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Littondale to Langstrothdale

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Halton Gill in Littondale – car park (voluntary contribution) (SD 881765)
Ordnance Survey map	OL 30 Yorkshire dales – Northern and Central
Distance	8.2 miles
Date of Walk	24 September 2014
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This walk from Littondale to Langstrothdale gives you a chance to see the picturesque Halton Gill, Yockenthwaite and the very pretty river walk along Langstrothdale, following the Dalesway. You climb Horse Head at 1985 ft (605 metres). Although you start from almost 1000 ft, in effect, by the time you have finished, you will have ascended and descended around 2000 ft of steep slopes, which makes this quite a hard walk. To add to the torture, there are one or two false summit situations! Having said that, the climb is worthwhile, because from the top, there is a stupendous view which takes in all the Three Peaks (Pen-y-ghent, Ingleborough and Whernside) and in the other direction, Buckden Pike.

Halton Gill is a remote, very attractive hamlet, with some lovely old buildings. If it has any claim to fame, it is that it was used for filming *The Woman in Black*, a horror film starring Daniel Radcliffe.

Yockenthwaite is a small hamlet with a pretty stone bridge. The walk along the river here is lovely and there are some useful rocks here and there for a sandwich break.

You are almost at the tiny hamlet of Beckermonds, when you start the return ascent. This is where the River Wharfe starts, where Oughtershaw Beck and Green Field Beck come together.

It is worth pointing out that on the return journey, there is quite a difference, in some places, between where the path seems to be on the ground and where it is shown on my OS map. If you are using GPS, my route is based on the GPS recorded track of my actual route. Given that the path I followed passes marker cairns and later crosses ladder stiles, I feel I got it right. In any case, this is Access Land so you can pretty much go where you like.

The journey to Halton Gill is almost worth it on its own. Take the B6160 from Threshfield (near Grassington) north west towards Kettlewell. Half a mile after passing the unmistakable overhang of Kilnsey Crag, take the left turn signposted for Arncliffe and Litton. Stay on this road through Arncliffe, with a right/left dogleg and keep going to Halton Gill which has a large nameplate. The car park (voluntary contribution) is on the left as you enter the village. Please give something – you have had a lovely ride after all!

Start: With your back to the car park (SD 881765), turn left and walk along the road. Just after leaving the houses round a left hand bend, leave the road by the footpath on the right to follow the fingerpost for “Beckermonds 2½ miles” and “Yockenthwaite 3 miles”.

Follow the path as it climbs the hill, ignoring a gate on the left which is your return route. This is a bit of a hard slog for 1¼ miles and at the top of the hill, you reach a wall, which runs along the ridge, with a gate. To visit the trig point (SD 887780), do not go through the gate but turn left to follow the wall, on a faint path. After “bagging” the trig point, return to this gate and go through it.

Follow the obvious path as it descends into Langstrothdale, meeting the road at Yockenthwaite (SD 905789). Turn left, then right over the bridge.

According to the map, the Right of Way curves round to the farm then back but in practice, once over the bridge, you might just as well follow the wall on the left briefly (no more than 30/40 yards), then turn left on the track.

Follow the track (part of the Dalesway) as it runs parallel with the river. You soon pass an old lime kiln and at SD 900794, you pass to the left of an ancient stone circle or base of an old cairn, no-one seems quite sure but it is believed to be Bronze Age.

After following the river for about three quarters of a mile, and after passing through a walkers' gate, on to a broad stony track, turn left to follow the fingerpost for Beckermonds.

The track leads down to the road. Cross the bridge (SD 893797) and turn right to follow the fingerpost for Dalesway and Beckermonds.

You pass New House Cottage.

Follow the track/path by the river, until you get almost opposite Beckermonds, a white painted farmhouse. Here, climb up a short banking and through a gate. Not far ahead is a three way fingerpost (SD 874802). Turn left to follow the fingerpost for “Halton Gill”.

The path climbing the hill is faint but you can trace it with care. Unfortunately, there are no obvious landmarks I can give at this stage, other than the top! It is something of a lung bursting climb. There is a clear course of a stream (which was dry when I did the walk) and you need to keep to the right of this depression.

From here on, the path on the ground bears little relation to its position on the OS map, as mentioned in the introduction.

At SD 874789, there is a small stone cairn, which will confirm you are on the right route. A little further on, at SD 873787, is a larger rather strange shaped cairn, looking almost like a short stretch of wall as you approach, indicated as “Pile of

Stones” on the OS map. By this point, you can see the gate on the horizon which is your aiming point (SD 873786).

From the gate, the path goes straight ahead at first, then curves to the left. You cross a collapsed stone wall.

The path is marked with intermittent posts. It leads to a ladder stile (SD 875779). Cross this and keep straight ahead on the obvious path. Not far after the ladder stile you meet a crossing path but keep straight on.

Cross a second ladder stile.

The path drops down to a five bar gate. Go through this and turn right here. At the next gate you should recognise this as your outward route. Retrace your steps to the parking.

