



Clementhorpe lies just outside the York City Walls and along the west bank of the River Ouse. It is not well known to visitors, but amply repays a visit. Clementhorpe was one of York's earlier suburbs, and it has a long and diverse industrial history.

The main development of Clementhorpe can be traced from the early nineteenth century up to the present day. You can see the 1852 map of the area on the National Library of Scotland site at <https://maps.nls.uk/view/102344815>.

Prior to the 1850s there was very little development south of Clementhorpe. That is the road with that name rather than the area. There was only the original St. Clement's Church and the site of Clementhorpe Nunnery, which was already in ruins.

Modern Clementhorpe is very largely residential in character. On this walk we will try to trace some of the surviving industrial buildings, structures and other features.

There are plenty of places to sit and contemplate. Public toilets are available in Rowntree Park, and there is a variety of local pubs and cafes. We will point these out as we go round.

The walk is approximately two kilometres (just over a mile), and should take between one and two hours to complete.

The walk was designed by John Stevens, with the support of Susan Major. Thanks to Anne Houson for recording the text. All photos are by John Stevens, except where specified.

Skeldergate Bridge can be noisy with traffic, so we're going to start our walk underneath it, on the north west side of the bridge. Here is Terry Avenue, the road which runs beside the river. Carefully cross this road and stop on the paved area next to the bridge with a bench. Listen to the commentary.

Stop 1 The Postern

This is the site of the Skeldergate Ferry which operated for many years across the downstream boundary of the Port of York, prior to the construction of the bridge. A private ferry facilitated crossing of the Ouse from Clementhorpe to the City Centre as early as 1541. Later, in the eighteenth century this ferry was leased by York Corporation. In 1873 the Corporation of York reported that more than 800 people a day were using the ferry crossing.

Skeldergate Postern lay just to the north. This was a small door in the City Wall, probably next to the Skelder Gate. The name is thought to derive from the Old Norse meaning street of the shield makers. This area was probably the first part of the suburb of Clementhorpe to be built, and there are references to it in the Middle Ages. Behind you lies the start of this section of the City Wall, and the bailey of the old castle motte of Baile Hill.

The need for a third bridge over the River Ouse was identified and The York (Skeldergate Bridge) Improvement Act was passed in 1875. The foundation stone of the new bridge was laid in 1878. Designed by Thomas Page, later succeeded by his son George, the bridge officially opened for pedestrians in January 1881 and to general traffic in March of that year. The present postern dates from 1878, when the building of the bridge made it necessary to re-align its approaches.

It is an iron bridge with Gothic details. The parapet is decorated with ornate ironwork featuring trefoils, six-pointed stars and the white rose of York. The small arch at the opposite end opened to admit tall-masted ships. The Motor House also served as a toll house and accommodation for the toll keeper and his family. The bridge was last opened in 1975, and the Motor House is now Dyls Café. Skeldergate Bridge was originally built as a toll bridge, but was formally declared toll-free on 1 April 1914. The bridge and its attached tollhouse is a Grade II Listed Building.

Construction of the Skeldergate Bridge involved the demolition of Calvert's Iron Foundry. This was a well-known business in Clementhorpe from 1858. Calvert & Locking were the ironwork suppliers for the first Lendal Bridge in 1861. Unfortunately, that bridge collapsed and had to be replaced. This was just one problem faced by the company, and it went bankrupt in 1862.

Walk back under the arch south along Terry Avenue. There is a small concrete area where steps lead down to the river. This is a safe place to stop and look around and listen to the commentary.

Stop 2 Skeldergate Bridge

The River Ouse here is flowing southwards towards the Humber via the lock at Naburn. This was once a busy route for bringing agricultural produce and raw materials into the City, and for exporting local products. Throughout the last two hundred years the River has also been an important outlet for recreation and leisure.

Clementhorpe lies to our right, taking in the waterfront as far as we can see. We are now looking at a continuous 'wall' of apartments and town houses. If we had stood here as recently as 1970, the view would have been unrecognisably different. We would have been looking at a 'wall' of industrial buildings.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this area supported a wide variety of industries, including shipbuilding, glass making, malting and brewing, tanning, dying and thread making, manufacture of fertilisers, ropes, nails, ironwork and confectionery. The river was lined with busy wharves, and horses were everywhere.

The northern end of the area was greatly affected by the construction of Skeldergate Bridge in 1878-81. The construction of the approach road to the bridge on the west bank involved the demolition of a public house – the Navigation Tavern – and the adjoining church school, as well as other buildings.

Terry Avenue was originally a tow path enabling barges to be manhandled or horse-drawn. Wharves lined its eastern edge, serving the industries along the bank. This area of wharves and riverside industries continues all the way along the river to the north as far as Lendal Bridge. It was indeed a 'hive of industry'.

Carry on along Terry Avenue southwards for about 200 metres. Stop on the concrete area next to the first moored boat (the Motor Vessel Till), and turn to face away from the river. Listen to the commentary.

Stop 3 Terry's Clementhorpe

Just south of Skeldergate Bridge along the Ouse frontage lay Henry Richardson's fertiliser factory. Part of the site had been earlier occupied by a Bone Mill. Bone meal or bone manure is a mixture of ground animal bones and slaughterhouse waste. It was used as an organic fertiliser in agriculture, and later as a feed supplement for livestock.

The Richardson's were Quakers. In earlier times they had been involved in tanning and sales of agricultural merchandise. The family lived at nearby Cherry Hill House. On the maps of the late nineteenth century the business is marked as a Chemical Manure Works. You can see this at <https://maps.nls.uk/view/102344815>. The business involved the treatment of calcium phosphate with sulphuric acid to produce the more soluble calcium superphosphate – an agricultural fertiliser.

Richardson's continued in business until 1973, when it seems to have been taken over by Hargreaves Fertilisers Limited. It was closed and demolished shortly thereafter, and part of the site was used for car parking until being redeveloped for

housing. This housing is called The Postern – named after the former gate in the City Walls.

On the next site downstream there once lay the Clementhorpe Brewery. This opened some time before 1825, and after many changes of ownership, was bought by Calvert's to expand their ironworks. After a brief interlude as a nail factory, the site was bought in 1862 by Joseph Terry and Sons to build their new confectionery works.

The Terry Family business had outgrown its premises in St. Helen's Square. The new Clementhorpe Works prospered. Raw materials and coal were imported by boat, and the factory made extensive use of modern steam-powered machinery. It remained the centre of Terry's confectionery and chocolate business until new premises were constructed at Campleshon Road/Bishopthorpe Road between 1926-30. Terry's Clementhorpe site reached its peak in the 1920s, with over 300 staff. It stayed in use, mainly for storage, until the 1970s.

Joseph Terry had originally leased a riverside site at Clementhorpe to house his stocks of peel. The riverside location was important as all supplies of sugar, cocoa, glucose, orange and lemon rinds in brine arrived by steamer (along with coal supplies) on the river. Twice a week the steam packet vessel would disgorge its cargo of sugar, cocoa and coal. When the business began to expand rapidly, especially in the manufacture of peel, the size of consignments increased, and railways probably played a larger role.

On the corner of Terry Avenue with Clementhorpe [the road], just south of Terry's, was the Clementhorpe Boatyard and Slipway. Boat building had a long history on this part of the Ouse, dating back to medieval times. The Slipway itself was built in 1836 by the Ouse Navigation Trustees. It was equipped with powerful winches and chains, and could accommodate a vessel up to 215 feet long (the length of around seven buses). It closed in the 1930s. Most of the boats built here were relatively small, mainly barges and freighters, but also a wide variety of pleasure boats. Several pleasure boat companies operated out of Clementhorpe in the early twentieth century.

A narrow footbridge carried Terry Avenue over the entrance to the boatyard near where we are standing. This proved to be an insuperable barrier to several customers of the nearby pubs, and there are reports of some being hauled from the river in various states of distress.

Cross the road (Terry Avenue) and stand at the entrance to Clementhorpe [the road]. Stop on the left-hand side while you listen to the commentary.

Stop 4 Clementhorpe (the road)

The first thing that we notice is the dedication in stone on the wall of Waterfront House. This confirms that the building we are now looking at was once the premises of the Co-operative Society. Just in front, to our left, is a small house. This was where the horse keeper and his family lived. The horse keeper was responsible for

looking after the horses that the Co-op used to bring in supplies and to deliver to Co-op shops throughout the City. We will look at this in more detail at the next stop.

Before the Co-op was built, this site was occupied by the Clementhorpe Glass Works. Like many of the local businesses, this was a relatively short-lived venture. It survived the last 20 years of the nineteenth century, ceasing trading by 1907. The company specialised in the production of medicine bottles. At this time almost all liquid medicines were supplied in individually shaped and coloured bottles.

Across the road on the north side of Clementhorpe was the site of the boatyard. When boatbuilding ceased, the site was used for coal storage, and also housed a small bacon and pie factory.

The public house further up the road bears the name of The Slip. This refers to the slipway on which the boats were built, and is possibly the last reminder of this once important industry (We will come back to this pub later in the walk). Interestingly, The Slip served as a coroner's office from time to time, looking into the causes of local industrial and other accidents.

Further up on the left side of Clementhorpe there were once at least three Thread Mills. The first was run by Robert Henry Noddings & Co. for the manufacture of shoe threads. The second was run by John Scarr & Co. making shoe threads and spinning flax. Scarr later linked up with a man called Fletcher, and together they ran the Clementhorpe Brewery and the Thread Mill. In Clementhorpe we often find the same entrepreneurs running different businesses, together with family members and colleagues. Boots and shoes were often tied with waxed flax thread – possibly explaining why flax and shoe thread manufacture were carried out in the same area.

Turn and face the river.

Clementhorpe, the road that you have just been looking at, was once a trackway connecting the local Nunnery to the river. Here there was a staithe where agricultural produce and raw materials could be loaded and unloaded from boats. The Nunnery ran extensive agricultural lands to south of here. It had at least two windmills, and several lime kilns.

Carry on along Terry Avenue heading south. Stop on the wharf – the cobbled area next to where the last boat is moored and there is a small car park. Here you will be able to enjoy the commentary.

Stop 5 Waterfront House

Face away from the river.

You are looking at Waterfront House, a block of modern apartments and holiday lets. If you had been here at the turn of the twentieth century, you would have been looking at the extensive premises of the York Equitable Industrial Society Limited – later to become part of the Co-operative Wholesale Society. In 1899, the Society

started to build new central premises here to serve all its shops in the York area. The first phase comprised a large coal depot, a coal wharf, stables and the horse keeper's house. Later, further coal sheds, stables and bacon processing facilities were added. Early in the twentieth century, the Co-op added a bakery. The bakery closed in 1968.

The Co-operative movement in York had significant economic and social impacts. At peak it had over 10,000 members. The Society organised a wide variety of education and leisure activities for its members, and often included local residents.

Waterside House reuses some of the old co-op building, while the apartment block of Duke's Wharf, just to the south, lies on the site of the old coal depot.

Glancing across the River Ouse you may be able to make out St. George's Field, the site of the medieval Templar's Chapel dedicated to St George. From the 15th century it was the location for fairs and public celebrations, a function which it performed until well into the 20th century. The new Foss Barrier and Pumping Station is over there, hidden in the trees. If you had looked this way in the late nineteenth century, you might have spotted another of York's glass manufacturers, the York Glass Company.

As we travel south along Terry Avenue we will pass the new Aparthotel called Roomzzz. This site housed a succession of industries. Clementhorpe Dye Works, Timber Yards and a Rope Walk – the latter being a long, thin site where cords could be twisted to make rope. Some of these would have been used by local shipbuilders to make rigging.

Until very recently the site on which Roomzzz stands was occupied by Parkside Commercial Centre. This was a relatively modern set of buildings, dating to around 1931, which housed a number of small businesses that had to be moved to make way for a planned new river crossing. This never got built, thank goodness. The buildings were demolished around 2015.

Continue south past the caravan site until you come to the viewpoint over the river. This has an explanatory plaque and a bench where you can sit while you listen to the commentary.

Stop 6 Ouse View

From this viewpoint you have a very interesting sight of the confluence of the Ouse and the Foss. The Blue Bridge carries pedestrians and cyclists over the Foss and along New Walk. New Walk was laid out from 1730 to provide a place of promenade for fashionable Georgian residents and visitors, and remains popular for this purpose in the 21st century.

On our side of the Ouse, Terry Avenue now fulfils the same function. It links Skeldergate with the Millennium Bridge and points south and east. It is interesting to note that this route connects the former Terry's Works at Clementhorpe with the later Terry's site at Bishopthorpe Road.

At present, all the area behind you, including the Roomzzz site, the caravan park and Rowntree Park are liable to flood. Works by the Environment Agency during 2020-21 are expected to minimise the problem. On a more positive note, the supply of water from the Ouse was essential for many of the industrial processes that used to take place in Clementhorpe's factories. Changing water levels during periods of flood made loading and unloading of boats a bit of a challenge.

Pass the car park entrance. You will eventually arrive at the main gates to Rowntree Park. Look at the gates, then go in, and proceed straight ahead between the flower beds for about 100 metres. Choose one of the many benches to sit and listen to the commentary. There are public toilets in the Park.

Stop 7 Rowntree Park

You may wonder why a walk dedicated to the history of local industry has taken you into a park. But, in addition to its obvious visual attractions, it does tell us something about the philanthropic nature of many of York's key industrialists.

The name Rowntree is synonymous with chocolate and other confectionery products and with York. Joseph Rowntree, the owner of Rowntree & Co., gave the park to the City in a grand act of philanthropy at the close of the Great War (1914-1918), as a tribute to those members of the Company's staff who served their country in her hour of need.

It was designed by architects Frederick Rowntree and W. J. Swain between 1919 and 1921, and is Grade II Listed and a Registered Historic Park. Their work was assisted by P. W. Woods, the head gardener at Rowntree's Cocoa Works. The opening ceremony took place in July 1921, when it became in effect the City's first municipal park

In 1955 a further memorial was dedicated to those lost in World War 2. This comprised the iron gates at the entrance off Terry Avenue, and were given to the City of York by Rowntree and Co. Ltd, in memory of all those from the Cocoa Works who lost their lives in the Second World War (1939-1945) and in thanksgiving for the courage and steadfastness of the people of York throughout those years. You will have come through these on your way into the park. The gates date from around 1715 and, designed by Jean Tijou, they were originally in Ritchings Park, Buckinghamshire. The two war memorial plaques are on the internal walls of the lych-gate. You can see them on your way through to the bridge across the lake.

It is worth remembering the generous philanthropic actions of the confectionery manufacturers of York. Joseph Rowntree was a Quaker and stalwart champion of social reform, as were many leading members of the Rowntree family. The Terry family were not Quakers, but were paternalistically inclined. We have already, earlier in the walk, heard about the importance of the co-operative movement in York, with its similar stress on looking after its workforce and animals.

Confectionery, especially chocolate, has a proud history in York. After 1900 the confectionery industries grew to be the largest single group in York's industrial life.

By 1911 the sector employed 3,737. Between the two world wars rapid expansion took place, mainly through the growth of Rowntree's. In 1923 this firm employed some 7,000 persons. By 1939 the total number employed in the industry in York was 12,274 or some 29.4% of the City's insured working population.

The lake, or duck pond, that we will cross used to be a small tributary of the Ouse called Clementhorpe Beck. This was notorious in the nineteenth century for being a source of pollution and for its despoiled appearance. Many of the local businesses and traders dumped their waste in the Beck. And, there were some very unpleasant industrial activities, as well as the waste from hundreds of horses and the numerous cattle kept in domestic premises.

Cross the bridge over the lake. Straight ahead of you is the Reading Room Café, with its terrace overlooking the Park, is a delightful spot to while away a bit of time and have drink or bite to eat. Turn immediate right along the lake.

Follow the path along the edge of the lake heading north, and then take the left fork leading out of the Park. At the top of the short slope, pass through the park gate, turn right and walk about 50 metres. This takes us onto Vine Street via the short stretch of Lovell Street. Stand on the corner and listen to the commentary.

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The park, which was the City's first municipal park, has undergone a number of changes since its original design. During the First World War, some 200 workers from the Rowntree factory were killed. After the War, the park was dedicated to their memory, and it is still sometimes referred to as Rowntree Memorial Park. In 1921, a plaque was erected in their honour.

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Stop 8 De Little's

Vine Street once contained a number of important local trades and industries. Now, there is almost nothing to remind us of this except the names on the buildings. On the left is Woodyard Mews, a reminder that there were several timber yards in this area, as well as tradesmen specialising in making things from wood. Wood wasn't just used for building, but for fencing, furniture and coachbuilding.

On the right-hand side of the road you will spot De Little Court. This marks the site of a very interesting and long-lasting local business.

DeLittle's was founded in 1888 by Robert Duncan DeLittle under the name of the Eboracum Letter Factory. When it finally closed it was the last manufacturer of wooden type in Britain. The Company's catalogues are now sought-after collector's items.

Products included a wide range of letter-heads, advertisements, posters and theatre bills. These works might include edging and other designs. One poster comprised 16 sheets, printed in 8 colours and, at 8 x 13 feet, it was largest of its kind ever printed. Despite most potential customers having switched to metal printing plates or computer systems, the firm carried on until 1998.

Terry's used premises on Vine Street for storing ingredients, and there were several other confectioners in the nearby streets. These included H. Backhouse and Company of River Street and the Nunthorpe Peel Works where Fenwick Street now lies.

During the remainder of the walk keep an eye open for stable pavements. These distinctive engineering bricks were widely used to surface the gutters and back lanes of Clementhorpe. There are boot scrapers, still set into the front walls of some of the houses. These remind us of the times when roads were unsurfaced and frequented by horses. It must have been very smelly and mucky!

One of many converted corner shops will be on your right as you turn the next bend into Cherry Street. See if you can spot any others. The whole area used to be awash with small shops. In the days before refrigeration and supermarkets most people shopped multiple times each week.

Proceed up Vine Street to the left and take the first turn right into Cherry Street. Take the next right turn into Lower Ebor Street and stop to admire the Clementhorpe Maltings.

Stop 9 The Maltings

The Maltings were built in the late nineteenth century. Tower Brewery purchased the buildings in May 1903 and used them until the late 1960s. The building is now Listed Grade II.

Clementhorpe Maltings used a process known as floor malting, whereby cereal grain was converted into malt for the brewing industry. Barley was brought in by road and was hoisted up to the second floor taking-in door for storage. When required, the grain was carried down to the first floor and soaked in water. This process, known as 'steeping' was carried out in a large cast-iron cistern. Next, the grain would be spread out on the ground and first floors and left to germinate. Germination would be halted by placing the grain in a kiln, heated by a furnace. The malt was then cleaned and dressed, before being stored in large walk-in storage bins. A double-bucket elevator was used to move the grain between floors.

After lying empty for some time, the Maltings were used as a museum store, and later converted into apartments. Many of the historic features were preserved. Lying under the small car park is a possible Roman cemetery.

Opposite The Maltings is the Clementhorpe Community Centre. This is all that remains of the Cherry Hill School demolished in recent years to make way for the Clementhorpe Medical Centre.

Retrace your steps to Cherry Street and turn right. Pass the Medical Centre where the old school was, and turn right into Lower Darnborough Street. Here you can pause to read the information board, on the right-hand side, about The Maltings and the process that went on there, before crossing the road and going up Colenso Street.

Go to the end of Colenso Street and stop to listen to the commentary.

Stop 10 Colenso St

The name of Colenso Street derives from a battle in the Boer War. This took place on 15 December 1899, between the British and the Boer forces at Colenso, in Natal, South Africa.

From here we can see up and down Clementhorpe [the road]. Prior to 1851 there was very little development south of here, except the church and nunnery.

To the right and across the road there is The Slip public house, that we saw earlier, and beyond it the southern end of the Postern estate, standing on the site of the old boatyard – later the coal yard and bacon and pie factory. Where we are standing would have been occupied by two thread mills. To our immediate right would have been the Clementhorpe Glass Works, the site later occupied by the Co-op.

Between 1851 and 1910 this part of Clementhorpe became urbanised. In the early stages, between 1851 and 1864, speculative housing was developed by builders such as Richard Darnborough and William Coulson. This was concentrated in Clementhorpe [the road], Darnborough and Vine Streets. Many of the local streets are named after these builders or members of their families.

In the second, most prolific, stage of development, between 1865 and 1885, houses were built in the Ebor, Lower Ebor, Cherry, Charlton, Anne, Fenwick, Lower Darnborough and William Street area. These were houses for lower-paid, unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Many of the occupants worked on the River and the industries that had developed along the River frontage.

The third stage of housing development took place after 1885. Small areas were infilled, including Board, Teck, Carl and Lovell Streets and individual plots on Lower Ebor Street. From 1900, Colenso and River Streets were built on the disused St Clement's Glassworks site.

In the mid to late twentieth century there was extensive demolition of decaying industrial and residential properties. Many of these sites were infilled with social housing, for example, on Cherry Street.

Go left up Clementhorpe [road] and stop at the corner with Cherry Street. There is a bench. Stop and listen to the commentary.

Stop 11 The Nunnery

The northern part of Clementhorpe developed outside the City walls at a relatively early date. Some Roman objects have been unearthed. Clementhorpe is thought to have acquired its name around 1070-88, derived from a combination of the local Nunnery Church of St. Clement plus the Old Norse thorp for village.

Clementhorpe [the road] is a medieval street name. It appears in maps and documents of the early fourteenth century. A church dedicated to St. Clement stood here, before it was incorporated into a Benedictine nunnery. The nunnery, which was founded by Archbishop Thurstan, Archbishop of York, in 1130, was dissolved under Henry VIII purge of religious foundations and fell into ruins. The piece of wall behind the bench is the last remaining fragment of the nunnery and arguably, the first hint at 'industrial' activity in the area involving a number of agricultural products and trades.

A local family called Air had their coal yard here. They delivered coal by horse and cart all over the surrounding area. We have already mentioned coal a couple of times on our journey. It is worth remembering just how important it was to the development of local industry, as well as in heating domestic premises. Many of the factories relied on steam power, which was generated by burning coal. The coal, in the era before the development of the railway, came in by barge up the Humber and Ouse from the Yorkshire coalfield to the south. When the Air property at 2 Cherry Street was demolished, the remains of a lime kiln were found, together with a Roman mosaic.

If we had looked across the road here in the mid twentieth century, we would have seen a large modern 5-storey extension to the rear of the Terry's confectionery works.

Looking up Clementhorpe, we can just see The Swan – a historic public house, now painted white. Like many other pubs, The Swan also ran other money-making enterprises. In this case it was the manufacture of nails, which took place to the rear yard.

If we were to go up Clementhorpe, we would cross Bishopgate Street and continue up what is now Price's Lane and Nunnery Lane, running to Micklegate Bar. These roads follow an ancient trackway.

Cross Clementhorpe and proceed along the narrow Cherry Hill Lane. Emerge onto the elevated stretch of pavement, where you can stop and listen to the final bit of commentary.

Stop 12 Bishopgate St

The route that you have just taken is an historic route or 'snickleway'. This may have run between the Skeldergate Postern and the windmill at Southlands Road. This windmill was one of a pair owned by the Clementhorpe Nunnery. The area that we have just walked through once contained a number of substantial private houses. One of these apparently had an orchard – giving the names of Cherry Hill and, later, Cherry Street.

Bishopgate House, that we are standing next to, dates from around 1860. The Swan, public house, and numbers 1, 3 to 7 Bishopgate Street are all Listed Grade II. Number 7 was built around 1830; numbers 3-6 around 1830-35, and number 3

around 1860. With the exception of Bishopgate House (Number 1), which is now an office, they are all still in residential use.

From the elevated footpath we get a great view of part of the City Walls and Baile Hill. We can see how close the suburb of Clementhorpe was to the walled city.

Leaning over the railing, we can see a granite horse trough, now used as a floral display. This trough is dedicated to Henry Richardson – who we heard about earlier - and his fertiliser and tanning interests. Erected in 1905, the horse trough is inscribed “A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast”. It is a useful reminder of the huge importance of horses in the trade and industry of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. An amazing variety of jobs and trades were dependent on the use of horses.

Turn left to get refreshments on ‘Bishy’ Road, or right to return to the City Centre over Skeldergate Bridge.

If you want to know more about industry and employment in Clementhorpe you can go the Clements Hall Local History Group website at <http://www.clementshallhistorygroup.org.uk/> and look under ‘Projects’. If you want to know more about the development of the old shops on Bishopthorpe Road you should look at our book *Bishy Road: a York shopping street in time*, still on sale at local shops.