landranger 1:50,000 maps No 75 *Berwick-upon-Tweed* and 81 *Alnwick & Morpeck*. Books on the area include *The Northumberland Coastline* by Ian Smith, describing the coast from the Scottish border to Newcastle upon Tyne, with Wainwright-style text and hand-drawn maps. Most useful is the *Exploring the Northumberland Coast* pack of six leaflets published by Northumberland Countryside Service, covering areas such as

Bamber, Craster and Alnmouth, with colour illustrations and notes on history and wildlife. All maps and books are available from local tourist offices.

## Guided Walks

The National Trust organises walks on the Northumberland coast about twice a month. They're free, and you can get details from local tourist offices.

## Information Sources

Local tourist offices covering the coast and hinterland are at **Alnwick** (☎ 01665-510665; www.alnwick.gov.uk) and **Berwick-upon-Tweed** (☎ 01289-330733; www.berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk/guide), both open all year. On the route, there are small tourist offices at **Seahouses** (☎ 01665-720884; www.seahouses.org; ☒ closed winter) and **Craster** (☎ 01665-576007; ☒ daily in summer, Sat & Sun only in winter). All stock walking leaflets, books and maps, and can advise on bus timetables.

## NEAREST TOWNS Bamburgh

The route starts at the village of Bamburgh, just inland from the beach and overlooked by the giant walls of famous Bamburgh Castle (see the boxed text opposite).

## SLEEPING & EATING

There are several B&Bs and hotels on the wide square called Front St, including the **Greenhouse** (☎ 01668-214513; d £56), also a good restaurant and tearoom. Other options are **Hillcrest House** (☎ 01668-214639; www.hillcrest-bamburgh.co.uk; Lucker Rd; d £60) and **Glenander** (☎ 01668-214336; www.glenander.com; per person from £28). The smart **Victoria Hotel** (☎ 01668-214431; per person from £55) offers accommodation, a bar serving meals from around £7 and a brasserie serving main courses (£11 to £13). Another good hotel is **Lord Crewe** (☎ 01668-214243; www.lordcrewe.co.uk; d with/without bathroom from £88/76), also with bar and restaurant.

For food, apart from the pubs and hotels, **Blacketts Restaurant** (☎ 01688-214714; www.blackettsfbamburgh.co.uk; Lucker Rd) offers lunches from £6, dinner from £11, and breakfasts at weekends.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

The region's gateways of Newcastle upon Tyne, Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick can all be reached from other parts of the

## BAMBURGH CASTLE

Dominating the coast for miles around, and appearing to rise from the sea, **Bamburgh Castle** (☎ 01668-214515; www.bamburghcastle.com; adult/child £6/3; ☒ 11am-5pm mid-Mar–Oct) is an undeniably impressive fortress. It stands on an outcrop of basalt that makes up part of the great Whin Sill, a natural barrier stretching across the county (where it forms part of the Hadrian's Wall defences; p223) and continuing east out to sea to create the Farne Islands. For obvious defensive reasons, this site has been occupied since prehistoric times. It is thought that both the ancient Britons and the Romans had forts here.

Move on a few years, and Bamburgh was the capital of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria from the 6th to 9th centuries, although the oldest part of the castle visible today is the 12th-century Norman keep, built in the reign of Henry II with walls more than 3m thick. Probably the most famous battle to take place here was during the War of the Roses in 1464, when Yorkist Edward IV defeated Lancastrian Henry VI.

Much later, at the end of the 19th century, the castle was bought by wealthy industrialist Lord Armstrong. He oversaw a major rebuild – just about everything you see today dates from this time or later – and the castle is still the home of his descendants. Tours of the castle take in various halls, the armoury and exhibitions of later weapons and machinery from Lord Armstrong's time. Views from the upper castle walls out to the islands and along the coast to Dunstanburgh provide inspiration for the walk to come.

country by National Express coach and train (the nearest station to Alnwick is about 1.5 miles west of Alnmouth).

Between Berwick and Newcastle, the exceedingly useful local bus service (buses 501 and 401) operates via Alnwick, Craster, Beadnell, Seahouses, Bamburgh and Bedford five times per day in each direction (four on Sunday). This means you can base yourself somewhere for two nights, do the walk on the day in between and easily get back to your accommodation by bus. It might be best to catch the bus to the start of the route and walk back, so you have no worries about keeping time.

## Craster

At the walk's end, the small and picturesque fishing village of Craster is about 1 mile south of Dunstanburgh Castle (see p233).

## SLEEPING & EATING

Your options include camping at well-organised **Proctor's Stead** (☎ 01665-576613; www.proctorsstead.co.uk; sites for 2 £10). B&Bs include friendly **Stonicroft** (☎ 01665-576433; www.stonicroft.ntb.org.uk; d £48), just outside the village, and **Howick Scar Farmhouse** (☎ 01665-576665; www.howickscar.co.uk; d £44-48), a working farm overlooking fields running down to the sea.

Craster is particularly famous for its kipper (smoked fish) factory, but if you're

peckish for other types of seafood, the crab sandwiches served at lunchtime in the **Jolly Fisherman** pub are pretty legendary too. There's a great view over the sea, good beer, and bar meals are served in the evening, although we found the service a touch indifferent. Your other eating options are the village **shop**, which sells picnic supplies, and **Robson's Restaurant & Coffee Lounge** (mains £5-8), connected to the kipper factory.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

The way to/from Craster by public transport is by buses 501 or 401, as outlined in the Bamburgh section (opposite).

## THE WALK Bamburgh to Beadnell 2–2½ hours, 5.5 miles (9km)

After looking around **Bamburgh Castle** (see the boxed text, above), go down to the beach, turn right and stride out southwards. To your right are large sand dunes and to your left is the sea, with the island of **Lindisfarne** (or Holy Island), topped by the castle-like priory, visible to the northwest. The Farne Islands are visible to the north-east. For the next hour or so you follow this beautiful section of beach and enjoy a wonderful feeling of space – unless you hit one of Northumberland's notoriously unpredictable sea mists, which will completely spoil your view.



On reaching the outskirts of **Seahouses**, it's easier to join the road for the last 800m into town. This is a strange place; half traditional fishing port, half tacky seaside town. It does have a good supply of cafés and takeaways selling fish and chips, though – and the fish seems fresh, so this is probably one of the better places to try the traditional

English dish. The harbour is interesting and usually busy, as this is where you find boats for the Farne Islands. Seahouses' tourist office (p230) can provide more details.

Work your way out of the northeast side of town, past the caravan park, round the golf course, along some strange parallel ridges and back onto the beach again (you may possibly be forced onto the road for a short distance to cross a small river that flows in here). These obstacles overcome, you can once again enjoy fine, open walking along the beach for another mile to **Beadnell**.

At the northern end of the village is a small **shop** selling hot drinks and takeaway snacks. From here follow the small road through the village, past holiday homes and fishermen's shacks, all the way to the harbour, where there's usually some activity involving fishing boats or scuba divers, and some interesting old lime kilns (a nearby plaque explains their history). Beadnell also has a camp site and a handful of B&Bs – useful if you're going all the way from Bamburgh to Alnmouth, and splitting the route over two days.

### Beadnell to Craster

3–4 hours, 7.5 miles (12km)

From Beadnell Harbour, your route continues southwards round the wide curving beach of Beadnell Bay down to Snook Point, a spit of exposed rock sticking out into the sea. Beyond here is Newton Point. Our route does not go to the end of the point itself, but continues straight on, to the left (north and east) of an old coastguard station up on the hill, to meet a lane that goes down into the tiny fishing village of **Low Newton-by-the-Sea**, consisting of three rows of houses in a square, with the fourth side open to the sea so boats could be pulled up in bad weather. One of the houses is now the **Ship** pub, which does lunchtime food, including very good crab sandwiches. (Incidentally, the bay between Snook Point and Newton Point is called Football Hole. It seems a modern title, but the 1850 map on the wall of the pub shows it with this name, so it can't be that new.)

After enjoying a bite and a pint or two, it's time to keep on going down the beach round Embleton Bay. If you want a change from sand under your boots, a pleasant

footpath runs through a National Trust nature reserve just back from the shore. Either way, the ruined tower of **Dunstanburgh Castle** (see the boxed text, below) looms large on the opposite headland – standing like a jagged tooth waiting to be pulled.

Your route takes you under the castle's remaining walls (the entrance is on the south side) and after a stroll around the ruin it's only 1 mile or so to the picturesque fishing village of Craster, and the end of this walk.

### OPTIONAL EXTENSION: CRASTER TO ALNMOOUTH

3–3½ hours, 7 miles (11.5km)

This optional extension from Craster turns the walk into quite a lengthy enterprise. With good weather, a following wind and a late lunch at Craster, the whole walk from Bamburgh to Alnmouth could be done in a day. Alternatively you can split it into two days, overnighing in Beadnell.

From Craster, continue south along the path that runs along the top of the cliffs overlooking the rocky, wave-cut platform. You can't miss the noisy groups of sea birds nesting on the cliffs. From Cullernose Point, you can either keep to the inland path or walk on the beach or over the rocks

### DUNSTANBURGH CASTLE

Dating from the 14th century, **Dunstanburgh Castle** (EH; ☎ 01665-576231; adult/child £2.70/1.40; 🕒 10am–5pm Mon–Sun Apr–Sep, 10am–4pm Mon–Sun Oct, 10am–4pm Thu–Mon Nov–Mar) was built in a strategic position, protected to the north and east by the sea and to the west by the cliffs of the Whin Sill. On the vulnerable south side a large wall was constructed to complete the defences. The castle was originally built in the early 14th century by the Earl of Lancaster, a powerful baron opposed to the rule of King Edward II. It later became home to John of Gaunt and his son Henry IV and, like neighbouring Bamburgh, was a Lancastrian stronghold during the War of the Roses. Unlike Bamburgh though, the castle was abandoned in the 16th century and is now a ruin. Today the impressive gateway still survives, as well as a tower and some of the wall, and the castle is well worth a visit as you pass by on your walk.

past the outcrops of Longhoughton Steel and the small fishing village of Boulmer.

The route passes Seaton Point, a sandy beach and the Marden Rocks outcrop, and then passes a last stretch of beach to reach Alnmouth, set dramatically on a steep ridge overlooking the estuary of the River Aln – a striking finish to this walk along the coast.

## MORE WALKS

Most walking opportunities in Northumberland (apart from the coast) are in Northumberland National Park, one of the largest yet least visited parks in the country and often billed as 'the loneliest park in England'. It covers 398 sq miles of high ground inland from the coastal plains, between Hadrian's Wall in the south and the Scottish border in the north. Only a few roads cross the park, and the landscape is characterised by high, windswept grassy hills cut by streams and valleys, almost empty of human habitation.

Multiday routes that cross this wild and remote area include the infamously tough Pennine Way (p261) and the increasingly popular St Cuthbert's Way (p427).

For day walkers there are several options. In the southern part of Northumberland, Hadrian's Wall is an ideal focus for easy strolls or something longer. (The guidebooks mentioned in the Hadrian's Wall section of this chapter on p215 provide plenty of ideas.) North of Otterburn is a military training area where access to the public is restricted – for more details, see the boxed text on p234.

### CENTRAL NORTHUMBERLAND

For walks in the central part of Northumberland, and the centre of Northumberland National Park, a good place to base yourself is the small town of Bellingham. To get here, there are bus connections to/from Otterburn and Hexham, with connections to the gateway towns of Carlisle and Newcastle upon Tyne.

Bellingham (pronounced 'bellinjam') is surrounded by beautiful countryside and plenty of walking options. For a starter, you could follow a section of the Pennine Way that passes through Bellingham. You could

even get here on foot by walking from Once Brewed, on Hadrian's Wall, about 18 miles south. For information on the town, including places to stay, see p224.

Another good base in central Northumberland is the charming town of Rothbury, easily reached in summer months by direct bus from Newcastle upon Tyne. The town offers relatively easy access to the Simonside Hills on the eastern side of the park. The hills have some of the widest views in Northumberland, from the Cheviots to the coast. The town also makes a good base for circular walks in the hills to the north (outside the park and not so 'wild' but still well worth a visit). For a place to stay, there are several B&Bs on and around the wide main street, plus teashops and a couple of nice pubs doing evening meals. **Rothbury tourist office** (☎ 01669-620887) can give information, and stocks books, maps and leaflets on walks in the surrounding area.

North of Bellingham and west of Rothbury, tiny Byrness also lies in splendid countryside, and is on the Pennine Way. Straddling a main road, access includes National Express coaches between Newcastle upon Tyne and Edinburgh. From Byrness, you can walk 15 miles along the Pennine Way to Bellingham, or (if properly equipped) you can head into the starkly beautiful Cheviot Hills – for details on the route and Byrness, see p275.

## NORTHERN NORTHUMBERLAND

The best place to base yourself for walks in northern Northumberland, and the top end of Northumberland National Park, is the sturdy old market town of Wooler, with several good walker-friendly places to stay, plus shops, banks, cafés and pubs. This place is easy to reach by bus from the gateways of Newcastle upon Tyne, Berwick-upon-Tweed or Alnwick, and the **Berwick tourist office** (☎ 01668-282123; www.berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk/guide) can provide more information on walking routes, accommodation and transport in the park and surrounding area.

There are several circular day walks possible in this area. You can walk up the quiet and beautiful Harthorpe Valley into the Cheviot foothills, and some walks even deeper into the heart of the park become viable if you tie in with the local postbus that goes up this valley to Langleeford. Hardy walkers go up the Harthorpe Valley and continue all the way to the summit of the Cheviot (815m), the highest point in the county and the remains of an ancient volcano.

For a real adventure, from the Cheviot summit you could follow the Pennine Way to Kirk Yetholm in Scotland, 14 miles away, but only consider this if you have enough time and the right equipment – the weather can be terrible up here, the area is not so well frequented and paths are

often faint on the ground. There are more straightforward and less energetic options in the area north of the Harthorpe Valley and south of the road between Wooler and Kirknewton.

Also near Wooler is the Breamish Valley, with the village of Ingram at its east-

ern end, and a **National Park Visitor Centre** (☎ 01665-578890; www.northumberland-national-park.org.uk), with lots of information and leaflets on suggested local walks in the valley or up onto the high ground. Many of these take in the remains of Bronze Age settlements that once covered this area.

### NORTHUMBERLAND'S TURBULENT HISTORY

A significant part of Northumberland National Park is used by the army as a training ground. This may seem strange to visitors from countries where national parks are carefully preserved areas virtually untouched by human interference, but it happens in Britain (where all national park land is privately owned) so while you're walking in this area you may hear the bangs and thuds of live ammunition carried on the wind from nearby valleys.

The involvement of the army here is not completely inappropriate, as this was once the most war-torn region of England. The Romans built Hadrian's Wall in an attempt to control rebellious tribes and, after they left, the region remained a contested zone between Scotland and England – home to warring clans and families led by ruthless warriors called reivers, from where we get the modern word 'bereaved'.

Few buildings from this time remain. Most families lived in simple structures of turf that could be quickly and cheaply built and just as quickly abandoned. A few larger farms were more solidly constructed and better fortified. Known as *bastle-houses*, one of the best remaining examples is at Black Middens, between Bellingham and Byrness, west of the Pennine Way.

Peace came in the 18th century, but coincided with new farming practices; large estates were created and the tenant farmers dispossessed. For today's walker on the high ground of Northumberland this leaves a landscape with no stone walls and only a few small isolated farms. Instead there's a bleak grandeur, wide horizons and vast skies...

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