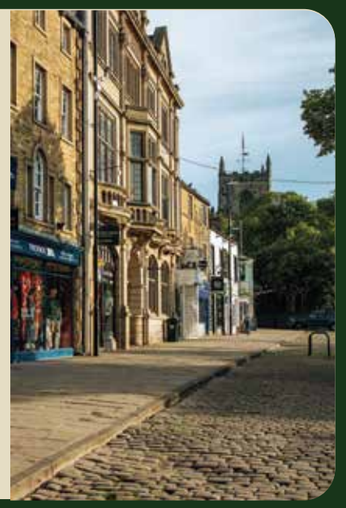
1 Skipton Town Hall



The Town Hall sits on the High Street at the heart of the market. Inside is the Craven Museum, which holds the archaeology and social history of the whole district, including material considerably older than the town itself.

Stand outside and look up and down the high street. What you are looking at is a medieval town plan that has barely changed in eight hundred years. The buildings have been replaced, rebuilt and refronted many times over. The shape of the place has not. Everything else on this walk is within ten minutes of here.

2 The High Street



Skipton received its market charter in the early Middle Ages. The market that fills this street four days a week today is the direct descendant of that grant; it has been running on this spot for over 800 years.

The width of the street is not decorative and it is not accidental. There is a specific reason for it, and once somebody explains it you will not be able to unsee it.

Then look at the shopfronts. The narrow ones, particularly on the older buildings, are the outline of something medieval that is still there underneath.

3 Skipton Castle

One of the most complete medieval castles in England, and the reason Skipton is here at all.

The first fortification went up in the aftermath of the Norman conquest of the north. By the 14th Century, it belonged to the Clifford family, who held it for over four hundred years and who are buried in the church next door.

During the Civil War it was the last Royalist stronghold in the north of England.

Look above the gatehouse and you will find a single word carved into the stone. It is the Clifford family motto. Given what this building survived, it reads as either a promise or a challenge.



4 Holy Trinity Church

The church stands directly beside the castle, which tells you something about how medieval England was governed.

It dates from the early fourteenth century and became the burial place of the Clifford family after Henry VIII dissolved Bolton Priory in 1539. Their tombs are inside, including one belonging to a man who was Elizabeth I's personal champion at the royal tournaments and who raided Spanish shipping in the Caribbean.

There is also a feature built into the fabric of this church relating to somebody who chose to be sealed inside it for life. Most visitors walk straight past it!



5 High Corn Mill



There has been a working water mill on this spot for hundreds of years, powered by Eller Beck running underneath it.

Before steam, water was the only source of power beyond muscle. Anything requiring real force depended on it, and a town with a fast beck had an industrial advantage over one without.

It has not stopped working. The beck still turns machinery on this site today, producing something rather more modern than flour.

6 The Springs Canal

Barely a third of a mile long and one of the shortest canals ever built in Britain.

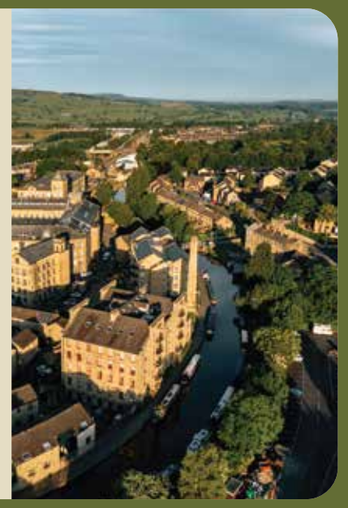
It was cut for the then owner of the castle, and it exists for one single purpose. There is a resource in the hills above Skipton that was extremely valuable in the eighteenth century, and this canal was the way to move it.

Follow it and it takes you along the back of the castle rock, through a wooded gorge most visitors never see, and out to the main canal.

John Buck's rope walk of the 1820s. Painter and plumber Robert Smith built three houses in the yard in the 1860s, demolished in 1976 to make way for Skipton Building Society offices, now flats.



7 The Leeds Liverpool Canal



At 127 miles, the longest single canal in Britain, crossing the Pennines through the same gap that brought the castle here.

In April 1773, two barges of coal arrived in Skipton from Bingley. They were the first goods ever carried on the canal, and the effect on the price of coal in this town was immediate and dramatic. Skipton invested heavily in the scheme.

The wharf you are standing on managed limestone, coal and wool. Today it handles narrowboats and ice cream.

8 Sheep St and Victoria St



Most visitors walk up and down the High Street. The older part of Skipton is the part they rarely see.

Sheep Street runs parallel with the high street. It is narrow with stone setts forming the roadway, and has changed remarkably little over the centuries.

Victoria Street and the ginnels behind it are where workshops and industry was based, out of sight of the market. Look up, and the place tells you a completely different story.

Scan the QR code for further information, when you can join us for a walking tour and to book your place.

Scan me

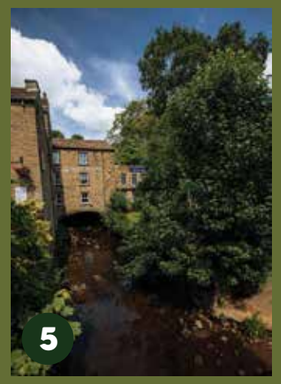
Brought to you by SkiptonBID Gateway to Business

Welcome

Skipton

Skipton Walking Tour











Hike Yorkshire

Meet the guide



Andy has a degree in archaeology from UCL, an MA in the historic built environment from the University of York, and he is a qualified teacher. Andy has worked on archaeological sites all over Britain, Spain and Romania. He has designed and run numerous archaeological digs for schools, and is an experienced walking tour guide in London and Yorkshire. When not engaged with history and archaeology in all its forms, Andy enjoys hill walking, and he owns a small holding in the Dales with horses, goats, sheep and poultry.

www.hikeyorkshire.com

The Key

1. Skipton Town Hall
2. The High Street
3. Skipton Castle
4. Holy Trinity Church
5. High Corn Mill
6. The Springs Canal
7. The Leeds Liverpool Canal
8. Sheep Street and Victoria Street

Hike Yorkshire

This map is not to scale but, as a guide, the distance from the Town Hall to the Canal Basin is about 400m