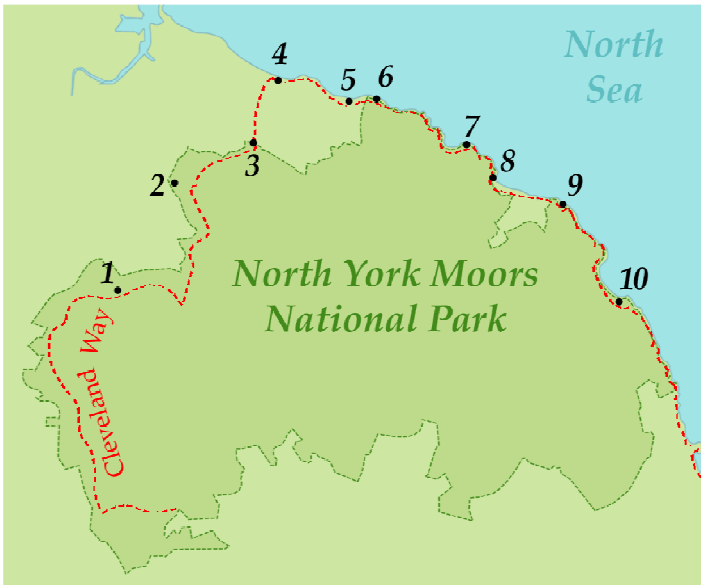


Cleveland Way Alum Sites Guide



When out walking on the Cleveland Way within North Yorkshire and Cleveland without realising it you may have passed a long disused alum quarry. These sites offer a glimpse into the history of the area and provide a dramatic backdrop to this unique industry.

This guide helps to point out some of these remains and tells you about each site you might pass. It is not intended to be a route map and directions given should be considered as a guide only. We recommend that you take a suitable map with you (OS Outdoor Leisure 26 & 27 from the Explorer Series cover the route).



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1. Carlton Bank Alum Quarry (NZ 521 029)

These works were established at the end of the crown monopoly on alum in about 1680 and the works closed about 55 years later. A second attempt at working them was started in around 1765 but it closed in 1774.

The quarry was excavated in 1997 as part of work to stabilise the slope.

The excavations revealed the remains of steeping pits and cisterns. These were documented and covered over to preserve them for the future.

Today you can see the large quarry from the Cleveland Way, the hillside by the quarry is covered in the terracotta coloured burnt alum shale, thrown away as waste.

2. Ayton Bank (NZ.588 108)

The Cleveland Way passes by Captain Cooks Monument and down Cocksure Hill but it is worth spending a while wandering through the remains of this alum works. This works was never very successful, the first owner became bankrupt after just five years. It was then bought by George Colebrook who worked the quarry for about 2 years as part of an ambitious but flawed attempt to fix the price of alum by reducing the amount made. The most obvious feature is the large heap of unburnt shale. This is thought to be the only example of this left in a quarry in the UK. The site is open access land but please be careful wandering off the path, much of the ground is very uneven and in places has collapsed due to later jet working.

3 Slapewath (NZ 641 159)

The Cleveland Way passes through the corner of this quarry and it is thought to be the first alum quarry within the whole of the UK. Run by John Atherton, one of the owners of the Skelton Estates, it opened in about 1603. The early years of the alum industry were not very profitable and this site was sold several times to hopeful buyers, each wanting to make their fortune. It eventually closed for the last time in 1804.

4. Saltburn Alum Works



There are references to alum houses on both sides of Saltburn Beck. The exact location is not clear, as the rocks here are not suitable for making alum. There was an alum house somewhere near the base of Cat Nab and it is possible that the building being revealed and eroded within the cliffs near the Ship Inn is also linked to the alum industry.

5. Loftus Alum Works(NZ 735 200)

The Loftus alum works were also known as Lingberry and Lofthouse during its lifetime. The quarry is owned by the National Trust and is open for people to visit. From the Cleveland Way you can look over this vast undertaking that was working for over 200 years almost continuously. You can also make your way down to the beach at Hummersea and look at the remains of one of the three alum houses from the works, within the foot of the cliffs. On the way down you can see the cut made in the rocky shore to help boats reach the alum house to deliver and remove goods.

6. Boulby Alum Works(NZ 754 195)

This vast quarry contains some of the most impressive remains of the alum industry. From the Cleveland Way you can see down into quarries and marvel at the scale of these works. The quarry opened in about 1650 and closed in 1871. Within the quarries are the remains of large stone block platforms that may have been used for burning shale on, or to protect the burning shale from the wind.



7. Kettleness Alum Works(NZ 833 159)

This works was owned by the Mulgrave Estate along with Sandsend and Asholme, Holmes and Rockhole. The Cleveland way provides a perfect view into the works and from the path it is possible to spot the remains of buildings on the quarry floor. The original alum house, near the shore in Ruswick Bay was destroyed along with some other buildings in a landslip in 1829.

8. Sandsend Alum Works(NZ 857 138)

This is the largest and longest running of all of the alum works, opening in 1607 and the last alum works to close in 1871. The alum house, that processed the alum for all the works on the Mulgrave Estate other than Kettleness, stood where the car park at the bottom of Lythe Bank. The entrance wall to the car park would have been the outer wall of the alum works. The Cleveland Way runs through the centre of the alum works, along the line of the Whitby to Middlesbrough Railway. There are several paths around the quarry that enable you to explore this wonderful space.

9. Saltwick Alum Works(NZ 914 112)

Most of the headland of Saltwick Nab has been removed as part of the quarrying and from the Cleveland Way a large part of the quarry shows a distinctive red colouring, where the stone was burnt in the early stages of alum making. From the Cleveland Way you can walk down onto the beach and see some of the remains of harbour walls and the alum house within the cliffs at the foot of the steps.



10. Stoupe Brow and Peak Alum Works(NZ 972 021)

Peak alum works are the most southern of the coastal alum works. The remains of the quarries can be seen in the hillside. From the Cleveland Way it is possible to walk down to the remains of the Ravenscar Alum House. This is managed by the National Trust and is the most complete remains of an alum house anywhere in Cleveland. From the shore you can make out the remains of an incline and a zig-zag path that brought coal and kelp up to the works from the shore.