

Dent Foot

We had intended to start this walk at Middleton Bridge where the A683 from Kirkby Lonsdale to Sedbergh crosses the Rawthey – there is generally parking for three or so cars on the Kirkby side of the bridge, but that proved impossible on the day, so we carried on to a layby further along the main road at Beckside. Parking for 4 or 5 cars is available on the right, at the location shown on the OS map as a milestone. The Grid reference there is SD6299 9082. If you are using Satnav to get to this location, then the postcode LA10 5ES covers the area, and you can use what-3-words tag **racing.sunbeam.scare** to pinpoint the layby. If you prefer the Middleton Bridge starting point, then the same postcode applies, but the what-3-words tag is **snappy.engages.unsigned**, and the OS reference is SD6303 8973.

The walk starts by heading along the A683 in the direction of Sedbergh for a short while. This is a busy road, so take care here. Fortunately the distance on the road is short, and we soon see a waymarked path - (FP Birks Mill 1 ¼, Dales way) - on the right taking us down to the banks of the Rawthey.

We head up the Rawthey for a little while now. As we follow the river round to the left, a rather fine railway bridge comes into view. Our path crosses the railway track bed and then continues on the far side, still along the river.

The Rawthey now bends round to the left, passing a waste water treatment works, and ahead of we see a rough road and then a footbridge over the river. On the far side of the footbridge the path goes right and approaches a gate where the path splits in two. We take a sharp left and head East toward Millthrop. We are walking along flat meadows here and to the far side of the river (our left) we can see Birks House, a whitewashed country house.

Our walk continues round to the right and after taking a wide track between drystone wall, we come to a minor road where we turn left and walk down into Millthrop. As we approach the hamlet, we see a fork in the road, and we take the smaller road on the right. We now need to look for a well signed track on the right (BW Frostraw Fell)– just before the older part of the hamlet. This takes us steeply uphill along a rough track.

The track continues, and not far beyond here splits into two. We need to take the left hand fork heading uphill. The track on the right goes down to the minor road at the base of Dentdale.

The path becomes a green lane between drystone walls after a while and skirts the edge of Gap Wood – care is needed here as there are fallen trees. After the woodland we enter a more open landscape and see an attractive whitewashed farmhouse ahead of us. Beyond the farm the track continues down to the minor road at the bottom of the valley, as it does so, but hidden from view, we are passing Gate Manor on the right. The only real signs we get of this large house are a pair of curious oak doors set in the perimeter wall.

As we arrive at the road, we take a very slight left-then-right dog leg to continue the Dales way as it heads down to a ford / footbridge combination in the base of the valley. We cross the footbridge and continue up to meet a road on the South side of the Dee – where we turn right. We stay on the minor road for a while now – heading down the Dee Valley with views of all the locations we passed a short while ago from the opposite side of the valley – including Gate Manor.

Eventually we arrive at Rash Bridge – on our right, and somewhat hidden by trees - and just beyond this is the Methodist Chapel at Dent Foot.

Just before the chapel it is worth noting that there is a weir in the river – weirs are often built to manage a head of water to drive a water wheel, and sure enough, we see a mill race running behind the chapel to an old mill building – this is Rash Mill – a grade II listed building.

We continue along the road - expect little traffic – we are initially following the Dee, but the road soon heads left and we leave the river following the contours around the base of Holme Fell. From here the views over the Dee and Rawthey Valleys to Sedbergh and The Howgills are wonderful, and lunch at a convenient memorial bench at the roadside gives an opportunity to enjoy them.

Our next destination is Jordan Lane – part of the Roman Road from what is now Kirby Lonsdale to Sedbergh. In a short while we see a sign for a **footpath** to Jordan Lane. This is a viable route, but involves some climbing up boggy terrain, so we prefer to press on along the road until we see a way marker for the **bridleway** to Jordan Lane. In practice, it does not really matter which route you take – they come together before we reach Jordan Lane. However, the ancient green lane that the Bridleway takes is so attractive that it must be our recommendation.

The bridleway and the footpath merge, and head down hill toward the route of the railway that we saw at the start of the walk, and we see a bridge where the railway passed over Jordan Lane.

From here we follow Jordan Lane Southwest (i.e. not under the railway bridge). The lane is perfectly straight here in that Roman Road kind of way, and we need to look for a path on the right taking us down, over another railway bridge through woodland to the Middleton Bridge we had intended to use as the start of the walk.

We cross the road bridge with care and take a footpath on the right immediately after the bridge. This takes us over fields and back toward the A683 and our starting point. On the way we cross a footbridge over a small back and note the memorial to plaque to a countryside ranger.

We arrive back at the A road at a gate and turn right to walk down the road for a short distance back to the cars.

- **Total distance 13.0 km (8.1 miles)**
- **Total ascent 234 m**
- **Moderate walk**