



WALK 29

ST CUTHBERT'S CAVE - CIRCULAR (MODERATE ROUTE)

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Distance: 4.5 miles (7.2 km)

Maps: Explorer Map 340

Walking time: 2 ½ hours

Start – St Cuthbert's Cave Car Park (grid ref - NU051351)

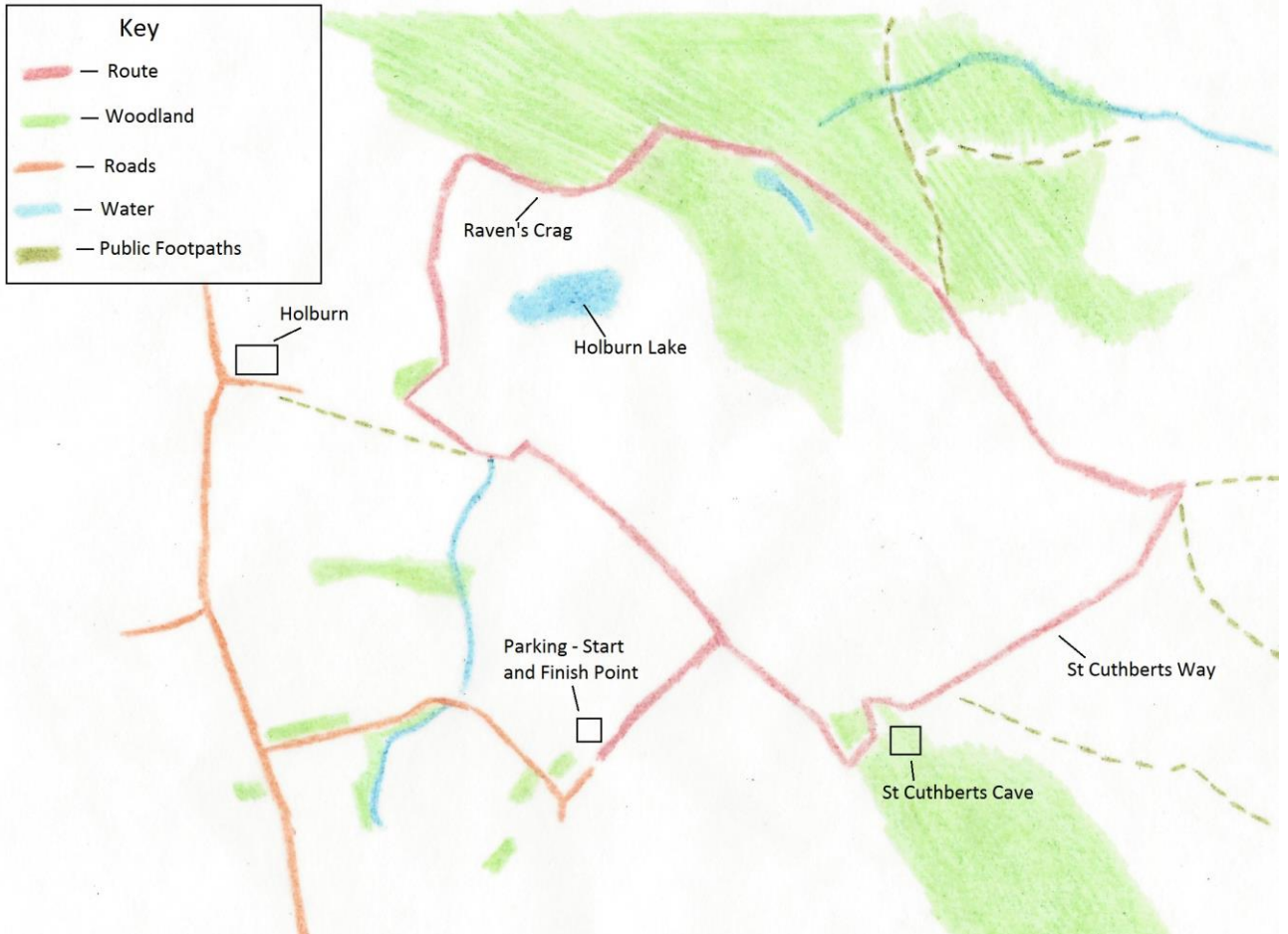
If you are travelling north up the A1 turn left a little way after Belford along the B6353 (road sign - Lowick 4, Fenwick ¼). Continue a little way and turn left (road sign – Chatton) and go along this road passing through Holburn. After a few miles you see a National Trust sign saying St Cuthbert's Cave. Turn left here and follow the signs to the car park.

Summary

This walk takes-in several distinctly different environments along the route including arable and pastoral farmland, coniferous plantation woodland, open moor, the sites of former bell pits and more recent peat extraction, even the remains of a dam that failed dramatically in 1948. From the crests of the modest west facing Fell Sandstone escarpments there are excellent views of the coast towards Lindisfarne and the Farne Islands and on a clear day the silhouettes of Holy Island and Bamburgh Castles are easy to see. To the west the Cheviots stand out above the broad valley forming the Cheviot Fringe.

All of this without a single mention of the significance of St Cuthbert's Cave itself or the long distance path that bares its name. There is a lot to see on this walk relating to natural, political or ecclesiastical history even without including the expansive Northumbrian skyscape.

Map.



Route Details.

Walk out of the car park turn left and walk up the hedge lined lane. At the top pass over the stile situated to the right of the large wooden gate (with St Cuthbert's Cave ¼ sign on it).

Continue along the path and pass over the stile next to a large wooden gate taking you into the wood (St Cuthbert's Way and Public Bridleway arrow on it). As you enter the wood you pass a National Trust sign.

Continue along the path along the bottom of the wood (following the fence on your right). Take the first path going off to your left and follow it up to St Cuthbert's Cave.

St. Cuthbert's Cave is an overhanging outcrop of sandstone rock, supported by an isolated pillar of stone. It is said to have been one of the resting places for the body of St Cuthbert on its journey from Lindisfarne to Durham Cathedral in the 11th century.

After visiting the cave pass up to the left of it and take the first path going off to your left taking you to a small stile crossing the fence, so that you leave the wood. Turn right and follow the path that runs parallel to the fence on your right. You then reach and turn right along a main path that gradually rises up to a gate taking you through a wall (Public Bridleway and St Cuthbert's Way marker discs).

Immediately after passing through this gate pass through another gate on your left taking you through a fence (again with St Cuthbert's Way and Public Bridleway marker discs on) and follow the fence on your right as the path rises up.

As it rises up it just bears away from the fence a little as you head down the middle of a field (with small horse jumps in it) to a small gate. Pass through the gate and over the small footbridge and through a second small gate.

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Continue walking in the same direction as you rise up through the next field, passing a Public Bridleway marker post, to a large gate that you pass through. On this gate are two arrows (one indicating St Cuthbert's Way and the second the Public Bridleway). Walk in the direction which these arrows are indicating and rise up before dropping down to a stile located to the right of a large gate. Cross the stile and turn left along the track.

From here you get a superb view of Holy Island. I personally think this is one of the finest views of Holy Island, as you have that small amount of height it is a very different view than one normally seen of this special place.

After a few yards you pass a marker post saying (Public Bridleway - Holburn 2 ¼) continue walking along the track and after a short distance you pass through another gate and continue to follow the fence on your right.

You reach and pass through a large wooden gate taking you into the woods (Kylloe Woods). Continue along the track. After a few yards the long distance trails (Northumberland Coastal Path, St Oswald's Way and St Cuthbert's way) all go off to your right, but you continue straight on along the track.

I really like Kylloe Woods, it is a very different wooded area than that we find in other parts of Northumberland. The current owners purchased Kylloe Woods in 1986. The total area is 390 hectares, of

which 326 are conifer, 32 broadleaves and 32 unplanted. Keep your eyes open for roe deer which are resident and common, with occasional red and fallow deer.

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After a while you reach and pass to the left of a large wooden gate (you are still in the wood here) and continue along the track as it bends to the left and drops down a little before the view opens up on your left so you have the trees on your right and a fence on your left with hill ground the far side of it.

When you reach the end of the wood you pass through a large wooden gate and follow the path as it drops down a little and follows a wall on your right.

As you reach a small wood on your right the path bends around to your right and you pass through a gate. Follow the path as it drops down with a wall on your left and the wood on your right.

At the end of the wood the path bears around to the right. Turn left here and pass through a large gate (Public Bridleway marker on it) passing the old sheep handling pens on your right before following the fence on your right.

You reach and pass through another gate and continue on following the fence on your right as it passes through a dog leg.

After a while you reach the large gate you walked up to at the start of the walk just above the car park. Pass over the stile to the left of it and walk down the hedge lined lane to the car park.

Revised Jan 2017