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| <p>Distance: Approx. 7 miles</p> <p>Time Taken: Approx. 3hrs</p> <p>Terrain: Clear footpaths, some ascent and descent. Old railway paths.</p> <p>Total ascent / descent: 680ft</p> <p>Dog Friendliness: Dog friendly for most of the walk. Some sheep around in the farmland so keep dogs on leads on these sections</p> <p>Toilets / Refreshments: Choice of pubs in Ravenstonedale.</p> <p>Parking: In front of Ravenstonedale school</p> <p>OS Maps: OL19</p> | <p>022 – Ravenstonedale To Smardale</p> <p>Background: Ravenstonedale was historically known as a sock producing area and would have been the place to come in the 1700's for a nice pair of woolly foot warmers. The history of Ravenstonedale itself is a long one, stretching all the way back to the Romans.</p> <p>Behind the church is another clue to the history of Ravenstonedale's ancient past. There lies a quite fantastic ruin of a Gilbertite monastery with several rooms still clear to the eye and stairs leading down if you would like to explore.</p> <p>Smardale Gill Viaduct is enjoyed on this walk and was built by Cumbrian Engineer Sir Thomas Bouch as part of the South Durham and Lancashire Union Railway which crossed the Pennines to carry coke to the iron and steel furnaces in the Barrow and West Cumberland area.</p> <p>The viaduct has been restored by the Northern Viaduct Trust into its present excellent condition. Smardale Gill itself is a nature reserve under the care of Cumbria Wildlife Trust.</p> <p>Route Description: From Ravenstonedale school, walk up the lane past the church keeping it on your left. Turn right at the junction and crossed the waymarked stone stile on the left. Cross the field and over a steep stile in the far left corner of the field down to the A685. Cross the A685 into more pasture fields. Follow the path through the field, passing a small barn on the right and up to a small plantation. Bear left at the plantation keeping it on your right and through a gate at the end.</p> <p>Follow the path through more pasture across a stile in the wall and up to Smardale bridge. At the Bridge turn right and follow the track along the edge of a wall on your left. On the other side of the wall is Smardale Gill nature reserve. Follow this track until you reach another stile / gate on your left and cross into the nature reserve. The path now winds through the nature reserve up to Smardale Gill viaduct. The view of the viaduct from here is fabulous.</p> <p>Once you reach the viaduct continue on the railway path until you reach Smardale. Loop around the village and rejoin the railway path and route back to Smardale bridge.</p> <p>When you reach the bridge cross over and follow the beck a few meters to a stile on the left. Cross this stile into more pasture. Follow the path through the field keeping Scandal beck on your left. Drop down to the beck and cross through a gate and follow the track toward a farm. Before reach the farm cross a stile to follow the path along the beck and back out under the A685 to Ravenstonedale. Follow the road behind the Kings Head and back to the school where you started.</p> <p>Points of Interest: Smardale Gill Nature reserve is home to all kinds of flora and fauna and is one of the only two sites in England that's home to the Scotch argus butterfly. https://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/smardale</p> <p>Smardale Gill Viaduct with spectacular views across the Howgill Fells.</p> |
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