

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!



At this point Clennell Street, an old drove road from Alwinton to Yetholm, crosses the main Cheviot watershed. Here it cuts the Pennine Way and the border fence between England and Scotland at right angles. Clennell Street can be negotiated with difficulty by all-terrain vehicles, but a notice prohibits traffic in April and May (the lambing season) on the Scottish side of the border.



Foxgloves are a common summer flower colonising the bare river shingles in the Cheviot valleys, here on the bank of an old meander of the Cocklaw Burn.

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.