

A Holy Island Pilgrimage

**A personal reflection route
around the Upper Springs**



Reflections by Andy Raine © Northumbria Community 2019

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How to use this booklet

This booklet contains fourteen reflections, originally written for Easter Sunday 2019, each one associated with a particular place on Holy Island. You can use one or more of these reflections to help you to revisit this precious place, our Upper Springs. When first used, they were intended to help Companions prepare for the Easter Sunday renewal of our Vows of Availability and Vulnerability. Our hope is that, at any time of year, reflection on the stories and places on Holy Island which connect most with our own 'lived' experiences, can help our vows to become more personal and poignant.

Videos of these reflections can be viewed by using the the weblinks at the top of each reflection and listed together on page 22. You can use these in preparation for your visit, after it, or as you go around the Island, if you have a Smart phone with you.

You can do the reflections in any order during your visit, but to help you get the most out of your time, we have grouped all except the walk across the sands into four suggested routes: A to D.

Suggested route A – a longer walk as far as Castle Point – allow a minimum of 1hr 30 minutes. (Note that you could also visit the Impressions Gallery on the way! – see Route D.)

- Window on Wild Lindisfarne
- Lime Kilns
- Castle Point

Suggested route B – 45 minutes minimum – involves a walk up a steep hill (but the views are worth it!).

- Heugh / old Coastguard Station
- Mo's Seat (around the look-out tower)

Suggested route C – 1 hr 30 minutes approximately – note that Cuthbert's Island will only be accessible at low tide.

- St Aidan's statue
- St Mary's Church
- Jenny Bell's Well
- Cuthbert's Beach and Island

Suggested route D – Holy Island Village – a flat, accessible walk (although the entrance to the Gospel Gardens is reasonably narrow). Allow approximately an hour.

- Gospel Gardens
- Boiler House
- Peering through the window of the Lindisfarne Scriptorium
- Impressions Gallery

If you get the chance, have a listen to Andy Raine chatting with Phil Summers during the preparations for Easter Sunday 2019. In this short video for the Northumbria Community (about 8 minutes long) he is explaining the significance of the Upper Springs and Nether Springs.

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQWAGvcQHwE&feature=youtu.be>]



Andy Raine in conversation with Phil Summers, filmmaker, January 2019

All the Upper Springs personal reflection places are marked on the map on the back of this booklet. For a Google Map of the Upper Springs personal reflection places please click [here](#).

The Pilgrim's Way [<https://youtu.be/XGi4jWSqv8A>]

Come barefoot – or maybe in wellies or clogs but never in boots that get drenched through with water and written off by salt!)

From the Beal end of the causeway, dropped off by car, walk over the Bridge, then clamber down to the right without slipping, make your way to the first pole this side of the water, and begin.

'A causeway will be there', said Isaiah (as if he knew) 'and a way, a pilgrims' way, and it shall be for them the wayfarers, seeking a holy place.'

Experience whatever happens. The journey matters every bit as much as the arriving. Stay upright if I can, breathe in the weather, silence or conversation, see the view from where I am. After the final post, above me on the sand there is a seat. With the use of towel and water if I carried them it's a place for washing pilgrim feet.



Activity: Walk the Pilgrim's route with private reflection followed by footwashing. The walk will take between one and one and a half hours. You will need to take your own water and towel.

Please be very careful to consult the tide times, and the additional safety advice for those walking the sands, that is available on the Northumberland County Council website:

<https://orawww.northumberland.gov.uk/www2/holyisland/HolyIsland.asp?dt=0619>

Suggested route A

A longer walk as far as Castle Point (allow minimum of 1hr 30)
(Note that you could also visit the Reflections Gallery on the way! – see Route D)

- Window on Wild Lindisfarne
- Lime Kilns
- Castle Point

Window on Wild Lindisfarne [<https://youtu.be/4e5FOYMWoVc>]

The 'Window on Wild Lindisfarne' is simply what it says, a sheltered place to look outside, framed by a window. Bring a small seat and you could stay all day and watch, notice, unobserved.

Imagine looking everywhere, holding an empty frame or anywhere, waiting quietly with a camera!

So often we see, but do not see. Behind and underneath us water flows, fed from springs that sometimes soak the field.



Upper springs still flowing
under the Popple Well
where people of the Island came
to carry its waters to their homes, in buckets
suspended from a wooden yoke and frame.

Our taps are fed today by mainland water
– sadly, things are not the same –
but life still is shared and stillness found
here on Holy Island. The important things remain.

Activities:

- A reflection.
- Stop in the shelter and watch what is going on, out of the weather.

Lime Kilns: above and beneath [<https://youtu.be/c2q0SPqp4RQ>]

Walking up towards the castle
until more boat-sheds are in view.

Beyond the castle,
on the right we see
the top of lime
kilns reached by
the wagonway
from the quarry
behind Coves Bay.

The wagons' contents
would be tipped from
up-a-height,
then lime extracted
from the fires below.



Follow the steps, and you can explore the inside of the kilns, climb in and look upwards to the sky, or see the archways frame a different view of what's outside.

Beneath, above, inside and out:
with or without fire,
a different perspective
helps us see clearly where we are.

Activities:

- A reflection
- It's possible to walk into the lime kilns from below, as well as view them from above.

By Castle Point [<https://youtu.be/rVHmcLLqjck>]

Beyond the Castle, in sight of the sea,
are many small stones,

some of them
gathered in cairns,
arranged in patterns
or often a labyrinth.

Here is an opportunity
to walk reflectively
the steps
that are your life
as it has been,



returning
from its centre to
new days ahead.

Perhaps, like Much Afraid
in 'Hinds' Feet on High Places'
you may gather small stones
to make an offering, a cairn, an altar,
placing one by one before the Lord
the hard places of your life:
sacrifices, loss, rejections, disappointment.

Pick one stone for each,
numbering them as you walk here.
Build them as a memorial,
or maybe...
throw them one by one into the sea!

Activities: Use the reflection to walk the labyrinth or
build a cairn

Suggested route B

45 minutes minimum – involves a walk up a steep hill (but the
views are worth it!)

- Heugh / old Coastguard Station
- Mo's Seat (around the look-out tower)

The Heugh: old Coastguard Station, new look-out tower [https://youtu.be/m_Yq-fijpyw]

The Heugh (say 'He-yuff'!) is the highest point of Holy Island. Just below the surface, remains (or perhaps beginnings?) of a 7th century chapel have recently been found. Also, stone foundations large enough to support a tall tower to answer with fire a signal from Inner Farne, as they did when Cuthbert died. And here between the war memorial and our own look-out tower may have been the site of Aidan's circular cell.



Here we too may stand, looking out to sea,
from up the stairs of the opened-up coastguard station
with the all-around view,
or simply outside with our feet on the grass.

Many come here with their dreams and sense of calling,
as if from Holy Island they wait to be sent out.
Aidan's eyes, far-seeing scanned the horizon,
and the joyous venturing of little boats.
Like him, may we listen for the breath of the ever-present Spirit.

May I hear the heart that speaks in each I meet along the way.

Activities: Reflection based on Day 16 Meditation (Aidan)

Mo's Seat, around the look-out tower on the Heugh

[<https://youtu.be/RmFlruDXljo>]

She had been a singer, recorded with the Mo James Band. She presented a weekly radio programme. Married to Mike and with two growing children – do the maths – at 47, Mo Jowett experienced a brain haemorrhage.



She dreamt of a book, and was eager to turn more pages, to live what came next. She had also dreamt that she saw herself stood upon a column, a pedestal with marbling in the stone. She looked carefully at the patterns and recognised them as the faces of people holding her, supporting her with prayer and love. Two weeks on, a second bleed, and she was gone. She needed our prayers: now roles are reversed, and we lean on her strength, find support. Here's Mo's seat, carved with her name, set as a reminder in a place she visited and loved, looking out to sea. Challenging us to know her God, and be known and truly seen, yet loved and claimed as His, to grasp hold of life with both hands, and make our living count!

Activities: Take in the beautiful views from here – either outside, or inside from the coastguard tower if it's a wet day!

Suggested route C

Suggested route C – 1 hr 30 minutes approximately – note that Cuthbert’s Island will only be accessible at low tide.

- St Aidan’s statue
- St Mary’s Church
- Jenny Bell’s well
- Cuthbert’s Beach and Island

At Aidan’s statue (recollecting Easter Sundays)

[<https://youtu.be/iQNdCAEmSyl>]

At Aidan’s statue we gather, year by year;
voices find harmony, singing mid-day prayer.
Then ‘Christ as a light’ encircles the torch held high.

Fresh people fall into the dance-steps,
kneel, stand, pray for those on either side.



Day after day,
year after year,
we pray these
familiar words,
day after day,
put on Christ’s
presence,
walk as His own
into our worlds.

Christ behind us:
Love God more,
and live more
generously, we say.

But Christ before us goes: each person
that I meet may speak His word
to me today, if I will listen,
and respect their hard-won wisdom.

Can I be trusted with the dream
they carry, the heart's desire
that God has wakened and
the Spirit hastens to fulfil?

Activities: A quiet time of reflection

St Mary's Church [<https://youtu.be/l5xvN-rjyJY>]

Outside, next to the Crossman graves before the Priory is the base of a Celtic cross known to generations of Islanders as the Petting Stone which Island brides jump over after making their wedding vows in church. They are sent, these hopeful couples, to a day of celebration and the day-by-day promise of married life. Their friends, neighbours and family bear witness, and so





does this place. Nowadays for most of the Island-folk the church is a place for send-offs and of a deep sense of continuity.

St Mary's is the sending place for many an Island funeral. The seats in the pews fill up as we come to remember, support those who are mourning, and know one day we will be walking behind that coffin or carried from here. The Fenwick Lawson statue 'The Journey',

near the door, depicts Cuthbert being carried by designated companions. But his body would be taken here and there for many years before being laid to rest at Durham. Our loved ones' bodies journey mostly to the graveyard surrounding the Church, and the names on the stones are familiar, in a place where everyone knows each other, and names live on in family and often-recounted stories. In November a small company leaves from the Church to lay wreaths at the war memorial at the Heugh.

This is a place of prayer. The Church is open every day for early prayers, communion, and prayers again at 5:30. Beyond this pattern of silence, psalms, and eucharist, any day, Island folk, pilgrims, and visitors come here, become quiet, maybe light a candle. Almost all will sit, breathe in for a few moments, and pray in their own way.

This is a place where many come who never 'go to church'. At Easter there are pilgrims with Northern Cross who have walked

for a whole week, carrying large wooden crosses together, sleeping in village halls, battling with wonderful or lousy weather, and offering their experiences of the week, the past year, or all their life, to God in good faith, or in some cases no faith at all. Yet, somehow they come. And the crosses they carried across the sands on Friday are now decorated, dressed with fresh flowers, as from behind the altar, through the church, held high on pilgrims' shoulders to the singing of 'No more we doubt Thee, glorious Prince of Life', they burst out through the door.



The busy Easter service has struggled to contain us comfortably. At the sign of peace and at communion warmth overcomes formality – even small children seem able to relax. Yet much of it seems long and crowded, disconnected from our lives. We miss the undistracted quiet of the empty space, would prefer to be outside or by the open door... Suddenly we meet someone else's searching eyes, or spot a familiar face. 'Church' may not be the heart's resting-place, but today as pilgrims we can belong.

Activities: Spend some time in and around the Church, looking and reflecting quietly, or join in with one of the daily services.

Jenny Bell's Well [<https://youtu.be/4ovzGVS8Njg>]

When children came to the Island, often they'd be given a sheet of discovery questions to answer as they'd explore.

The first was a puzzling one to children: 'How's Jenny Bell?'

'Well', was the answer some Islander would give them.

A local name long passed,
but 'down at Jenny's' a location.
It's been restored, a place to sit and ponder,
though used as a well no more.

'Jenny Bell's' asks the praying soul
a question: will you remain
and watch with me,
when the well runs dry?

When prayer
becomes a chore,
no longer refreshing,
will I remain, persist,
sustained by love
that brought me here?

Surprise me!
or find for me under the rubble
the water that once
used to flow.
Talk with me, by this well.



Activities: A lovely spot to sit and reflect.

Cuthbert's Island [<https://youtu.be/AkEffWjT6K8>]

This small tidal island just off Lindisfarne is really called 'Hobthrus', but that you never hear. It's always 'Cuthbert's Island' for the saint who hurried there at every opportunity – just to be alone from the busyness of a Prior (or of a Bishop later on!)

It was here that he PRACTISED the life of a hermit which he lived on Inner Farne eventually.

When the tide has pulled back we use rocks as stepping stones, make our way to the cross, and foundations of a chapel.

Away from external distractions, the hermit must face their own heart, and when that is known, at last they're alone, available, open to God.



Step up to the highest point here,
then look on the side of the rock
for a plaque placed
there by some praying
nuns
with words about God
and His power.

He's mightier than the
storms of
my circumstances,
mightier than all the
storms in me.
He's mighty enough
to make all disturbance
cease.

He's mighty enough to love me.



Activities: A place of quiet reflection

Suggested route D

Holy Island Village – a flat, accessible walk (although the entrance to the Gospel Gardens is reasonably narrow).
Approximately an hour.

- Gospel Gardens
- Boiler House
- Peering through the window of the Lindisfarne Scriptorium
- Impressions Gallery

The Gospels Garden [<https://youtu.be/AdqkUYnJqm4>]

The Gospels Garden was only a temporary installation for the Chelsea Flower Show, inspired by the illuminated masterpiece from Lindisfarne.

What a shame to just dismantle and destroy it!
Could we not carry it here, find it an Island home with its own space to grow?



A later addition was a cross designed by Fenwick Lawson, a Celtic cross depicting Cuthbert, brokenness, fragility. Sadly in one of our wilder storms the wooden cross was truly broken, (re-cast at last safely in Durham more durably) but here on the Island it is no more.

The garden remains, and we remember where the cross stood: others never miss it.

Now the question: when I am gone
life will carry on without me, is it enough
to stand, however fragile?
embody the truth I own
for the moment that is mine?
to shine, with the beauty of the Lord our God
upon me?

Activity: A lovely space to sit. Nothing to be seen. Ask: do we amount to nothing? Do things that are not seen still have meaning? Will our living have made any difference?

The Boiler-house Chapel [<https://youtu.be/TAM3QYteS-Q>]

Not so long ago this boiler-house was fire for the church, warmth for worshippers, with Island voices singing metric psalms and 'Will your anchor hold?'

Now the church is cleared of pews and pulpit, become a pilgrim centre, in a different time offering welcome space.



Reimagined: even when the often-open doors are closed, around the back one place remains open, a chapel where the boiler used to be, now a silent place for pilgrims.

Lift the latch, bow your head, and enter.
Catch your breath and wait a while.

Activity: Reflection on how things change.

Peering through the Lindisfarne Scriptorium window

[<https://youtu.be/j0dPjLcu1E>]

In the beginning was the Word
and jewel colours, patterns
of Celtic interlace, amongst which small figures
unnoticed help each other climb to higher places.
Light reflects from overshadowing wings, the letters
dance with sudden flames of fire almost
jumping from the page.



Glimpsed-at designs, prints, and unidentified
stuff of different sizes always intrigue when
peered at through the window.
Today we are not open;
or we might be, knock and see.

Come inside, and look around,
surrounded

by the day by day, year on year output
of a Lindisfarne scriptorium.

With borrowed eye-sight of an eagle,
Eadfrith-the-illuminator has leave from time
to time to do a search of the Scriptorium
as he used to,
to squint with interest and surprise at
the latest almost-finished work,
pleased by its innovation
and faithful artistry
on an Island now you drive to
along a causeway through the sea.

Activity: A reflection on looking, glimpsing, peering...

Impressions Gallery [<https://youtu.be/XtMzMttAp-c>]

A gentle welcome awaits you at the Impressions Gallery,
a pool of
peacefulness,
just one step from
the street.

One man from
Birmingham in love
with Holy Island
went home and
painted nothing
else, until this place



collected the overflow with play of light and colour,
seeing what we see, but holding the moment for us.

Every picture – and each title – is a story.

Miracles often happen;
but the discipline of noticing – is gift!

Activity: Reflections and stories associated with the paintings in this small gallery



Weblinks

The links on this page will take you to YouTube where you can view short videos of each of the reflections in this booklet.

The Pilgrim's Way – <https://youtu.be/XGi4jWSqv8A>

Window on Wild Lindisfarne – <https://youtu.be/4e5FOYMWoVc>

Lime Kilns – above and beneath – <https://youtu.be/c2q0SPqp4RQ>

By Castle Point – <https://youtu.be/rVHmcLLqjck>

The Heugh – old coastguard station, new look-out tower –
https://youtu.be/m_Yq-fjipyw

Mo's Seat – around the look-out tower on the Heugh <https://youtu.be/RmFlruDXljo>

At Aidan's Statue – <https://youtu.be/iQNdCAEmSyI>

St Mary's Church – <https://youtu.be/l5xvN-rjvJY>

Jenny Bell's Well – <https://youtu.be/4ovzGVS8Njg>

Cuthbert's Island – <https://youtu.be/AkEffWjT6K8>

The Gospel's Garden – <https://youtu.be/AdqkUYnJqm4>

The Boiler-house Chapel – <https://youtu.be/TAM3QYteS-Q>

Lindisfarne Scriptorium – peering through the window - <https://youtu.be/j0dPfJLcu1E>

Impression's Gallery – <https://youtu.be/XtMzMttAp-c>

The significance of the Upper and Nether Springs – <https://youtu.be/IQWAGvcQHwE>

Space for your own reflections ...



Holy Island

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