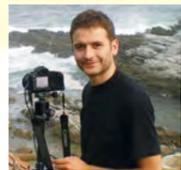


Only on foot

Dunstanburgh Castle, Northumberland



World-class photographer **James Osmond** talks us through one of his favourite landscapes - and the fantastic walk that brought him to it...



"Dunstanburgh is my favourite of the castles because it is the most ruined and so conveys a stronger sense of age and conflict."

THE LOCATION

You can't beat a proper medieval castle sitting right on the coast. It's a scene that evokes a strange mixture of concepts: nowadays we view the seaside as a place of relaxing retreat, but the presence of a castle is a reminder that our coast used to be a place of vulnerability and violence. Along the Northumberland coast between Berwick and Alnmouth you can find not one but *three* seaside castles. The most northern is Lindisfarne, with Bamburgh in the middle and Dunstanburgh to the south. They all dominate their surrounding landscapes of dunes, rocks and beaches, and each one is an irresistible subject to photograph in its own right. My personal favourite, however, is Dunstanburgh, because it is the most ruined of the three and so conveys a stronger sense of age and conflict.

THE WALK

The castle is built on an outcrop of dolerite protruding into the sea, so it looks good from both north and south, but the approach from the north offers a greater variety of views. Starting at The Ship Inn in Low Newton-by-the-Sea, you can either drop down to the sandy beach and follow it all the way to the south of Embleton Bay, or you can follow the footpath (which is part of the St Oswald's Way long-distance walk) through the dunes behind the beach. This latter route will take you past a series of delightful wooden summerhouses. Either way, when the sand stops at the southern end of the bay, you may want to scramble down onto the rocks and explore.

THE PHOTOGRAPH

There are countless places en route where you can take great photographs, but I think the section of rocky shoreline around Graymare Rock at the south of Embleton Bay is the most special. Here, the dolerite rocks have been eroded into almost perfect spheres, giving them the appearance of spent cannonballs. I timed this visit to coincide with high tide at dawn so that when I arrived at the boulders, the waves were lapping in amongst them. The light wasn't very bright, even as the sun rose, so the shutter speed was several seconds. This meant that the water moved around in the scene during the exposure creating an ethereal, misty effect. It is a great example of the creative options available to you when you use a tripod to take photos.

Factfile

Location: Embleton Bay, Northumberland

OS grid reference: NU255223

Equipment: Pentax 67, 55mm lens, 3-stop ND graduated filter, tripod, Fuji Velvia 50

WALK HERE!

The path continues south right past the castle walls to the coast on the other side. This is the angle from which J M W Turner painted the castle in 1798. It continues on to Craster from where you can make a circular route back to Low Newton, using inland paths and lanes, via Dunstan Steads and Embleton village.