

Sedbergh and Winder

We start in the centre of Sedbergh. There are a number of places for parking, including the well signed posted (and chargeable) car park on Main Street, but we opted for on-road parking in front of the school playing fields on the A684. If you are using Satnav to get to this location, try Back Lane, Sedbergh, LA10 5BX as an address, or if your device accepts what-3-words tags use **unity.carriage.icon**, which corresponds to the OS grid reference SD65869207.

We walk first to Howgill Lane – which does exactly as it says on the tin – takes us to the Howgills, passing a row of charming three storey villas with something of a seaside feel to them, curving left along the side of the People’s Hall and a playground before rising behind the housing to the west of the town – we are starting to climb now, and have a good view of Winder over to our right. As we walk further up Howgill Lane, we see a track on the right heading up to Lockbank Farm. Also worth noting here is the sign for Howgill Fellside Ice-cream – well worth a visit.

We follow the track up to the farm, and then follow the signage through the gates onto the fell, turning sharp left to head along the drystone wall for about 200m at which point the track forks. One route goes straight on heading up to Nursery Wood – close to where we will descend from Winder later in the day - so if you wanted a gentler and shorter version of today’s walks, that’s an option. However, we take the fork to the right which doubles back and then starts the relentless climb up Winder. The route is clear, but almost all the climbing in today’s walk is in the next 2km so use the excuse of stopping to admire the excellent views over the valley to Holme Fell and Frostrow Fells as often as is needed.

The path starts to bend round to the left as we head up the side of the valley carved by Settlebeck Gill – and no more than 600m after starting the section up the Settlebeck Gill, and just as we have the 605m peak of Arant Haw in view, with the Calf at 676m just beyond, we look for a clear path on the left heading up to the Trig point at Winder. From the trig point, we take a moment to check the views indicated on the toposcope and then continue west heading along a well-trodden path which eventually comes back down to the drystone wall we started to follow at Lockbank Farm – you will notice from the trace on the website that we took the direct route using a marked track rather than the oddly kinked footpath marked on the OS map – we are now just 100m northwest of Nursery wood, for those contemplating the shortcut.

We look for the gate in the wall which leads us onto a track down to Howgill Lane – we are now just 1 km up the lane from Lockbank Farm. We turn left on Howgill Lane and head back toward Sedbergh, walking on the road for the next 400m until having passed Nursery Wood (on our left) we see a sign for a path on the right which takes us through fields to Underwinder where we stay left and take the lane down to an old bridge over the disused railway. Beyond the bridge we continue on the road for 120m until we arrive at a small junction. We go left, and then almost immediately arrive at the A684, where we again go left to walk at the roadside for about 300m. The road is busy, so care is needed here.

Our next landmark is Ingmire Hall where on the right, we see a sign for a bridle path to the A683. We follow this down the side of Ingmire Hall and then on to an ancient green lane lined with impressive beech trees. Once we arrive at the A683, we again need to walk on the side of the main road for a short while. This time we head right and walk carefully for 50m until we see a footpath opposite taking us across fields to the banks of the river Rawthey at Brigflatts. We follow the riverside path

back toward Sedbergh, and soon see one of the fabulous viaducts that the Ingleton Branch line is famous for – this one is the Rawthey bridge.

Our path climbs the embankment up to the railbed and then back down again on the far side to continue along the riverbank. 300m later we see the confluence of the river Dee with the Rawthey, and soon after the path curves left to arrive at an old mill now used as a food distribution business. The minor road that serves this business hub now becomes our route, and we follow it up to the lovely hamlet of Birks just 100m further on. We need to look for the fine gates to Birks house, and then take the rather more modest pedestrian gate to the right to find the footpath round the boundary wall of the house which soon becomes the riverside path again.

Slightly further round is a small building named, because of its appearance, as the pepper pot. This a well known landmark in the area, and like most such landmarks is surrounded by stories which may or may not be true. It is said that the function of the pepper pot was as a sanatorium, for Anne, the daughter of Charles Edward Taylor, the owner of Akay Hall (more on this in a moment). She suffered from TB, and rather than send her to an isolation hospital, the suggestion is that she was housed in this purpose-built structure with ample light and fresh air to aid recovery. Anne died of TB three years after diagnosis, and there is no clear evidence that this was indeed the function of the building, or that she was housed there. An alternate explanation notes that it is very similar in style and positioning to other early 20th century buildings used as occasional dining rooms with furniture and food brought down from the grand house by servants – in much the same style as most of us played at taking picnics in the garden when we were kids.

Pressing on for another 60m we come to a track with relatively young woodland to one side, and Akay Woods through a kissing gate on the right. Within these woods was Akay House, also known as Akay Hall, or Akay Lodge, or often just Akay. It was built in the 1820s by a local mill owner and greatly expanded in the 1890s by Taylor only to be demolished and sold, stone by stone, in 1939. The only visible remains are fragments of the tiled floors that emerge from the leaf litter.

Our path continues through the woodland then crosses a large field before arriving at a road, just to one side of a bridge over the Rawthey. We go left here and follow the road for 500m up to the town centre, passing the rather impressive Sedbergh School Chapel on the left.

- **Total distance 12.4 km (7.7 miles)**
- **Total ascent 438 m**
- **Moderate walk**