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Flamborough Head

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Danes Dyke – Pay and Display car park (TA 216695)
Ordnance Survey map	OS Explorer 301 – Scarborough, Bridlington and Flamborough Head
Distance	9.3 miles
Date of Walk	1 April 2015
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This Flamborough Head walk from Danes Dyke, in part, follows some of the Headland Way, a 20 mile, long distance path running from Bridlington to Filey. The walk itself is straightforward and easy to follow and the main points of interest are the sea views and the amazing chalk cliff scenery, eroded by the sea into some remarkable shapes. These are the only chalk sea cliff in the north.

The cliffs at Flamborough Head are a Site of Special Scientific Interest, both geologically and biologically, which extends from Sewerby round the headland to Reighton Sands. Thousands of seabirds nest on these cliffs including Gannets, Kittiwakes and Atlantic Puffins. Bempton Cliffs, fractionally beyond the route of this walk, are under the care of the RSPB and famous for the nesting gannets and puffins. The cliffs are part of the dramatic view as you progress around this walk.

Danes Dyke is a 2 mile long defensive ditch that runs north to south across the Flamborough peninsular. The dyke and the steep cliffs would have made Flamborough easily defended. Despite its name, the dyke is actually prehistoric. It is difficult to capture its immensity on a photograph but a few minutes exploration around the Danes Dyke car park reveals the impressive amount of work which must have gone into its creation.

There are a number of paths which walkers have created on the cliff tops and it matters little which you use. I stuck to the nearest the edge but obviously you need to take care, especially if with children or dogs.

The walk starts from the pay and display car park at Danes Dyke. To get there, take the B1255 from Bridlington to Flamborough. The entrance is on the right, just before the town and is signposted. The reason for starting here in preference to anywhere else on the route is that it gets the hard work (such as there is – a couple of steep flights of steps) out of the way early in the walk.

In terms of refreshments, picnic spots and toilets, you are spoiled for choice!

Start: From the Danes Dyke car park (TA 216695), take the broad track to the left of the small picnic area down to the beach.

At the beach, turn left up a long steep flight of steps and at the top, turn right to follow the coastal path. There are good views here back towards Bridlington.

After almost a mile, descend some more steps to South Landing (TA 231693). This area became a Local Nature Reserve in 2002, because of important wildlife, not least an important colony of tree sparrows. There is a Living Seas Centre in car park, with toilets and refreshments open April to October. You have to walk up the steep road to get to it! South Landing is also home to the Flamborough lifeboat station, which houses an inshore Atlantic 85 lifeboat.

From South Landing, more or less opposite the descending steps, climb some more steps to follow the fingerpost for "Headland Way" and "Lighthouse 2½ miles". At the top of the steps, turn right. Here is the The Flamborough Longsword Dance Lock sculpture.

At TA 258705, you begin to see the start of the unusually shaped eroded coastline.

You now follow the coastal path for about two miles until you get to the Flamborough Foghorn Station with two radio masts (TA 257707). You have to divert inland here to the lighthouse. The lighthouse, designed by architect Samuel Wyatt, was built by John Matson of Bridlington in 1806 and cost £8,000. In the distance behind it you can see the old chalk stone built lighthouse, a Grade II listed building which was finished in 1669 and designed as a beacon tower, believed to be the oldest complete lighthouse in England.

There is a shop and toilets by the more "modern" lighthouse – which dates from 1806!

You can walk behind or in front of the lighthouse but once past it, pass in front of the long curving row of benches on the cliff top, above Selwicks Bay. On the right at the end of the row, descend some steps to continue the coastal path.

At TA 245718, just by the promontory of Breil Nook is a distinctive stack set is a small horseshoe bay.

Follow the cliff path to North Landing (TA 239720), an attractive cove with a sand and pebble beach. There are generally fishing cobbles pulled up on the slipway. There is a café here and toilets.

From North Landing, continue along the coast path to Thornwick Bay, an unmistakable horseshoe shaped bay, which supposedly gets its name from the Norse mythological God of Thunder Thor, on account of the pounding of waves against the cliffs. Looking across the bay, you can see the impressive Bempton Cliffs. At the rear of Thornwick Bay, turn right along a broad track to the café. The track may have a barrier chain across, if the café is not open but it is easily stepped over.

The cliff path continues from the rear left hand corner of the café car park. There is a fingerpost indicating the "Permissive Footpath".

At the next junction of paths, turn right continuing to follow another "Permissive Footpath" fingerpost.

After about half a mile from the café, just as you begin to approach Bempton Cliffs, you come to a three way fingerpost on the left (TA 224726). Turn left here to follow the “Public Footpath” fingerpost.

The path is now virtually a straight line to the town of Flamborough, following the left hand boundary of the fields. It is well walked and easy to follow.

As you reach the houses, there is a three way fingerpost. Turn left for “Flamborough”. You quickly reach a kissing gate. Go through this and follow the right hand field boundary.

On arriving at the road “Craikewells”, turn left then immediately right at the road junction. Follow this road (Tower Street). After passing the remains of Flamborough Castle, it curves right and becomes Church Street.

Turn left off Church Street on to West Street, then first right on to Water Lane.

As Water Lane curves right, take the path on the left indicated by the fingerpost for “Danes Dyke ¾ mile” (TA 224701). The path is initially constrained by fencing, then follows the left hand side of the field.

At the corner of the field, ignore the path off left and continue to follow the left hand boundary of the field to a tarmac lane which is the exit road from the Danes Dyke car park. Turn left. A footpath has been created alongside the lane to avoid competing with traffic. Follow it back to the car park.

