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Stainforth to Langcliffe via Catrigg Force and Stainforth Force

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Pay and display car park at Stainforth (SD 820673)
Ordnance Survey map	OL2 – Yorkshire Dales – Southern and Western
Distance	5.9 miles
Date of Walk	11 January 2019
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This short walk from Stainforth takes you in a circular route through the village to Catrigg Force and provides a shorter option to visit this, than my Settle to Catrigg Force walk. You also get Stainforth Force thrown in for good measure.

Catrigg Force was a favourite of composer Sir Edward Elgar, where the waters of Stainforth Beck fall dramatically for about forty feet over the North Craven Fault, en route to feed into the River Ribble. The Force is situated at the end of a secluded gorge, in a very atmospheric setting.

Our route then continues via some limestone pavement at Winskill Stones. These were badly devastated by extraction to provide rockery stone for gardens but eventually the wildlife conservation charity Plantlife stepped in to save what was left and this is now a nature reserve.

On then to the village of Lancliffe. If you have only ever driven past it on the main road, you could be forgiven for thinking there is little to it but in fact it is much larger than it appears and is extremely picturesque with a large village green where there are some benches should you want a lunch stop

From there, the walk returns to Stainforth via the banks of the River Ribble, passing Stainforth Force, a dramatic cascade.

During the walk, you get good views of the Yorkshire Three Peaks Ingleborough, Pen y ghent and Wharfedale.

The walk starts from the pay and display car park at Stainforth where there are public toilets. To get there, take the B6479 north from Settle. The car park is unmistakable next to the road after a fraction over two miles.

Start: Exit the car park and turn right. Follow the road as it bends right through the village and turn left opposite the Craven Heifer pub, following a Pennine Bridleway fingerpost, then left again.

Follow the road round to a little green and turn right at its end, following a Pennine Bridleway fingerpost (SD 823675).

You now begin a steady climb up a broad stony track, soon passing a fingerpost for “Catrigg Force ¾ mile”. The track is not so steep but it is remorseless.

You arrive at a five bar gate, to the left of which is a walkers' gate to the path which leads down to Catrigg Force, a spectacular fall after rain.

Return to the five bar gate and once through it, follow the obvious track as it bends right.

Go through a gate at the top of the hill and stay on the broad track, ignoring a fingerpost.

At SD 833668, ignore a track to the right, unless you want to shorten the walk. Continue on the main track for just over a quarter of a mile. Look out for a fainter but broad track through the grass on the right (SD 834666). This leads to the corner of a wall, which you follow, to its left. If you miss this track, continue to the road and turn right along it.

Whether you use the track or the road, you will come to a point where you meet the Winskill Stones limestone pavement, close to a lay-by on the road where there is an information board about the stones.

Turn right down the road opposite the lay-by, following another Pennine Bridleway sign.

Follow the road down, noting the large boulder (glacial erratic) on the right, known as Samson's Toe (SD 832662).

Just before Winskill Farm, reach a four way fingerpost. Turn left down a broad track following the fingerpost for "Langcliffe" and "Stainforth" (SD 830665).

Before getting to the white painted farmhouse, turn left over a gated stone step stile on the left, following the fingerpost for "Lancliffe 1 mile" (SD 828665).

Go to the opposite corner of the field, go over the stile and bear right to follow the obvious footpath. After passing a bench, the path changes into a broad, walled track which you follow all the way to Langcliffe.

At a crossroads, go straight across.

At Lancliffe, keep straight ahead to the village green where there are benches should you want to stop for a picnic. Otherwise turn right at the War Memorial, along Main Street.

At the B6479, turn right for a few yards then cross the road to go through a stile and follow a public footpath fingerpost down a walled track to and over the railway line.

The track ends at the entrance to a factory. Go straight ahead into the factory yard, keeping to the footpath on the right hand side of a fence. The fencing guides you to turn right at the factory buildings.

Follow the path around the edge of the mill dam to follow the left hand bank. At a gate, the path turns 90° left then soon right to pass between Locks Cottages. At the

end of the row of cottages, turn immediately left and cross the River Ribble via the footbridge in front of the weir with its salmon ladder.

Turn right to follow the left hand bank of the river.

Follow the river for almost one and a half miles, going through a gate at the side of the entrance to a caravan site, to arrive at Stainforth Force.

Continue to the packhorse bridge ahead. Cross this and follow the lane to the main road. Turn right here to return to the parking area.

