

PRESS RELEASE

WINTER BLUES THERAPY ON OFFER IN HADRIAN'S WALL COUNTRY

People looking to combat the effects of short winter days are being offered a range of winter-blues busting walks in Hadrian's Wall Country.

According to NHS Direct, eight in ten people in the UK suffer from winter blues, or sub-syndromal SAD, which starts as the days grow shorter and less light reaches our brains.

Getting exercise in the great outdoors is one of the best ways to lift your spirits, so Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd is offering some top tips on choosing shorter, scenic strolls to help people get the most out the reduced daylight hours.

There are a variety of leisurely circular walks on offer in Hadrian's Wall Country, which can be done in a morning or afternoon. All provide breathtaking scenery and miles of wide open skies for that all important daylight fix. To help preserve and conserve the Wall, walks that explore the countryside, forts and museums are especially encouraged during the wetter winter months.

David McGlade, Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail Officer for Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd, says:

"Hadrian's Wall Country is famous for its inspiring natural scenery and fresh, clean air, so those looking to banish their winter blues can give themselves a boost with a range of carefully selected circular walks.

“More exercise will not just make you fitter at this time of year, there’s a good chance it will make you happier too.”

As well as self-led circular walks around the Wall and surrounding area, there are year-round guided walks on offer and opportunities to spot local wildlife.

Gilsland Spa ‘Popping-stone’ (3.5 miles plus optional 2.5 miles to Birdoswald Roman Fort)

Walk to Walter Scott’s ‘popping stone’, where he is said to have proposed to his wife. This popular route takes walkers through the village of Gilsland, the Woodland Trust’s Irthing Gorge Wood and the option of taking an extended detour to Birdoswald Roman Fort.

Walkers’ accommodation:

Slack House Farm, Gilsland, Brampton, Cumbria

Slack House Farm is a working organic dairy and sheep farm in open, unspoilt countryside, overlooking Birdoswald Roman fort and Hadrian’s Wall. Birdoswald Organic Farmhouse Cheese is made here and the farm has full organic status.

www.slackhousefarm.co.uk

‘Robin Hood’s Tree’, Sycamore Gap, near Once Brewed (2 miles)

Sycamore Gap is a section of the Wall between two crests just west of Milecastle 38. As well as the Wall, people come here to see ‘Robin Hood’s Tree’, named for its use in the 1991 film Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves, starring Kevin Costner. It is also the site of the tallest piece of surviving Wall.

Take a two mile walk from the Once Brewed Northumberland National Park Visitor Centre along the Wall to the tree. The tree can be seen from the B6318 (Military Road).

www.english-heritage.org

Walkers’ accommodation:

Carrow Bed and Breakfast, Military Road, Humshaugh, Hexham, Northumberland

A family run-working farm situated on the foundations of Hadrian's Wall, with a sublime hilltop setting overlooking the countryside of Northumberland National Park and the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Bed and Breakfast of the Year (Silver Award Winner), North East England Tourism Awards 2008. www.carrow.co.uk

Allen Banks and Staward Gorge, near Bardon Mill (2.5 miles)

Allen Banks and Staward Gorge Estate are set on the steep valley sides of the river Allen. It is the largest area of ancient woodland in Northumberland. People can explore the woods and see what wildlife they can spot on this gentle two and a half mile riverside walk, including red squirrels, roe deer, bats and otters. On a hill within Staward Wood are the remains of a medieval pele tower. www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Walkers' accommodation:

Wydon Farm, Haltwhistle, Northumberland

A 366 acre working farm, on the National Trust Bellister estate and an ideal base for touring Hadrian's Wall and Haltwhistle - the 'centre of Britain'. Footpaths and a bridleway run through the farm yard and Sustrans cycle way runs through part of the farm. www.wydon-haltwhistle.co.uk

Shepherds Walks Christmas walks, Kirkharle Estate (5 miles)

This 5 mile guided walk on the 21st of December will explore the Kirkharle Estate and hamlet of Kirkwhelpington, with its contrasting landscape and history. This walk starts and finishes at Kirkharle Courtyard, where there are plenty of opportunities to pick up those last minute Christmas presents. www.shepherdswalks.co.uk

Walkers' accommodation:

Battlesteads Country Inn, Wark on Tyne, Hexham, Northumberland

Originally built as a farmstead in 1747, this four-star Inn and restaurant offers a cosy winter retreat, with log fire and real local ales. www.battlesteads.com

The Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site, spans the north of England from Ravenglass on the Cumbrian coast to South Shields on the North East.

A full list of walker friendly accommodation is included in the official Hadrian's Wall Country 'Where to Stay' guide, which can be obtained by calling the Hadrian's Wall Information Line on 01434 322002.

For more information about Hadrian's Wall Country and to plan your winter walking itinerary, visit www.hadrians-wall.org and www.nationaltrail.co.uk/hadrianswall

Ends

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Notes to Editors

1. Images of 'Robin Hood's Tree' at Sycamore Gap, Allen Banks and Staward Gorge, and sections of Hadrian's Wall are attached. Higher resolution versions are available by calling 015394-42436.
2. Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd was set up in May 2006 in partnership with One NorthEast (One), the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA), Natural England and English Heritage.
3. Hadrian's Wall Heritage works in partnership with a number of organisations. It brings together business and conservation, visitors and local communities in a uniquely focused way, with the overall aim of:
 - Creating jobs and enhancing the local economy
 - Attracting more visitors who will stay longer and spend more in the area
 - Creating a vibrant and sustainable visitor economy
 - Finding better ways to interpret and protect an internationally recognised monument
 - Making Hadrian's Wall a truly world-class destination
4. In order to protect this important and historic monument for future generations we

would be grateful if editors do not use photographs of people standing on top of the Wall as this is counter productive to our conservation messages. Hadrian's Wall Heritage has a large image library available to support news stories and travel features. Journalists can contact the organisation direct to obtain access to this library. It is also important not to use photographs of cyclists or horses next to the Wall.