

Levens and Sedgwick

We start just a short distance from the A590, the main route from the M6 into the Southern Lakes.

From the M6 take the A590 toward Kendal. Leave at the first exit (A590 to Levens) and take right at the roundabout – signposted Sedgwick. Ignore a small side road on the left and then park in a layby on the left before the road crosses the river Kent. If you are using Satnav then the name of this road is Nannypie Lane, Sedgwick, whilst the What-3-Words tag **inserting.unusable.taken** will pinpoint the layby, and the grid reference for the paper map is SD50698686.

From the parking spot, we head toward the road bridge over the river and cross, enjoying views up and down the Kent as we do. As we cross the bridge, we note that the road goes sharp left and tracks up the side of the Kent. We follow the road for a short while looking for a sharp right turn which see the main road head away from the river. At this point we see a small track carrying on along the river side – so our direction remains unchanged – we are heading upstream on the right hand bank of the river.

The track continues past a cottage on the left – with a weir just visible behind the cottage – and we continue until we meet a gate where a footpath and a bridleway continue.

We take the left hand option – the footpath, still following the riverbank – if the ground is boggy here, the bridleway is an option – it just takes slightly higher ground but both routes re-combine in a short while. We stay on the right bank heading upstream along paths that remain clear, soon reaching a wooden gate at the end of a drystone wall taking us into riverside woodland.

This is the point where the footpath and the Bridleway recombine, so the route ahead at the edge of the woodland is easy to navigate. Our next landmark is the point at which the footpath leaves the bridleway. Look for a marker post on the left hand side of the path, and at this point take the left branch – the bridleway goes right, and up to Larkrigg.

After a while, we arrive at a stile onto a minor road at a bridge over the Kent – this is Hawes Bridge, where we go right following the road uphill and away from the river. The road loops round to the right and continues uphill until we find a steel kissing gate on the left giving access to the towpath of the de-watered section of the Lancaster Canal, and we now follow the line of the canal south toward Sedgewick.

We follow the canal for a while now – entering a wooded area known as Larkrigg Spring, where we find that the growth of birch saplings may make the canal less apparent, until we emerge on the far side of the woodland onto open land where although the line of the canal is still apparent, the waterway has been backfilled to create more usable agricultural land.

We now have Sedgwick ahead of us, and we soon find the rather fine Sedgwick Aqueduct – the bridge that once carried the canal over the main road through Sedgwick.

We stay with the canal for a little longer – and soon see another isolated bridge (177) which once carried a road over the working canal. At this point we could choose to shorten the walk significantly by taking the clearly visible footpath back down to the bridge noted at the start.

If we are continuing, we cross the bridge and continue along a footpath uphill though farmland to find Well Heads Lane.

We turn right onto this minor road and walk along the road for a little while until we see a footpath signed on the right – this is just before the road passes under the railway.

From here the path heads uphill toward a stile and then stays close to the field boundary as we crest the hill with another stile ahead of us. After the second stile we turn left and stay close to the hedge tracking it down to a bridge over the A590.

We cross the bridge and then take a sharp right to find a stile into a further field – where we turn left and head uphill along the line of the hedge.

We are now walking over Tunnel Hill – the name indicating that a canal tunnel passed under here. The footpath passes over the top of the Western Portal, to arrive at the junction of a lane and a minor road - continue the walk on the lane opposite past a farmhouse with a monkey puzzle tree, and then on to Hincaster Hall – a very impressive 16th century farmhouse with significant 18th century extensions.

Beyond the Hall, the track veers right to arrive at a gate giving us access to a field where the track continues round and gently uphill. As we skirt the crest of the hill, we see a farm come into view – this is High Barns, and ahead of us we now have a good view over the Kent Estuary and Foulshaw Moss.

The path approaches the farm and then passes to the left of the barn to arrive at a stone stile onto a lane just by the farmhouse. We take the access lane to the farm downhill toward Levens Hall which is now clearly visible. We eventually arrive at a gate and cattle grid, before taking the last part of the track down to the A6.

It is to the deer park that we head next: We go right along the A6 for a few metres until we see a stile just before the road bridge over the Kent, where we take a path which follows the right bank of the Kent upstream through well managed and extremely well established trees.

We follow the path all the way through the woodland until we arrive at a stile onto a minor road at the north of the parkland. We turn left at the road and see a bridge over the busy A590 with a footpath going up onto the hills just after the bridge.

Once we have taken that footpath, the ground levels out and we again find ourselves on the old course of the canal – now just south of Bridge 177 where we headed over to Well Heads Lane a short while ago. From the bridge, we see a clear path on the left which heads downhill to a gate in the fence where we cross a minor road to continue onward down to the bridge where our walk started.

- Total distance 12.8 km (8.0 miles)
- Total ascent 322m
- Moderate walk