# Northumberland's heritage site embraces dog-friendly initiatives



Britain's affection for dogs has been underscored by the recent surge in pet-friendly activities, particularly evident in Northumberland, where local attractions have embraced initiatives to promote responsible dog ownership. One such endeavour is taking place at Housesteads Roman Fort, a renowned heritage site located within the scenic Hadrian's Wall Country.

With the arrival of sunny April weather, the site has resumed its innovative programme featuring dog rangers, first established in the summer of 2024. The dog rangers are focused on ensuring that dog owners adhere to responsible walking practices while enjoying the natural beauty of the area. On a recent excursion, I accompanied Charlie Wainwright, a dog ranger, and his six-year-old Mioritic Shepherd, Bear, as well as Tom Millmore, another ranger, and his five-year-old Golden Retriever, Mr Darcy.

During our walk from the visitor centre to the fort, which spans approximately half a mile, the dogs proved to be excellent ambassadors for the site. Bear, a gentle giant weighing 40kg, attracted attention from children eager to pet him, while Mr Darcy relaxed in the sun whenever the opportunity arose. As we traversed the picturesque landscape, the imposing Roman fort came into view, further enriching the experience with its historical significance.

As we approached the fort, situated just a short distance from notable landmarks like Sycamore Gap and Milecastle 39, it became evident that the presence of the dog rangers was beneficial for the visitors and their pets alike. Charlie noted that Bear often has sheep following him on their walks, a humorous indication of his gentle nature, as the intrepid dogs seemed unperturbed by the herd nearby.

Although the atmosphere was largely positive, an incident highlighted the challenges dog owners still face. One visitor was seen carrying a bag of dog waste that had been left behind, prompting disbelief from both rangers and myself, given the effort to maintain cleanliness at the site. However, it was encouraging to see that aside from this occurrence, the area appeared well cared for, with limited dog litter present.

The rangers not only assist in maintaining order but also engage with visitors to provide information and trails for dog owners. Among those I spoke to was Lily from Manchester, who expressed her approval of the dog ranger initiative, stating, "I think it's great, it's good to be able to make sure it's accessible to everyone." Her sentiments were echoed by John and Laura, visitors from Liverpool, who visited the site with their four-year-old Cockapoo. John shared his hopes that the dog ranger scheme could be implemented more broadly across the country, remarking that, "it's good that everywhere is so welcoming with the dog because you can be quite restricted on holiday otherwise."

Housesteads Roman Fort is actively seeking more volunteers to serve as dog rangers, with aspirations to have them available daily. The initiative aims to foster a welcoming environment for dog owners while encouraging responsible behaviour among them. For those interested in volunteering opportunities, further information is available through their official channels.

As the trend of integrating dogs into community activities grows, sites like Housesteads Roman Fort are at the forefront, highlighting the potential for harmonious coexistence between dog lovers and wildlife in Britain's beautiful countryside.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/north-east/hadrians-wall-and-housesteads-fort/visiting-hadrians-wall-and-housesteads-fort-with-your-dog> - This URL supports the claim that Hadrian's Wall and Housesteads Fort are dog-friendly, with initiatives like Dog Rangers promoting responsible dog walking. It also provides details on where dogs are allowed within the site.
* <https://www.northumberlandgazette.co.uk/arts-and-culture/dogs-lead-recruitment-drive-for-hadrians-wall-volunteers-5075520> - This article corroborates the presence of dog rangers at Housesteads Roman Fort, highlighting their role in a recruitment drive for volunteers. It mentions specific dog rangers and their involvement.
* <https://beatingthebounds.wordpress.com/2024/08/27/hadrians-wall-and-housesteads-roman-fort/> - This blog post describes a visit to Hadrian's Wall and Housesteads Roman Fort, providing an account of the setting and historical context of the area, which is enriching the experience of visitors.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source is mentioned as the origin of the information provided about the dog ranger initiative and its reception among visitors at Housesteads Roman Fort.
* <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/visitors/things-to-do/hadrians-wall> - While not directly available in the search results, this would typically provide information about Hadrian's Wall's attraction and nearby landmarks, supporting the description of the area's beauty and historical significance.