

Littledale and Caton

We start at a free car park at Little Cragg. The simplest way to find Little Cragg is to take the Brookhouse Road from Caton at the A683. At the Black Bull pub in Brookhouse take the Littledale Road uphill out of the village. Stay on this road until you arrive at a crossroads at New House Farm. We go right there, and downhill to cross the Udale Bridge – following signs for the Scout Camp. After the bridge, stay on the same road – the car park is at the top. If you are using satnav to get there then be prepared for Littledale Road to be problematic – there are just too many of them, so perhaps try LA2 9ET as a postcode (the one listed for Potts Yeats farm), then use the What-3-Words tag **quote.besotted.pointed** to pinpoint the car park. The corresponding OS grid reference is SD54576179.

From the car park, we initially head back the way we came to find a cattle grid where we turn back sharply to the left so that we are walking diagonally across the field opposite where we parked. The route through the field is not particularly clear, and the land can be boggy when wet so you may have to improvise a little to find the best way across, but in general, head for the left hand edge of the stand of trees in the distance.

We continue in this direction – taking the stiles to cross the drystone walls - until we arrive at a farm track at the far left end of the field - our path turns back and takes the farm track east to the farmyard at Pott Yeats. The path continues through the farmyard and then downhill back to the road, where we turn left and follow for a while.

The road drops downhill and takes a sharp right turn to enter woodland before arriving at the Udale Bridge. The road now continues and crosses a second bridge – with the entrance to the Scout Camp on our left. We continue uphill, staying on the road until we arrive at a crossroads, where we head right toward Crossgill. We pass a number of attractive farmhouses along this road, before we arrive at the entrance to Littledale Hall. Ignore this, the road public - and our route - continues just to the left until the road takes a sharp right turn with our path continuing straight ahead. We are on a broad track at this point and continue through the woodland until we see the curious abandoned church – Littledale Chapel.

The track continues past the chapel, and soon we see Littledale Hall on the right in the bottom of the valley, with a track down to a bridge over the river. Our path continues along the valley side at a high level for a while. We now head uphill slightly toward a small plantation of trees, where the path crosses a stile and continues through the woodland. The sides are quite steep, so take care in wet weather. We follow the high level path until it starts to descent to the bottom of the valley and the river – Closegill Beck.

Ahead of us at this point is a wooden footbridge and then a ladder stile. These are **NOT** our route today - we turn round and walk back along the river (downstream) on a flat path keeping the beck on our left.

As we approach Littledale Hall, we meet the bridge that we saw from higher up the valley side earlier and we cross it to follow the track round past the buildings and then back round to the left. As we do so we get good views of the hall.

The path curves back on itself at the edge of the Hall grounds and takes a sharp right at the edge of a barn to enter an area of woodland that appears to have been ornamental gardens for the hall when it was in its heyday. We stay with the path until we arrive at a footbridge over a beck. This is a lovely spot, so a pause for lunch is warranted.

We continue with the path. Take care not to follow the unofficial path up the beck side, the right of way goes up the side of the hill, almost reversing the direction we came to the bridge on.

We rise steeply for a short while, and then arrive at a stile into open fields with a farm ahead of us. We cross the field diagonally and head for the buildings, to find a stile in the drystone wall ahead. After the stile we walk to the right of the farm and pick up a track along fairly flat ground with beech woodland ahead and to the right. We continue on the track until we arrive at the Hamlet of Littledale. Here we take a sharp left and pass the house to go through a gate before following the rough track down to a beck, which we cross at a wooden footbridge.

The track continues uphill beyond the beck, and we see the track extending into the far distance. We need to take care here not to go too far though, because we leave the track and take a path off on the right at a metal gate. The path now runs behind a drystone wall, and heads uphill, we cross Sweet Beck and continue until we get a view of a rather fine, and unusually large barn ahead. We walk to the right of the barn and then follow the path round to another metal gate (with stile to the right).

From here we stick with the track as it passes Calf Hill Wood (on our left) before passing to the left of a cluster of farm buildings.

From here we follow the track up to the road and then left to the car park where the walk ends.

- **Total distance 9.9 km (6.1 miles)**
- **Total ascent 313 m**
- **Easy walk**