

Places of Interest to Visit when in Whitby

Every visitor to Whitby sees the great Abbey which dominates the East Cliff of the town and many tourists climb the 199 well worn steps to take a closer look at the ruins. You can take in a show; climb the famous 199 steps; browse in the Captain Cook Museum; take in the Dracula Trail guided tour; walk along the harbour front and watch the deep sea trawlers land their catches or just pick one of the many panoramic views of Whitby, sit and watch the world go by. Whitby is centrally located to visit places up and down the coast, Scarborough; Goathland (home to the TV series "Heartbeat"); Grosmont and the Steam Railway; local fishing villages, such as Robin Hoods Bay; Runswick Bay; Staithes and many more attractions, not forgetting the lovely North Yorkshire Moorlands and its walks.

Old town of Whitby (East side) where its ancient cobbled streets still wind beneath cliffs, dominated by Gothic remains of the Abbey over 1300 years ago. You can see and smell the character of years gone by, where picturesque red roofed houses nestle on the slopes above the river Esk. Whitby is one of Britain's finest coastlines, with cliffs, panoramic bays and safe sandy beaches. Whitby has been a port for more than a thousand years and is still a seafarer's town, keeping its old world character.

Whitby Abbey, Streonshalh from which arose Whitby Abbey, was founded in the year 657AD by Oswy, King of Northumbria. Lady Hilda, his daughter, then 44 years of age was appointed the first Abbess and dedicated to St Peter. The ruins of the Abbey as seen today, were built over 500 years after the death of Lady Hilda, who became a Saint and was known by the Anglo Saxon name of Hild, meaning "battle". She was born into the Royal house of Northumbria.

Whitby Swing Bridge which joins the two communities East and West of the river Esk together, has been the scene of rivalry in the earlier part of this century, where gangs of youths would contest the bridge with "t'other side o' watter dogs". The original bridge was first mentioned in 1351 and used to lie to the South of the present one, roughly aligned with Baxtergate. A block of early 18th century buildings on the south side was demolished in 1975. The present swing bridge was built in 1909 and is electrically operated.

People of Interest when in Whitby

Captain James Cook was born on October 27th 1728 in the village not far from Whitby, called Marston. The Cook family moved to Great Ayton, where James went to school. At 17 years of age he was placed with Mr William Sanderson, a shop keeper in the coastal village of Staithes. Later, he joined a family from Whitby, the Walker brothers, who owned and sailed ships from the port, serving his time apprenticed to the family business. After his apprenticed days, he sailed the family ships, earning his living. Cook gave up eventually certain promotion to a Captain within the Merchant Navy Services, taking the step to volunteer for the Royal Navy, joining as Able Seaman. He soon rose through the ranks and became a Master, the highest non commissioned post achievable and was highly respected by his superiors. Fame awaited Captain James Cook, who went on to circumnavigate the world three times, mapping the oceans of the world for the Royal Navy.

Frank Meadow Sutcliffe 1853 - 1941 A nationally and internationally acclaimed pioneering photographer who helped to develop photography as an art form.

Sutcliffe worked in Whitby from the mid 1870's until his death. Most of his photographs for which he is now famous, were taken out of season. They include many of the harbour, fishing boats, children at play and fishermen.

Sutcliffe's equipment ranged from the cumbersome brass and mahogany full plate camera, with their wet collodion process of the late nineteenth century, to the hand held bellows type of camera, of this century, using celluloid negatives. The Sutcliffe gallery in Flowergate, Whitby, publishes several volumes of his images and can be purchased by the visitor to Whitby.

Bram Stoker, born in Dublin in the year 1847 whom became a highly popular member of "Trinity College", where he was also a very successful sportsman. His first working duty was as a civil servant, moving on to become a journalist. However, after seeing the actor Henry Irving act on one of his tours of Ireland, Bram Stoker became the manager of the Lyceum in London, shortly after his marriage to Florence in 1876. Bram Stoker remained there throughout his career and it was his careful management, providing a contrast to Henry Irving's theatrical excesses, that was probably a major reason for the Lyceum's success.

Bram Stoker wrote a number of short stories and gothic novels, but surely is remembered for only one, that of his tale of the undead, the blood thirsty horror storey of vampires "Dracula", published in 1897.

Whitby Brochure

Whitby - where there is something for everyone
"The jewel in the crown of Yorkshire"



Whitby on a steep wooded inlet of the River Esk, offers a delightful combination of fishing port and tourist centre.

The ancient town of Whitby has been the scene of the Synod, held at the Abbey of St Hilda; nurtured Caedmon, the first English poet; has fostered the genius of Capt Cook and his sailing ships, built in the town; fathered the abilities and bravery of the Scoresby family, the finest sailors and whalers of their day; hosted authors the likes of the great Charles Dickens and Bram Stoker author of "Dracula". Today, Whitby is still a very busy fishing and trading port and has become very popular for tourism, taking the family holidays or a short weekend breaks. Whitby is well situated close to the North Yorkshire Moors to visit other popular towns of Scarborough; Bridlington; Filey; York where you will find the historic York Minster and the National Railway Museum.



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