

Scarborough's Old Town History Trail



Scarborough is Britain's first seaside resort and the home to Scarborough Fair. Shipbuilding, fishing and seaside entertainment made the town what it is today. This one-hour walk will take you back in time along Scarborough's Old Town Trail.

Starting near the Scarborough Maritime Heritage Centre you will see a few benches looking out over the harbour. This short stretch of road is called **Merchant's Row** and once ran down the full length of Eastborough to the sea. Next to the Train Shop is a fine Georgian town house. You will also see a statue of the 'Smugglers' reminding us of the days when almost every boat & ship on this coast would sneak in goods without telling the custom's men!



At the far end of Merchant's Row turn right into Leading Post Street, named after a

post that was used to help pull goods up the cliff. Go directly across the main road to arrive outside the market, opened in 1853. Pop in and see the wonderful stands.



Turn right into **St Sepulchre Street** and walk down until you see Trinity House on your right, built in 1832. This charitable organisation was, and is, concerned with providing relief for distressed mariners. It also played a role in ensuring mariners' families were cared for and children were educated before schools were open to everyone.

Continue along **St Sepulchre Street** and pass Globe Street on the left, where the Old Globe Inn once stood and received a cannon ball through its window during the Civil War. Continue on until you reach **Princess Square**. Looking right you will see an old obelisk, called the 'Buttercross'. To your left you will see the road and step up to St Mary's Church. In that street is the Leeds Arms, a popular haunt for local fishermen and next to it the home of the Scarborough Sub Aqua Club.



Continue straight ahead into **Princess Street** and notice the low height of the doorways as people were much shorter two hundred years ago due to their limited diet. Look out for the 'sun' symbol fire insurance plaques on some houses. When you reach the end of the street turn right and walk down the cobbled street to a viewing area on your left. You will see a house named '**The Flower in Hand**' it was once a pub and rumoured to a brothel for the sailors.

Walk down the road to your right and you will see the old St Thomas' Church, now the Sea Cadet Hall. Carry on and you will see the **Tunny Club** fish and chip shop on your left. Tunny, or tuna fish, were caught here from the end of World War One right up to the 1950s. It was a 'rich gentlemen's big game fishing sport'. The largest ever caught weighed 851lbs. There is a statue to mark this on the East Pier.



At the bottom of the road on the right is the **Newcastle Packet** pub that is on the site of the 17th Century Customs House. This pub was originally named the Five Man Boat, a style of boat, along with the Coble, that is particular to the Yorkshire coast.

Turn into the small alleyway by the **Tunny Club**. These back lanes are called '**The Bolts**' and may have been used by smugglers. They would also be open sewers for 'night soil' and been flushed out at high tide by the sea each day. At the end turn left and you will see **2 Quay Street** one of the oldest medieval timber framed buildings in Scarborough.

Quay Street is the line of the original 13th Century waterfront. Walk along until you see the **Three Mariners inn**, an old smugglers inn. This street also had warehouses and an icehouse where boats would take on ice to preserve fish caught at sea. Before mechanical icemakers, salt was used to preserve herrings in barrels.



At the end of Quay Street you will see the **Toll House**, originally used to collect tolls to pay for the building of the Marine Drive, opened

in 1908, to the North bay, and was also used as a Coastguard Station. Cross the main road and turn right past the Tea Pot café and walk up on to the **East Pier**. The North Sea was once the called the German Ocean and behind you is the craggy outcrop of Scarborough Castle, the site of a Bronze Age and Roman camp.



The **East Pier** was constructed about 260 years ago. Older still is the next pier along - Vincent's Pier, named after the Georgian engineer, William Vincent. It was started in medieval times, built of a strong timber framework filled in with rubble. Walk down to the end of **Vincent's Pier** to the lighthouse. This is used at night for signalling to boats when the tide is high enough for them to enter the harbour. The lighthouse is also home to the **Scarborough Yacht Club**. At the end of the pier we will see a Vickers cannon recovered by the local sub aqua club. On a tall post is the '**Diving Belle**', a tribute to Scarborough's place as the first seaside resort in Britain.

In the harbour you will see the pleasure boat pontoons named after **Albert**

Strange, a Victorian yacht designer, whose history is given on an information board. As you exit the pier, across the road above the amusement arcade, is an old sail loft where sails were made for ships. In the 17th and 18th century, many large ships were built on the gently sloping sand, a hive of activity, with carpenters, and the noise of saws and hammers, the smell of tar and wood.



Turn left and walk along past the shops. You will see a large arched glass window of a café that was once the 19th Century **Bethel Mission**, the seaman's mission run by Methodists. It was also the site of the town's first town hall until 1800. Continue on and see the **Richard III House**.



Go to the traffic lights and cross the road. In front of you is the **West Pier** or Fish Pier that is still used today.

It is the main site for SeaFest, a festival of the sea, held every July. To the right of the pier is the **RNLI lifeboat station**. Scarborough had one of the first lifeboats in the country.

Scarborough was once the fifth largest herring port in the country and one hundred years ago the harbour would have been full of fishing boats from Scotland, Hull, Grimsby, Lowestoft and the Netherlands. Herring swum down the East Coast in August and were chased by the Scottish boats. Fisher lasses followed along and spent all day gutting and packing the herring, up to 60 a minute. Herring died out due to overfishing in the 1950s.



To the left of the pier by the benches you will see a **red sea mine**, a reminder of the many lives lost by fishermen, naval and merchant men during the two world wars. Scarborough was famously attacked by German battle cruisers in December 1914 killing 18 people. A 'Remember Scarborough' recruitment poster was used across the UK to encourage young men to join up.



Looking to the right of the pier you will see the wide flat sand of the South Bay. However calm it may seem it has also been the scene of many tragic shipwrecks.



Now turn your back on the sea and cross the road heading up **Eastborough**. At the corner a steep slope led to a house where Admiral Sir John Lawson lived, scourge of the Dutch in the mid 17th Century. This was also the path by which the tithe, a tenth of all fish caught, was taken up to St Mary's Church and the monasteries.

If you continue up Eastborough you will arrive back at the Scarborough Maritime Heritage Centre, open Wednesday to Sunday 11am to 4pm, entrance free.



www.scarborouhsmaritimeheritage.org.uk

