

1 COOK'S COTTAGE

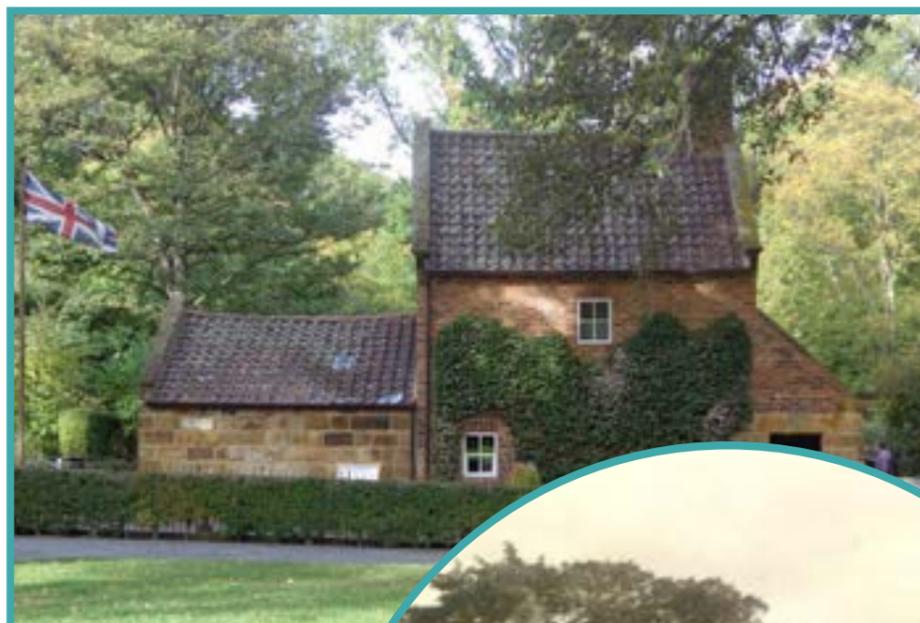
PART OF THE CAPTAIN COOK SERIES

Captain Cook's father retired from Aireyholme Farm in 1755 and bought this site for 'twenty-six lawfull shillings'. He built two cottages, living in one with his wife Grace while renting out the other. After Grace's death, James Cook senior left the village in 1772 to live closer to his daughter Margaret in Redcar. Changes were made over the years, including an extension to the western cottage. In 1907 the Dixon Brothers, who owned a grocery shop on Bridge Street, acquired the two properties, which they rented out. Virtually all of the western cottage was demolished in 1928 to widen Easby Lane.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Although the Dixons carried out various 'improvements', by the 1930s the remaining cottage was unoccupied and unwanted. It was put up for auction as 'the home of Captain Cook's early days' even though it was well-known locally that Captain Cook had never lived there. The only time that Cook entered the cottage was in December 1771, when he came to Ayton to visit his father but stayed with William Wilson at Ayton Hall.

The auction only produced one bid, of £300, from a Middlesbrough man. The condition of sale that the building should remain locally was withdrawn, and it was bought on behalf of the State of Victoria in Australia for £800. Detailed drawings were made by architects from York, who attempted to return the building to what they imagined would have been its original state. It was dismantled and transported to Australia where it was rebuilt in Fitzroy Gardens, Melbourne. Suitable furniture was bought from an antique shop in York.



The footprint of the cottage is marked out on the ground, and the outline of the end gable wall of its outhouse can be seen in the existing wall at the rear of the site. The iron railings around the garden were put up after the road widening in 1928.



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The interpretation Boards are located near the entrance to the memorial garden and next to the mill race in Easby Lane. The Garden has an obelisk dedicated to Captain James Cook and the garden marks the outline of the cottage built by James's father. The remains of the mill race serving the milling industry of the village can be seen from the garden.

CAPTAIN COOK'S PANEL LOCATIONS

