



ancient pilgrimage routes to Durham dating back more than 1,000

Around 30 churches in the dioceses of Durham and Newcastle are part of four revived pilgrimage routes starting from villages and towns in the region, re-creating the routes taken by pilgrims to Durham Cathedral,

'The Way of Learning, The Way of Life, The Way of Light and The Way of Love,' allows pilgrims to walk from 27 to 45 miles while exploring places of historical and religious significance.

Modern- day pilgrims can visit churches and historical monuments, museums and galleries on the route, including shrines and places associated with Saints Cuthbert, Bede, Hilda, Helen, Wilfrid, Oswald, Aidan and Godric.

Further pilgrimage routes *The Angels Way* (30 miles) and the *Way of the Sea* (62 miles) link Lindisfarne and Durham, the two most important pilgrimage centres in the region.

Pilgrims on 'The Way of Light' can stand where medieval pilgrims once made the Sign of the Cross as they caught their first glimpse of Durham Cathedral from a hill near the village of Esh.

Mount Joy, just south of Durham, on the Way of Life, takes its name as the place where pilgrims had their first sight of the cathedral close at hand.

In Esh, 'Cuthbert's Cross' commemorates the village's role as a refuge for the coffin of St Cuthbert during the era of Viking invasion.

Other highlights of the trails include St Mary's Well near a ford on the River Tees at Gainford, where Cuthbert's coffin is likely to have crossed on its last journey from Ripon to Durham.



Northern Saints Trail Coordinator David Pott said he believed the new routes will help cater for a growing interest in pilgrimage and a hunger for spiritual exploration.

"There is a 21st-Century revival in pilgrimage – only 2,500 people walked the Camino to Santiago in 1985, but there were 347,538 pilgrims recorded in 2019," he said.

"Pilgrimages are attracting people who are not necessarily of strong Christian faith but want to explore more.

"For many from the London and the South East, this will be the first time they have visited the North East and learned about its crucial role in the history of Christianity in Britain."

More information:

- The four routes were launched by the Bishops of Durham, Newcastle, Jarrow and Berwick between March 29th and May 25th.
- For more information: Northern Saints Trails - [The British Pilgrimage Trust](#).
- Picture credits: The British Pilgrimage Trust, Roderick Stuart

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