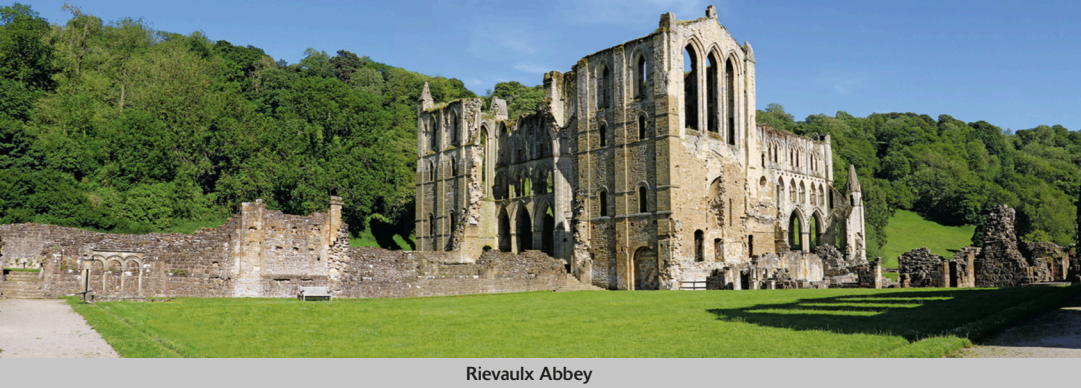


# Helmsley to the White Horse

SECTION ONE – 8¾ MILES (14.1KM)



Rievaulx Abbey

**The opening section of the Cleveland Way begins with a leisurely stroll along the beautiful sylvan valley of the river Rye, climbing gradually to the limestone plateau of the Hambleton Hills, pausing at one of Yorkshire’s most famous attractions – the White Horse of Kilburn.**

Assuming that you have previously enjoyed the riches of Helmsley, we begin our journey of discovery from the market square. There are some superb views of Helmsley Castle as we leave the town. The route meanders through the woodland, passing the site of the medieval village of Griff, to reach Rievaulx Bridge and a short detour leads to the impressive Rievaulx Abbey.

Founded in 1132, Rievaulx was the first Cistercian abbey in the North of England. Rievaulx’s foundation, initiated by St Bernard of Clairvaux, was part of an ambitious plan for the monastic colonisation of northern England and Scotland. Within a few years, Rievaulx became one of the most influential monasteries in England, a place for meditation, learning and culture. In 1136 the Abbey began to establish colonies. The most important of these was Melrose Abbey, which became Scotland’s first Cistercian monastery, endowed by King David.

Walter l’Espece, the great Norman lord of Helmsley, provided most of the abbey’s land. In addition, he granted to William, the first abbot, and his twelve monks, the present site on the banks of the river Rye together with land above the valley to the north. In all this amounted to some 1000 acres of arable land. Under the third Abbot, St Aelred (1147-1167) there were 140 choir monks and nearly 500 lay brothers in residence, and the abbey owned over 14,000 sheep. However, expensive enlargements and rebuilding during the thirteenth century resulted in the monastery falling into substantial debt. At the time of the abbey’s dissolution in 1538, only the abbot and twenty-two monks remained.

Rievaulx Abbey is an architectural masterpiece and one of the most impressive medieval sites in England. Many of the outbuildings are still standing to a consistent height, and almost the whole range is visible at foundation level. The eastern part of the abbey church rises virtually to its original height, its soaring, three-storey arches conveying the magnificence that it once possessed. The building stone was quarried locally and transported to the abbey site on barges along two canals especially dug for the purpose.

From Rievaulx we pass through the richly wooded valleys of Nettledale and Flassendale to Cold Kirby. The lakes beside the track attract a variety of birds, including Canada geese, coots, mallards, moorhens, mute swans, teal and tufted ducks. Apart from its church, Cold Kirby has little to delay our progress. The present building dates from 1841 replacing a much older church with twelfth-century origins. Only the font and the bells from the earlier church survive. After passing through Hambleton, we cross the busy A170 and then follow a clear track through the woodland to Roulston Scar and the White Horse.

Roulston Scar was the site of a massive hill fort dating back to c.400 BC. The fortifications covered an area of 53 acres (21.5ha), defended by a perimeter 1.3 miles (2km) in length – the most extensive Iron Age hill fort in northern England. The defences comprised a trench 6 feet (2m) deep with a box rampart, fronted by a timber palisade up to 13 feet (4m) high, topped with a defended walkway. The fort occupied a dominant position, utilising the natural defences of cliffs and steep valley sides. Furthermore, it overlooked the territory of the Brigantes tribe. Therefore, it is most likely that

the Parisi tribe constructed it, as a ‘statement of power’ to impress, deter and intimidate their neighbours.

The site, which has been the home of the Yorkshire Gliding Club since 1937, sustained damage from anti-aircraft batteries placed around the central area during World War II. Apparently, the hilltop had been fashionable with German gliding enthusiasts in the 1920s and 1930s. Consequently, the military declared Roulston Scar as a possible Nazi invasion site.

The White Horse is one of Yorkshire’s best-known landmarks – on a bright day, it is visible from over 30 miles (48km) away. The horse initially measured 314 feet long (96m) by 228 feet (70m) high, although it’s present dimensions are 318 feet (97m) long and 220 feet (67m) high. In 1857 John Hodgson, Kilburn’s schoolmaster, marked out the outline of the horse and a team of thirty-one villagers cut away the turf and other vegetation to reveal the grey limestone rock underneath. To make the horse stand out, they deposited several tonnes of lime over the surface. The White Horse, often nicknamed ‘the old grey mare’, requires regular ‘grooming’ to keep it in prime condition and 220 gallons (1000 litres) of masonry paint!

## SECTION ONE – MILEAGE AND ELEVATION

**Start:** Helmsley, the market square.

**Grid Ref:** SE 613 838.

**Finish:** The White Horse of Kilburn.

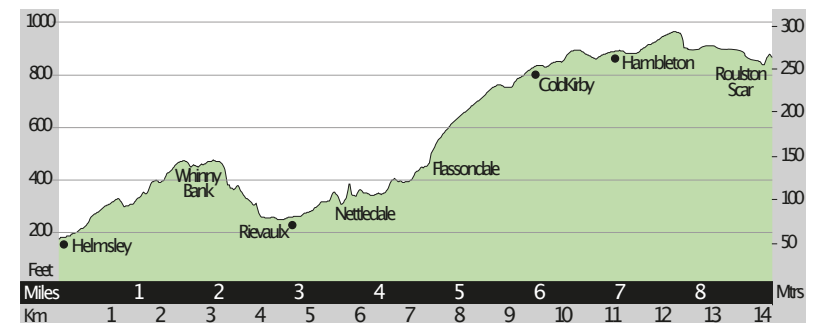
**Grid Ref:** SE 514 813.

**Section 1 Distance:** 8¾ miles (14.1km).

**Total Distance:** 8¾ miles (14.1km).

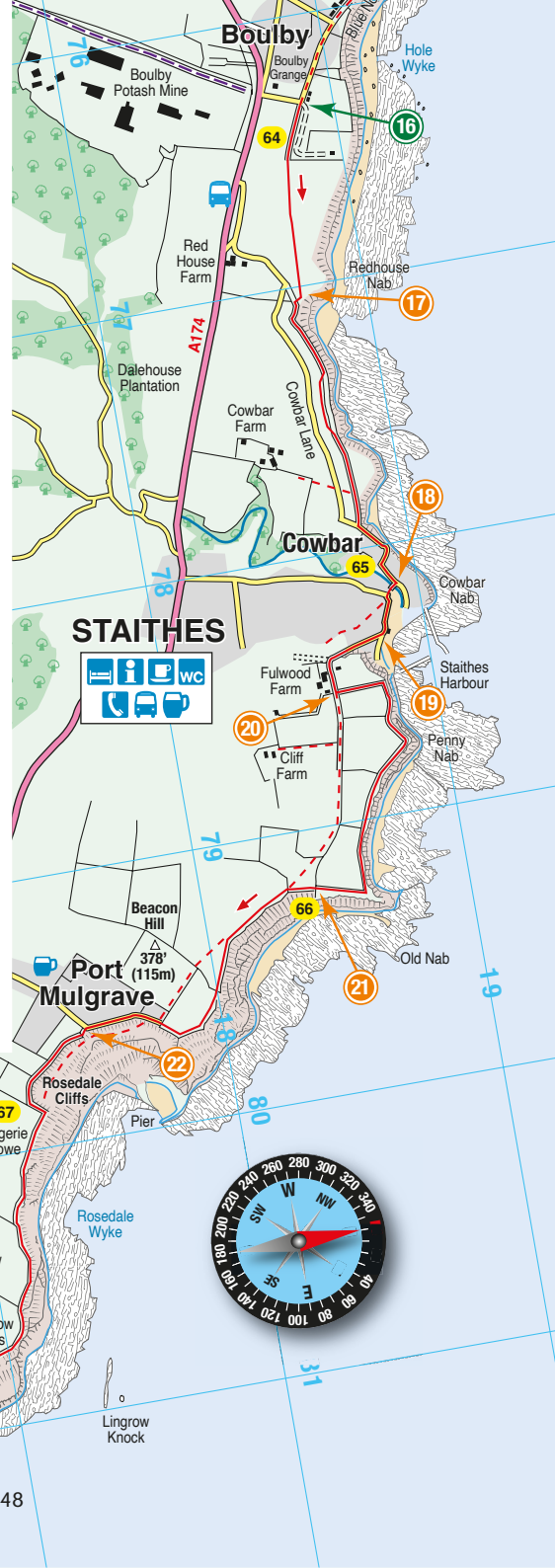
**Total Ascent:** 1481 feet (451m).

**Maximum Elevation:** 965 feet (295m).



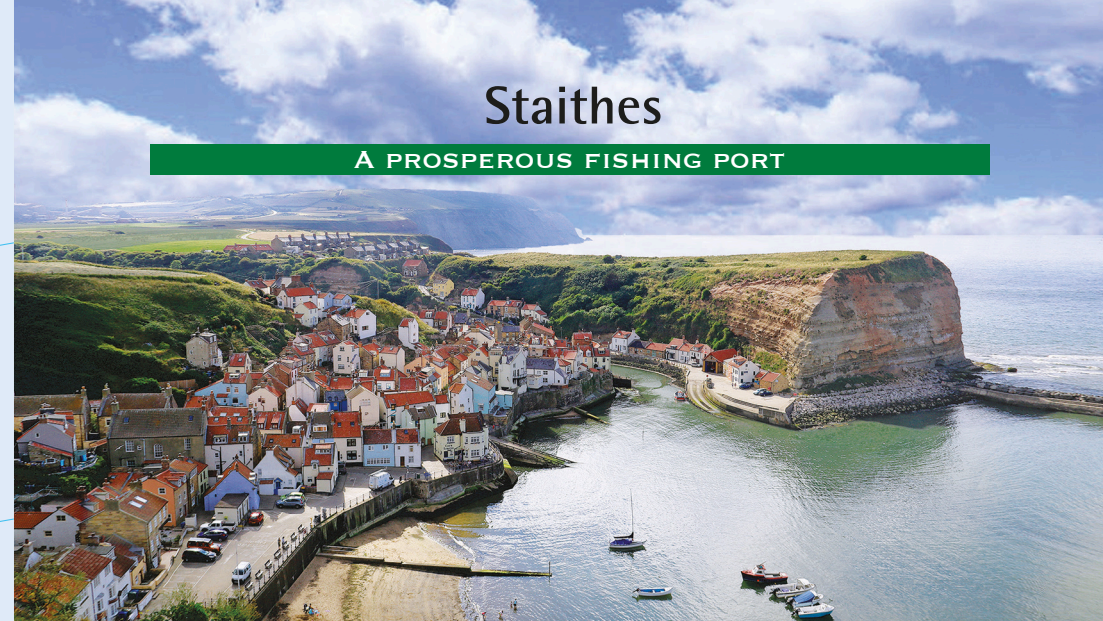
## MAP 19 BOULBY TO RUNSWICK BAY

- 16 763189** Leave the road and follow an enclosed track (*SP Cleveland Way*). Cross a large field and return to the cliff top.
- 17 70187** Turn right and after a few yards turn left onto a tarmac lane (*SP Cleveland Way*). Follow the lane, and a diverted section of the trail to Cowbar, (*permanent diversion due to a landslip*). Turn left and descend along the road to a footbridge.
- 18 782189** Cross the footbridge which leads into Staithes. Turn left and continue to the harbour.
- 19 783188** Turn right into Church Street, continue uphill onto an enclosed track (*SP Port Mulgrave 1m*). Keep left at a fork and ascend to Fulwood Farm.
- 20 85186** Turn left and go through a gate (*SP Cleveland Way*). Follow a fenced path to the cliff edge. Turn right and continue around the cliff top to a gate.
- 21 792184** Go through the gate, turn left and follow the fence uphill. Pass through another gate (*SP Cleveland Way*) and continue to the road near the former coastguard station at Port Mulgrave.
- 22 86175** Leave the road and follow a clear path along the cliff top (*SP Cleveland Way Runswick Bay 2m*).
- 23 80165** Turn right and follow a clear track to Runswick Bank Top. Turn left (*SP Cleveland Way*) and follow the road to the Cliffmount Hotel.
- 24 808161** Continue between some concrete posts (*SP Cleveland Way*) and descend a steep path leading to Runswick Bay. Turn left (*SP Cleveland Way*) and descend to a mini roundabout.
- 25 89160** Route directions now continue from **MAP 20 – POINT 1**.



## Staithes

A PROSPEROUS FISHING PORT



Staithes and Cowbar Nab

**Staithes, pronounced as 'steers' by the locals, derives its name from 'staithe' which means 'a landing place'. The village was formerly one of the largest fishing ports on the north-east coast of the UK.**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, eighty full-time fishing boats were putting out from Staithes. More than a century later the port still has a few part-time fishermen and it maintains a small fleet of traditional cobles. The distinctive shape of a coble is flat-bottomed with a high bow, and it possibly originates from a Viking design. The flat bottoms enabled boats to launch from and land onto shallow, sandy beaches. Moreover, fishing vessels required high bows to sail on the hazardous North Sea, especially when they were launching into the surf.

The harbour nestles between the bulky headlands of Cowbar Nab and Penny Nab with two long breakwaters to reduce the force of the waves and provide much-needed protection to the village. Despite being destroyed by fierce storms and rebuilt on at least three occasions, the Cod and Lobster Inn on the quayside continues to resist the wrath of the North Sea. The great storm of January 1953 washed away the front of the pub.

Hopefully, improved sea defences will help to prevent that from happening again.

In 1744 James Cook arrived in Staithes to begin his haberdashery apprenticeship in the shop of William Sanderson. But it was not long before 16-year-old James became fascinated by seafaring tales and of becoming a seaman, and Sanderson realised that the youngster's heart was not in shopkeeping. Furthermore, in July 1746 he found Cook an apprenticeship in the Merchant Navy with Whitby shipowner Captain John Walker, thus starting his incredible maritime career.

Additional information about Cook's time in Staithes is available at the Captain Cook and Staithes Heritage Centre, housed in the old Methodist chapel. The museum has a complete re-creation of Sanderson's shop and is overflowing with exhibits from the life and voyages of the great seafarer.

Further exploration of the village reveals an intriguing network of alleys and ginnels, which bear curious names such as Gun Gutter, Slip Top and Dog Loup. The latter is the narrowest street in the UK, and at a mere 18 inches (457mm) in width, stouter walkers may have to shed a few pounds if they wish to pass through it!



# MAP 14

## KILDALE TO HIGHCLIFF NAB

- 1** **608094** Turn left (*Station Road*) and follow the road into the village to the junction at the Glebe Farm Tea Rooms.
- A** **607094** To visit St Cuthbert's Church, follow the road over the railway line. Afterwards, retrace steps to the Glebe Farm Tea Rooms and follow directions given in point 2.
- 2** **607094** Turn right (*Waymark*) and follow the road, passing under the railway bridge. Continue along the road ascending to Bankside Farm and into the Pale End Plantation.
- 3** **605105** Turn Left (*SP Cleveland Way - Gribdale 2 miles*) and follow a clear track ascending through the wood. After leaving the wood continue through the heather to the Cook Monument.
- 4** **590101** After passing the monument turn right (*Waymark*), begin descending on a paved path, and then a rough track leads through a gate to the road at Gribdale Gate. **CAUTION: busy road!**
- 5** **592110** Turn right and follow the road for about 30 yards (27m). Leave the road (*SP Cleveland Way*) and follow a track heading off to the left. Ascend a stepped path and then continue along the left boundary to point 6.
- 6** **588127** Go through the gate, turn left and continue alongside the boundary. Descend steeply via a paved path (*very slippery in wet conditions*). Continue along the edge of Roseberry Common and join another stone path which leads uphill to the summit of Roseberry Topping.
- 7** **579126** Return via the outward route to point 6 and after passing through the gate head diagonally across Newton Moor (*Waymark*) and into Hanging Stone Wood.
- 8** **592128** Go through the gate, turn right (*Waymark*) and follow the right boundary to a gate.
- 9** **597130** Pass through the gate, turn right and continue through two more gates. Follow a broad track for about 200 yards (194m). Turn left and continue on a paved path beside the wall to Highcliff Wood.
- 10** **612135** Go through a gate (*SP Cleveland Way*) and follow a rough track through the wood. Cross a broad track (*Waymark*) and ascend along a narrow path to Highcliff Nab. Turn right (*Waymark*) and climb some steps leading to the summit.
- 11** **610138** Route directions continue from **MAP 15 - POINT 11**.



Roseberry Topping