

where plays, concerts, exams etc take place, and to the right in the more modern buildings are the science labs.

Go through the kissing gate and straight on with the **main cricket field**, cricket nets and pavilion to the right. The cricket pitch, which is of First Class standard, plays host to annual Lancashire County Cricket Club matches.

At the corner turn right towards the church\*. Behind the high wall on your left is a boys' House, **Evans House**, the last of the nine houses. This House again is one that has grown from a private house and is somewhat higgledy-piggledy inside. It faces immediately onto Main Street. Follow the path past the church to arrive once more at the mini roundabout and Library.

\*Extension loop (blue on map): at the corner of the cricket pitch turn left instead of right. Walk past the **Main Buildings** and down the drive to the **School gates**. Turn right along Station Road, passing the **Thornley Studio** and **Music School** on your left. Cross the road then go through a kissing gate to a path over a field (**March Hill**) to rejoin the drive. Turn left towards the church.



*Please note: The School Archivist has advised us that tours of Sedbergh School can be arranged.*

*Contact the School Secretary on (015396) 20535*

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# VISIT Sedbergh Walk 4



## Walk 4: A Walk Around Sedbergh School

**A walk exploring the main features of Sedbergh School. A mix of hard surfaces and grassy paths, which can be muddy after rainfall.**

**Please keep to the footpaths, and keep dogs off the rugby and cricket pitches. The walk takes approximately 45 minutes.**

### Introduction to Sedbergh School

Sedbergh School was originally founded as a chantry school for poor boys in 1525. It had a hiccup with the dissolution of the monasteries, but was refounded by Edward VI as a free grammar school. It went through various phases of success (with a high reputation for mathematics at one time) and collapse, falling to as few as 6 boys at one period. Much depended on the Headmaster of the time. However, it was completely rebuilt between 1880 and 1900 as a fully functioning fee paying public school – an expression which means open to the general public anywhere as opposed to schools which recruit from a particular area only. From then on the School has flourished and now has about 520 pupils, including girls who were first admitted in 2001. There are 6 boys' Houses and 3 girls' Houses.

Starting from **Sedbergh Information Centre** turn right along Main Street to its end then turn left down Finkle Street to the mini roundabout.



The Library

Continue in the same direction onto Loftus Hill. On your left is the **School Library**, the oldest building in the School, and you can see the date 1716 above the door. It was built as the only School building, probably on the site of an earlier School building, but has been used for many other purposes including a court. It now forms the School Library, having been remodelled by Brendon Bracken, Chairman of the School Governors, in 1958 in memory of Winston Churchill, to whom he was Private Secretary and friend. It is lined with light oak and a bust of Churchill frowns down on readers from above the main door.

Further down the hill, past the car park, are two buildings. These were for a few years the classrooms for the Prep School, which has since moved to Casterton. In earlier years the second building was the School tuckshop. The first building was converted into an isolation unit for covid-19 and renamed the **Nightingale Centre**.

On the opposite side of the road set in the wall is a plaque giving the times and names of the record holders of the **Wilson Run**, the School's famous ten mile race over the hills. This run finishes (but does not start) opposite the plaque. The race, which takes place on a Tuesday in March, runs along the face of the Howgills, across the shoulder of Baugh Fell and back along the road coming from Hawes. The runners have to be 16, qualify and pass a medical. Up to 180 complete the run.

Next on your right is one of the two entrances into the central school campus which is edged by Loftus Hill, Busk Lane and Main Street leading to Station Road. Just inside the gate is the **Bursary**. Slightly further in is the swimming pool, with the **Queen's Hall** behind which has been used mainly for entertaining and functions, and is now a sixth form centre. Beyond the swimming pool is **Powell House**, one of the nine boarding houses. It is less planned than some of the others, having been originally housing for bachelor masters, and has grown somewhat haphazardly.

The Chapel



The next set of gates on the right lead to the **Chapel**, which was built in 1897 to replace a timber building when the School numbers were far fewer than now. Despite a small extension the present numbers in the School make it difficult to welcome visitors to services without excluding some of the pupils.

Turn left into the lane opposite the chapel gates (Winder Drive). The large building on your right, slightly obscured by buildings in front including squash courts, used to be the sanatorium in the days when epidemics raged and a quarter or even a third of the school might be confined with measles or chickenpox or flu. It is now one of the girls' boarding Houses having been enlarged and modernised for that purpose and called **Robertson House**.

On your left are rather eccentric playing fields, sloping down from Back Lane. Across Back Lane is a large "stockbroker tudor" building, **Lupton House**, now a girls' boarding House. The Wilson Run starts in front of this building. Further to the right across Back Lane is a large modern building with Georgian buildings and a garden and drive to the right, which is the third girls' House, **Carus House**. Until recently the Georgian house was part of the prep school, but when this moved to Casterton the girls from Casterton School moved in and named it Carus after the founder of Casterton. At the end of the drive you are on is **Winder House**, the youngest of the four purpose built boys' Houses.



At the gates to Winder House turn right through the kissing gate and follow the path till it dips down to a stile on your right. Cross the stile then cross the field to a small gate onto the road. The big house above you to the right is the **Old Vicarage** (built in the days of vicars with 13 children and a small army of servants), now in private hands. Cross the road into another playing field. This used to be the prep school cricket ground. It is used for secondary games, and in the holidays by a club in the local League. Follow the line of trees to the corner where there is the **Akay Oak**, an

extremely old oak tree enclosed in fencing – thought to be one of the oldest in the country. Turn right past the oak and then left onto the track through old stone gateposts.

Follow the track uphill till you get to a flattish area. This is where **Akay House** stood. It was a large Edwardian house (with ballroom, music room, billiard room etc.) built in about 1907 but only lived in until 1927. It had three terraces in front leading down to the cricket field, with two follies on either side, which can still just be seen. To the left of the path, on the flat area, you can see traces of the floor tiling of the house. **Akay Wood** has grown up from the gardens, and contains some interesting trees, including redwoods. After 1927 unsuccessful attempts were made to sell the house, and it descended into decay so that when the School bought it in about 1937 they were forced to demolish it. There is an unusual double sided haha just beyond the old tiling.



From the haha bear slightly right and go through a kissing gate. On your right is **1525 Wood**, a plantation started in 2002 with plaques commemorating people who have given money to the School. These will be attached to trees when they grow big enough. Continue along the path. Across the plantation and about two fields distant is another boys' House, **School House**, where until the mid sixties the Headmaster was also Housemaster. To the left of that is a small house which used to be a farm until well after WWII. This was the original farm with which Roger Lupton endowed the School in 1525 – the land stretches from the parish church to the river Rawthey at the bottom of the hill behind you. Round the corner of the wood you will see the **Pepperpot**, a folly built by the owner of Akay House, which had fallen into a ruin following the rescue of a cow from its upper storey, forcing the School to remove the central circular staircase. It has now been restored with a Lottery grant.

Continue on the path downhill with the river Rawthey on your left and woodland on your right. At the end of the wood turn right and you will come to a small lake (**Bruce Loch**). This was constructed after WWII to provide skating – when winters were still winters! It is now a wildlife conservation area. Go through the kissing gate, turn right and follow the path uphill past a barn. On your left are the main rugby pitches and the rugby pavilion, while on your right are new all-weather pitches. Beyond them, in the trees, is another boys' House, **Sedgwick House**, which like School House is one of the original Houses purpose built at the end of the 19th century. The modern building, **The Hirst Centre**, is a very large sports hall which can accommodate 5 netball courts, including one of international standard, or alternatively two tennis courts, among other activities.

The Hirst Centre



Cross the road through the kissing gates and go up the hill. The fourth purpose built boys' boarding House, **Hart House**, is on your right. Up and to the left are the **Cloisters**. These were built to commemorate the 257 dead (from a school at that time having only about 300 boys) of WWI. The names of the dead of WWII were added to it. Above that is the hexagonal monument to the School's four VCs. And beyond that above the Cloisters is the **Main School Building** containing the class rooms. To the left of that is **Powell Hall**