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Danes Dyke - Flamborough - Beacon Hill

This walk takes us to the highest point on the southern headland, Beacon Hill, home to Beaker Man. It includes field paths, minor roads and cliff top walking. Some Steps.

Start/finish: Danes Dyke or Flamborough Village

Grade: Moderate

Length type: Medium

Length miles (kilometres): 3 (5)

OS Explorer map: 301

Car Parking: Danes Dyke

Toilets: Danes Dyke, Flamborough North Landing.

Refreshments: Cafe at Danes Dyke car park, Several Pubs in Flamborough Village.



Leave Danes Dyke and its birdsong along the vehicular exit road through the plantation. Leave the road by the sign posted path and follow the field headlands to Flamborough Village. In the last field before the village earth works can be seen. It is believed these were ancient fish ponds belonging to the manor in 1559. Reminders of the past can be found all around you on most walks, it's up to you to look for them. Parts of the old medieval ridge and furrow farming system can also be seen. If you fancy a pint and a snack, there are several village inns which are unspoilt friendly places that serve some of the best food in the area. From the village, follow the back lanes on map near the church to Beacon Farm. Can you spot the unusual weather vane on the church? Head southwards through the farmyard and then around a former gravel quarry to the cliff top. This is Beacon Hill and it has quite a history.

Evidence of Mesolithic, early Neolithic and Beaker occupation has been found in this remote high place, which was probably a good vantage point and a place to fish and catch ground floor plan of an oval timber built Beaker house has been found and traces of Beaker Man are extremely rare in Great Britain.

The Romans were possibly here using the high ground as a signal station, as 4th Century pottery has been found and sandstone blocks similar to those at the Roman signal station at Filey unearthed during quarrying. They established signal stations along the coast as threats from northern tribes and Anglo Saxon raiders increased.

Beacon Hill takes its name from the beacons that stood there from the 16th Century. There were three on the headland in 1588. One was on the headland, one at the northern end of Danes Dyke and one at Beacon Hill, which still stood there in 1834. They consisted of iron hoops holding iron pans and were lit to give warning of invasion, the Spaniards and their Armada being intent on a take-over. If one strange ship was sighted, one light was fired. For many strange ships, two lights were fired and for an actual invasion, all three were fired. A network of beacons existed on various high points inland to give warning to York. You lit your three pans, they-shut the gates! In all, 52 beacons existed in the East Riding.

After the Romans, the Vikings probably also used the high ground as a vantage point - and now you to admire the view. The Roman Galleys and Viking Long ships have long gone, to be replaced with the sometimes raucous fishing parties with their crates of brown ale - have things changed?



The return is made along the cliff top path and across the steep, stepped gully at Hartendale to return to Danes Dyke. The views are again over busy Bridlington Bay and the long low coastline of Holderness. On a clear day, Withernsea lighthouse can be seen. In winter only the odd fishing boat can be seen but if there is a northerly wind, many sea birds shelter in the bay. Most walks change throughout the seasons and always try a walk again at a different time of the year. Over the years, you'll find it rewarding and interesting

Danes Dyke Trail

This walk is the ideal nature ramble featuring a variety of plants and birds

Grade: **Easy**

Length type: **Medium**

Length miles (**kilometres**): **2 (3)**

OS Explorer map: **301**

Car Parking: **Danes Dyke**

Toilets: **Danes Dyke**

Refreshments: **Cafe at Dane Dyke car park**



You start the walk in the car park, which is the site of Danes Dyke House, built in 1873 for Frances Elizabeth Cotterell Dormer, lady of the Manor at Flamborough. Early pictures of the house show that the area was much more open at the time, so woodland has only developed on much of the site in the last 100 years or so.

Although the house was demolished in the 1950's the stables and outhouses, now used as a snack bar, remain. Some of the steps from the old garden layout are still there as well, and you notice as you walk round the circular trail that the mixture of-plants reflects the history of the site, with surviving plants from the old gardens (e.g. specimen trees, Snowberry and currant bushes, London Pride), being-mixed with those suggesting a long history of woodland in parts (e.g. Sanicle, Wood sorrell) and recent colonisers (e.g. Blackthorn, Red Champion) in others. The moist, shady sheltered gullies that you cross along ideal conditions for a host of lush ferns - easiest to recognise is the Hart's Tongue Fern, which looks, as its name suggests, like a bunch of leathery green tongues!

As you descend the steps to the beach, you enter the ravine that was used by the ancient builders of Danes Dyke as a natural feature on which to base their ditch and bank earthwork that stretches 2.5 miles (4Km) to the coast on the north of Flamborough Head.

Exposed to strong winds from the sea, the bushes here are stunted, but still provide an important resting area for birds on migration in Spring and Autumn, as well as feeding and nesting areas for resident birds.

The only 'natural' grassland on the trail, with its own particular community of plants and animals, is found on the cliff edges.

After climbing the other side of the ravine, you stroll through peaceful woodland under a canopy of tall Beech and Sycamore trees, crossing the valley of a small stream where the chalk, which underlies the boulder clay on which the woodland grows, is exposed

As you climb up the bank to the access road and on to the other side of it, you move up on to the start of the enormous earthwork known as Danes Dyke, and follow it along to where the path crosses the access road again.

The origin of Danes Dyke is mysterious - the only thing agreed being is that it was not built by the Danes. Some date it as being built in the Dark Ages, between 1200 and 1600 years ago, whilst others date it from prehistoric times, 1000 years earlier, by Iron Age people. Though the southern end follows the eastern side of a natural ravine, the northern 2 miles is manmade. A vast ditch was excavated some 60 feet (20m) wide and 20 feet (6m) deep. The spoil was thrown up on the eastern side to form a rampart 16-18 feet high.



Why was the rampart so important to the builders who put so much effort into it, and what sort of society did they live in? Was it worth all the work expended on it? No answers in this brief guide, but interesting questions to ponder on your return to your starting point, through what were once the formal gardens of the old Victorian house.

It kept the invaders out but even up to fifty years ago, any person who ventured into Flamborough was viewed with suspicion. Flamborough folk were insular and clannish and some never ventured past the "big ditch".

Today the road bisects it and it is easily missed, but again, it's part of Flamborough's heritage and its secrets remain. Let's leave it that way for nature, and its inhabitants to enjoy.

Flamborough Lighthouse - New Fall

Easy flat, cliff edge, field headland and roadside.

Start/finish: Flamborough Lighthouse

Grade: Easy

Length type: Medium

Length miles (kilometres): 2 (3)

OS Explorer map: 301

Car Parking: Lighthouse

Toilets: Flamborough, North Landing.

Refreshments: Cafe near Lighthouse.

The Headland area was designated a Local Nature Reserve in the spring of 2002. This signals the East Riding of Yorkshire Council's commitment to nature conservation and access to the countryside to the wider community, and will help provide better access and promote educational opportunities.

This walk commences at the focal point on the headland, Flamborough lighthouse. The 'new' one was built in 1806 and stands 214 feet above sea level. It is 85 feet high and was built without any outside scaffolding in the short space of 9 months. Its 31/2 k.w electric lamp bulb is magnified through prisms each weighing 3 tonnes to produce 3.5 million candle power and its beam can be seen for 21 miles. The best view of the bay is seen on the path towards the fog horn station which is in fact, the official end of the headland.

Beyond the fog horn is an area known as Mathan Nook and below is Mathan Sand. This is one of the most popular spots to watch the passing migratory birds, including the skuas and shearwater in Autumn. Erosion is taking place on the headland, please don't walk too near to the cliff edge.

Beyond is South Cliff and Hedge Nook, the home of the largest House Martin colony south at the headland. The rock shelf extends far out to sea at low tide at this point. The present rock shelf was once at the base of the cliffs, and it can be seen how far the headland has eroded over thousands of years. A pleasant walk is then taken with views of Bridlington in the distance until a path is reached leading northwards. The path along field headlands is followed past Old Fall Plantation, a haven for migrating and local birds. What can you spot?

On the way you will see an octagonal chalk tower which was the "Old Flamborough Lighthouse." This octagonal chalk tower, patched in places by red brick, was built by Sir John Clayton in 1673 and is believed to be the oldest building of its type in England. Sir John had a Royal Charter to build five lighthouses along the east coast and only when all five had been built were dues from passing ships to be collected to pay for them. As all five were not built, he could not collect any money and the light on top of the tower was never lit. Other old books say that coal fires were lit to give the warning.

At one time, George Mainprize was in charge of the light and had to keep an oak-wood fire burning in the cresset at the top, the wood being stored at the base and the fire stoked every three hours. He also had to count the ships that passed the headland. Different stories may be confusing but always interesting. There was a need for a lighthouse however as in the 36 years before the new one was built, 174 ships were wrecked around the headland. The old lighthouse was, it is believed, used from 1840 until the early part of the 20th Century as marine telegraph station and although unsafe at present, it is hoped that one day it may be open to the public.

Some of the local fishermen still use it as a guide to their crabbing sites as it is on higher ground than the new one and they say if you can see the top of the old lighthouse whilst sailing round the headland, you are in safe waters. You will also pass a number of chalets, all home built and with names that reflect their owners.

There is the obvious "Sea Breezes", "Cliff End", "East View", "Bay View" & "Lightcliff", whilst others are more exotic like "Beauregard", "Euretta" and "Stella Maria". Two say it all, "Happy Days" reflects how one person feels about it and "Gale Force" reflects how it can be in winter. Typically English individuality at its best. What would you call yours?

Flamborough Village - Bempton Cliffs - Flamborough

Field edge, cliff top and minor roads.

Start/finish: Woodcock road, Flamborough.

Grade: Strenuous

Length type: Medium

Length miles (kilometres): 7 (11)

OS Explorer map: 301

Car Parking: Flamborough Village (Roadside) and Bempton Cliffs

Toilets: Flamborough North Landing, RSPB Centre (When open)

Refreshments: Pub and tea shop in Bempton Village. Several pubs in Flamborough Village.



The start of the walk is from Woodcock Road, Flamborough and follows various field headlands past Sixpenny Hill Plantation to the point known as North Cliff, a path known locally as 'Rotherams'. For those with a head for heights, it's a rewarding walk. This area of the headland lacks people but you won't be alone, for all along the cliffs thousands of sea birds swirl and dive in every direction and the cliffs themselves are packed with nesting birds in spring and summer. Kittiwakes, Puffins, Guillemots, Razorbills can be seen and at Bempton, are joined by the Gannet. The Kittiwake is the most numerous. Each bird has its own nest site. Gannets nest on the big ledges, Guillemots on the long narrow ones, Kittiwakes on small, short ledges, Razorbills in small crevices and Puffins in the deeper ones.

Besides the 33 species that breed regularly, 160 species have been recorded at the RSPB reserve since 1971, when the land was purchased.

Just for the record, and to keep you busy, over 220 species of flowering plants have been recorded on the reserve and most can be seen from the footpath. Stoats, weasels and hares can sometimes be seen, as can some 15 species of butterfly and 12 species of bumblebees. It all adds up to an interesting little walk.

The view is over Filey Bay with its Brigg jutting a mile out to sea and beyond, Scarborough Castle and the high cliffs towards Whitby can be seen. It's a spectacular sight.

Gull Nook and White Corner are passed before the northern end of Danes Dyke is reached and it is here that you can clearly see the manmade ditch and adjacent earthwork. It's home to many birds and mammals but there are no public rights of way along it. Continue along the cliffs. The large flat rock visible at low tide is known as Billiard Table where a submarine was once wrecked. Blacksmiths Shop, Wandale Nab, Pig Trough and Little Dor are passed to Scale Nab which has a large arch at the foot of it and a colony of gannets nest on top of it. The small bay is Old Dor into which a freshwater spring runs. Rock Doves live in the caves and crannies at the foot of the cliff and drink and preen themselves in the spring.

Mazy Shelves and Old Roll Up are passed to the R.S.P.B. viewing areas where barriers have been erected to watch the birds on the cliffs.

Follow the path to the R.S.P.B. information centre, which sells books and leaflets on the bird-life on the cliffs and is well worth a visit. Follow the road into Bempton Village where refreshment can be had at the local inn or tea shop, or follow the two tracks and then road to return to Flamborough if you do follow the lanes, look out for a 'bump' in the field to the north. This is Metlow Hill on which stood an Iron Age burial mound or tumulus.

Lighthouse to North Landing



This walk is a pleasant cliff top walk full of interest and history. You may return along the cliff top, or walk into Flamborough and back to the lighthouse along roads, or catch the bus back to the lighthouse.

Start/finish: Lighthouse or North Landing

Grade: Moderate

Length type: Medium

Length miles (kilometres): 1 (2)

OS Explorer map: 301

Car Parking: Lighthouse and North Landing

Toilets: Flamborough, North Landing.

Refreshments: Cafe near lighthouse. Caravelle complex at North Landing

Which is furthest from Flamborough Head, Lands End or John-o-Groats? Have a guess, and then look for an answer on the toposcope on the cliff top.

The toposcope was erected in 1959 to commemorate the battle off Flamborough head in 1779 between the Royal Navy and the Americans. Two English ships, the H.M.S. "Serapis", a 44-gun frigate, and H.M.S. "Countess" of Scarborough, a 20 gun sloop, were escorting a convoy of 40 merchant ships sailing northwards. They were attacked by four American vessels under the command of John Paul Jones, the American privateer.

Beyond the toposcope is one of the many beacons in the country erected in 1988 to commemorate the beacons lit to give warning of the Spanish Armada some 400 years before.

The walk runs along the cliff top and many bays and inlets can be seen. Many have names that reflect Viking influence. Stottle is Icelandic for station and bink is a shelf of rocks. Sticks reflects the Danish word for Stakkr meaning column of rock.

This section of the headland has many of the features of a chalk coastline and typifies the fight of the sea with the land. The sea has eroded the land at its weakest points, forming headland, bays and inlets. Caves have been gouged out and when the cave collapses, arches have been left. When the arch collapses all that is left is a stick, or pillar of chalk, which in turn is also eroded. Unrelentingly the chalk and boulders are finally reduced to grains of sand. The power of the sea is forever there, respect it at all times.

The first headland is Kindle Scar and the bay is Molk Hole. Stottle Bink is passed to the inlet of Swimhaw Hole and Cradle Head beyond. Breil Head with the arch in the rocks is the next headland and then Breil Nook is reached. There was a Coastguard look-out here not many years ago and a searchlight which was lit by the Coastguard. The light would shine on the clouds and their height calculated. This information, along with wind speeds was passed to the Bracknell Weather Centre for use in calculations for the weather forecast. Did they have a bit of seaweed on the door just to make sure!

Also at Breil Nook is a ditch and bank, believed to be the defence works when the tiny headland was a "fort" of some kind. For who, and why, remains one of the headland's mysteries.

All the cliffs are alive with the sights and sounds of nesting seabirds in Spring and early summer and, as always, stop when and where you want. South Breil is the large bay and the large rock is Queens Rock. There used to be a King rock, but like the Adam rock at Selwicks Bay, it has withered away. Why is that only the rocks with male names have eroded?

Two small bays alive with bird-life in spring and summer are passed before North Landing is reached and on the opposite side of the bay, several caves can clearly be seen, as can the massive cliff Bempton beyond.

At North Landing, you may use for refreshment at the "Caravette" complex before walking back, or use the regular bus service between the two points.

North Landing - Thornwick - Flamborough

There is a choice of two circular walks here, both starting at the picturesque inlet of North Landing.

Start/finish: North Landing

Grade: Moderate

Length type: Medium

Length miles (kilometres): 4 (6)

OS Explorer map: 301

There has been a lifeboat station protecting the water around cliffs since 1871 and the boards inside tell of lives saved, and lost. Although launching the boat today can still be dangerous, try to picture it not all that long ago, when it was an open boat and rowed through the heavy swell, the volunteers clad only in oilskins with a cork life-belt for safety.

Although only a few cobbles sail from here today, at one time there were 80. The catch was landed on the beach and auctioned, the buyers giving their own nods and winks. It was then taken up the cliff by donkeys and packed into boxes or barrels before transportation to Hull by train. Many local people still remember this and will always tell you their story. The boats were hauled up the slipway and old photos depict a busy and colourful sight, now sadly gone.

Rock pools are exposed at low tide and are a delight for young children, if not the crabs! Several large caves can be explored but be careful and make sure you know where your children are.

The tide comes in the caves from behind and, as the rocks shelves upwards from the beach, many people are cut off every year. Some have drowned! It is not advisable to explore the rocks at the western side of the cove as this is where most people get cut off. It is also where the rock falls are.

In the book *Mary Anerley*, written by R. D. Blackmore of 'Lorna Doone' fame, Robin Lythe is mentioned. The book tells of smuggling exploits in this part of England, and looking down on this secluded cove away from the village, it is not hard to imagine. Tea, brandy, tobacco, silk and cotton ware all smuggled in at one time and one typical tale is that of a ship moored of the headland signalling that a man on board had died. A coffin was sent out and duly returned. A solemn procession was led through the village, watched over by the preventive men (Customs), and the coffin left overnight for burial the next day. It was buried, but then full of stones instead of.....? Some of the older cottages are said to have hidden cupboards that defied the searches of the Customs men.

From North Landing, follow the cliff top path across the inlet known as Holmes Gut. Many of the caves can be seen from here, as can a small brick construction set near the top of the cliff. This was a gunpowder store for the two forty pounder guns once kept at Flamborough for the defence of the area.

Thornwick Bay is soon reached and from the cafe fine views of three large caves can be seen. They are Smugglers Cave, the largest on the east coast of England, Church Cave and ThornWick Cave. The large bay is Thornwick Bay and the small one, Little Thornwick Bay. (Thor was the Danish God of thunder and it is named after him). You can walk between them at low tide and a natural amphitheatre exists with many rock pools awaiting exploration. These are a delight for young children, if not for the crabs. The next bay is Chatterthrow Bay. Beware. The only entrance and exit is through the large rock arch. You can't climb up the cliff and you will be stranded until the tide goes out again if you are not careful.

You may return along the cliff top path or the road from the cafe or continue along the high cliffs until a field footpath is reached leading southwards to Flamborough village, where you follow the road to return to North Landing.

Sewerby / Danes Dyke Circular

The walk is a pleasant stroll along the cliff top from the old village of Sewerby to the ancient earthworks of Danes Dyke, and back over the new golf course.

Start/finish: Sewerby or Danes Dyke

Grade: Easy

Length type: Medium

Length miles (kilometres): 2 (3)

OS Explorer map: 301

Car Parking: Sewerby and Danes Dyke

Toilets: Sewerby and Danes Dyke

Refreshments: Cafe at Sewerby Hall. Snacks at Danes Dyke.



Sewerby is an ancient village and the 'by' denotes it may be of Danish origin. The Romans built a settlement here and the village was mentioned in the Domesday Book. It has some fine chalk built cottages and has a pleasant feel about it. Along the cliff top to Danes Dyke, the view is over Bridlington Bay which, in summer, is full of cobbles from Bridlington on a two hour trip trying to catch that elusive fish. The two pleasure boats from 'Brid' the 'Yorkshire Belle' and the 'Flamborian' can be seen plying up and down on their trip to the lighthouse. Many still remember the 'Flamborian' when it was called the 'Boys Own' and the other boats, the 'Bridlington Queen', the 'Britannia' and the Hull tug the 'Yorkshireman'. This is the 'busy' side of the headland and you'll meet many others enjoying a pleasant stroll and always finding time to pass the time of day, it seems the natural thing to do.

From the beach, east of Sewerby steps is the "buried cliff". The cliff turns from clay to chalk topped by clay. The chalk section is the old cliff line and ran inland to Driffield and south to Hessle i.e. the Yorkshire Wolds. During the last Ice Age, glaciers swept over Holderness depositing debris along and on top of the former chalk coastline. Now in Holderness, the sea is eroding the clay cliffs at 2-3 yards a year and one day, the coastline may again be along the chalk at Driffield and Hessle! Some protection took place at Mappleton south of Hornsea in 1990. This has stopped erosion there but further south, the sea has now washed away the beach and certain farmers lost over 30 yards!

There are also important fossil deposits here including perfect specimens of sponges. Children may find these, and the many large flat pieces of chalk with several holes in them, bored by shellfish called piddocks. Many children enjoy painting faces on them. Can you paint yours?

The rock pools on the shore attract large numbers of wading birds and gulls, always a source of interest. Which can you identify?

Inland was the site of an Anglican cemetery near to Home Farm dating back some 1,400 years. Excavation has revealed the graves of adults and children with items of jewellery, clothing, pottery and weapons, all of which indicates a settled community. Some of the finds can be found in Sewerby Hall.

The return to Sewerby is made along the inland path over the golf course or along the cliff top again. Always remember that if you return along the cliff top, your view will always be different. In this case, that of Bridlington itself.

Sewerby has a fine hall and gardens which are well worth a visit. The house was built in 1714-20 by John Graeme with additions in 1808. Inside is a collection of trophies, awards and mementoes belonging to the pioneering airwoman Amy Johnson who opened the house in 1934 after its purchase by the former Bridlington Corporation.

The grounds are delightful to wander around and contain what are said to be the oldest Monkey Puzzle trees in the world. The Old English Garden is especially pleasant in Spring and Summer and the children will enjoy the mini-zoo with its monkeys, llamas and penguins, as well as farm animals such as pigs and goats.

It's a pleasant end to a pleasant stroll, especially if the brass band is playing on the bandstand, or if a game of cricket is being played on the cliff top field.

A brisk tune or the sound of leather on willow, and always the headland beckoning beyond. Let's go for another walk.

South Landing Trail

The trail runs to the east of a deep natural gully which provides shelter from the strong, salty sea winds and cover and feeding areas for migrating birds.

Start/finish: South Landing car park

Grade: Easy

Length type: Medium

Length miles (kilometres): 1 (2)

OS Explorer map: 301

Car Parking: South Landing

Toilets: Flamborough, North Landing.

Refreshments: None

The bird feeding area near the picnic/parking site is designed to cater for the area's resident winter birds and is regularly stocked with food.

Cross the bridge and follow the track between the woodland and meadow, a good place for watching butterflies as the 'edges' between different habitats are often the best for wildlife.

At the cliff top, there is a magnificent view over Bridlington Bay. How far can you see along the coast?

Many years ago from the early 14th to later 16th Century, you'd be looking down at the port of Flamborough, a port of some significance. There was a wooden pier mentioned in 1400 when Robert Constable left £40 for its maintenance but the last mention of it was in 1569. Its most famous visitor was in August 1561 when two ships anchored close to the pier. They flew two flags; one was blue with the Arms of France and the other silver white. On board was Mary Stuart sailing from France to claim the crown of Scotland.

In later years many coal carrying ships unloaded at South Landing to avoid paying the port tax at Bridlington.

Flamborough fishermen had boats at North and South landing and depending on the tides and winds, would sail from the more sheltered one. Both landings had a lifeboat, and the first one to South Landing came in 1871. The various boats saved over 108 lives before it closed in 1938. The original building still exists but at low tide, can you imagine how difficult it must have been to launch it? Thankfully launching the new boat is a little easier. Seaplanes were also launched from here during the First World War and the concrete base can still be seen.

Like many places round the headland, South Landing has had an interesting and varied past. The return to the car park is along a winding track past what used to be the 'Timoneer Hotel'. It was once Cliff House Farm, built in 1865 by the Duke of Norfolk for a son who died before it was completed. What does Timoneer mean?

To the right of the entrance is a whale 's jawbone, one of a pair that once formed an arch to the garden and a reminder that large whales are still spotted off this coast. In fact in February 1992, a 70 foot Fin Whale was washed up on the beach at nearby Sewerby. All large whales are uncommon but it's quite common to see porpoises, a type of small whale, and seals around the headland.

It is interesting to note that under Anglo-Saxon law, any place where a whale was washed ashore entitled that place to be called a port. The port of Sewerby?

South Landing - Beacon Hill - Flamborough

This walk combines a stroll to an ancient port, along the cliff top and back along the old streets of Flamborough. To make it longer, it can be combined with other walks.

Start/finish: South Landing car park

Grade: Moderate

Length type: Medium

Length miles (kilometres): 2 (3)

OS Explorer map: 301

Car Parking: South Landing

Toilets: Flamborough, North Landing.

Refreshments: Several pubs in Flamborough Village

The South Landing area was designated a Local Nature Reserve in the spring of 2002. This signals the East Riding of Yorkshire Council's commitment to nature conservation and access to the countryside to the wider community, and will help provide better access and promote educational opportunities.

From the car park, walk down the slope to the foreshore. Not all that long ago, local fishermen had boats at North and South Landings and sailed from either, depending on winds and tides. Both had lifeboats but the one at South Landing ceased in 1938. The first boat at South Landing was the "St. Michael's Paddington" and was 33 feet long by 8 feet wide. This open boat had 10 oarsmen, 2 coxswains and a bowman. It also needed 10- 12 men to launch it and haul it back again. Just go at low tide and imagine how hard that could be, especially in a force 9 winter's gale! This was replaced by the "Mathew Middlewood" which saved over 100 lives and then, in 1933, by the "Hannah MacDonald".

South Landing was a port in medieval times and in 1537, the Duke of Norfolk informed Thomas Cromwell it was safer than Bridlington. The importance of the port can be judged in 1544 when Henry VIII mounted his Scottish Expedition. The tonnage of ships from Flamborough was 140 tons, only 20 tons less than those from Bridlington.

Today fishing and pleasure craft can be seen, as well as the local lifeboat keeping the waters safe.

Along the cliff top, the view is over Bridlington Bay and the walk is to Beacon Hill.

The bay once saw Roman Galleys, Angle Invaders and Viking longboats. Lookouts on the hill also watched for "visits" by the Spanish with their Armada and Napoleon was also expected. The American privateer John Paul Jones sailed past and Dutch privateers were often seen daily, harrying the boats in the bay. In 1666, three Dutch Warships attempted a landing but were driven off when every gun and musket was brought to bear.

The rich history of the bay is left at Beacon Hill as you walk along a path, then track, to Flamborough Village. Have a stroll along the old lanes to the church, which is well worth a visit. This area is one of the oldest in Flamborough and "Ogle's Cottage" is said to be the oldest house. John Ogle helped the local fishermen in their dispute about paying tithes. Up to the dissolution in 1537, tithes were paid by fishermen to the church for its upkeep and to help the poor. After dissolution, the Crown granted tithes to various people who could sell them. John Ogle appealed on behalf of the fishermen to this unjust practice and a compromise was reached. Unfortunately, John died in London after catching gaol fever, which apparently lots of people caught after attending a court of law! His body was brought back in a cobbler by a man named Cross, a name still common in Flamborough today.

Enjoy your wander round Flamborough before returning to South Landing.

South Landing

This walk combines a pleasant cliff top walk with a stroll along some field headlands and some minor roads.

Start/finish: Flamborough Village or South Landing

Grade: Moderate

Length type: Medium

Length miles (kilometres): 4 (6)

OS Explorer map: 301

Car Parking: South Landing

Toilets: Flamborough, North Landing.

Refreshments: Several pubs in Flamborough Village

You may either walk down to South Landing itself, or walk eastwards from the car park and then southwards to the cliff top. The South Sea Plantation is an important nesting site for migrating birds so please keep your dog, and young children, under control. Although normally quiet, you may sometimes catch sight of that frequent animal known as the 'twitcher', more commonly known as the birdwatcher. When a rare bird is sighted, the 'twitcher' travels from all parts of Britain to view it. For example, in 1991, three rare birds were spotted. One was a 5" Desert Warbler, a native of the Middle and Far East. Only six have ever been officially recorded in Britain. At about the same time, a dark brown Dusty Warbler was seen at Danes Dyke and a Siberian Chat was seen near the lighthouse. The result was an influx of 'twitchers' armed with cameras and binoculars all trying to spot one of the elusive little birds.

From South Landing, follow the cliff top path with its fine views towards Bridlington and over Bridlington Bay and cross two ravines to Old Fall, the name given to the section of the cliff. As always, stop if you want to admire the view, or just to try and identify some of the wild flowers. At Old Fall, follow the field headland path past Old Fall Plantation. Both the plantation and the old hedgerow are especially important resting places for migratory birds.

In the fields to the east was a tumulus, or burial mound on Crossbow Hill. Unfortunately this 5000 year old mound had no legal protection and has, like many others, been ploughed out.

Upon reaching the road, you may walk to the lighthouse area for refreshments or to view Selwicks Bay. (Bus service back to Flamborough if required) or, just stroll along the footway by the roadside. To the north, the caravan site at Thornwick Bay and the 'Caravelle' complex at North Landing can be seen. This is a very windswept part of the headland and the most visible signs are strangely bent bushes and trees. At Flamborough, follow the signs back to South Landing

Along the road to Flamborough, look at the fields for signs of the medieval ridge and furrow farming technique. This dates from the time when the fields around this part of Flamborough were farmed in the old open field strip system where each man would have a number of strips to work in different vast fields. The modern field layout is the result of the Inclosure Awards of the 1700's where land was given in blocks proportionate to how many strips a man had.

You can also see that the village of Flamborough is situated in a natural hollow, sheltering from the cold northerly winds.

At Flamborough, you'll pass Mereside and North Mere Green. Until 1938, this was a large mere, or pond, and children sailed their boats on it in summer and skated on it in winter. The donkeys used for hauling the fish catch up the slope at North Landing were grazed here after it was filled.

Every fisherman had one, making about 100 at the village and two old men tended them, paying one shilling a week to have their donkey cared for all year long. Grass verges were also used around the village.

Today, once a year, it holds the village fair and a joyous place it is to be.

Folk and accents mingle, old friends are found and the year's gossip duly swapped. It's a way of life all villages had at one time, Flamborough still has.