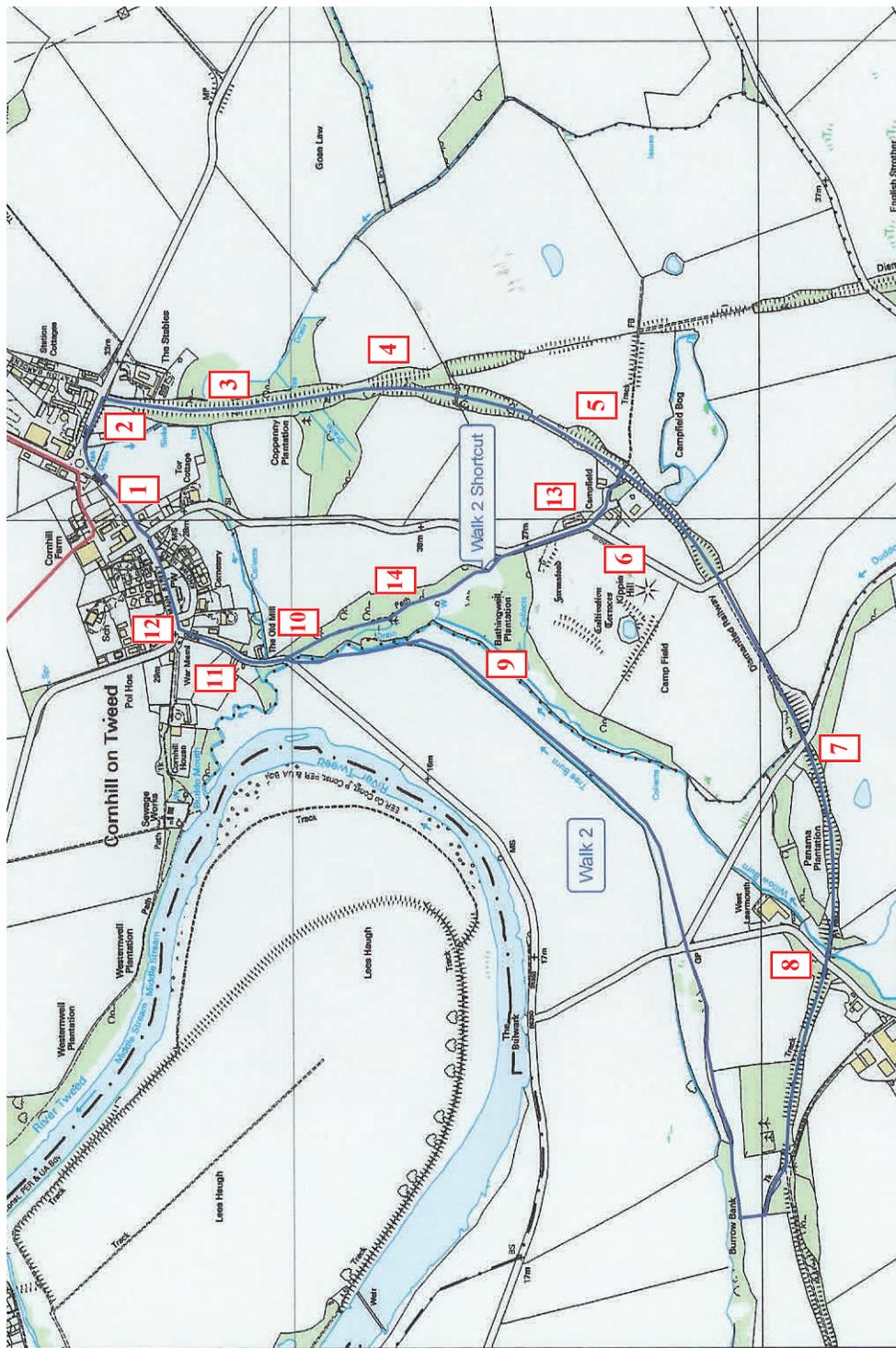


CORNHILL WALK No. 2 BY RAILWAY TO LEARMOUTH

3.5 miles



Date 09/06/2008

Northumberland
COUNTY COUNCIL

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3.5 miles

There is a shorter version (2 miles) for those with less time to spare.

Refreshments Cornhill has a village shop and coffee shop; the Collingwood Arms a bar and brasserie restaurant.

Parking There is limited parking outside the village shop, and to the rear of the church, please park considerately and do not obstruct access.

Footwear Many of the paths on this walk can be wet and muddy at any time of the year, and suitable footwear is essential.

Maps In addition to the map in this leaflet, you will find Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Explorer map Sheet 339 (Kelso, Coldstream & Lower Tweed Valley) helpful in following this itinerary. This map can be purchased at Cornhill Village Shop.

Please follow the **Country Code**:

Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work

Guard against all risk of fire

Fasten all gates

Keep your dogs under close control

Keep to public paths across farmland

Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls

Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone

Take your litter home

Help to keep all water clean

Protect wildlife, plants and trees

Take special care on country roads

Make no unnecessary noise

**LEAVE ONLY YOUR FOOTPRINTS,
TAKE ONLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

Produced for Cornhill Parish Council by Julie Grainger and Keith Bailey, 2008. Assistance from Northumberland County Council is gratefully acknowledged.

The route is generally described in a clockwise direction, starting from Cornhill village.

1. Cornhill Village is in the form of two parallel rows of houses, and probably reflects a deliberate act of planning, probably in the 11-12th centuries. St Helen's Church, first mentioned c.1080, occupies what appears to be a natural hillock between the rows, although the land has been considerably raised by centuries of burials. The church was rebuilt in the 18th and 19th centuries, although medieval masonry survives in the lower walls. Several buildings in grey stone survive from the late-18th to late-19th centuries, including the *Collingwood Arms*, Cornhill Farm and the shop. The Old School north of the church was built in 1837, and replaced in the 1960s. Note the milestone, provided when the main roads were turnpiked (converted to toll roads) in the 1760s.

Park as suggested above and then proceed along the main street until you reach the roundabout. Bear right in front of Rickerby's agricultural showroom onto the A 697 as far as the abutments of the former railway bridge. The entrance to a housing estate is on your left. Cross the road and climb steep steps up the side of the former railway bridge. A finger post reads East Learmouth 1¼ West Learmouth 2 miles.

2. The former railway bridge was part of the branch line from Tweedmouth to Sprouston opened by the York, Newcastle & Berwick Railway in 1849. From 1854 it was part of the North Eastern Railway, and was the only line owned by an English company to cross the Border. The line was continued to Kelso and St. Boswells, where it joined the Edinburgh-Carlisle line. Always more important for freight traffic than passengers, it was closed in 1965. The main traffic inwards was coal, while grain and livestock were carried from a wide catchment area to the rest of the UK network. Notice the seven former railwaymen's cottages in Station Gardens. No trace of the station or goods yards survives. From 1849-73 the station was called Cornhill, thereafter Coldstream. A horse bus linked the two until the early-20th century.

You are now on the railway line and the walking is now all on the flat. The line is a good place for dog walking.

3. Below the high embankment note remains of the mill ponds, where the stream was dammed to provide a head of water to power the wheel at Cornhill Mill, which you will pass at the end of this walk. There are several railway remains along this part of the walk, including a buffer stop and a concrete signal post with its ladder.

At a split in the footpath keep right.

4. The path to the left follows the line of the Cornhill to Alnwick branch line, opened in 1887. It was the result of various schemes for railways in rural north Northumberland from the 1860s, and linked the existing lines at Cornhill and Alnwick by way of Wooler. Never very important for passenger traffic, which was withdrawn in 1930, the line helped to open up wider markets for local agricultural produce. The route was cut by the Borders Flood of 1948, but goods traffic lasted until the mid-1960s.

5. Just before the next bridge, a large pit on the left was a railway ballast hole. To the right is Campfield, a typical 19th-century farm-and-steading group. The origin of name is not known, but may relate to military activity in the period of unrest from c1300 to c1700. South of the railway lies a substantial boggy area with a pond. Adjacent to this was a large gravel pit in the 19th century, with its own railway siding taking away stone for railway ballast.

Go up the steps ahead.

(A short-cut from Campfield to Cornhill Village is described below)

Go straight on and down the steps

6. The prominent conical hill to the west is Kippie Hill. It is natural, but contained some prehistoric burials. On the right after the next bridge note evidence of medieval farming in the form of ridge-and-furrow, caused by centuries of ploughing.

Continue walking along the railway line until you are crossing the first of two viaducts. As you cross the viaduct marvel at the height! (This walker/writer has also ridden a horse across these viaducts!)

7. The first of two large viaducts is known as Panama Bridge. This crosses about 60ft above the Dedhoe Burn, and provides a panoramic view of Coldstream and the hills beyond, although the Tweed is all but invisible. The bridge is named from Panama Cottage, which stood just below it to the north, next to the stream. There was a sawmill here in the 19th century, and a few stone footings survive. Why this name was adopted is unclear, possibly timber from Central America found its way here. Dedhoe Burn, an insignificant stream in a typically oversized valley created by meltwater after the final phase of glaciation, marks an important boundary. From early medieval times to 1844, the land to the east (Cornhill) was part of North Durham, to the west Northumberland (Carham). The areas known still as Northhamshire and Islandshire were held by the Prince Bishops of Durham as successors to St. Cuthbert and his community of monks on Lindisfarne. Although the bishop lost all secular control in the 16th century, it took another 300 years to "correct" the administrative anomaly.

Continue along the railway line.

8. The second viaduct crosses two small streams in a large valley, with a view to the farm and steadings at West Learmouth. The larger is now called Willow Burn, but was originally known as *Læfer*, from the Old English for rush, reed or yellow iris, whence Learmouth.

After crossing the second viaduct, you will come to a gap in the hedge on the right. Turn right and follow a permissive path along the edge of the field, descending steeply into the Tweed valley. Follow the edge of the field with a boggy area to the left marked by reed beds.

When you reach the road, turn left, cross the bridge (keeping an eye out for traffic), then immediately right, descending steeply, with farmland to the left and the stream to the right. Note the view of the two viaducts on your right.

9. As you walk beside the Burn, the site of St. Helens Well lies in the trees to the right. Little is known of its history, although the name suggests that it was considered sacred in the medieval period. At some time in the 18th-19th centuries it acquired a reputation as a chalybeate spa with health-giving properties, and some kind of building was erected for the use of visitors. Unfortunately, this has vanished, apparently leaving no visual record. The wooded area is known as Bathingwell Plantation.

Continue round the edge of the field, then turn right to join the B6350. As you walk along this road the watermill appears on your right. Take care as there is no footpath here.

10. Cornhill watermill lay just next to the parish boundary, where the stream fed by the millponds was crossed by the Wark road. A vital part of the local farming economy in an area of corn-growing, this probably began life as soon as the village developed.

The road climbs up to Main Street where it meets the A697. Directly ahead is the Collingwood Arms whilst to your left is the war memorial.

11. On the steep slope up to Cornhill village notice the stonework of a well, dating from 1842. At the top on the left is the parish war memorial, and beyond Cornhill House. This is 18th century in appearance, but has at its core a medieval tower house. This stood next to what was the original road from Cornhill to Scotland, serving various fords and a ferry until Coldstream Bridge was built in the 1760s. The latter was served by a new turnpike (toll) road, running north from the village in a series of sweeping curves.
12. The Collingwood Arms dates from the early-19th century, originally a coaching inn on the improved roads linking Morpeth and Berwick with Scotland.

Refreshments can be obtained in the Collingwood Arms or the Coffee Shop inside the Village shop.

SHORT CUT

A pleasant woodland walk features in this short-cut from Campfield [No.5] *Turn right at the top of the steps and walk down the farm track to the road*

13. On your right is Campfield Farm, and then its steading cottages, probably rebuilt in the late-19th century.

Walk along the road as far as the stile on your left, where there is a fine stand of Scots pine.

14. Walk through Bathingwell Plantation, a rather rundown area of woodland, but full of attractive woodland flowers changing through the seasons, with old decayed trees and newer ones. The ground can be boggy. The path follows the Dedhoe Burn, although it is only seen on the final stages before the bridge. The plantation probably takes its name from St. Cuthbert's Well, a one-time spa, and apparently a bathing place.

Complete the walk by joining the B6350 and continuing into Cornhill