

Cauldron Snout and Cronkley Scar

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Free car park at Cow Green Reservoir (NY 811308)
Ordnance Survey map	OL31 – North Pennines, Teesdale and Weardale
Date of Walk	28 September 2014
Distance	7.2 miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: Cauldron Snout, set at the heart of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), is a “must do” Teesdale walk. It is an impressive waterfall or probably more correctly a cascade, which tumbles down a gorge beneath Cow Green Reservoir. Personally, I think Cauldron Snout is more impressive than High Force, which is better known.

The two mile long Cow Green Reservoir was built in the face of much opposition between 1967 and 1971. Unfortunately, its dam is an incredibly ugly glowering grey mass which overlooks Cauldron Snout. The reservoir is reputedly one of the best places to fish for native brown trout.

The walk also follows an interesting section of the River Tees passing the dramatic cliffs of Cronkley Scar, formed from the igneous Whin Sill rock, prevalent in these parts and which also provides the ledge over which Cauldron Snout tumbles.

The downside of this walk is that to make it circular, there is a two and a quarter mile stretch of road walking. However, the roads are very quiet with lovely views of Teesdale. Also, if you walk the route clockwise as I describe, the road section is slightly downhill and so less of a chore.

Overall, the walk is straightforward with easy to follow paths/tracks. There are two boulder fields you have to cross which are just a little awkward more than anything else. The rocky scramble up the side of Cauldron Snout may deter some but this can be avoided via the heather covered bank alongside, if you prefer.

The walk starts from the free car park at Cow Green Reservoir. To get there, turn south west off the B 6277 at Langdon Beck, which is between Alston and Middleton-in-Teesdale. On a clear day (which unfortunately I did not get) are good views of Cross Fell and nearby hills. Opposite the car park across the reservoir is Meldon Hill 767 metres.

There are no refreshment opportunities en route but plenty of rocks on which to sit, for a picnic.

Start: From the reservoir car park (NY 811308), walk back down the road for one and a half miles to the road junction then turn right. Continue on the road for just short of a mile and just after passing a white painted barn, go over the cattle grid and turn right, following the broad track in the direction of the public footpath fingerpost (not the bridleway) (NY847310). A sign advises that you are entering Moor House - Upper Teesdale Nature Reserve.

Follow the track for a mile to Widdy Bank Farm (NY 838298). Go straight through the farmyard and go left through the second set of gates.

At the next gate, you join the Pennine Way (NY 837297). Turn right to follow the right hand bank of the river. There are some useful rocks by the river for a picnic stop along here.

There is an awkward hundred yard or so boulder field to be crossed at NY 831285 and another at NY 825281, with a large cairn at NY 824231. Across the river, you can see the boards which mark the army firing range area.

Continue to follow the riverbank as it curves right, passing the junction of the River Tees and Maize Beck and under the cliffs of Falcon Clints. You catch sight of Cauldron Snout quite suddenly and may hear it before you see it.

The route continues from the right hand side of the dam. How you get there depends on what route you prefer. There is a scramble up the rocks at the side of the waterfall, or, if you are feeling more risk averse, you can climb up the heather covered bank – you will discern some faint tracks this way, where others have been.

From the right hand side of the dam, go right to follow the service road for a mile to a gate (NY 815307). The main gate is likely to be locked but go through the walkers' gate alongside then turn left on the stony track. After a couple of hundred yards, fork off to the right on a more minor but obvious track.

At the road, turn left for the car park.

