

Other Friends' sites near Biddlestone

We currently have over 70 places of worship in our care spread across England and Wales. A full list can be found on our website (fofc.org.uk/find-churches) but the closest one to Biddlestone Chapel is:

Coanwood Friends Meeting House, Northumberland

(approx. 54 miles - open daily)

Coanwood Friends Meeting House, built in 1760, stands in a beautiful upland valley, south of Hadrian's Wall. Several 18th-century meeting houses survive in Cumbria but only Coanwood has been spared major alteration or conversion.

Visiting details:

Clattering Causeway
Coanwood
Nr. Haltwhistle
Northumberland
NE49 0PU

OS grid reference: NY709590
what3words: cries.releasing.with



 FRIENDS OF FRIENDLESS CHURCHES

Who are the Friends?

We are a small charity, caring for over 70 historic places of worship across England and Wales. We receive no government funding in England and only a modest grant in Wales. Everything we do depends on people who care – **people like you.**

What do we do?

Since 1957, our mission has been the same: to save disused but beautiful old places of worship of architectural and historic interest from demolition, decay and unsympathetic conversion.

Today, our work is more important than ever, as more and more places of worship face closure and uncertain futures.

We rescue historic places of worship from wrecking balls, we carefully repair and re-open them, and we keep historic churches alive for local communities and visitors to enjoy.

How you can help

You can help our cause becoming a Friend, volunteering your time, donating, or remembering us in your Will. To find out more about our work and sites in our care, visit our website, follow us on social media or contact our team directly - by mail, email or a phone call.

With more support, we could do so much more - **will you join us?**

friendsoffriendlesschurches.org.uk

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 Friends of Friendless Churches

Friends of Friendless Churches is a company limited by guarantee (Company no. 1119137).

We are a registered charity in England and Wales (Charity no. 1113097).

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Biddlestone
Roman Catholic Chapel,
Northumberland

a guide to its history

One of our most remote places of worship, Biddlestone Roman Catholic Chapel is idyllically situated amongst the sweeping landscape of Northumberland National Park. The historic core of this building is a medieval Pele Tower, on top of which a Gothic Revival chapel was raised in the 19th century. Then, in the basement is one of the best surviving examples of a Second World War Anderson shelter in Britain. It is these literal layers of history that make Biddlestone Roman Catholic Chapel such a fascinating structure.

Biddlestone Roman Catholic Chapel came into the care of the Friends of Friendless Churches in 2025, having previously been owned by the Historic Chapels Trust.



History

Across seven centuries, Biddlestone Roman Catholic Chapel has been fashioned into its present shape by the Selby Family. In the 14th century, the Selbys built themselves a handsome Pele Tower, a form of fortified tower house, to defend against raiding parties coming across the Anglo-Scottish border. This Pele Tower was later incorporated into a larger manor house. Then, between 1787 and 1816, the Selby family built a grand Classical stately home (Biddlestone Hall) adjacent to the

tower and, in the 1820s, they had the remains of the medieval Pele Tower converted into a Gothic Revival Chapel. That initial conversion was undertaken by architect John Dobson, however, the interior furnishings of the present chapel date from a later mid-19th century refurbishment. During the Second World War, Biddlestone Hall was a convalescent home for injured servicemen and, accordingly, an Anderson air raid shelter was installed in the basement of the chapel. Unfortunately, after the Second World War, Biddlestone Hall was demolished.

Features of interest

The interior of the chapel is sumptuously decorated in a mid-Victorian Gothic Revival manner. The focal point of the chapel is the luminescent stained glass East window.

In the basement of the chapel is the Second World War Anderson Shelter, which survives in a near complete state.

The exterior west wall bears scars from where the chapel was connected to the long-lost stately home. To the south of the chapel, hidden beneath a layer of foliage, are the surviving tiled floors of Biddlestone Hall.



Finally, don't miss the 'Biddle Stones'. Located about 200 metres southeast of the chapel, along the track leading down to the road, these rough bits of sandstone are thought to be the remnants of an old medieval cross.

Historic England's entry mentions the chapel's isolated and extremely picturesque location

