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Cautley Spout

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Roadside parking on Howgill Lane, Sedberg (SD 653923)
Ordnance Survey map	OL19 Howgill Fells & Upper Eden Valley
Distance	10.8 Miles
Date of Walk	9 September 2015
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This walk from Sedbergh is not for the faint hearted as it is quite a demanding excursion, because of the steep climb up the side of the Cautley Spout waterfall. It is not a rock climb however, just a very steep ascent up a series of rocks which have been implanted to reduce erosion. It may not be advisable for anyone who suffers from vertigo. Apart from this climb, the walk is straightforward with very little other steep gradients.

Immediately above the falls, the walk is not on a path marked on the OS map but this is Access Land and the route is clear on the ground.

The walk passes some interesting old properties, the remains of a Norman motte and bailey castle and an Andy Goldsworthy artwork.

Cautley Spout is reputedly the highest cascade type waterfall above ground in England, falling some 650ft in a dramatic plunge.

The walk takes you over The Calf which at 2218ft (676 metres) is the highest point of the Howgill Fells, from where there is an extensive panorama of the Lake District on a clear day and views of the Three Peaks of the Yorkshire Dales. Unfortunately, I was not blessed with the clearest of days so I have included a couple of photos taken on a walk up the nearby hill of Winder to give an idea of the view you could expect. It is worth taking binoculars!

The walk starts from the town of Sedbergh. There are pay and display car parks but also free street parking on Howgill Lane, more convenient for the end of the walk, at the junction with a cul-de-sac called Hevera, by a telephone box, where there is also a handy bench for boot changing.

To get there, turn north off Sedbergh's Main Street on to Howgill Lane (next to the Dalesman pub) and follow the road past the Peoples Hall and children's playing field until you get to the phone box.

Start: Walk back along Howgill Lane and follow it down to Main Street and turn left. This is one way for traffic. Immediately the one way system ends, turn left on a rough track to follow a public footpath fingerpost for "Castlehaw ¼ Mile" (SD 660921).

After the track goes round a left hand bend, look out for a kissing gate on the right accompanied by a sign for "Permissive Path to Castlehaw" (SD 662924). This takes you slightly uphill to view Castlehaw, the remains of a Norman motte and bailey

castle. It is about 30 ft high and it had commanding views across Sedbergh and around. An information board tells you about it.

Return to the main track and turn right to continue your original direction.

Stay on the track as it passes through the buildings at Howgills Bunk Barn, ignoring a footpath off to the left.

Go through a gate into a field and follow its right hand boundary and cross a stile.

At an old barn, there is a two way fingerpost. Follow the direction for "Ghyll Farm $\frac{3}{4}$ " mile. Follow the right hand boundary of the field and cross two ladder stiles. Then follow the left hand boundary.

At Ghyll Farm (SD 670930), go through the gate and turn right, then left through the farmyard. A yellow arrow directs you. Turn right to follow the drive from the farm.

The drive becomes tarmac. Follow it down to a junction and turn left. The track passes the grand old building of Stone Hall, with its tall chimneys. Go anti-clockwise round the barn and follow the left hand boundary of the field.

Cross a footbridge (SD 674928) and pass to the right of Hollin Hill farmhouse ahead of you and in the field beyond, head for the far right hand corner.

Cross two ladder stiles and keep straight ahead.

Drop down to the right of a white house (Ellerthwaite) (SD 679931) and on joining a broad track, turn left, which leads to Thursgill Farm. The track splits, keep right.

The track crosses an old bridge where there is a public bridleway fingerpost for "Cautley".

Stay on the track, passing Fawcett House.

The route is now clearly marked by yellow arrows or is obvious on the ground. It follows the contours for almost 2 miles from Fawcett House, until you reach the footbridge bridge over Cautley Holme Beck, which flows down from Cautley Spout. There are lovely views along here of the River Rawthey valley.

Cross the bridge and turn left, to follow the beck (SD 693968).

You see the falls from some distance away. As you get closer to them, you will see a sign on the left which asks you to vary your route and zig-zag to reduce erosion.

The route of the path may not now be obvious at first glance but it closely follows the line of the falls. Above the grassy section where you are asked to zig-zag, the path has been reinforced with stones, again to reduce erosion. Take care on the climb as there are some steep drops.

From the top of Cautley Spout, continue to follow the right hand side of Red Gill Beck. At SD 677971 you come to a sheepfold with an unusual conical corner. This is Corner Cairn Fold, created by the artist Andy Goldsworthy and commissioned by Cumbria County Council as one of a series.

Shortly after the sheepfold, the beck divides. Follow the right hand beck (Force Gill Beck). When you reach the end of the beck, continue to follow its valley to the ridge (SD 669968) and turn right along a broad path to the trig point on The Calf (SD 668971), a gentle climb of under a quarter of a mile.

After surveying the view, retrace your steps (compass direction 151° magnetic) but continue past the top of the valley up which you came from Force Gill Beck. The path is very clear and crosses over Bram Rigg Top (SD 670965) and on to Calders. Theoretically and according to the OS map, there is a right turn here but in practice, the main path is so clear to follow, inclusion of this might mislead. From Calders (SD 671960) the compass direction is 217° magnetic, before the path dinks round in a 'V' shape.

Continue on the clear path, passing a stone cairn at SD 671960.

From the cairn the clear path continues for 1¼ miles where it forks. Take the left hand fork. The outskirts of Sedbergh are visible. There are one or two paths here, some of which go down the valley but stick to the higher level path which curves round the left hand side of the hill (Winder). There are good views of Sedbergh along here.

At SD 653927 the path splits again. Once more, go left descending steeply to a private gate to a farm. Turn left here, following the yellow footpath arrow.

Turn right through a gate down a walled lane (SD 652925). There was a Howgill Fell Ice Cream sign on the gate when I passed. Go through the farmyard and follow the access drive down to the road. This is Howgill Lane. Turn left back to the car.

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