

Staithe Village Walk

The name **STAITHES** comes from the Norse word *staith*, meaning a landing-stage. During the 18th and 19th centuries, Staithes became the principal fishing port on this part of the Yorkshire coast.

Fishing employed almost one thousand men involved in boat building, sail-making, fish curing and the transportation and selling of fish. The **coble** is still the traditional fishing vessel, but very few people are involved in the fishing industry today.

Alum, jet and ironstone were all mined in the area – Cleveland Potash at **Boulby Mine** still carries on the mining tradition. It is the deepest mine in Europe and extends six miles under the North Sea. The arrival of **the railway** in 1883 made the area more accessible to tourists. Staithes viaduct across the ravine was 790ft wide and stood at a height of 152ft. If it was windy enough to ring a bell on the viaduct, trains were not allowed to cross.

Staithes and Hinderwell stations had a warehouse and a two ton crane. In the early 1900's there were three trains a day conveying ironstone to Teesside, and also a daily fish train. In 1939 there were as many as 18 passenger trains in each direction a day. New bus routes were opened, which were more regular and cheaper, and the line eventually closed in May 1958.

The now world famous **Staithes Group of Artists** or the Northern Impressionists lived and painted throughout the parish in the early 1900's. Their work is permanently displayed in Pannett Park Art Gallery in Whitby. A Staithes Arts Festival is now held annually in September (check www.staithefestival.com)

Staithes is a destination for **geologists** researching the Jurassic strata in the cliffs surrounding the village. Port Mulgrave remains one of the best places to find fossils of ammonites (about one mile down the coast towards Whitby).

In 1745-1746, Staithes's most famous resident, **James Cook** worked as a grocer's apprentice before leaving for Whitby to embark on his adventures of discovery to become one of the greatest navigators in British history.

VILLAGE WALK

- 1. SITE OF the old Staithes Board School** opened in 1878.
- 2. VIEWPOINT** overlooking **COBLE GARDENS** - winter storeplace for fishing cobbles and **FISH FIELD**, where fish were hung to dry. The old railway viaduct embankment is still visible.
- 3. OLD STUBBLE footpath** - to the left is **BOULBY CLIFF** (666 feet), the highest cliff on the English Coast, and also **BOULBY POTASH MINE**. Potash is used in fertiliser, and the salt bi-product on icy roads in winter.
- 4. MOUNT PLEASANT VIEW POINT** with seating area.
- 5. HIGH BARRASS** is almost level with the rooftops. Gardens were once crowded cottages. Leads to
- 6. BARRASS SQUARE** – Norse word for steps. One of the few open spaces in Staithes, a communal water tap once stood here. Today there is a communal drying area.
- 7. GUN GUTTER** - Continue past tightly packed cottages until you reach a set of steps which lead to:

8. CHURCH STREET (Formerly Weatherill Street and Kirkhill Bank). Turn left towards the Church of St. Peter the Fisherman.

In the 1840's, £496.8s.8d. was raised by subscriptions and grants to build Staithes National School and Chapel.

9. DOG LAUP the narrowest street in Yorkshire.

10. GUN GUTTER - See right the smallest house in Staithes.

Walk through Gun Gutter and turn right into

11. SEATON GARTH (THE STAITH) The Cod and Lobster Inn has been washed down three times in storms. Captain Cook's Cottage is at the bottom of Church Street. A plaque was unveiled by H.R.H. Prince Charles in 1978. Fish auctions were held on the Staith, as catches were landed.

12. GARTH ENDS (GARR ENDS) Gives views of the sea and Lifeboat House. The house, left, with two flights of steps was once a Coastguard Lookout Post.

Walk on through the narrow passageway (Shoulder of Mutton yard) into:

13. THE HIGH STREET - Turn right, on a wall on the left is a memorial to a local man who gave his life in a brave rescue attempt.

Turn right by the Royal George.

14. Follow the path via **BARBER'S YARD** into the High Street (a one time inhabitant, a stonemason, used to cut people's hair).

Turn right by the Cafe into:

15. ABRAM'S LANE - leads to Cowbar and the Lifeboat House.

Turn left before the bridge along a walled path leading to:

16. BECKSIDE - an opportunity to see an array of cobbles, dinghies, crab pots, floats, flags, ropes and pot ends (floats with flags attached). Across the bridge stood a **KIPPER HOUSE**. Boats were built behind the cottages by the slipway. Across the road is the Wesleyan Chapel. Along Beckside the Long House, right, was a **DAME SCHOOL**. Left, is the old Congregational Chapel now converted to housing.

Follow the path to BANKBOTTOM. A house standing on the right - Valley View - partly slid into the beck in 1924. A Blacksmith's Shop was once here.

Cross the road on to:

17. BROWN'S TERRACE The first building, right, was a Wheelwright's Workshop.

Follow the path and up the steps (BENNISON STEPS) which returns you to Mount Pleasant. From here you can follow the alternative routes (marked in yellow) back to

18. THE HIGH STREET via **SARAH COLES STEPS**. Turn left and follow the road back up the hill (**STAITHES BANK**) to the Old School Site - the starting point of the trail.

OR back to the car park via **Rolling Cross Footpath** taking in the spectacular views from the seating area, over the rooftops towards Seaton Garth and the beach, and past

19. WW1 Army Camp – now holiday accommodation & campsite.

Hope you enjoyed your visit.

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