

Loftus Quarry Alum Trail

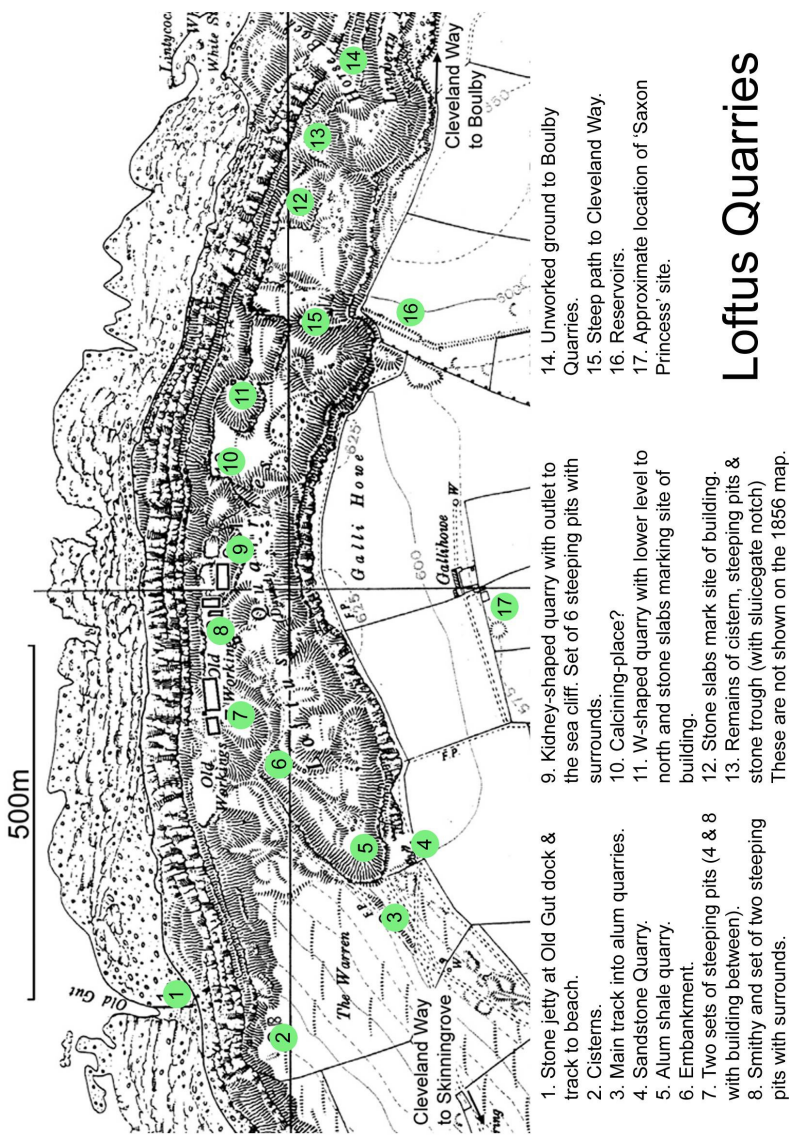


The alum quarries that once provided much employment and money for the town of Loftus are often now forgotten. The remains of the quarry in the sea cliffs just over a mile North of Loftus are all that remains of this once thriving business. Discover the scale of the industry and the landscape left behind with this walk around Loftus Alum Quarry.



Please remember that quarries can be dangerous places and care should be taken to stay away from cliff faces above the quarry and cliff edges below. The map and directions given should be considered as a guide only and we recommend having a suitable map with you. (OS Outdoor Leisure 27 covers the route).





Loftus Quarries

Map adapted from Goldring (2001) Along the Scar

Start: Car park on South View, Loftus. Walk north up Hummersea Lane towards the cliffs, follow the track past North Warren Cottage. (2 cisterns (2) are missed unless one deviates along the coastal path).

Alternative Start: Car park at NZ 713 201 by the mouth of Skinningrove Beck north of the village. Make your way across the beck and follow the Cleveland Way up the steep, stepped path and then eastwards where there is a view of the Old Gut dock ((1) on the plan). Pass the path down to the shore at NZ 725 198 and walk past North Warren Cottage, on the Cleveland Way.

Both routes: At NZ 735 197 fork left off the Cleveland Way to go down the track in to the quarries.

3 (NZ 736 199) – Loftus Quarries come into view where the Cleveland Way joins the track into the quarries. From here you can see a sandstone quarry (**4**) above the large alum shale quarry (**5**).

▶ Continue down the track.

6 (NZ 737 200) - Foot of ramp track. There are views of tiered quarries to the northwest.

7. There were two sets of steeping pits and the cliff edge where there is now a crown hole, the result of jet working. To the east one can leave the path temporarily to examine the alum shale face close by.

▶ Cross the embankment and follow the path for about 200m to, just before a large fallen block of sandstone, descend down a faint path to the site of the smithy (8).

8 (NZ739201) This is the site of the smithy and 2 steeping pits as shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map. Little is seen but there are indications of other steeping pits on the cliff edge to the west.

▶ Go down the short ramp into the 'kidney' quarry immediately to the east.

9 (NZ740 201)'Kidney quarry'. This quarry is sheltered from the north by an in situ shale wall that has an opening for waste disposal over the cliff. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map shows that there was a set of 6 steeping pits here.

▶ *Trek eastwards over the desolate landscape, crossing several cols and quarries(scoops) and passing archaeological locations 10, 11 and 12.*

10, 11, 12. There is the opportunity to look for fossils, especially ammonites such as species of *Harpoceras* and *Dactylioceras* and (b) the small bivalve *Dacryomya ovum* which was characteristic of shale suited to alum making.

12. (NZ744200) There is a stone slab platform here, probably the base of a steeping pit, slightly bowed as a result of expansion of the shale beneath it. It is a good spot to view the archaeological remains (**13**, steeping pits, cistern and lengths of a stone trough) in the quarry further to the east and examine large limestone concretions with *Dactylioceras* that are close by. The extreme eastern end of Loftus Quarries is not far beyond. This is the landslipped ground between Loftus and Boulby Quarries (**14**).

▶ *Make your way on a thin path to 15 (NZ 744 199) where a path goes up a steep but safe slope to the Cleveland Way.*

16. (NZ743199) This is the site of a long and narrow reservoir for the alum works.

▶ *Return westwards to Skinningrove along the Cleveland Way. There are at first fine views of the quarries to the north and the rolling dip slope to the south.*