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This month's National Trust adventure walk emphasises the different kinds of treasures that have been buried in the soil for generations at Housesteads Fort, some discovered and others still waiting to be discovered!

Buried Secrets: Housesteads Roman Fort

1 Start at the Information Centre and look up. You can see evidence of three different ages of occupation in the area: The Romans, The Victorians and Medieval remains.

2 As you start to go up the hill you can see the Roman quarry to the left, where they quarried sandstone to build the fort and wall. Off to the right are the remains of a spoil heap, waste from a lead mine that went into the hill side.

3 The farmhouse kitchen garden is a small, walled enclosure where the Victorian farmers grew apple trees, rhubarb and vegetables to help supplement their diet.

4 Looking at either side of the path you will see the remains of the Roman terracing where they cultivated the land to produce crops. This suggests the climate was slightly warmer with a need to conserve water to improve crop yields.

5 View to Broomlee Lough. According to legend, a massive box of treasure



was sunk in the lake by one of the ancient lords of Sewing Shields with a spell. It could only be recovered by the co-operation of "two twin yands (horses), two twin oxen, two twin lads, and a chain forged by a smith that claims descend of unbroken succession from six ancestors of the same trade". An attempt to recover the treasure was made, but failed. Just as the chest neared the edge of the lough the chain broke and it sank back into the depths. The cause was due to the questionable ancestry of the smith.

6 As you turn right to walk down to the tax-gate you can see King and Queens' Crag. According to folklore, King Arthur was talking to Guinevere but she was ignoring him.

So he threw a rock at her, which she deflected with her comb. That rock still lies there today.

7 Buried somewhere beneath Sewing Shields is the legend of King Arthur's court. The legend says all his subjects are entranced in sleep only to be awoken if someone first blows a horn, which lays on the table near

the entrance, and uses the sword of the stone to cut a garter, which is also placed beside it.

The Sewing Shields farmer found the entrance through fortune and, when confronted with the enchanted court, forgot to blow the horn but cut the garter. The King awoke briefly to scorn him, causing the farmer to flee and forget the way to the entrance through fear.

8 Checkpoint to allow trade through the wall.

9 This is the Eastgate. As you look into the fort you are looking up the main street leading to the fort headquarters. This is where soldiers got their orders and wages were banked in a secure strong room.

10 On completing the loop around the remains of Housesteads Fort you come to the remains of a house. During the excavation of the building a grisly discovery was made under the building's floor – a skeleton which had the broken tip of a dagger lodged in its ribs. Ever since, this place has been known as the murder house.

We hope you enjoyed this easy walk. There are more in the series at other National Trust sites in Yorkshire and the North East. For more information visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/northeast