

# Cuthbert Prequel

Posted on [April 16, 2017](#)

St Cuthbert Way Day 1, April 16, Easter Sunday

Start Tweedbank train station

End Abbotsford and across Tweed at Kingsknowes Hotel

Miles walked: 5

It is all my daughter's fault.

She lives very near us at the moment, but is going back to school in July. We intended to travel and take advantage of her free pet care and house sitting, but never did. Hmmmm, we never took a trip to Europe in all these years. Perhaps something easy the first time like the UK. Hey, there are some long-ish trails– we could hike all the way across Scotland and visit castles. Well, perhaps compromise on something shorter with lots of history and spiritual stuff, and bed&breakfasts each night, using a tour operator and luggage transport service to take everything except our daypack...

So KK and I are in Glasgow, jet-lagged after a six hour flight out of Newark. We take a train to Edinburgh and explore briefly in all-day drizzle. (The city has many opportunities for discovery, and we reserved some days after the hike to do just that.) We stop in a little taco shop for hot tea, and I try the haggis tacos like a tourist.





Another train takes us to Tweedbank, where we start hiking on Abbey Way along the River Tweed. We stroll to Abbotsford, the home of Sir Walter Scott, and take a delightful audio tour.



The inside of the mansion has many artifacts and weapons and plaster decorations in a bold theatrical style.







Later we went across the river to Kingsknowes Hotel to a charming room overlooking Abbotsford and the Tweed, with decorated plaster ceiling that is a call-back to Abbotsford's style.



The room is a little intimidating after several recent nights in a tent on the GET, but I will endeavor to endure.



# Melrose Place

Posted on [April 17, 2017](#)

St Cuthbert Way Day 2, April 17, Monday

Start Abbotsford and across Tweed at Kingsknowes Hotel

Stop Melrose and then back across the river to Fauhope Country House

Miles walked: 6.4



After breakfast at the Kingsknowes we crossed the bridge near Abbotsford and walked along the Tweed on Border Abbey Way on a cold day with occasional light rain alternating with sun.





At Chain Bridge we saw cute horses, and turned towards the town of Melrose.



We took the audio tour at Melrose Abbey tour, spending hours exploring the ruins.







The abbey was founded by Cisterians, who followed the teaching of Benedict strictly. This included the type and manner of clothing allowed, though Benedict was from Italy and Scotland winters were much colder.





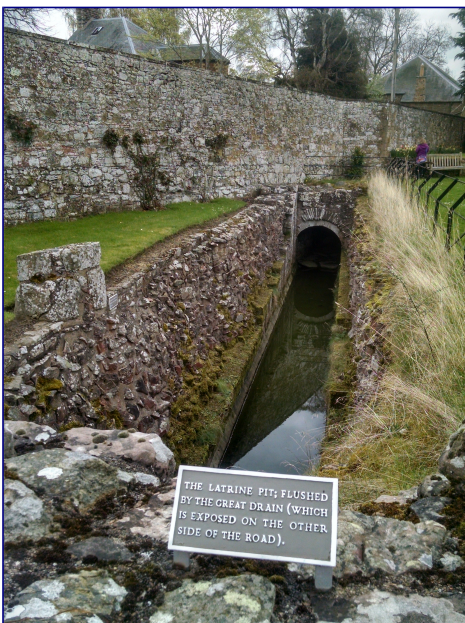
We got to climb a narrow spiral staircase and view the site from on high.







The Great Trench showed the engineering prowess of the monks.

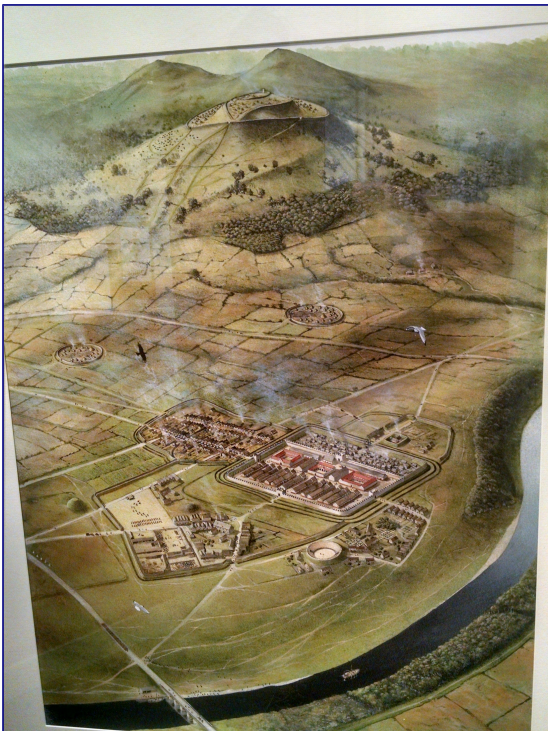


A latrine was built over the trench, very sanitary for the times. Many artifacts have been recovered from the trench and collected in a nearby museum.





In town center we explored the Roman Heritage Museum.





Back across Chain Bridge, a long pedestrian suspension bridge spans the Tweed





Up to Fauhope Country House to clean up and leave our bags.



Back into town for dinner, extended to dessert to wait out sleet and rain. Then back across the bridge in a bitter cold head-wind to our rooms.

Good museum day! And we finally reached the beginning of Cuthbert's Way at the abbey.

# KK Wins

Posted on [April 18, 2017](#)

St Cuthbert Way Day 3, April 18, Tuesday

Start Fauhope Country House

Stop Howden Visitors Center and then get a ride with B&B host to Jedburgh.

Miles walked: 16.2

Breakfast at the B&B was served with a lovely window view.



This was our first "full breakfast". The black disk on right is blood pudding. And yes, those are beans.





After returning across the river to Melrose, we walk past town center and start a long series of Steps.



Looking back at Melrose below, you can see the path rises straight up the hill as we near the saddle between two of the three Eildon peaks.





A Roman signal station was located on middle Eildon peak.



We descend through pleasant fields with nearby sheep.





We approach a small village with a restored well, dubbed Pants Well.



Hedge experts advertise their expertise with a woven hedge. We pass along many hedgerows today.





## EU propaganda



The little sign says “Project part financed by the European Union. Europe and Scotland. Making it work together.”

We pass along the edge of a golf course, which we include an image here for some of our friends who are wild about golf.





## Along River Tweed again



Pump well, fancy technology for the day. Donkeys turned a wheel in this structure to power a pump to bring spring water to Benrig House, above.





Sheep with lambs were a frequent sight on the walk.



Our last stretch was along a Roman road, no longer very visible on the ground.





Lilliot Cross marks a meeting place where British and Scottish kings sent representatives to talk to try to avoid wars.



KK had not hiked such a long day for over 25 years, since our hike to Stone Lions in Bandelier National Monument. And she finished like a champ, though sore and weary.





The BB host picks us up and brings us into Jedburgh to Allerton House.



We go to a pub for dinner and pass Jedburgh Abbey.





We will visit the abbey more tomorrow.





# Abbey and Castle

Posted on [April 19, 2017](#)

St Cuthbert Way Day 4, April 19, Wednesday

Start Jedburgh, Allerton House.

Stop Morebattle at Temple Hall Hotel

Miles walked: 12

After breakfast we go down to Jedburgh Abbey and take an audio tour. The Augustine order were canons instead of monks at Melrose, and typically came from wealthier families.



The community only had around twenty monks at one time, along with many staff and servants. Imagine such a large structure for only twenty!



Note the change in architectural styles between stories. The lower arches are Norman, and higher are Gothic, with pointed arches. This medieval abbey is much better preserved than Melrose.



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As with Melrose we had the opportunity to climb a spiral staircase, though not all the way to the top, and even cross over and climb down a different stairs.



Here is the view after climbing up stairs.





The main entrance looks imposing.



After the abbey tour we took Border Abbeys Way out of town, until it joined up with Cuthbert. Farmland on rolling hills surrounded us the rest of the day.





Several waymarkers from overlapping trails stacked up on this one post.



KK demonstrates how to climb an unusual rock stile over rock wall.





Cessford Castle was stronghold of the Kerr family, Border Reivers with a violent history of feuds and raids.



Closed to entrance, we must peek through windows for clues to what is hidden inside.





Signs of wear on the thick outer wall show why the castle is closed to exploration.



I get tantalizing glimpses of secrets held inside.





Later on we continue on narrow country lanes. Along the way I see a wall nearly covered in moss. Perhaps in another few centuries the coverage will be complete.



Entering the village of Morebattle, KK is weary from yesterday's long hike, and ready to stop.



I might be used to longer hiking days than KK, but it is not every day you get to walk to a castle and a medieval abbey. What will be the next trail adventure?



# Highest Shortest Middlest

Posted on [April 20, 2017](#)

St Cuthbert Way Day 5, April 20, Thursday

Start Morebattle at Templehall Hotel

Stop Kirk Yetholm, The Farmhouse b&b

Miles walked: 9

Today we will reach the highest elevation on the trail, hike our shortest mileage day, and pass the midway point.

We cross a footbridge on the way out of Morebattle.





The way goes mostly straight up a steep slope to a peak at Grubbit Law.



After the first hill we ascend to another higher hill with good views.





Before getting to the top of Wideopen Hill we shelter against the wall to get out of the wind, and eat lunch and nap or rest for an hour. We have a short hiking day, and check-in at our next B&B is not until 4PM, so no reason to arrive too early.



We reach the summit of Wideopen Hill, the highest point on Cuthbert, but not actually the midpoint now, a little further on.





Views of wide rolling hills rock walls, and sheep reward our walk.



Rock walls are so long in this region. Imagine the man-hours of effort required.





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Little forest islands float in the large fields, with all trees in each group nearly the same height.





Descending down towards Yetholm Kirk, a rare goat among sheep munches on hedge. As we get lower in elevation hedgerows replace rock walls.



Private joke.





Yetholm Kirk has a village green...



And a few thatched roofs...





...and a kirk (church).



We get to our room, after some confusion about B&Bs and the correct entrance...





and then I have dinner with someone “Reserved”.





# Heather

Posted on [April 21, 2017](#)

St Cuthbert Way Day 6, April 21, Friday

Start Kirk Yetholm, The Farmhouse b&b

Stop Wooler, Rockcliffe B&B

Miles walked: 15.7

Gorse and some scotch broom highlight the lane as we walk out of Kirk Yetholm.



We pass by several peaks with ancient remains of hill forts all through the day as we climb in the Cheviot Range.





We bid farewell to Scotland and cross the border to England.





England has less permissive laws regarding walking on privately owned land, so trail markers designate “public footpaths”.



We enter a very dark woods, much darker than shown on camera, with trees planted in straight rows.





We take a short side-trail to Hethpool Linn (Waterfall), and are a little puzzled such a small falls would be mentioned on the map. It made a good spot for lunch, though.



As we go further into England the prevailing breed of sheep changes to having small horns and black faces.





The tops of hills are covered heather, a low perennial shrub.



Heather makes the heath— or the moor. This is heather moorland, though I might be mistaken on terminology.





The sides of hills are a crazy quilt patch-work, with polygons of three colors; heather, recently burned heather, and old burned heather. Perhaps this is for plant and wildlife management.



Here is a closer view of the patch-work.





Many grouse fly and call out in the heath.

Just before climbing down to town from the heights, we look out and try to see the ocean, but clouds might be blocking the view.



The square stone wall seems to be a hunting blind, likely for grouse.

Wooler comes into view as we hike further down.





About a mile from town a steady rain comes down. We are pretty wet as we get to our room, but a hot shower does wonders.



Our planned restaurant had too long a wait-time, so we found a food take-away shop of the sort mentioned in British television shows we watch, and get a kabob to find out what it really is.



# Coast

Posted on [April 22, 2017](#)

St Cuthbert Way Day 7, April 22, Saturday

Start Wooler, Rockcliffe B&B

Stop Lindisfarne Inn, Beal

Miles walked: 15.4

From Tower Hill, the location of an ancient 12th century fort and 16th century castle, you can look down on much of Wooler.





We pass a school that was the site of a former POW camp in WW2, where Italian prisoners carved this figure.



Climbing over Weetwood Moor, we go down to Weetwood Bridge, built during the 16th century and restored multiple times.





KK observed that several bridge stones are cut in a curved shape, rather than fitting rectangular blocks into a curve.



Large fields of rapeseed in bloom add bright yellow to the countryside.





We walk along a narrow road that passes next to a WW2 pill-box defense structure.



A wooden statue of St Cuthbert looks on at walkers.





In the afternoon we come to Cuthbert's Cave. When vikings came to steal Cuthbert's remains in the 800s, the body was hidden here, so the story goes.



Graffiti carved into cave sandstone include some old dates, including 1818.





First view of ocean.



An ancient stone wall goes for several hundred feet, now forgotten and overgrown.





Water again



Past Fenwick and on to Beal, we get to our destination, a modern hotel built to resemble an old inn, that happens to have superb tavern food.





# Holy Island of Lindisfarne

Posted on [April 23, 2017](#)

St Cuthbert Way Day 8, April 23, Sunday

Start Lindisfarne Inn, Beal

Stop Bambaugh Inn, Lindisfarne

Miles walked: 9.4

In the morning we start a road-walk to the causeway for Holy Island. This is a non-elevated causeway that connects the island to mainland across a tidal mudflat, so the road is underwater for much of its length at high tide, or twice a day. We have to time our crossing with tide tables.





On the causeway, there is enough room for hikers to walk just off the pavement for nearly the total distance.



An alternate way to the island for hikers is following the Pilgrim's Path, marked by tall poles, which shows the path used by pilgrims for centuries as they make their way to the island to pay respect to St Cuthbert. We cross over from the causeway to Pilgrim's Path when we see it is passable.





Further along the causeway sand dunes appear.



On the island we make our way to the ruins of an ancient priory.

A priory...





The structure was built here by the Benedictine order, Durham abbey, in the 12th century.



About 20 monks lived here at one time, rotating in and out from the abbey. Later, in decline, as few as two monks occupied this large complex.





Near the priory is an observation tower that we climbed for the views. St Cuthbert's Island can be seen, an island where Cuthbert lived for a time seeking solitude.



Here is the priory as seen from above in the tower





Later we walked to the ocean side of the island to view a castle, currently undergoing renovation and not open to explore. The castle was built on order of King Henry VIII to help fight the Scots in the 16th century.





Past the castle, past a walled formal garden, one discovers rock stacking along the shore.



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KK and I pause for meditation on the beach.



Below the castles are limestone kilns, used to make lime for farmers in the 19th century.





From the top, one can see where limestone and coal are layered into the kiln.



At one time many fishing boats operated out of the island. When they were made obsolete by steam trawlers, some were beached and used as shacks. A few of these can be found near the kilns and castle.



Past the kilns we can see the castle from other angles.





We “touristed” the heck out of the island today.

This ends our Cuthbert’s Way hike!!!

Well, almost...



# Post-Cuthbert

Posted on [April 30, 2017](#)

After finishing the Way we spent a few days sightseeing, first in Edinburgh, and later in Stirling, before flying out of Glasgow.

Edinburgh Castle



Palace of Holyroodhouse





St Giles Cathedral



Stirling Castle





Queen's Bedchamber, Stirling Castle



Wallace Monument near Stirling





We took an extra day to savor Stirling Castle. Do not miss the tapestry exhibit.



‘Bye!