

VISIT Sedbergh Walks



Walk 3: A Circular Walk through Akay Wood and along the River Rawthey

Distance: 3.7 km (2.3 miles)

Time: 60 – 90 minutes.

A lovely walk at any time of year. Moderate walking, some uphill, good views if the weather is clear, good birdlife.

A good walk with children – unkempt woods and picnic spots by the river. Not suitable for prams, buggies or wheelchairs.

A popular dog walk but there may be sheep in the fields around the Peppercot, and cows or sheep on the riverbank.

May be muddy in places.

(1) Start at **Sedbergh Information Centre** at **72 Main Street**, turn right along **Main Street** and at the end turn left down **Finkle Street** past the church. Turn right just past the churchyard and follow the narrow lane along the back of the cricket pitch. You are now in the grounds of **Sedbergh School**. Turn left beside the sports pavilion, signposted to **Birks**. Follow this path straight on, across another wide path, through a gate and down the grassy hill to **Busk Lane** (as you start to go downhill, look back to your right and you will see the **Sedbergh School Cloisters**). Cross the road to the wide track opposite.

Variation due to covid restrictions. During the school term the path from the pavilion to Busk Lane is closed. Do not turn right off Finkle Street but instead continue straight on up Loftus Hill. Turn right into

Immediately on your left is a shingle beach, a popular area for picnics and for children to play beside the river. Further on you will come to the weir, another popular picnic spot. In late autumn you can sometimes see salmon leaping up the weir. The weir creates a large pool which used to feed the mill leat for **Millthrop Mill**. You can see the old sluice gate in the far bank, about 50m above the weir.

(7) When you come to **New Bridge** go through a metal gate, up the stone steps to the road and over the bridge back towards Sedbergh. After the bridge go through the gate on the left, at the back of the layby. This brings you to the picnic area where there are wooden tables and good access to the river. Now take the path on the right, which runs along the side of **Settlebeck School** sports field, to reach a car park. Walk left around the car park to the **Millennium Stone**, designed by the school students. Bear left here, walk along the narrow lane at the back of the school buildings, through two narrow gaps in old stone walls and past the **Old Vicarage**. Follow the wide track to the corner. Ahead you will see the **Sedbergh Community Orchard**.

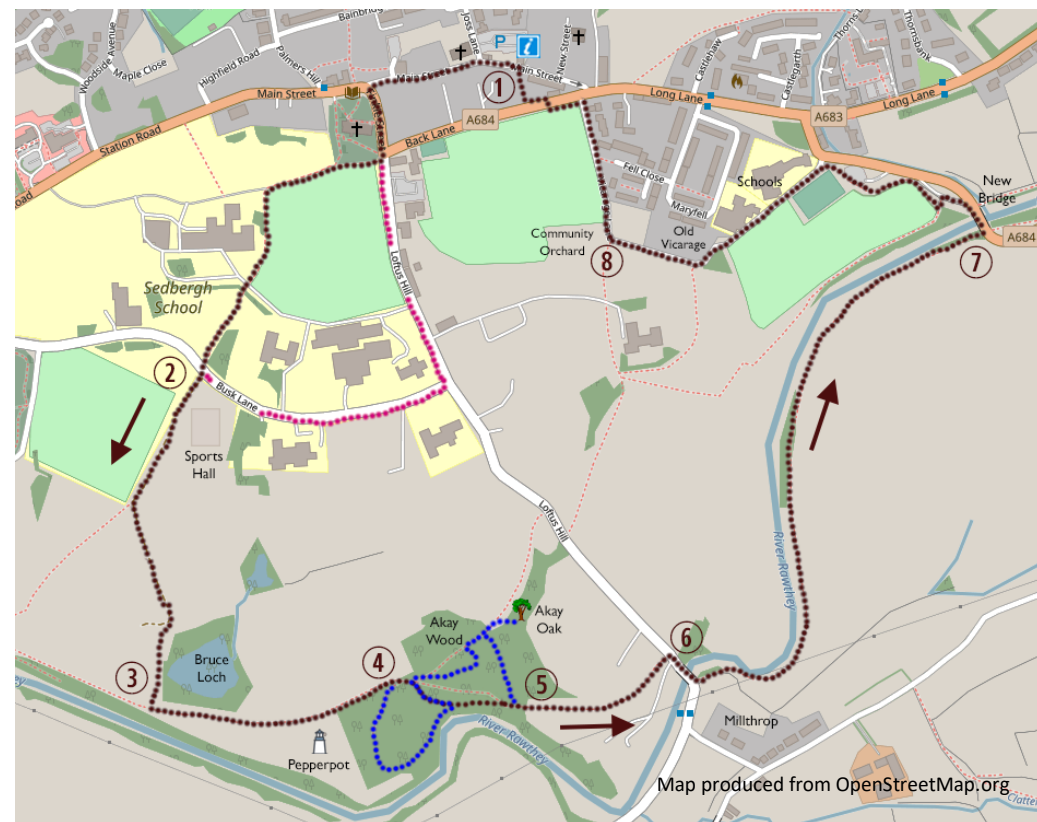
(8) Turn right and follow **Vicarage Lane** back into town. If you want to return to **Main Street** cross **Back Lane** at the zebra crossing, turn left and after a short distance turn right under an archway to walk through **The Folly**, one of Sedbergh's ancient yards. You will emerge on **Main Street** opposite **Sedbergh Information Centre**.

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Information in this leaflet is given as a guide and no responsibility will be taken for any inaccuracies.

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behind. Carry on with the **Millennium Wood** on your left to a kissing gate on your right.

(4) Go through the gate into **Akay Wood**. The direct path through follows the footpath signs. However it is worth spending some time exploring the woods, which at different times of year are full of snowdrops, bluebells and ransomes (wild garlic). Here is a suggested route (blue on the map):

- Go through the kissing gate into the wood then turn immediately right on a path which leads to the top of the steep river bank (take care with small children here). Swing left beside an old wall and follow the path high above the river until you come to a fence where the main path emerges from a “channel” between two walls. Carefully join the main path.
- Turn left along the “channel” then at its end turn right. Now see if you can find a piece of tiled floor, part of the house which was demolished in the 1930s. Then walk into the clearing in the centre of the wood where there is a tree stump cut to look like a chair.
- From here take a broad path which leads towards an old barn. When you reach the main driveway turn right to reach three large stone gateposts, the original entrance to the property.
- Go through the gateposts and after a short distance turn right towards a sports field. Just in front of you is the **Akay Oak**, surrounded by a wooden fence. This splendid tree is nearly 700 years old and, although it has lost many of its branches, is still very much alive.
- Retrace your steps into Akay Wood and then turn left towards some very prominent tall redwood trees. Walk between the redwoods to meet the main path through the wood and turn left.

(5) You will come to a small gate at the edge of the wood, after which the path continues across a field. The buildings on your right are renovated buildings that belonged to **Millthrop Mill**, once a woollen mill. At the end of the field you can glimpse the beautiful old **Millthrop Bridge** before going through a gate and down some steps onto the **Dent** road.

(6) Turn right over the bridge, pausing in the triangular alcove to look down at the water swirling below. At the far side of the bridge turn left through a small gate onto the riverside path (signpost to **New Bridge**).

*Busk Lane and continue to the bottom of the hill where there is a track on the left at the turf-roofed sports hall. **Pink route on map.***

(2) Follow the track which runs between playing fields and the **Sedbergh School Sports Centre**. Continue past a large barn. A short distance further on the track bends right, but you need to go through a small kissing gate a bit tucked away on the left. This section can be very muddy. Take a few minutes to observe the wildlife on the **Bruce Loch Nature Reserve**.

(3) Bear left around the south side of the reserve and uphill to a break in a stone wall. On top of the hill in front of you is a building known locally as the **Pepperpot**. This was originally a kind of stone gazebo belonging to **Akay House**, which once stood in the woods ahead of you. Some people say the Pepperpot was built for a daughter of the house who suffered from TB. There is an information board here.

Continue past the Pepperpot to a bench at the corner of the wood, a good place to rest while enjoying views of Sedbergh with Winder fell