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VISIT Sedbergh Walk 9



Walk 9: Cautley Spout Walks

Cautley Spout is a spectacular waterfall on the eastern side of the Howgill Fells. It is England's highest waterfall above ground, tumbling 200 metres (650 feet) in a series of cascades.

Two walks are described:

A short stroll from the Cross Keys Inn at Cautley

A longer walk from Sedbergh. Return the same way, catch a bus back, or return over the fells.

Cautley Spout from the Cross Keys Inn

4 km (2.5 miles) out and back with some steps and a little ascent over good paths

The Cross Keys is a 400 year old National Trust-owned temperance inn, serving excellent food including lunches, teas and dinners. No alcohol is served but you can take your own if dining. Telephone 015396 20284.

Coming from Sedbergh on the A683 (7km, 4.4 miles), park in the layby on the left just past the Cross Keys Inn (1). Parking is limited. Please do not obstruct the road if it is full.

Cross the footbridge over the River Rawthey then turn left on a clear level path. In about 1200 metres there is an information board describing the iron age settlement which once existed in the valley.

Cautley Spout can be seen ahead. The path undulates, with Cautley Crag looming above on the left. As you get nearer to the waterfall (2), the view

opens up nearly to the top.

There is a rough, steep path to the right of the waterfall which then leads across the fells above to the top of the Howgills. It is taxing and coming back down is even harder. If this is not to your taste, enjoy the view from below, and then retrace your steps to the start.

Cautley Spout from Sedbergh

8.3 km (5.1 miles) one way. 390 metres of ascent. 2 - 3 hours. Beware - there is one section that requires care where the path has crumbles.

A lovely walk along the valley of the river Rawthey.

From Sedbergh Information Centre (3) turn left along Main Street then turn left along Long Lane A684. Cross at the lights and continue to the junction. Turn right towards Hawes then after 100m turn down the lane on the right, behind Settlebeck School. After 10m turn left to the parking area where a path leads round the left edge of the playing field to arrive at the picnic area and river. Turn left and walk to the road at New Bridge (4).

Cross the road and take a path just before the bridge signposted "Straight Bridge". After a short section with slippery tree roots the path leads through open fields beside the river, with a variety of stiles, steps and footbridges, to eventually arrive at the A683 at Straight Bridge (5). **Awkward stone steps, dogs may need to be carried.**

Across the road, just before the bridge, is another footpath that continues along the riverbank before heading leftwards to Buckbank farm. Go through the farmyard, between the barns, then turn right onto the minor road.

At Thursgill the tarmac ends but the track continues as a bridleway, dropping down to cross the gorge of Hobdale Beck (possible flood risk here) before climbing steeply up to the last house, Fawcett Bank. Walk round the righthand side of the barn and go through a gate in the far left corner of the field.

Follow the path through trees along the left edge of the next two fields then go through a gate onto the open fell (6). The path then runs roughly horizontally, parallel to the fell wall for about 1km, crossing several streams en route.

Beware! There is a section of crumbled path which must be passed with caution. Eventually a gate leads off the fell into boggy pastureland with two more stream crossings.

The path then rises up through a gate onto the fell once more. Continue, again parallel to the fell wall, until a descent and a further gate brings you to river level. Follow the wet track round to the left on open ground to a bridge over Cautley Holme Beck and a junction with the path from the Cross Keys

Inn (7). Turn left to reach the base of Cautley Spout in 1.5km.

Options for return

- **Retrace your steps** along the valley to Sedbergh
- **Catch a bus.** Before setting out check the latest timetables for Western Dales Bus services S5 & S6 at dalesbus.org and Stagecoach service 563 at stagecoachbus.com
- **Return over the fells.** Described below.

Return from Cautley Spout over the fells

This is a remote strenuous mountain walk so do not attempt it if the weather is bad, or you are not fully equipped for a mountain day.

8 km (5 miles), 600 metres of ascent from the base of the falls to Sedbergh including visiting The Calf. 2.5 - 3.5 hours

Climb the very steep zigzag path to the right of the waterfall, pausing to catch your breath and admire the crashing water. Be very careful as a fall into the gill could be fatal.

At the top the path turns left and crosses the first stream, Swere Gill. Continue to the next stream, Red Gill Beck (8). Do not cross but turn right up the valley, keeping to the right of the stream.

After 500m you will see a large sheepfold to your left. Known as Red Gill Washfold this was rebuilt by artist Andy Goldsworthy in 2002 as part of his seven year Sheepfolds project for Cumbria County Council .

At the stream junction take the right fork and continue beside Force Gill Beck until you reach the ridge and a large track (9).

From here you can make a short out and back diversion by turning right to the white trig point cairn at The Calf, the highest point of the Howgill Fells (10).

To return to Sedbergh follow the large track south to the summit of Calders (11). Turn right and drop steeply down a stony track beside the fence to a flattish area called Rowantree Grains.

Continue along the track passing over the broad shoulder of Arant Haw until you reach the col between Arant Haw and Winder (12). Here a path turns left, heading down to the right of Settlebeck Gill to arrive at the fell gate (13).

Continue down through a wooded area then across a field to reach a gate at the top of Joss Lane, and down to Sedbergh.