

ST CUTHBERT'S BELLINGHAM



CUDDY'S WELL

As you come to the end of your journey, enjoy a drink of the beautiful fresh water from the well; it is reputed to have healing qualities and is said never to have dried up since St Cuthbert blessed it on one of his missionary journeys!



ST CUTHBERT'S CHURCH

This solid and substantial medieval church, parts of which date back to 1120, has been a place of prayer and sanctuary through turbulent times. The famous barrel vaulted ceiling was built after the border reivers repeatedly burned the church down and further hints at a violent past can be seen in the cannonballs found in the roof, probably left after the Duke of Buccleuch attacked Bellingham in 1597.

Be sure to take a look at the 'Lang Pack' in the churchyard, marking the burial of another audacious and cunning raider of 1723!

ST CUTHBERT'S CORSENSIDE



Ancient Tudor Way Marker
© Chris Woodcock

Exposed to all weathers, St Cuthbert's Corsenside stands alone on the hillside overlooking the Rede Valley and a vast expanse of rolling hills and farmland. This small, simple church, consecrated in 1120, offers an atmosphere of intimacy, peace, tranquility and shelter to all.

During the time of the Border Reivers, the medieval wooden village at Corsenside was destroyed, leaving St Cuthbert's church and priest's house alone on the hill.

Today, the churchyard is managed for wildlife by local people and during the summer months the meadow is a riot of colour. Look out for harebells, bluebells, bush vetch, meadow vetchling, betony, yarrow, lady's bedstraw and crosswort.



ST CUTHBERT'S ELSDON

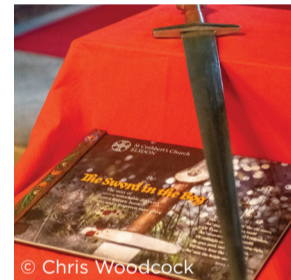


The picturesque church of St Cuthbert's Elsdon is the "Mother Church of Redesdale" and for this reason is the most likely of our three churches to have hosted the coffin of St Cuthbert on its journey to Durham.

Around 1400 an original Norman church was rebuilt on this site, incorporating stonework from the earlier building. This place of worship has stood proudly ever since, through peaceful times but also through battle and fire. A careful look at the stone work will reveal the red patches that are the result of fire damage.

Come and find out about a forgotten battle, a mass grave and the beautiful Sword in the Bog; a relic from the area's violent past.

View the three horse skulls which were found carefully arranged in a little chamber in the bellcote. Can you solve the riddle of why they were placed there?



ST CUTHBERT'S FINAL JOURNEY - TRAVELS WITH HIS COFFIN!

St Cuthbert was a much loved monk, bishop, hermit and celebrated healer living at the end of the 7th century, a time of great change and struggle in English history.

Strangely, his fame only increased after his death in 687. Pilgrims were drawn to Cuthbert's tomb, and the tales of miracles grew. Eleven years later, the monks on Lindisfarne opened his tomb and had a shock. Rather than decomposing, his body remained uncorrupted. The pilgrimages understandably increased!



In 793, the Vikings began their attacks on the North, particularly on monasteries which were rich and unguarded targets. By 875, the monks decided to abandon Lindisfarne and head inland, taking the coffin of St Cuthbert with them. And so began seven years of wandering across the north east with the coffin of St Cuthbert.

Wherever the monks arrived bearing the coffin, they were met with kindness and gifts, everyone they met having heard of Cuthbert. There were times when the coffin's retinue was extensive but, throughout its travels, only seven monks were allowed to touch the coffin and the cart on which it was transported.

Legend and rumour have grown up around many of the churches dedicated to St Cuthbert in the north east and so it is that each of the churches in the Three-Church trail lays claim to hosting the body of St Cuthbert on his travels.

PRACTICALITIES

Elsdon is easily reached by road using the A696 or the A68. Parking is available around the green and near the village hall.

There is no bus service between Bellingham and Elsdon but a taxi can be arranged from Bellingham.

The Bird in the Bush pub on Elsdon Green offers accommodation and food.

The Old School Tea Room and National Park Information Point is open during the summer months opposite St Cuthbert's church.

Toilet facilities are available at Elsdon village hall.

Corsenside Food and toilet facilities are available at The Bay Horse Inn in West Woodburn.

Bellingham is a busy village with a number of pubs, coffee shops and many places to stay.

Toilets are available in the centre of the village during the summer months.

Please follow the Countryside Code, check the weather and the river heights before you set off, take a map, food and drink for the journey and wear appropriate outdoor clothing.



St Cuthbert's Three-Church Trail

Follow in the steps of **St Cuthbert** as you walk through the beautiful Rede Valley on a route that links three ancient churches; Elsdon, Corsenside and Bellingham.

Revitalising
REDESDALE
Landscape Partnership

Supported by
Heritage Fund



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IN BRIEF:

Category Mainly moderate walking, some difficult
OS maps Landranger 80 or OL42
Distance 22.5km (14 miles)
Time 5.5 to 6 hours

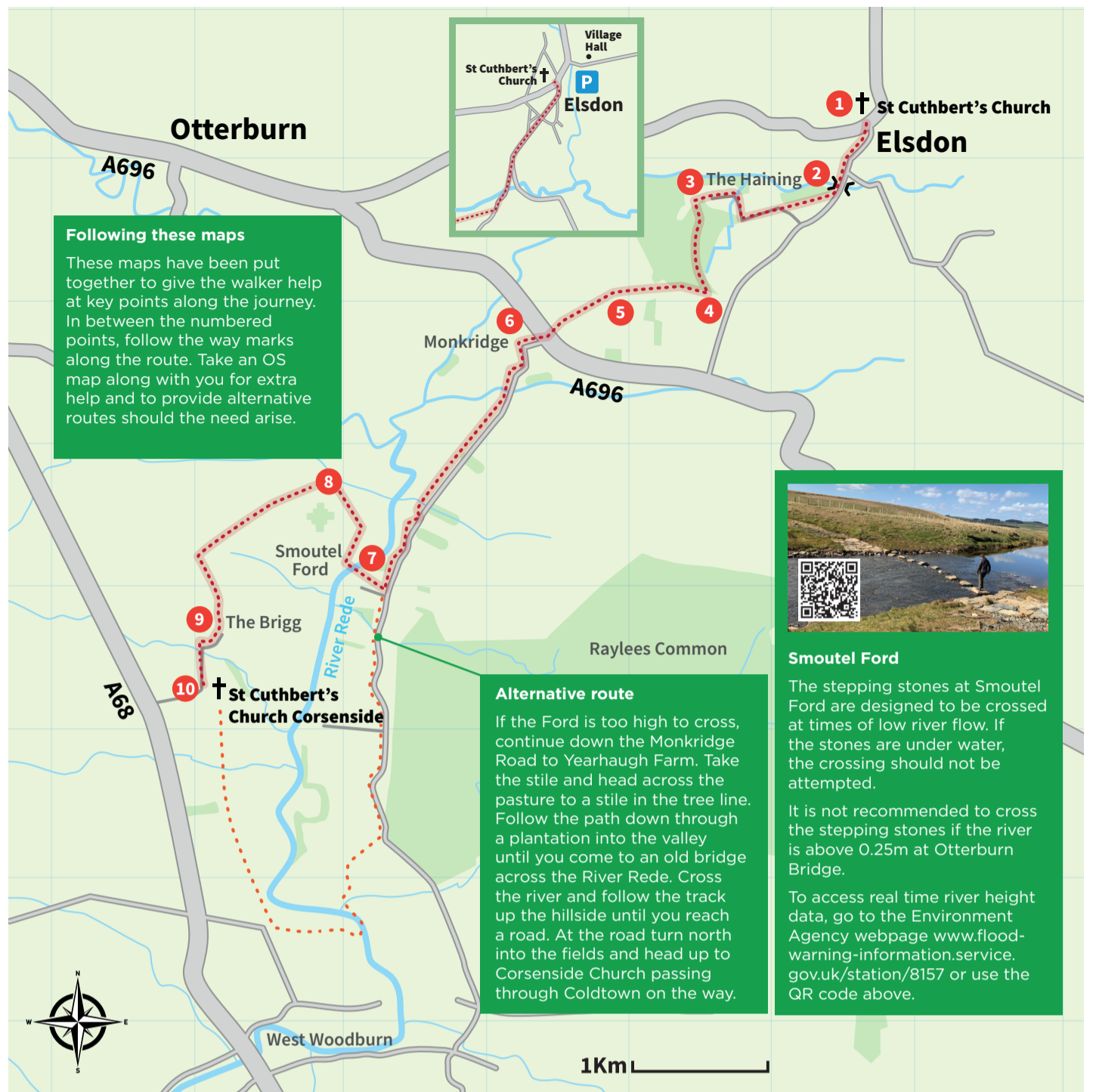
ELSDON TO CORSENSIDE

9.5km (6 miles) taking 2 ¼ hours

Mainly moderate, some difficult walking

- 1 From the church, cross the Green and take the road out of Elsdon towards Elsdon Bridge.
- 2 Cross the bridge and take the path signed Haining. Follow the fence line until you join a gravel farm track, through a cattle grid and up to the front of Haining.
- 3 Turn left into woodland. Walk up the hill and over a stile.
- 4 Turn right and walk along fence line and then over the brow of the hill.
- 5 Head for the intersection of the fence lines. Continue down to the road.
- 6 Take care crossing the busy A696, then follow the Monkridge Road opposite, signed East Woodburn.
- 7 Leave the road at a gate to cross Smoutel Ford. (If the water is too high see the alternative route.) Head across the rough grassland towards a piece of woodland. There is no path at this point.
- 8 Go round the woodland, keeping the plantation on your left and then walk up the hill until you reach the footpath that goes to The Brigg.*
- 9 Follow the path through The Brigg farmyard. Continue along the farm track to Corsenside Church.
- 10 St Cuthbert's Corsenside

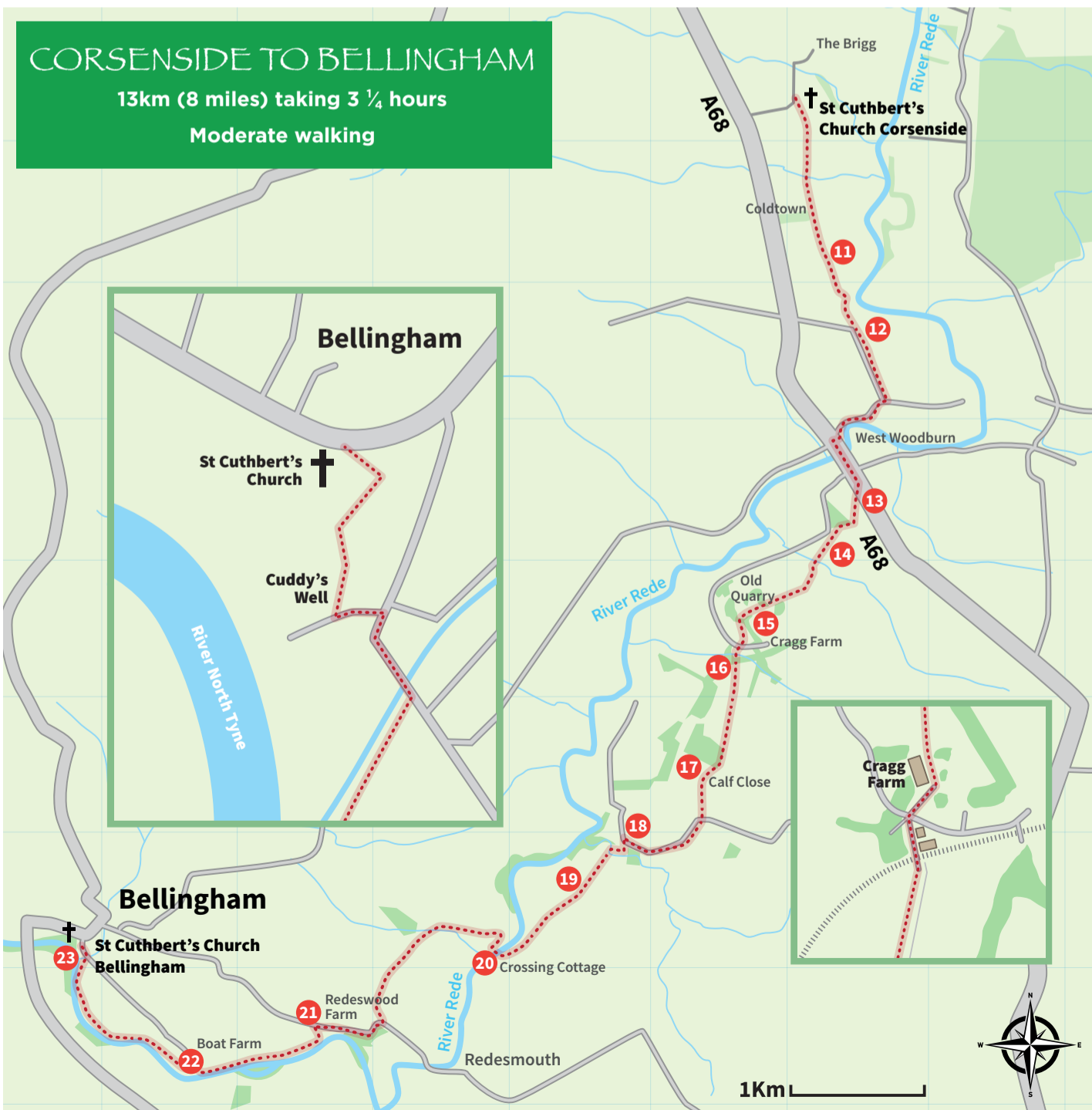
* The route from points 8 to 9 is allowed by kind permission of the landowner of The Brigg. It is not a right of way and though there is no path, please keep roughly to the designated route. There may be a beef bull running with cows and heifers at some times of the year. Walkers follow the route at their own risk and should take necessary precautions for themselves and any dogs that may be with them. Dogs should be kept on a leash unless cattle are becoming aggressive.



CORSENSIDE TO BELLINGHAM

13km (8 miles) taking 3 ¼ hours

Moderate walking



- 11 Cross a stream/stream bed at the bottom of the hill. Then head for a dry stone wall on your left.
- 12 Follow the wall until you come to a gate onto a road. Take the road down the hill into West Woodburn.
- 13 Follow the main road south to beyond the last houses on the right hand side. Go through a small stone gateway to enter the field on the right hand side of the road and then cross the field diagonally towards some buildings. Continue following the waymarks.
- 14 After coming out into a big field, with a house on your right, bear left across the field rather than going down to the road. You are heading downhill to a gate and bridge in the tree line which is difficult to see in the summer months.
- 15 Walk uphill to a gate on the left of trees on the skyline. Follow the path keeping the old quarry on your right up to a gate and into a field.
- 16 After the farm there is a five way junction. Viewed as if it were a roundabout, take the second exit along the front of the barn and over a railway bridge. Take a right through a gate into field. Follow the fence line.
- 17 Come down the hill to the back of Calf Close Cottage. Go past with the cottage on your right. Follow path to the road.
- 18 After the old railway bridge, look out for a finger post on the left where the path goes down to a bridge over a burn
- 19 After passing another railway bridge, drop down into the cutting.
- 20 At Crossing Cottage turn right and follow the County Ride over the Rede Bridge and finally out onto the road to Bellingham.
- 21 At Redeswood Farm, take the path into the field on the left and down to the river.
- 22 After Boat Farm, the walker can take a footpath on the left and follow the river or walk along the road into Bellingham.
- 23 Follow the inset map to find Cuddy's Well (Cuddy is an affectionate name for St Cuthbert) and then take the path up the hill to some steps on your left and into St Cuthbert's churchyard.