

Skinningrove and its people are a source of inspiration for writers, photographers and artists. Steve Jackson took this photograph, and Stan Binks painted the picture of Timms Coffee House that is reproduced on the title page of this leaflet.



Please note:

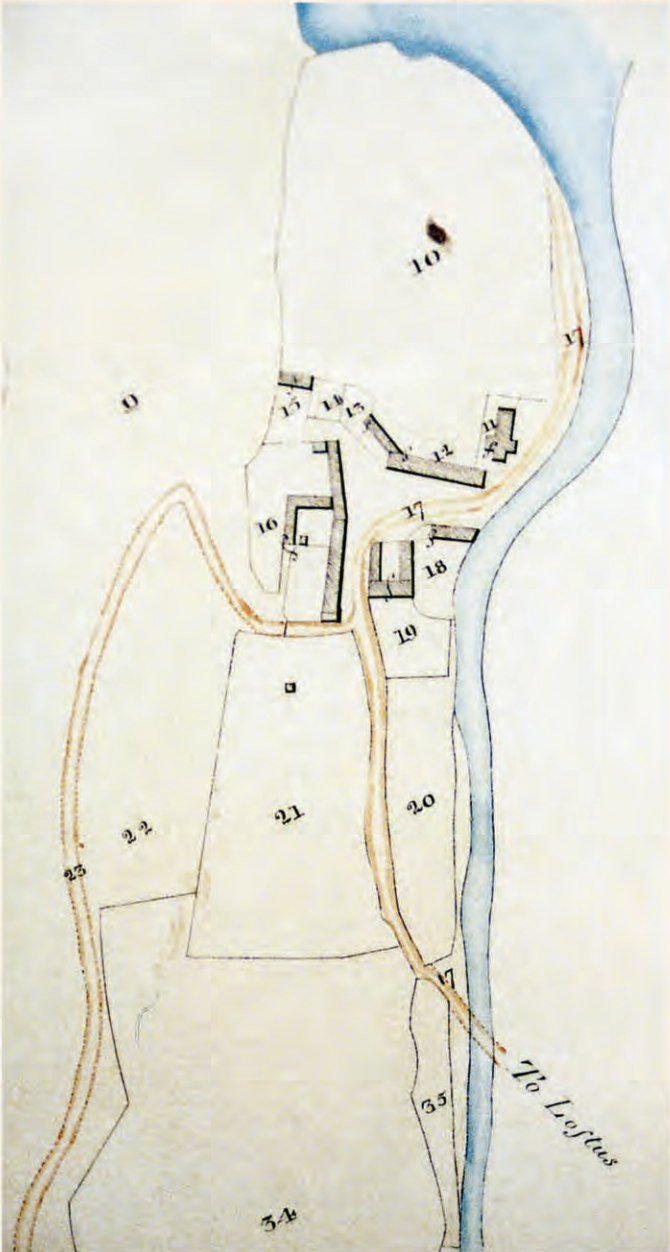
This linear walk of about 1.5 miles/2.5 km may not be easily accessible in places. The path between the jetty and the village can be uneven at times. There are gates to go through in the village, steps near Kilton Mill and the A174 to cross. Extra care should be taken when crossing this road; the speed limit is 40 m.p.h. here: please ensure you can see far enough in each direction before crossing. Care should be taken at the inland end of the trail where the ground slopes. Suitable clothing and footwear are recommended.

Whilst every care has been taken to ensure accuracy, Skinningrove History Group cannot accept any responsibility for errors or omissions or any consequences arising from them.

A large print version of this leaflet is available to view at Riverside Building in Skinningrove and at Loftus Library.

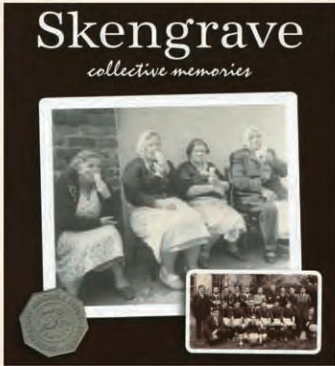
This tithe map shows the village in 1846. Buildings include the Old Hall (11), now the Post Office and the Hall (19), now Timms Coffee House. There were also several cottages and a farm. Other features include Barley Garth (20) and Pigeon Cote Field (21).

Courtesy of Teesside Archives



Skinningrove History Group was formed in 2003 by local volunteers. It aims to research, conserve and promote the social, economic and cultural history of Skinningrove and its surrounding area and provide access to local historical resources for residents and visitors. In 2006 the group published 'Skengrave,' a collection of photographs and memories of the characters, events and day-to-day life of the village. This trail was devised by the group in 2011.

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Skinningrove History Group wishes to thank the following for their help:
Loftus Town Council
Skinningrove Link Up
East Cleveland Image Archive
Teesside Archives
Thanks also to all the individuals who have helped.

- Some useful websites:
- www.ironstonemuseum.co.uk
 - www.visitredcarandcleveland.co.uk
 - www.northyorkmoors.org.uk
 - www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/teessidearchives
 - www.ecol.org.uk/loftus
 - www.skinningrove.tv
 - www.skinningrovebonfire.org.uk
 - www.clevelandmrc.org.uk
 - www.sustrans.org.uk
 - www.northseatrail.org
 - www.skinhist.co.uk

Skinningrove Zig Zag Railway Project is a joint venture between Cleveland Ironstone Mining Museum and Cleveland Model Railway Club. See their websites for information about this ambitious project to build a working scale model of Loftus mine, the internal railway system and part of the zig zag connection to the main line.



Skinningrove Station above the village on the Loftus to Middlesbrough line. It opened in 1875 and closed in 1958.

Skinningrove in 1846

The following description is taken from "The History and Antiquities of Cleveland" by John Walker Ord, published in 1846.

Skinningrove, a small village lying in a low deep creek of the sea, presents many charms to the admirer of the romantic and picturesque. The broad, level, shingly beach looking upon a vast expanse of waters, the lofty projecting precipices, the gay motion of vessels skimming their native deeps, the glorious diapason of winds and waves along the coast, arouse and elevate the soul with the loftiest and most sublime contemplations.

This is two years before mining of a major ironstone seam began in the valley and the area was transformed dramatically.

Welcome to
SKINNINGROVE VALLEY TRAIL



A heritage walk through some local history

Supported in partnership by:



The Story of the Merman

One story about Skinningrove's past that is still recounted is that of the "sea-man" or merman who allegedly visited in about 1530. Writing in the early 17th century, William Camden states "Upon the shore, Skengrave, a small village, thrives by the great variety of fish which it takes; where it is reported that, seventy years ago, they caught a sea-man, who lived upon raw fish for some days, but at last, taking his opportunity, he made his escape into his own element. When the winds are laid and the sea is calm... a hideous groaning is oftentimes heard in these parts on a sudden, and then the fishermen are afraid to go to sea." Another account claims that during his stay "fayre maidens were welcomest guests to his harbour, whome he woulde beholde with a very earnest countenaynce, as if his phlegmatic breast had been touched with the sparke of love." (J.W. Ord 1846)



Image courtesy of Skinningrove Bonfire Committee. The merman was the theme for the 1984 bonfire.

1 THE JETTY

As you pass through the jetty you are near the halfway point of the Cleveland Way National Trail, a 110 mile/176 km walk between Helmsley and Filey. The North Sea Trail passes through this area which also forms part of the North Yorkshire and Cleveland Heritage Coast. The jetty was built in the 1880s to serve the ironworks above which had opened in 1874. If you look up at the cliffs you can see they are covered with slag that was poured in a molten state over the clifftop. The jetty fell into disuse as other forms of transport developed and now looks forlorn, but funding is being sought to revitalise it.

Towards the village can be seen evidence of fishing activity and beyond are Boulby Cliffs, the highest on the east coast. The cliffs were home to the alum industry that was active there between 1656 and 1863.

The former miners' hospital with the steelworks behind. Note the footbridge which is long gone.



3 STONE ROW

The information board tells you more about Skinningrove in the past.

This part of Stone Row was built after 1856, when an early Ordnance Survey map shows only buildings around The Square and some farms.

Across the beck you can see man-made caves which were carved out to shelter hospital patients when bombing raids took place during the war.

The beck is sometimes a reddish-brown colour due to water coming out of the former ironstone mine upstream.

The Post Office (PO on map) was originally a manor house, built in the shape of a cross in the 16th century. It later became the Old Hall and is now a grade II listed building. Across the bridge, just upstream, there is a mosaic that illustrates the story of the village. Local people were involved in creating this work of art which should capture your interest.

5 NEW COMPANY ROW

The plaque at this point is on the wall of Riverside Building.

As you enter New Company Row from The Square you will see the former Co-op building on your right and the war memorial on your left. Wilson Terrace is on the site of the former Miners' Institute which was built by Pease and Partners in 1875. Riverside Building began as a school in 1884 and remained so until the late 1990s, since when it has been a base for community projects and activities. Please see the ceramic merman on the wall; the story of the merman is on the other side of this leaflet.

6 DOORSTEP GREEN

This area was once a thriving location for the gas industry with a gasworks, house and showroom on this side of the beck and gasholders at the other side. Production started in the 1870s to coincide with the opening of the ironworks above and development of the model village of Skinningrove. As other sources of gas became available these buildings fell into disuse and were dismantled. Please take time to appreciate the large mural, 'Evolution of Life in the Sea.' It was originally beside the entrance to a Loftus school.

8 CLEVELAND STREET

This public footpath crosses the valley on its way through East Cleveland. Known at times as via de Witbei, Back Street and Cleveland Street, this route was once a major pedestrian highway, probably linking Gisborough Priory with Whitby Abbey in the Middle Ages. It may also have linked the Roman signal stations at Huntcliff and Goldsborough and the Iron Age settlements at Kilton Thorpe and Street House.

Upstream are remains of the bridge that took the mineral railway line between Loftus and Whitecliffe mines. The circular stone structure across the road was probably an air shaft for Loftus mine. The nearby Overman's Cottages were built to house mine supervisors. Originally seven in number, they were reduced to five in 1894 when a gantry was installed to take ironstone from the mine to the iron and steel works above.

9 KILTON MILL

At the time of the Domesday Book (1086) this site was part of Chilton (now Kilton). There was a reference to a mill here in 1323 when the manor had passed from Robert de Thweng to his son Marmaduke then to the latter's wife Lucy de Brus. The mill appears on the earliest ordnance survey map and remained in use until 1942. It used a breast fed wheel that turned anticlockwise as this was the most efficient use of water power. The mill race started at a weir in Whitecliffe Wood on the other side of the A174 then went through sluice gates and under the road to join the mill below. The A174 used to pass in front of the mill but it was realigned in about 1960. The mill and house were designated grade II listed buildings in 1987; the mill's workings are still intact.

Please take care when crossing the A174.

You are advised to cross from opposite the entrance to Whitecliffe Wood.

1, 2 and 6 to 11

- marker posts

3 - information board

4 and 5 - wall plaques

.... - route at each end



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2 BEACH ROAD

This area is rich in history. Limekilns were shown here on the 1856 Ordnance Survey map and during the two world wars gun emplacements were on the hillside. Around low tide a 30-minute walk below the cliff takes you to a small cove at Hummersea where the remains of a structure from the alum industry can be seen beside some steep steps. Please check tide tables before doing this walk.

Skinningrove is celebrated for its annual bonfire which attracts thousands of people. It takes place near here and each year a theme is selected to reflect the area's history and heritage. Over the hill to the right are the steelworks which began life as Lofthouse Iron Company and looking further inland you can see the railway embankment above post 11 of the trail.

As you head towards the village you pass houses that are on the site of the former miners' hospital which was built in 1871 and demolished in the late 1940s. Opposite these houses there is a carving of a man releasing a pigeon; please take time to read information about the Homing Society on the nearby plaque.



These gun emplacements were near post 2.

4 THE SQUARE

This part of the village is a designated conservation area. The plaque here is on the wall of Timms Coffee House which is a grade II listed building. It was built as Skinningrove Hall in 1704 for the Easterby family and later became the country residence of the Maynard family. They developed it as a hotel in the 19th century, naming it after the coffee houses that were then popular in London.

Across The Square, 18 and 19 Stone Row are also grade II listed buildings and behind them is the Methodist Chapel, built in the 1870s. (PW on map)

Opposite the chapel is Larvik Court which was built as a school in 1873. The old stone wall beside 1 The Square was once part of a farm building.

It's worth noting here that Skinningrove is on Route 1 of the National Cycle Network which is coordinated by Sustrans.

7 PLAYING FIELD

Across the beck from here are the remains of an entrance to Loftus mine. When it was active a footbridge spanned the beck and it was in such places that villagers would shelter from wartime bombing. A local school log book for 9 September 1915 states "Owing to Zeppelin raid and the children having been in the mines a good part of last night, we have been obliged to close school today".

The ironstone railway line crossed this field on its route between the mines and the zig zag link to the main line above the valley which is now used by Cleveland Potash. Going from here towards post 8 you come to a key area of the former Loftus mine, the first buildings on the left having been the manager's and pay offices. On the right, within the new housing, are remains of the mine stables where up to 45 horses were accommodated. To your left and up some steps is the mining museum which opened in former mine buildings in 1983.



A former mine entrance across the beck from the playing field.

10 WHITECLIFF WOOD

The houses nearby were built in 1871 to house senior staff at Whitecliffe mine which started output in the same year. The mine buildings were in this area and a rail link went under the A174 and across a bridge over the beck to Loftus mine which later took over these workings. Whitecliffe Wood forms a gateway to the wider Kilton Valley. Rare ancient woodland species are found in these woods which have Local Nature Reserve status.

11 RAILWAY EMBANKMENT

This post can be found down the slope, close to where Whitecliffe Beck joins Kilton Beck. The large metal construction, just downstream, was installed to trap logs and other debris after major flooding in Skinningrove in 2000.

Kilton Beck flows through a culvert under the embankment. In the 1860s a railway viaduct was built here to span the Kilton Valley but it was filled in with shale in the early 1900s to create this massive embankment so that mining could take place below.

If you wish to explore further you can cross Whitecliffe Beck by a small bridge and face a steep climb up through the wood to a footbridge over the railway line. From there you may walk beside the line and be rewarded with views up the valley towards the remains of Kilton Castle and back down the trail to the sea. Another route from the railway footbridge leads to the nearby village of Liverton Mines. OS Explorer maps OL26 and OL27 are recommended for this area.

Map contains
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