



# Northern Cross

Christian Ecumenical Easter Week Pilgrimage

8<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> April 2017

[www.northerncross.co.uk](http://www.northerncross.co.uk)

**Briefing Note: The Pilgrim's Crossing on Good Friday** **[PLEASE NOTE UPDATED TIMES!]**

**Event Date:** Friday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Waypoint Location: Beal Sands car park, south of Berwick on Tweed, off the A1.

[coordinates 55.677768,-1.875531 ]

**Time:** Pilgrims will walk past the above waypoint between 10.20 - 10.50am

**Crossing begins:** Between approx. 10:20 and 11:00am, as soon as groups arrive on the foreshore

The Northern Cross pilgrims who have walked from as far as Carlisle and Lanark; will approach Lindisfarne from different directions, and each group ('Leg') will stay in a different nearby village on the mainland for the night of Maundy Thursday. On the morning of Good Friday each Leg will have a different distance to cover, ranging from ten or so miles across country paths for Carlisle Leg (from near Belford) to Lanark Leg's rather longer hike from Etal.

We are an ecumenical pilgrimage and our walkers represent many different Christian traditions. Many will be old friends, and others entirely new to the experience. The meeting of the groups is often chaotic and joyous.

**2017 UPDATE:** In order to avoid disruption to the road traffic and minimising exposure when the weather is unpleasant, **the various pilgrim groups will NOT be stopping and waiting** for each other at Beal Sands car park. Instead they will keep on walking as that group to begin the actual crossing immediately. Pilgrims will therefore cross the tidal causeway as up to 2 groups, which will be leaving the foreshore over what might be up to a half hour period; starting the walking crossing of the tidal sands from this point at any time after 10.20am, with the last group leaving at the latest 11:00am.

## Joining Us

Often pilgrims who are not able to take a week off work, or are not strong walkers, will arrange to meet us on the day for the crossing of the sands. Anybody who wishes to join us in the crossing is welcome. Please make sure you read the 'logistics' section below, for a better understanding of our arrangements.

As meeting the groups as they pass the waypoint of Beal Sands itself will be swift and possibly slightly frantic, we would encourage you to walk at least part of the earlier (mainland) section with us. The 2 groups (Carlisle and Lanark Legs) will start Good Friday walking from Belford and Etal respectively. Please get in touch by emailing contact @ [northerncross.co.uk](mailto:northerncross.co.uk) to arrange this.

## Note to Press & Media / photographers

Northern Cross is an act of worship and witness, and we are happy for reporters or photographers to join us on the Sands or walk with us across the Crossing.

However, in the interests of safety, we would like to request that you:

- do not encourage pilgrims to walk away from the poles marking out the Crossing;
- do not ask the cross bearers to separate themselves from the group (not everybody is physically capable of carrying the crosses for long distances);
- do not disregard the marshals' advice or ask pilgrims to do the same.

**In general, as this is an act of religious devotion, please respect any individual's wish for space and quiet, and please do not encourage the group to split up. Thank you for your consideration!**

## Contact Details

For further information, please check our website at [www.northerncross.co.uk](http://www.northerncross.co.uk), and see <http://www.northerncross.co.uk/goodfriday.htm> for updates or email [northerncross@northerncross.co.uk](mailto:northerncross@northerncross.co.uk) we will also be placing updates during the week on our Twitter feed <http://twitter.com/northerncrossuk>

## Media and Press representatives

To contact us both BEFOREhand or BETWEEN 8 – 16 April 2017 (during the pilgrimage), please call Margaret Williams on **07789 637 936** or John Wallace on **07463 537976** (nominated members of the pilgrimage's Coordinating Steering Group)



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## Logistics

- Pilgrim groups will keep walking **past** the Beal Sands Car Park, south of Berwick on Tweed, at a point between 10.10 - 10.40am, and pilgrim groups will start the walking crossing of the tidal sands from this point at any time after 10.10am, with the last group leaving at the latest 10.45am.
- From there they will then walk a short distance along the road causeway (across the first bridge) out towards the start of the Pilgrim's Crossing. At this point (weather permitting) many walkers will remove their boots. Salt water is notoriously bad for leather and part of the fun of the crossing is the feeling of mud and sand between your toes! [*However please read our note below about hypothermia risks*] The boots will be ferried across by road, to meet us at the other side.
- During the crossing a number of marshals will walk in front, beside and around the group. They will wear yellow high-visibility jackets. These people are here to ensure our safety on the road and the Crossing (the sand can be treacherous if you stray too far from the poles). Please follow their instructions.
- The crosses are carried at the front of the procession. The only people in front of the crosses should be the marshals. If you are not a marshal, please stay behind the crosses!
- Each cross takes two or three bearers, one or two at the front and one at the back. Anyone can help carry any cross – simply offer to take over from the current bearer. The idea is to have frequent changes so that we share the burden.
- On reaching Lindisfarne we will stop to briefly clean our feet and collect our boots. The Legs will have arranged to carry hot water, bowls & towels for this purpose. Feel free to do the same!

## Easter Weekend

Please feel free to stay or return to Lindisfarne over the weekend & join Easter services in the churches.

## Small print

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'Non-Northern Crossers' – those not listed beforehand on our list of walkers – are most welcome to walk with us crossing the sands, but you must be at the Beal Sands waypoint by the time window listed, or ideally, join earlier on the routes that morning. **You must accept full responsibility for yourself and any dependants with you, as there are a number of risks:** We have a careful risk assessment of the crossing activity, as there are quick sands, it does take a long time – around 1½ hours – and some years the weather can make it so cold that we have to make sure some people do not get hypothermia! Other years it is warm and sunny and people get sunburnt, but the key is that the mud and quick sands are an issue if children are not kept an eye on. If you are a non-Northern Crosser, you must accept that you cross the tidal causeway at your own risk and that you will not be covered by our public liability insurance.

**Hypothermia** - Participants should be aware that in certain conditions, prolonged exposure to cold conditions can lead to hypothermia. The brain doesn't function fully to make good decisions, so you don't feel the cold. This can affect many different people of ages and body mass. Chief first issue is to recognise it in yourself. How to spot hypothermia – Ask a person if they are OK – did you get eye contact? (if not, then its a clue) / Have they changed character (lost bounce etc.) / Have their eyes lost focus? If symptoms are suspected then seek assistance immediately from other walkers and marshalls.

**If crossing back to the mainland on foot afterwards, please take careful note of the tide times** (details here <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3309> ) and we highlight you should cross back along the tidal causeway vehicular road for safety.

**We do not advise walking unaccompanied across the tidal sands.**

## Contact Details

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