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Ravenscar to Hayburn Wyke

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Ravenscar (NZ 985013)
Ordnance Survey map	OL27 – North York Moors Eastern Area
Distance	7 miles
Date of Walk	16 October 2020
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This is an interesting walk from the “nearly town” of Ravenscar to Hayburn Wyke. The coastline is unusual in that it comprises a high level plateau (along which my route, following the Cleveland Way, runs), separated from a lower level, rich in vegetation. If you do this walk at low tide, you will note the preponderance of rocky platforms, covered at higher tide, which mean local boatmen really need to know what they are doing!

On a clear day, you will get fine views along the coast to Scarborough, Filey Brigg and Flamborough Head. Unfortunately, it was very overcast for me although brightened up later.

Ravenscar, once known as Peak was destined to become a holiday resort at the end of the nineteenth century. Building plots were sold and roads were laid out. Unfortunately, the scheme folded, because of the long, steep walk to the rocky beach and possibly because people realised this high, exposed part of the east coast of Yorkshire was not exactly the Côte d'Azur! The railway station was the highest on the Scarborough to Whitby line and the steep incline caused problems for the trains. The line closed in 1965 but at least much of the route now provides a footpath route, which this walk exploits on the return journey.

Part way along the walk, you will encounter the remains of the old Ravenscar WWII radar station. This was built to detect incoming German ships or planes and was one of a chain of similar stations. The ruined shells of buildings with various functions can be explored and information boards tell you all about them. It is owned by the National Trust and protected as an ancient monument.

Fronting the radar station are the remains of Bent Rigg Coastguard Lookout, built about 1935 as coastguard then “War Watch” post. It was last used in 1972 (not for war!).

Hayburn is evidently an Anglo Saxon word which means ‘hunting enclosure by a stream’ and Wyke is the Norse word for ‘sea inlet or creek’. It has a “beach” with rather large pebbles and a pretty stream/waterfall. It forms a deep cleft in the cliffs which means there are a considerable number of steps to descend, hence the amber traffic light symbol. To the rear of the Wyke, is some very pretty deciduous woodland, through which the route passes. The Hayburn Wyke Inn is only a quarter of a mile from the beach, if you need refreshment but if you go there (follow the fingerpost), you will need to backtrack to go through the woods or just return to

Ravenscar directly via the old railway route. However, I strongly recommend taking the attractive woodland route.

If you like sloe gin, if it is the right time of year (in 2020 it was October) take a container or two. Many blackthorn bushes on the cliffs were groaning with them! I may never recover!

Apart from the considerable number of steps at Hayburn Wyke, the going is straightforward.

The walk starts from Ravenscar. To get there, turn off the A171 at the Falcon Inn, between Scarborough and Whitby and follow the road signs. There is a long stretch of roadside parking as you approach the entrance to the Raven Hall Hotel, which can get very busy. I recommend passing this and turning right, to park near the old station.

Start: From the old station (NZ 985013), follow the broad track across the road, to join up with the coast path, following the fingerpost for the Cleveland Way. As the track turns left, keep straight ahead to the coast path and turn right.

It is now simply a case of following the high level Cleveland Way path. I mention “high level” because as you will see, there are two levels to the coast here and there is a lower footpath marked on the map. However, my route is along the top of the high cliffs.

At NZ 992009, are the remains of a radar station from the Second World War and the old Bent Rigg Coastal Lookout, from which as you would expect, there is a great panoramic view of the North Sea. You are free to enter and look round both and there are a number of information boards.

The blackthorn bushes start at SE 998996, above the area marked on the map as Beast Cliff.

You arrive at Hayburn Wyke (TA 010971) where a lot of steps lead you down, to cross a stream with a pretty waterfall via a footbridge. Once over this, turn left to see the pebbly beach and right up steps, to continue the route.

You arrive at a three way fingerpost. Left is the continuation of the Cleveland Way. Keep straight ahead for now, following the fingerpost for “Hayburn Wyke Inn ¼ mile”.

The route through the woods is not easy to follow but essentially, it follows the stream, with a bit of wandering!

After only a hundred yards or so, you come to a junction of paths in the woods where you turn right.

You come to what I can best describe as a tree-lined “bowl”, where the route dinks right (TA 010971). The path was not easy to see amongst the autumn leaves when I did the walk.

Cross another footbridge over the stream and arrive at a post marked with yellow arrows. Keep straight ahead, ignoring a path off to the right.

The path divides at a fingerpost with yellow arrows. Branch left down to the stream and follow the path alongside its right hand bank.

The path divides again. Left is indicated by a blue, bridleway arrow and right by a yellow arrow. Fork left on the bridleway.

Arrive at a tarmac lane (TA 005977). Turn left.

After a couple of hundred yards, just after passing a sign indicating the lane is a Private Road to Red House Farm turn right up another lane, passing a bungalow on the right, bearing a sign "White House Farm".

Ignore a right turn into the farmyard and stay on the lane.

You pass a farm entrance, also marked White House Farm.

Pass also a sign for Plane Tree Cottage B&B, which is some distance before the cottage. When you reach it, fork off to the left following a public footpath fingerpost.

Cross the stream a final time via the footbridge and follow the wide path at the other side.

Keep straight ahead after the gate, climbing gradually and after about a hundred yards, cross a stile on to the track bed of the disused railway and turn right to return to Ravenscar.

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