

Sedbergh, Brigflatts and Millthrop

We start in Sedbergh town centre, where there are a number of options for parking – there are free on-road spaces on Long Lane (the A684), or paid parking at the car park on Main Street. The OS map on our web page for this walk shows us starting at the paid car park and ending at Long Lane – so take your pick. The OS grid reference for the paid parking is SD65919215, which corresponds to What-3-Words tag **pavilions.alley.bells**.

We start by walking out through the town centre along Main Street, heading west as if toward the M6 and soon arrive at the junction of Main Street and Loftus Hill, where we notice the Red Lion pub and opposite that, the church of St Andrew – our route takes us around the side of the tower of the church and down to a footpath behind the school playing fields.

We walk around the right hand side of the tower and then take the exit gate onto the path at the side of the church where we go left – this brings us almost immediately to a path along the side of the school playing fields – where we go right. We see a pavilion to our left and take the path behind it which brings us down to a minor road. We cross this and then take the driveway almost opposite which passes the new sports facilities, and then just 100m later we arrive at signposted footpath which takes us out across fields to Birks.

As we approach Birks, we walk below Birks House to arrive at a small road where we go left to walk through the hamlet looking for a footpath signed for Toll Bar leaving the road on the right about 60m later. We are now heading across fields toward Brigflatts and have the embankment of what was once the Ingleton Branch Line ahead of us.

We aim for a small tunnel under the railway and then continue on a clear path over to the buildings at Brigflatts – about 300m beyond the railway. Parts of this interesting line appear in a number of Bentham Footpath Group walks – search for Ingleton Branch line on our website to see them.

We arrive at a minor road which runs down from the busy A683 into Brigflatts and take a left turn to walk down to the Friends Meeting House, belonging to the Religious Society of Friends also known as Quakers.

To complete the walk, we initially set off back the way we came until we get back to the railway embankment, but instead of aiming for the tunnel under the line, we climb up the embankment and head right – toward the river. We follow this elevated route for 300m until we get to the riverside, where we exit the embankment on the left to walk upstream for a while. Ahead of us at this point, but barely visible, is one of the remaining bridges on the Ingleton Branch line – if you want to get a good view, the best way is to go right onto the riverside path first before returning upstream. You can also find more detail in our Sedbergh and Winder walk.

We now stick with the riverside path, and our next landmark after about 400m is the confluence of the Rawthey and the Dee – we see more of the latter further on in the walk. After a while the path veers left, and we find ourselves walking next to a wastewater treatment works on our left and a spillway on the right. The spillway is (thankfully) not related to the water treatment works – instead it is an interesting relic of a mill that soon comes into view ahead: Birks Mill.

Adjacent to the mill is a footbridge. We cross this and head right, back along the other side of the Rawthey. We soon arrive at a gate where we have a choice of routes. Ignore the path to the left and continue along the riverside via a pedestrian gate.

From here the path rises through woodland and then enters an open area at the top of a golf course. There is a public right of way over the golf course – signposted for Abbot Holme – and this soon arrives at a minor road.

We go right here and just ahead we see Abbot Holme Bridge, also known locally as Catholes Bridge. This rather attractive stone arched bridge is Grade II* listed and dates back to the 17th century. Just over the bridge is a sign for a public footpath to Rash Bridge: We take this and follow the river Dee upstream for the next 600m or so. The route along here is not as clear as it might be, but in essence we follow the river without necessarily being right next to its banks until we arrive at a minor road.

Once at the road we head left and walk along the road for the next 600m until we arrive at another old water mill, and just beyond that Dent Foot Methodist Chapel. This is currently disused. Behind the chapel, there is a weir. 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 the mill building – Rash Mill is a 16th Century water-powered Manorial Corn Mill, a corn mill associated with a manor house and supplying flour to the manor and surrounding villages. It was rebuilt in the early 18th century as a cotton carding and spinning mill and later reverted back to corn milling. It is now used as a joinery works. Neither the chapel nor the mill are open to the public, but there are a number of places to sit and enjoy a break before pressing on.

We continue along the road for another 80m until we see Rash Bridge – 18th century and Grade II listed. We cross this and when we arrive at the main road, go right. Just 100m later we arrive at Rash, and opposite a barn with an unusual, rounded roof, look left to find a footpath signed as Millthrop. We take this and climb steeply for a while – the first hard work we have done so far today.

The climb continues for about 400m, crossing a couple of stiles to bring us to a green lane that forms part of the Dales Way. We keep left here and enjoy a flatter section before Sedbergh comes back into view ahead of us – to get there we need to go via Millthrop.

We continue along the Dales way, until we arrive at Millthrop, turning right onto the minor road through the centre of this lovely village. The residents here clearly invest a lot of time and effort into keeping their gardens and properties in an attractive condition.

After just 100m, we see a road on the left and follow this down to the larger road which crosses the Rawthey at Millthrop Bridge. Like Rash Bridge, this is Grade II listed and dates to the 17th century.

We cross here and are now on Loftus Hill – we could follow this road back into Sedbergh, and indeed we do road walk for a short while, but after just 150 we see a path on the right heading across fields to one of the buildings belonging to Sedbergh School. We take this and aim for the large stone building to pick up a path which runs to its left. We follow this, and after crossing an access lane, soon arrive back at Sedbergh on Long Lane.

- **Total distance 10.2 km (6.3 miles)**
- **Total ascent 217 m**
- **Easy walk**