

# Ravenscar to Robin Hood's Bay



Joe Cornish

## The resort that never was

In 1895 a group of property developers bought up the land at Ravenscar with dreams of turning it into a smart holiday resort to rival nearby Scarborough. There were to be houses, shops, hotels, formal gardens and an esplanade along the cliff top. But the dreams were never to be realised. Only a few holiday homes, a road and some sewers were completed before the money ran out. The developers went bust, leaving a half-built resort with one large hotel, the Raven Hall. It was an optimistic – perhaps unrealistic – scheme in the first place. Being such an exposed place, sited high above the shore, Ravenscar would have appealed only to the hardest of holidaymakers!

## Peak Alum Works

In the 17th century the grey shale at Ravenscar was discovered to contain alum, a chemical used to fix and brighten dyes in the textile and tanning industries until the 19th century. Alum production transformed the coastal landscape into an industrial site for nearly 250 years – with quarries and spoil heaps on the hillside, cottages for hundreds of workers, and a busy harbour in the bay below.

The Cleveland Way National Trail runs through the site of the Peak Alum Works, where stone walls and foundations mark the site of the winding engine, boiler house, cooling tanks and alum warehouses. The site is owned by the National Trust and makes a fascinating visit – it's only a short walk from the Visitor Centre at Ravenscar.



Joe Cornish



JMikeKipling

Moor to sea and back again

**E**njoy the National Park in a nutshell on this 11-mile walk through some of the North York Moors' most characteristic landscapes. From the craggy heights of Ravenscar the route runs across Howdale Moor for some classic moorland scenery before dropping down to the old Scarborough-to-Whitby railway line and along to the famous smugglers' haunt of Robin Hood's Bay. Both here and at nearby Boggle Hole you can indulge in a spot of rock-pooling and fossil-hunting, before returning along an exhilarating clifftop stretch of the Cleveland Way National Trail, via the old alum works industrial site. That's a powerful combination of the best National Park experiences in one big day out.

### Did you know?

To make alum crystals you need ammonia, which the Peak Alum Works used in the form of urine – collected from local houses by young children.

### Great for:

coastal capers, more than a stroll, big-sky views, history buffs

### Length:

11 miles (17.7km)

### Time:

6 hours 30 minutes

### Start/Finish:

Ravenscar National Trust Coastal Centre

### Grid Reference:

NZ 981 016

### Map:

OS Explorer OL27

### Refreshments:

Ravenscar and Boggle Hole

### Toilets:

Ravenscar



The Raven Hall Hotel at Ravenscar has a bar and restaurant (and spectacular views from the gardens). There's also the Ravenscar Tea Rooms in the village plus drinks, snacks and ice cream available in the Visitor Centre. Robin Hood's Bay has several cafés, pubs and restaurants, while the café at Boggle Hole YHA is handily placed for Cleveland Way walkers.

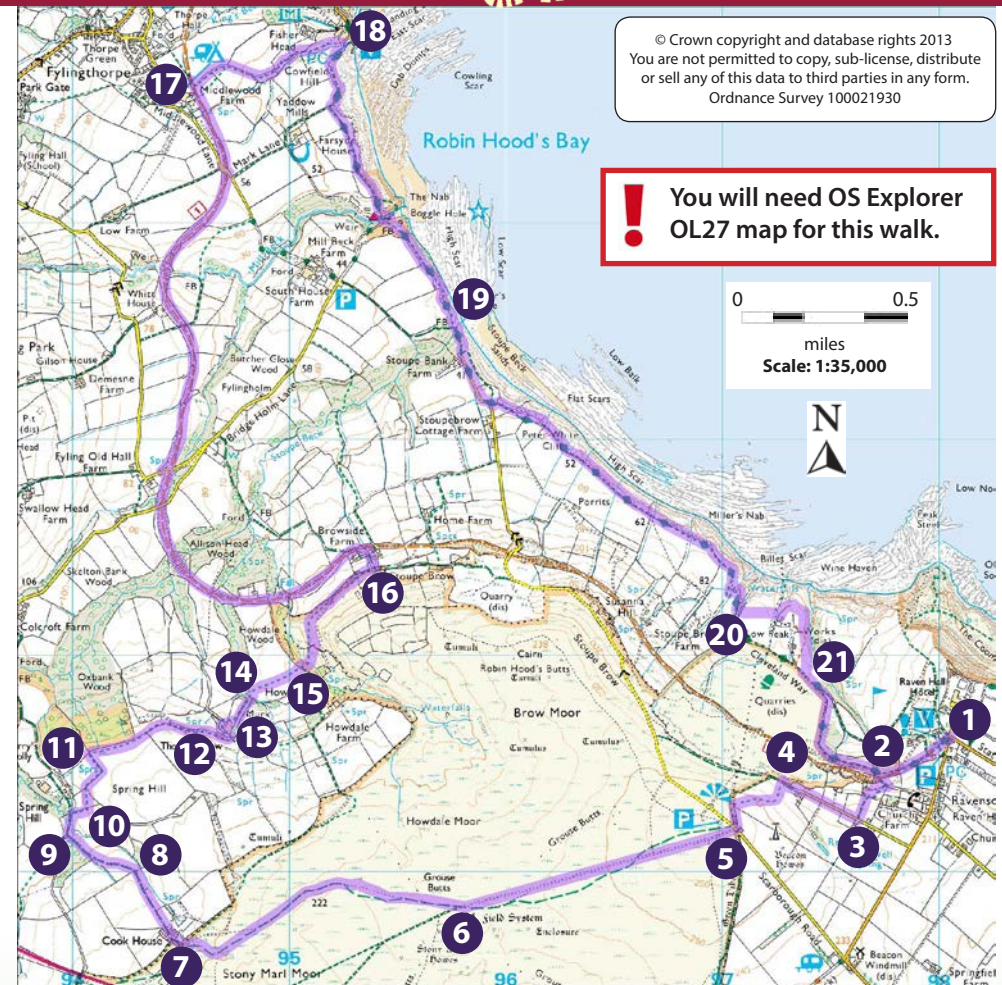


National Trust's Ravenscar Visitor Centre, Ravenscar.

# ... moor to sea and back again ...

## Route instructions

- 1 Walk down the concrete track in front of the Visitor Centre, go straight on at signs marked 'Trail' and 'Cleveland Way', then keep right at the 'Cleveland Way, Alum Works' sign.
- 2 At a 'Cleveland Way' signpost on your left, turn sharp left up a narrow path (signposted 'Public Footpath'). Shortly after crossing an old stone bridge, turn sharp right through a waymarked gate and follow the track up past Cragg Hall Farm.
- 3 Turn right at the lane.
- 4 After the tarmac ends, continue along the track and cross the stile on your left. Bear right up the field towards the mast. Go through the gate at the top corner of the field and turn left.
- 5 Cross the road and follow the bridleway over the moor.
- 6 At the crossroads of tracks, bear right along the bridleway (there's a waymarker post).
- 7 Cross the road, follow the bridleway (Spring Hill), go through the farmyard and then the gate.
- 8 Bear left across the field.
- 9 Turn right along the concrete track.
- 10 Turn right off the bridleway and immediately right again, through a gate, following the path uphill through Ox Wood – follow the waymarks as the path turns left, right and left again.
- 11 Turn right, cross the stiles and keep straight on.
- 12 Bear right, over a stile (signposted 'Howdale') and cross another stile to reach a minor road at a bend. Turn left, downhill, and follow the road as it hairpins around the house.
- 13 Below the house, turn right, through two high wooden kissing gates. Keep the fence on your left and follow the path into the wood.
- 14 Cross the bridge and stile and go straight over the field.
- 15 Cross the stone stile, turn left, then turn right into woods and over a wooden bridge. Continue ahead, across a sloping shale tip, then past a house and along the track.
- 16 At the Trekking Centre turn left through the first gate (through stone gateposts), walk down through the yard and turn left on to the old railway line.
- 17 At the farm, turn right over the stile (signposted 'Footpath to Beach').
- 18 In Robin Hood's Bay, turn right up Flagstaff Steps and then left along the cliffs to Boggle Hole and Stoupe Beck. (If the tide's out you can walk along the shore instead.)
- 19 Cross the footbridge over Stoupe Beck and turn right uphill, following the Cleveland Way – first along a country lane and then left along a footpath ('Ravenscar 2 miles').
- 20 Turn left at the 'Cleveland Way, Alum Works' signpost.
- 21 Turn left at the 'Cleveland Way' sign and return to Ravenscar.



**!** You will need OS Explorer OL27 map for this walk.

This is a long and reasonably challenging walk, with steep descents and ascents at Boggle Hole and Stoupe Beck and a moorland section with rough tracks. Weather can change quickly on the moor and sea cliffs – be prepared for poor visibility, even in summer. Howdale Moor is on Open Access land, which means that walkers do not have to stick to footpaths or other public rights of way.

On Howdale Moor, please keep dogs on a short lead or to heel at all times (and always on a lead near livestock). They also should be kept on a short lead between 1 March and 31 July when birds are nesting on the ground. There are stiles en route, and you're likely to encounter cyclists and horse-riders on the old railway track.