

THE CLEVELAND STREET WALK

INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

The Cleveland Street Walk covers a distance of approximately 9 miles between the towns of Guisborough and Loftus. Much of the footpath is across rolling countryside and fields, with brief visits to the villages of North Skelton, Slapewath, Carlin How and Skinningrove. You can begin the walk at either end (route descriptions are provided below for both directions) and there is a frequent bus service between the two towns making it easy to complete the walk in a day and return by bus (Arriva buses).

The walk originated during the Monastic period when the Augustinians of Gisborough Priory owned and worked much of the land reaching over to East Cleveland. The original walk extended through to Whitby Port which was a major export point for wool until the Cistercians at Fountains Abbey created Hull Port and the waterways leading to it. Much has changed since the founding of Gisborough Priory in 1119AD, with a rich mining history the evidence of which is still present at Slapewath, North Skelton and Skinningrove.

Guisborough may date back to the Roman occupation, when it may have been a military fortification. Gisborough Priory (spelled differently to the town name) was founded in 1119AD and was one of the first Augustinian priories to be built in England. It was founded by Robert de Brus, progenitor of both the English and Scottish branches of the family. It was rebuilt no fewer than three times, and what remains gives a glimpse of how magnificent it must have been. It is now under the care of English Heritage and the Gisborough Priory Project Team. Modern Guisborough is a charming market town with plenty of facilities for walkers.

Slapewath is first mentioned in a document from 1222 and its name derives from the Old Norse meaning slippery ford. Slapewath is reputedly the oldest alum quarry in the United Kingdom. Its alum works was developed in 1604 and worked until the early 19th century. Jet was also mined/quarried here, but by the 1850s this industry had also disappeared. Ironstone was discovered at Slapewath in 1840, allowing a third mining industry to flourish. The Cleveland Railway was built through the area on an eight-arched viaduct, which is the only surviving stone viaduct in the Cleveland area. It is known as the Waterfall Viaduct and is visible from the Cleveland Street Walk on the A171 west of the village.

North Skelton experienced a boom in the 1870s when North Skelton Mine opened. The mine was the deepest of all of the Cleveland Ironstone workings and its shaft extended to over 720 feet (220 m) in depth. The mine produced over 25 million tonnes (28 million tons) of iron ore between its opening in 1872 and its closure in 1964. The railway line is still open to carry freight from Skinningrove Steelworks and Boulby Mine.

Skinningrove was a quiet fishing cove until the opening of local ironstone workings in 1848. A railway was built by 1865, and iron smelting began in 1874. A jetty on the coast built in 1880 allowed seagoing vessels to carry heavy cargoes from the area. Mining continued until 1958 and primary iron production until the 1970s. There is still a steelworks at Skinningrove which is highly visible from the Cleveland Street Walk. The route passes the entrance to the 'Land of Iron' museum which describes the village's mining heritage and provides an underground experience ([Home ~ Land of Iron](#)).

Loftus has a history dating back to Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon times. Anglo-Saxon archaeological finds include a royal bed burial site and a gold pendant which would have belonged to a princess or Lady of high status. In 1656, the start of the chemical industry began with alum works at nearby Hummersea which continued until 1863. In 1856, Loftus consisted of buildings around the marketplace and had a windmill and a water mill, both for corn. Loftus was once a significant market town and had an annual wool fair. Modern Loftus has an attractive centre and provides good facilities for walkers.



FINDING YOUR WAY

The route is shown on Ordnance Survey maps and is waymarked. It is maintained by Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council assisted by volunteers from Loftus ACCORD Walking Group (LAWG), who also offer guided walks along the Cleveland Street Walk promoting the heritage of the area. Contact info@walkingloftusandthenorthyorkshirecoast.com for more information.

There are circular waymarks in many locations for route confirmation, and finger-post signs mainly where the route meets roads. These refer to the route as either the Cleveland Street Walk or the Cleveland Street Trail.

There are also wooden marking posts with a metal plaque to mark the beginning and end of the walk. These are along the boundary wall of the priory grounds in front of St Nicholas's church in Guisborough, and at the end of North Road opposite the Golden Lion hotel in Loftus. At the time of writing these incorrectly show the route as being 11 miles in length whereas the route is about 9 miles in reality. The marking posts will be corrected in due course. The marking post at Guisborough is also the start of the Guisborough Town Trail for those wishing to explore the town ([Guisborough-Heritage-Town-Trail.pdf](#) (redcarcleveland.co.uk)).



In the text below (WM) identifies the presence of a waymark and (FP) identifies the presence of a finger-post sign where they help to clarify the route description on the ground.

At the time of writing (20/04/2024) the Fox and Hound pub in Slapewath is closed, although banners advertise that a café will be opening there soon.

LOFTUS TO GUISBOROUGH

Start at the marking post opposite the Golden Lion hotel. With your back to the hotel proceed along North Road as it climbs steeply between houses to soon reach open countryside.

After passing North Terrace, a row of terraced houses on the right, turn left along a track at Deepdale Farm. There is a wooden post with 'Cleveland Street' carved in it. Follow the track in the direction of Skinningrove, where the steel works dominates the view of the village. The track turns into a narrow path for the final descent into the valley bottom, with 55 steps provided at the steepest section.

Upon reaching a tarmac footpath turn right then almost immediately left down a flight of concrete steps and along a tarmac path under a metal arch into a car park at the Land of Iron museum. Turn left through the car park round the end of a building to a road.

Turn left, cross the road then turn almost immediately right (FP) on a path. Climb through a wood with 25 steps at the bottom and a further 66 steps to a footbridge at the top, then continue to climb steeply on a tarmac path to a road.

Turn left at the road to cross a road bridge over the railway into the village of Carlin How. Cross the main road and continue in the same direction along the street opposite. At the end of the street turn left then right at the dog-leg crossroads. Follow this street to the top where there is a footpath in the left corner that continues uphill in the same direction (FP).

The enclosed path soon leads to open fields. Follow the field edges uphill keeping the hedge on your right before crossing to keep the hedge on your left near some telegraph poles.

Upon reaching a road (FP) cross over the road and a stile, crossing the corner of the next field in the same direction to soon reach another road. Cross the road and stile and continue downhill through fields in the same direction keeping the hedge on your right and past a left then right zig-zag at a field corner. Ignore the stile on your right where the hedge gives way to a fence (WM) and continue downhill with the fence on your right to cross a stile.

Descend briefly to a junction of tracks at disused mine workings. Bear right downhill then turn left to cross the railway. Bear left and follow the path across fields in the direction of a line of telegraph poles to a wooded area, cross the footbridge over a stream and climb the steps out of the wooded area.

Follow the path through a field with the hedge on your right at first. At the end of the hedge the public right of way bears right across the field to head due west to reach a surfaced track close to the road. However, the right of way may be unclear and an informal path straight ahead is often used by walkers as an unofficial alternative, to reach the surfaced track where it bends sharply near a bridge over a railway.

Turn left at the road junction and walk through North Skelton. Immediately after the road bends to the right, turn left into Dorman Way. In a short distance turn right onto a tarmac lane (FP).

At the end of the lane continue in the same direction along an enclosed footpath leading downhill to Holme Beck, cross the beck and continue to a road.

Turn right, cross the road and turn immediately left (FP) across a stile. Walk through the field keeping Holme Beck on your left, then follow a hedge keeping it on your left across fields, making a small left then right zig zag by two stiles (WM) then keep the hedge on your right and head for a large red brick house.

Upon reaching the lane near the house turn right uphill to a road. At the road turn left then almost immediately right (FP) along a tree-lined grassy track.

After crossing a stile, descend diagonally left to the bottom corner of the field and cross a stile onto an enclosed track. Cross another stile then continue keeping the hedge on your left. Ignore a stile and gate on your left and continue to the next stile and gate at the corner of the field.

Continue in the same direction, with woodland uphill to your right, across fields to a stile through a dry stone wall. Continue along a grassy track to the next stile where the path bears slightly right before continuing again in the same direction to an old stone gate post after which continue with the hedge on your left to the corner of the forest.

Continue along the edge of the forest until the path descends gradually through pleasant woodland to Slapewath with the Fox and Hound pub on your left.

Turn right and climb the hill towards a small group of houses and at the finger post sign for the Cleveland Way drop down left to the main road (A171). Cross the road at the pedestrian island and

turn right. There is a very wide combined cycle/footpath which makes this short A-road section less unpleasant than it otherwise would be. Look out for the impressive arched viaduct on your left as you march quickly alongside the road. Upon reaching a farm access road on your left, look for the stile (FP).

Cross the stile and walk through two fields with the hedge on your right, then continue through the next field with the hedge on your left to an enclosed path, after which descend with a fence on your right. Head for a bend in a surfaced track (FP) then follow the track right to the road.

Cross the road and turn left then, at the end of the high stone wall turn right onto a surfaced path. The impressive ruin of Gisborough Priory soon comes into view. Continue on this path through a metal kissing gate and turn left along the paved path leading past the cemetery to St Nicholas church to find the marking post along the boundary wall of the priory grounds in front of the church.

GUISBOROUGH TO LOFTUS

Leaving Guisborough from the marking post along the boundary wall of the priory grounds in front of St Nicholas church, walk down the left of the church on a paved path past the cemetery to a metal kissing gate on your right. Go through the gate and follow a surfaced path. Look back for an impressive view of Gisborough Priory.

At the road turn left, cross over and turn right just after the 1-mile milestone onto a surfaced track (FP) and at the bend in the track take a path to the left (FP). Follow this path keeping a fence on your left onto an enclosed track, then across a field keeping the hedge on your right, then across two fields with the hedge on your left to a stile at the A171.

Turn right on the A171 where there is a very wide combined cycle/footpath which makes this short A-road section less unpleasant than it otherwise would be. Upon approaching Slapewath cross the A171 at a pedestrian island and climb slightly towards some houses. Descend right on the quiet lane towards the Fox and Hound. Just before the pub take the path to the left (FP).

At a path junction ignore the cycle route and keep left uphill through pleasant woodland to reach a forest. Follow the path alongside the forest for a short distance.

Upon leaving the forest at the corner, continue with the hedge on your right past an old stone gate post, then onwards through fields to a stile through a dry stone wall. Bear very slightly left and across fields with woodland uphill on your left to a stile in the top corner of the field.

Continue across a field keeping the hedge on your right, ignoring a stile and gate on your right and continue to another stile leading to an enclosed grassy track. Follow the track to another stile. Cross it and then climb diagonally to the left aiming for a pylon in the distance, to reach another stile. Cross the stile and follow a tree-lined grassy track to a road.

At the road turn left then almost immediately right onto a tarmac lane leading to a large red brick house. Turn left off the lane onto a path as the lane bends right (FP).

Walk through fields keeping the hedge on your left, then after a small left then right zig zag by two stiles (WM) keep the hedge on your right until a road is reached.

Turn right, cross the road and turn immediately left (FP). Keep right to climb a pleasant tree lined path. Follow the footpath to Holme Beck, cross and continue to a tarmac lane.

Continue in the same direction and at the end of the tarmac lane turn left to reach the main road through North Skelton.

Turn right through North Skelton. After passing under two railway bridges turn right along a surfaced track. The public right of way leaves the track almost immediately to head due east across a field to the end of a hedge. However, the right of way may be unclear and walkers often follow an unofficial alternative, following the track to a bend close to a railway bridge, then turning left onto an informal path to head for the end of the hedge. Continue with the hedge on your left.

After descending some steps and crossing a footbridge over a stream, leave the wooded area to cross fields in the direction of a line of telegraph poles towards the railway. Cross the railway and turn left, then right up a track at disused mine workings and continue uphill at a track junction to a stile leading uphill into fields.

Climb through the fields keeping the fence on your left. Ignore the stile on your left where the fence gives way to a hedge (WM) and continue uphill with the hedge on your left, past a left then right zig-zag at a field corner.

Upon reaching a road cross over the road and a stile, crossing the corner of the next field in the same direction to soon reach another road. Cross the stile (FP) and descend through fields keeping the hedge on your right before crossing to keep the hedge on your left near some telegraph poles and eventually to an enclosed section of path.

When the footpath reaches a residential street, continue downhill in the same direction heading for Skinningrove. At the dog-leg cross road turn left then right to continue in the same direction to the main road. Cross the main road and the bridge over the railway then immediately take the tarmac footpath on the right leading steeply downhill.

Soon a footbridge is reached leading to a steep wooded path with 66 steps at the top and a further 25 steps at the bottom.

Upon reaching a road turn left, cross the road then turn right almost immediately into a car park at the Land of Iron museum at Skinningrove. Turn left through the car park and leave the car park on a tarmac path under a metal arch leading to some concrete steps. At the top of the steps turn right onto a tarmac path then almost immediately turn left onto a path that climbs steeply out of the valley, with 55 steps provided at the steepest section.

The path widens into a track leading in the same direction towards Deepdale Farm. Upon reaching the road at Deepdale Farm, turn right. There is a wooden post with 'Cleveland Street' carved in it. Follow the road downhill to the Cleveland Street Walk marking post in Loftus town centre, opposite the Golden Lion hotel.

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