

St Cuthbert's Church, Norham

Lying close to the banks of the silvery Tweed, this lovely, large and ancient church was built about 1175 AD, shortly after Norham Castle was erected as a defence against the Scots. Some stones from an earlier Anglo-Saxon Church (850 AD) remain near the font. The monks from Holy Island brought the body of Saint Cuthbert here when they fled from the Vikings, and they buried King Ceolwulf here before continuing their journey to find a resting place for Cuthbert in Durham. (Ceolwulf was a King of Northumbria who chose to become a monk on Lindisfarne). The church has a splendid priest's desk, pulpit, choir stalls and coat of arms from Durham cathedral, dating from 1660 AD.



St Paul's Church, Branxton

Some eight miles from Norham is a delightful little church with an ancient chancel arch. It was here that the bodies of some of the thousands of English and Scots slain on Flodden Field were laid. Nearby on the A697, is the area called Pallinsburn, which is probably one of the river sites at which Paulinus baptised pagan converts about 630 AD.



St Gregory's Church, Kirknewton

This interesting church lies less than a mile from Gefrin, or Old Yeavinger, the 6th century palace of the Kings of Northumbria.



The site of Gefrin is marked by a cairn and plaque on the roadside. Paulinus came here in 627 AD to celebrate the marriage of Ethelburga of Kent to King Edwin. He converted many Northumbrians to Christianity, baptising them in the nearby River Glen, for a marathon 36 days.

A much more modern saint, Josephine Butler, who once lived here, is buried in the churchyard. She did much for the welfare of women in the Victorian era.

One of the treasures of the church is an ancient relief image in the wall, showing the Adoration of the Magi, who are attired in kilts!

GEFRIN

"Here the missionary Paulinus in AD 627 Instructed the people in Christianity for thirty six days and baptized them in the River Glen close by"



*Pub / Refreshments: Akeld, Milfield
Toilets: in Kirknewton Village Hall dawn to dusk*

A Brief History

Christianity probably first came to Northumbria with the Roman soldiers who guarded Hadrian's wall in the early centuries after Christ. In the 7th century there was a dramatic renewal of Christian mission in this part of Northumbria. In 625 Paulinus came north with the pagan King Edwin and his Christian queen. He converted Edwin and baptised thousands of his subjects in the River Glen. When Oswald became King he asked the religious community of Iona to send one of their monks to Northumbria. In 635 Aidan came to Bamburgh. Supported by Oswald, he spread the gospel through the region. Aidan was made Bishop of Lindisfarne and established a monastery there – a place of prayer and learning which sent out a stream of witnesses to Christ. One of these was Cuthbert who also became Bishop of Lindisfarne. He spent many years on Inner Farne as a hermit and eventually died there. When the Vikings invaded in the 9th century, Cuthbert's body was taken on a long journey to Durham, stopping, among other places at Norham and Cuthbert's Cave.



Pilgrimage

Grant to me, Lord Christ, for this pilgrim journey through life
your ready hand to guide me, your light to go before me,
your protection to guard me from evil,
your peace to rest within me, your love to sustain me;
That through all the joys and sorrows that meet me
I may know the promise of your abiding strength,
until I reach my final home-coming with you for ever.

Amen



In the Steps of the Saints



This remote part of England seems to have had rather more than its fair share of saints.

We hope that this leaflet will help you to explore some of the places where they lived and worked and prayed.

*Pub / Refreshments: in Norham
Toilets: in Norham*

St Aidan's Church, Bamburgh

Aidan came to Bamburgh in 635 and built a wooden church outside the castle wall. Above the font, in the present church, there is a large beam, which tradition says was an outer buttress of this original building, Aidan is reported to have died while leaning against it. The beam survived at least two fires in the church and became an object of pilgrimage, eventually being incorporated into the 13th century stone tower.



There are vestiges of a Norman church, but the present building was mainly built by Augustinian Canons who came to Bamburgh in the 12th and 13th centuries.

Grace Darling, the young girl who rescued survivors from a shipwreck on the Farnes in 1838, was born in Bamburgh. Her family grave and memorial are in the churchyard. The huge churchyard has magnificent views over the sea to Holy Island.



In Bamburgh Castle is the site of another early chapel. There is a story that, when Oswald was killed in battle, his right arm was buried here. This arm was miraculously preserved, as Aidan had foretold when Oswald generously gave his silver plate to the poor. (No one knows where the arm is now!)

Pub / Refreshments: in Bamburgh Village
Toilets: near the church

St Cuthbert's Chapel, Inner Farne

Many visitors travel by boat from Seahouses to visit the Inner Farne bird sanctuary. From the island there are magnificent views of Bamburgh and Holy Island.

Aidan was the first of numerous saints to live here as hermits. Cuthbert had a much more prolonged sojourn on Inner Farne, and many others followed. Cuthbert built himself a hut and a chapel. He lived a life of prayer and meditation, befriending the wild creatures and growing meagre food supplies. It was not entirely solitary as people still came seeking his healing. He left Farne when he became Bishop of Lindisfarne but returned later and died there. In 1370 a chapel was built on the site of Cuthbert's oratory by Benedictine monks. It was restored in 1848 when some fine 17th century oak panelling, stalls and screens were brought from Durham cathedral.



Pub / Refreshments: Seahouses
Toilets: On the Island, Seahouses

St Mary's, Holy Island

Situated between the Lindisfarne Priory and St Cuthbert's Island, the parish church on Holy Island is a unique sanctuary of antiquity, beauty and peace.

A church, monastery and school were founded in 635 by Bishop Aidan. In 664, Cuthbert became bishop of Lindisfarne and probably the most widely known local saint. The English monks, who followed the first generation of Irish, replaced the wooden structure by a stone building, of which the foundations still lie beneath the present church. Benedictine monks of Durham converted this earlier building into the present church in the 12th and 13th centuries.

It is hard to imagine the influence and importance in historical terms of this Island, governed by the ebb and flow of the tides. Yet its missionary impact throughout England was hugely significant, contributing largely to the spread of the Christian Gospel - through St Chad to the Midlands, St Cedd to the South-East, and St Ebba further north. Hence it earned the description 'the Cradle of Christianity in England'.

Today the church continues as a Parish Church with regular daily services, while receiving vast numbers of pilgrims and visitors throughout the year.



Pub / Refreshments: Holy Island Village
Toilets: Holy Island Village

Cuthbert's Cave (near Chatton)



The monks brought Cuthbert's body here after the Vikings raided Lindisfarne. It was one of their stopping places on a journey which took many years, and ended in Durham where he was laid to rest. On a hill behind the cave you can look back to Holy Island.

The cave is on the long distance St Cuthbert's Way and is reasonably well sign posted.

From the centre of Chatton take the minor road north (not the B6348). This crosses the B6349 and in a mile or so there is a sign pointing right to St Cuthbert's

Cave. Drive along the track to the car park. The walk is almost a mile and the cave is on your left in the woods.

Pub / Refreshments: Chatton, Belford