

***The total distance is just less than 3 miles, and the walk is on a public footpath from High House Farm to Hadrian's Wall, and crosses some wet, uneven ground. Please wear sensible footwear, and follow the Countryside Code, which can be found on the back of this leaflet.***

Section One - just under one mile. Unsuitable for pushchairs.

From the brewery car park, turn right past the old hayshed and farm buildings. Pass Matfen High House B&B on your right hand side, and go through the old metal farm gate into the large front field.

Matfen High House, which is now owned privately, was the original farm house for High House Farm. Built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century after the Agricultural Revolution, it replaced a much smaller farmstead and smallholding, which had been on the land for many centuries, some think since Hadrian's Wall was built! Our farm was built in 1844 by John Clayton until it passed into the Blackett family. Our family bought the farm in 1969 and have been farming here ever since. The oldest remains that have ever been found on our farm are some Mesolithic flint tools, and a stone axe head. Proof that High House has been some kind of farm for a very long time!

In the front field, depending on the time of year, you will see a flock of our ewes, possibly with lambs at foot. We have 150 head of sheep, split into different fields, with ewes, 5 tups (male sheep) and a number of lambs. All the sheep are North Country Mule type – a hardy breed that produces a lot of lambs, and has fantastic mothering ability. Lambing time is March to April each year and usually lasts a very busy two weeks! The sheep live out all year, except when the weather gets very bad, and for a few weeks after lambing.

You may also see, (depending on the time of year), our small herd of beef-breeding stirks (older calves). The cattle are mainly Simmental cross breeds, which is a European breed which produces good quality beef. They are very nosy and may follow you, but don't worry, they will run away if you get too close! Please keep any dogs on a lead. We have a spring calving (April – May) each year. The cattle are kept in large airy barns during the winter, and go out each year in Spring time. Please don't worry as our Bull is not kept in this field!

Head half right towards the bottom right hand side of our field, walking over the wooden bridge, and past the stream and over the wooden stile.

This stream is called Sparrow's Letch, (a lech is a Northumbrian term meaning a small stream) and we often see herons standing over the small pool looking out for fish or frogs. There is often plenty of frogspawn and small minnows. Look out for our different mushrooms and fungi (please do not eat!!) – we often have a good crop in August and September.

Walk up the path and into the Wood

On your right hand side you will see one of our barley fields. We cut this barley in September time, and send it to be malted. We then use the malted barley in our beer. In winter time, the field is left as stubble, to encourage bird visitors, who eat the spilt grain from the fields, and use the stubble as protection. The used hops and water from the brewery are spread back on the land as fertilizer.

The wood is called Angus's Covert, after Mr George M Angus, who farmed this land in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1887 Mr Angus won a Champion Prize for the Best Managed Farm in Northumberland.

Walk through the wood, keeping to the footpath. Pass a hunt jump (and an old gate on your left hand side and keep on the footpath as it bears right, until you cross a tiny footbridge over a stream. Continue in the wood to the edge of the field

The hunt jump is the type known as a "tiger trap" as it goes over a small ditch. In the wood you will often see deer, foxes, badgers, and owls. We do have a very small population of red squirrels. If you keep still and quiet, you can

often see plenty of different bird species in the trees and foliage. The stream is called Welton Burn, and usually has a great deal of frogspawn, and small minnows. The wood also has elderberries, wild gooseberries, black berries, sloes, and wild raspberries. You can often see a herd of roe deer moving through this wood, nibbling on the bushes.

Go over a wooden stile, and keep right around another arable field. You will see a half hidden hunt jump on your right hand side. To the left hand side you can see another field of barley, and in the distance to the left a field of oil seed rape, that is sold as an energy crop. In the winter, these fields are kept as stubble, to encourage the survival of local birds and wildlife. You can often see families of pheasant, partridge and our favourite, tiny little families of quail! We have also been lucky enough to see buzzards, skylarks, curlew and many sparrowhawks.

Walk up the edge of the field, until you come out onto the Hadrian's Wall footpath on the edge of the Military Road (B6318)

This road follows the line of General Wade's Military Road, built upon original foundations of Hadrian's Wall after the Jacobite rebellion in the early 1750's. You can see the remains of the northern ditch, the road itself, and an earthwork called the 'vallum' on the other side of the Military road.

**Turn over for sections 2 and 3**

Section two - just over one mile. Unsuitable for pushchairs.

Turn left when you reach the Hadrian's Wall footpath, and follow the north ditch of the wall to a kissing gate. Go through this gate and up steps through the car park in front of the Robin Hood pub. Continue on the Hadrian's Wall footpath, sometimes just inside field boundaries, and sometimes in the ditch, until you walk up a low hill to a large ash tree and a concrete sign bearing an acorn.

There are some fantastic views here, east to Newcastle, and ahead to the Whittle Dene reservoirs and Harlow Hill. The Whittle Dene reservoirs have plenty of wildlife and there is a special hide for bird watchers. The reservoirs were built in 1833 and hold 10 million gallons of water to supply residents in Newcastle upon Tyne. Sparrow's Letch and Welton Burn flow into these man made ponds.

Section three - just over one mile. Suitable for pushchairs.

Turn left at the next road turning, signposted Stamfordham, and walk first on the right hand of the road. Cross the road with care at the layby, and then walk on the left hand side. Please be careful, this road is very busy!

You can often see cowslips on the bank next to the reservoirs, and sometimes on your left swans or geese grazing in the field.

Walk until you can see a cinder track on your left hand side, signposted "East Moorhouses 3/4 mile". Continue along this track, passing around end of a wood on your right hand side.

The horses grazing on your right belong to the Glenwood Stud at Coldside Farm, home of the famous Glenwood Connermara and Selle Francais stallions. You can often see their foals and mothers playing in the fields. Glenwood offers high quality livery and stud facilities.

Take the bridge across Sparrow's Letch, which flows towards the Whittle Dene reservoirs, and up the short hill to East Moorhouse Farm, a private residence. Go around the right hand side of the large barn, and down the tarmac road, until you reach a small T Junction, noting a wooden signpost pointing back to the "Great Northern Reservoir. Turn left and then walk back up to the

brewery.

Along this road in the Spring and Summer, you can see Sunny, our farm horse and his friends, on the left hand side. They're usually either standing under the trees or lying down in a patch of nettles. On the right hand side is our herd of cattle and our bull Fred. Please don't go into this field, as Fred is very protective of his family! However, you can usually see our tiny calves and their mothers from the road. On the side of the road you can often see harebells and red campion flowers growing, depending on the season. This road used to be called The Hollies, due to the great number of holly bushes alongside the field boundaries.

### **You now deserve a sit down and a pint or two of something refreshing!**

#### **The Countryside Code**

There are five sections of The Countryside Code dedicated to helping members of the public respect, protect and enjoy the countryside.

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
  - In fields follow the paths wherever possible.
  - Use gates and stiles wherever possible.
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
  - Wild animals and farm animals can behave unpredictably if you get too close, especially if they're with their young - so give them plenty of space.
  - Fires can be as devastating to wildlife and habitats as they are to people and property - be careful not to drop a match or smouldering cigarette at any time of the year.
- Keep dogs under close control
  - By law, you must control your dog so that it does not disturb or scare farm animals or wildlife.
  - You do not have to put your dog on a lead on public paths as long as it is under close control. But as a general rule, keep your dog on a lead if you cannot rely on its obedience.
  - If a farm animal chases you and your dog, it is safer to let your dog off the lead – don't risk getting hurt by trying to protect it.
  - Take particular care that your dog doesn't scare sheep and lambs
- Consider other people