



walk information

This waymarked walk is about 7.5 miles. It follows a riverside path from Chester-le-Street, then field edges up to Great Lumley. Then it follows field paths and a minor road to Finchale Priory. Steps lead down to the picturesque Priory by the riverside. From Finchale the path follows a minor road passes by Frankland prison on a footpath, and on to the riverside at Durham with views of the castle and cathedral. The river Wear is crossed by the ancient Framwellgate bridge, and we follow the medieval Silver street to the market square and then Sadler street to Palace green, surrounded by the Castle, university and the Cathedral.

Some field paths may be muddy following rain. Care should be taken when descending the steps to Finchale.



Location Map



Local information

Chester-le-Street

The waymarked walk starts from the church of St Mary and St Cuthbert, the spire dominates the town. There is parking at the church. There is a drop-in centre. Chester-le-Street has pubs, food shops and cafes. Chester-le-Street can be reached from Durham by bus, taxi and some trains.



Finchale

(pronounced Finkle) There is a café at Finchale. The Priory is in the care of English Heritage. (Charge for non-members. Check for opening times). English Heritage. North East Regional office, 41 Sandhill, Newcastle upon Tyne. Tel: 0191 269 1200

Durham

Durham is a thriving University and tourist city with pubs, cafes, shops etc. The walk finishes at Durham Cathedral which houses Saint Cuthbert's tomb, his treasures and a facsimile (copy) of Saint Cuthbert's book, The Lindisfarne Gospels.

Durham Tourist information centre. 2 Millennium Place, Durham. DH1 1WA. Tel: 0191 384 3720 where you can see a statue of St Cuthbert's cortège.



the story

In 875 A.D. in the face of Viking attacks, the Community of Saint Cuthbert on Lindisfarne, Holy Island, Northumberland, took up their most treasured possessions and fled.



They took the uncorrupted body of Cuthbert, their bishop and Patron Saint of the North, and Saint Cuthbert's book, written in his honour, now called the Lindisfarne gospels.

For seven years they travelled around Northumbria, from coast to coast, before they settled at Chester-le-Street, where they built a church. 113 years later they again fled and ended up in Durham where they founded a city and built a cathedral.

Cuddy's Corse follows in spirit this last journey from Chester-le-Street to Durham

This waymarked walk has been researched by the Northumbrian Association, a registered charity, whose members promote the History and Heritage of Northumbria, the land between the Tweed and the Tees.

They walk this route on **Saint Cuthbert's day, March 20th.**

We would welcome help in planning more Cuddy's corse walks in other parts of the North.

To join or for further information visit northumbrianassociation.com

We thank St Mary and St Cuthbert's church Chester-le-Street for permission to use images on the Chester-le-Street page and Daniel Kilkenny for the cartoon.

All other images, text and research by Chris Kilkenny, Historian of the Northumbrian Association.

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Making a difference where you live



Cuddy's Corse



Chester-le-Street to Durham

a 7.5 mile walk via Finchale Abbey Following

saint cuthbert's coffin



Follow this walk in the footsteps of Saint Cuthbert's Community on their final journey from Chester-le-Street to Durham Cathedral, carrying the uncorrupted body (Corse) of Cuthbert, the Patron saint of the North; and Saint Cuthbert's book, The Lindisfarne Gospels.



chester-le-street



In 882 A.D. the Community of Saint Cuthbert arrived at Chester-le-Street. They had with them Cuthbert's body, the brilliant **Saint Cuthbert's book or Lindisfarne Gospels** and the relics of other saints, including the

head of King Oswald. They remained here for 113 years in a wooden church built inside the walls of the old Roman camp. In that time Aldred took Saint Cuthbert's book and wrote a Northumbrian English translation between the lines of the Latin text. The book is the **oldest surviving English translation of the Gospels**.

The Church of Saint Mary and Saint Cuthbert Chester-le-Street

Stained glass Here you can see the story of Saint Cuthbert's book (the Lindisfarne Gospels) Bishop Eadfrith wrote it on Lindisfarne and dedicated it to God and Saint Cuthbert. Bishop Ethelwald added a binding; Billfrith, the anchorite, decorated it with jewels. When the community tried to sail to Ireland the book was lost overboard, but found again by Hundred.



Painting You can see the coffin leaving Holy Island and its arrival at Chester-le-Street.

Statue You can see Saint Cuthbert holding King Oswald's head.

Also in this church, you can see the tombs of the Lumley family and the Anchorage, the home of a type of Hermit.

The Walk

In 995 A.D. Fearing another attack by Danes, Bishop Aldhun led the whole of the community from here to Ripon. So he took the body with him and all the people who are styled the people of Saint Cuthbert.

Luckily today you do not have to walk to Ripon and back, and you can take heart because;

in their flight not one individual of that great multitude was afflicted by any infirmity or inconvenience whatsoever. Not only did the men, but even the more delicate of their cattle, and those which had just before been born (for it was during spring time that this occurred) endure the fatigues of the road without difficulty and suffering.

Simeon.



finchale

Saint Godric was born in Norfolk in 1065 A.D. He was a Pedlar, a sailor and perhaps a pirate. He had travelled to Jerusalem. When he returned he visited Lindisfarne and Farne Island, he was inspired by the example of Cuthbert to become a hermit. He tried a number of places but ended up here.

A recipe for long life

He made a cave in the earth and covered it with turf. He never used a bed, he just lay on the ground. In winter, amid snow and hail, he entered the river naked and spent the whole night praying. All other times he wore a heavy coat of mail. He often fasted, spending 6 days without food. His family lived with him, his mother died here; his brother was drowned in the Wear. He himself was robbed when the Scots invaded. He died on 21st May 1170 A.D., which made him 105 years old.



Reginald the historian of Durham interviewed him, Godric described himself;

*Godric, at first a gross rustic, an unclean liver,
A usurper, a cheat, a perjurer, a flatterer,
A wanderer, pilfering and greedy,
Now a dead flea, a decayed dog, a vile worm,
Not a hermit but a gad-about in mind,
A devourer of alms, dainty over good things,
Greedy and negligent, lazy and snoring,
Ambitious and prodigal,
One who is not worthy to serve others,
And yet every day beats and scolds those who serve him,
This and worse than this, you may write of Godric.*

After he died Finchale became a rest place for the Monks of Durham, and the Priory you see today was built. Four monks would come every 3 weeks for rest. Other visitors were attracted.

Watch where you are sitting

It was said that any women who had trouble conceiving a child would become fertile by sitting in the Oriel window in the Priory.



Durham

In 995 A.D., after a few months, they returned from Ripon but when they reached Warden Law the coffin could not be moved any further. They learnt in a vision that they were to stop at a place called Dunholme (Durham).



The Dun Cow story

The story goes that they did not know where this was until they heard a woman looking for her cow who was told that it was on Dunholme. The legend is remembered by a carving on the north side of the Cathedral.

Since they had lived for 113 years at Chester-le-Street only 7 miles away do you think that there is a good chance that they had heard of Durham?

An alternative explanation the Bishop's son-in-law, Earl Uchtred of Northumberland, needed a new home. The Vikings had just sacked his fortress of Bamburgh, so he cleared and fortified the site of Durham. He ordered all the men from the Tyne to the Coquet to help. A temporary church was made to house the body, and eventually a new Cathedral.

So the only reason there is a city here is to protect Saint Cuthbert's body. It has lain here ever since. Saint Cuthbert's book, The Lindisfarne gospels, was stolen at the time of the Reformation. This book the most important Northumbrian work of Art at present is in the British Library.

Durham Cathedral

There is much to see, but do not miss Cuthbert's tomb at the east end of the Church. Cuthbert's carved coffin and cross and other treasures in the Treasury. (charge)



This poem **Durham** is the last known to be written in Old English.

*The city is celebrated
Throughout the kingdom of the Britons;
Placed on a steep eminence
Surrounded with cliffs,
Wonderfully large.
The Wear surrounds it,
A river strong in its current;
There is also in the town,
One, illustrious among men,
The honourable and blessed Cuthbert;
And the head of the pure king
Oswald, the lion of the English.*

