

## Directions:

1. From Loftus Market Place head west along the A174 until opposite the Old Co-op Building, cross the road and follow the right hand side of the building to a footpath on the right. At the bottom of the footpath turn right passing Loftus Mine on the right, across Gaskell Bridge to the junction with Liverton Road then turn left.

2. Continue along Liverton Road up the hill over the railway bridge. Then before reaching St. Josephs school turn right into Rosecroft Wood at NZ 717177 and follow the path upstream to the road at Waytail Gate. All of the usual woodland birds can be found in Rosecroft and nearby woods including Great Spotted Woodpecker, Spotted Flycatcher, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Garden Warbler, Marsh Tit and Tawny Owl. A few pairs of Grey Wagtails also breed along the stream. (1)

3. At Waytail Gate turn right and proceed up Rosecroft Lane towards Liverton Village. Turn left onto the B1366

4. On approaching Liverton village, pass a restored pinfold on the left. You are advised to cross the road here for safety purposes. St Michael's Church may be seen down a path to the right. It is one of three in England which has a perfect Norman arch. Continue through the village then turn left on to the bridleway opposite Moorsholm Lane. You will soon pass Liverton pond on your right. Birds you can find here include Canada Geese which arrive in large numbers in September and October to feed and rest with the resident Mallards. Continue past the racing gallops and the weigh bridge on the right.

5. Turn right on to the footpath before reaching Handale Bank Farm (NZ722158) and follow the perimeter fence around the rear of farm. Follow the blue sign over the farm track, passing the silos on the left into the field whilst keeping close to the right hand perimeter fence. A gate on the right leads down to a bridge over Handale Beck. This was once the main entrance to the former priory from the west and south.

6. Continue uphill then turn left at a gate on the left to enter the walled garden area. The priory once had grazing for over 200 sheep and a fish pond. At its dissolution on August 23rd 1539, there were 10 nuns under the prioress, Anne Luton, who later moved to Malton.

7. After visiting the walled garden return to the Bridleway. Turn left at the gate then follow the path through the farm passing the cottages on the left and continue for 1/2 mile to the Warren and South Town Lane.

8. Turn left along South Town lane and after about 400 yards turn right on to a track leading to Highfields Farm (NZ.732167). Follow the way mark sign towards Loy Lane.

9. Turn left into Loy Lane. This lane may have been used by Sir Charles Palmer and his family, owners of the Grinkle Estate, to access Easington railway station. The lane continues through Loftus Cemetery on to the A174, Easington Road. Cross the road then turn right and then left on to a footpath, running on the right hand side of a beck. This path leads into Micklow Terrace and then East Crescent. Turn right at the A174 then uphill to Loftus Market Place where the walk begins.

## Refreshments:

Stonehouse Bakery - Market Place  
Willow Cake Shop - High Street  
Co-op Building - High Street  
(Public Toilets are available opposite St. Leonards Church)

## References:

(1) *Birds of Cleveland*, Martin Blick,  
*Tees Valley Wildlife Trust*, ISBN 978-0-9563283-04

## Disclaimer:

*Whilst every care has been taken to ensure accuracy, Loftus ACCORD Walking Group cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions or any consequences arising from them.*

## CIRCULAR WALK

# HANDALE ABBEY TRAIL

*Distance 6 miles*



*Spectacle of Spring Flowers*

*A walk through Rosecroft Wood to Liverton  
then to site of Handale Abbey  
and return to Loftus Market Place via Loy Lane.*

*Time: 4 hours*

*Terrain: Gradual ascent to Liverton  
then level terrain*

*Strong boots and a waterproof are recommended*



Pack Horse Train

## LONG DISTANCE PANNIER WAYS FROM LOFTUS

Along Rosecroft Lane there are remnants of a long distance pannier way connecting the coast to major northern cities, towns and monasteries. Some were established by Cistercian Monks after 1133 and some by the Romans over 1000 years earlier. They carried salted fish inland and returned with lime fertiliser and coal.

St. Mary's Church and Priory at Handale (also known as Grendale) priory was founded by William de Percy, (son of Richard de Percy) in 1133. It housed a small community of nuns, though, there is very little remaining of Handale Priory itself. In 1540 the property was leased to Ralph Beckwith, Goldsmith of York and subsequently sold by the crown in 1543 to Ambrose Beckwith.

Support and funding by



A tenor bell, once thought to have hung at Handale Priory now resides at St Mary the Virgin Church, Leake, N Yorkshire. The bell has a diameter of 92.7cm and has a Lombardic inscription ( an extinct language from the Germanic region in C6th) which translates as ' O father Aelrede, pray for the sinners of Grendale' . Aelrede was the 3rd. Abbot of Rievaulx (1147-1167) and of Grendale. It is thought that the bell was originally a gift to Rievaulx Abbey, from the Nuns of Grendale, which then passed to St Mary's Church as a result of the Dissolution of the Monasteries, in around 1538.

The property remained with the Beckwith family until 1748 when it was sold to Mr. Sanderson of Staithes. For a while the buildings were used for the manufacturing of cotton which one source suggested stopped in the late 18th and early 19th century with the lack of demand during the Napoleonic War.

In 1808 it is said the remains of the west end of the chapel was still present and in 1846 the remaining buildings were demolished with the stone being used for the nearby Handale Abbey Farmhouse and Handale Abbey Walled Garden which is now Grade II listed and marks the location where the nunnery once stood.

In 1830 sixteen human skeletons were found at the priory which then linked it with Scaw and the legend of the dragon. The exact details of what was found is slightly unclear and differs depending upon whichever source you read. Essentially though, the finds included a stone coffin, a stone pedestal of a font or cross and a sword which measured either 4 or 5ft. The skeleton with the sword was associated with Scaw.

One source suggested the stone coffin lid had a sword carved on it and 'snake slayer'.

Source: (1)

[www.mysteriousbritain.co.uk/england/cleveland/legends/handale-priory-scaw-and-the-serpent](http://www.mysteriousbritain.co.uk/england/cleveland/legends/handale-priory-scaw-and-the-serpent).  
(2) [www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/north/385-388](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/north/385-388)



Spotted Flycatcher



Grey Wagtail



Loftus Cemetery



Rosecroft Wood



Liverton Pond

Information Board - Handale Abbey