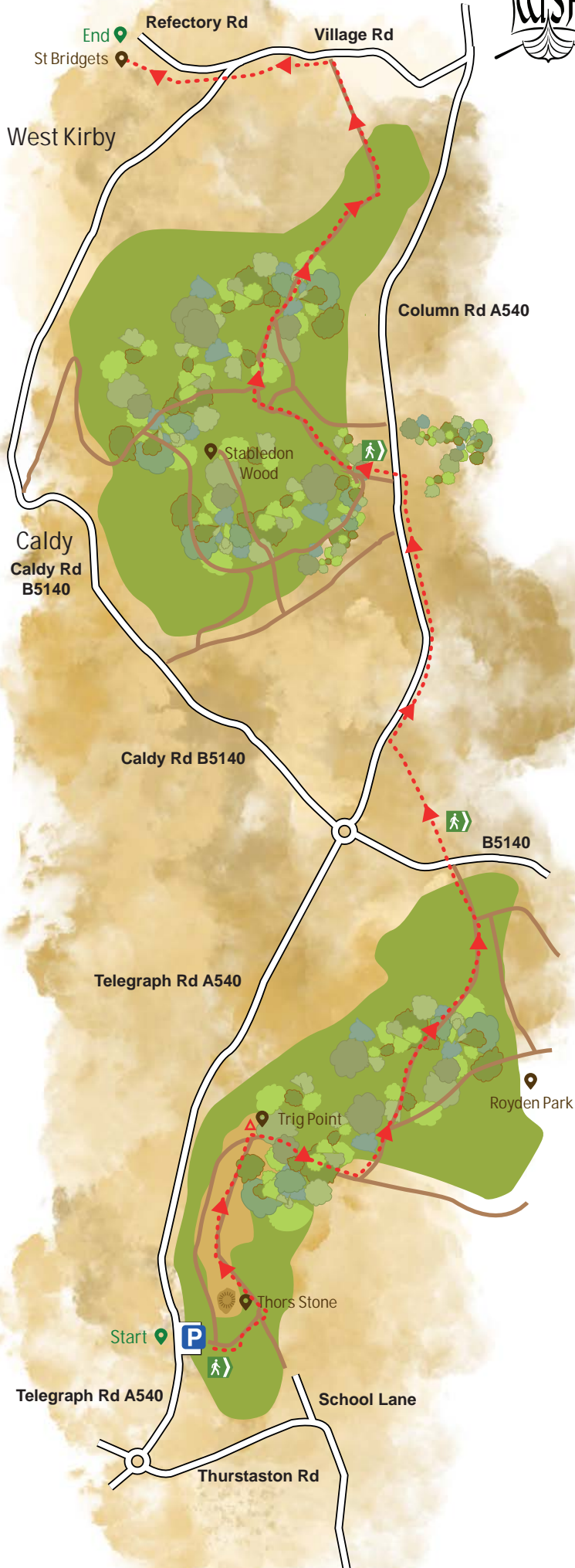




IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE VIKINGS



A walk past the Myth of Thors Rock to the reality of St Bridget's Hogback Stone

Distance: 4.6 Miles
Time: Approx 2 Hours
Start: School Lane, Irby, Wirral, CH61 0HH
End: St Bridget's Church Centre, Wirral, CH48 7HL
Car Park: Thurstaston Common, Thurstaston, CH61 0HH
Bus Stop: Sandy Lane, adj, Thurstaston Road, Irby, CH61 0HD
Railway: Nearest - Grange Road, West Kirby CH48 4DZ

Directions

- Start:** OS - SJ 24298 84753
From Thurstaston Common Car Park, walk east towards Thors Rock across Thurstaston common.
- Footpath toward Thors Stone:** OS - SJ 24474 84933
Trig point: OS - SJ 24531 84658 and **B5140:** OS - SJ 23988 85827
Take the path east towards Thors Stone. The walk north to the Trig point (Highest Point on Thurstaston common). Follow the footpath east then north past Caldyc Rugby club to the B5140.
- Cross the B5140:** OS - SJ 23988 85827
Crossing the B5140 onto the short footpath to column Road. Follow the road up to the Stabledon Wood footpath to the West.
- Footpath, Stabledon Wood:** OS - SJ 22998 86047
Follow the footpath West and then North across Stabledon Wood. OS - SJ 22450 85937 Then take the footpath to Village Road.
- Village Rd to Refectory Rd & St Bridget's:**
Follow the road west along Village Rd to Refectory Drive and into St Bridget's. St Bridget's Museum is open most Saturdays and the Hogback can be seen by appointment.

History

Thors Rock - despite popular belief has nothing to do with Vikings. Sir James Picton, (2 Dec 1805–15 July 1889), the well known Liverpool architect and antiquary first suggested it was a place of worship for Anglo Saxons or Vikings. He thought Thurstaston meant Thor's-stan-tun, the settlement of Thors Stone. In reality it was formed by quarrying and is a feature of Thurstaston Common. The Domesday records show the name derives from Þorsteinn combined with the Anglo Saxon place name -tun (farm). The pagan association is a modern invention. Picton himself said there were no local legends but his speculation grew into the rumours we have today.

St Bridget's - The wooden version of St Bridget's was built around 900 AD.. A second church, made of stone, appeared around 1150 and the third about 200 years later & in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Norman-era column and wall fragments, intricately carved child's coffin and a footpath (suggesting the church was a place of pilgrimage), elaborate 13th century grave slabs and other artefacts from the church spanning 1,000 years are in the West Kirby Museum. The Anglo-Norse 10th century Hogback Stone is carved – like a hog's back – possibly Welsh sandstone & used as a monument. This particular stone includes carved roof shingles and are typical designs associated with Scandinavian dwellings during the age of the Vikings, essentially stylised 'houses of the dead'.

