

Hownam

The quiet hamlet of Hownam in the valley of the Kale Water was, in the seventeenth century, a favourite haunt of the covenants. Far away from the prying eyes of Claverhouse's dragoons, the surrounding hills were ideal for prayer meetings. Built into the south and east walls of Hownam village church are six old gravestones, a not uncommon economy north of the border.

The Street

Although less well used or known than nearby Dere Street, The Street was once an important Roman road. The fact that 7km of the parish boundary between Hownam and Morebattle runs along The Street shows that it is a very old highway. On Roy's map of 1755 this route across the border is called "Clattering Path".

Today The Street is a largely grassy path, climbing steadily up from Hownam towards the English Border. Take time to stop and admire the panoramic views along the way, as well as the numerous archaeological sites. Not for nothing did our ancestors build their forts and settlements high on the Cheviot hills, where they had clear views of potential enemies approaching.

South of the border, The Street continues as a grassy path, skirting around the edge of Otterburn Rangers to the small village of Alwinton.

Clennell Street

Clennell Street is not, as its name might suggest, a Roman road. It is referred to in medieval charters as "magnum viam de Yarnspath", and appears on Roy's map of 1775 as "Road from Morpeth to Kelso". For

many years it served as a drove road along which cattle were moved from the fertile Tweed Valley to the hungry markets of industrial Tyneside.

The farm steading at the end of the quiet public road which winds its way up the sleepy valley of the River Bowmont is now called Cocklawfoot. This is reputed to be the place known in medieval times as "Hexpathgate", where the wardens of the Middle Marches met during the 15th and 16th centuries to administer law and order. Three were appointed from England and three from Scotland. With few exceptions, the individuals were chosen on the basis that the most active poacher made the best gamekeeper!

For many years after that, Cocklawfoot was an inn, thriving on the trade of passing drovers. From here, a grassy track climbs steadily upwards through enclosed

fields (in-bye) to open hill. Look out for the old forts above and below the track beyond the shelterbelt.

The clear lines around the hillside at Outer Cocklawfoot could easily be mistaken for the defences of earlier forts, but in fact these mark the former line of the track, which has moved time and again to avoid erosion. Tweed Trails has undertaken work to address erosion on the current track. This will also help prevent further damage to archaeological remains, from which the past history of our countryside can be unravelled.

Straddling the border between Clennell Street and the Street lies Windy Gyle. With 360 degree panoramic views across to the Northumbrian coast, English Lakes, Tweeddale and the Southern Uplands, it is no wonder that this was chosen as a fitting place for the burial of Iron Age chieftains.

