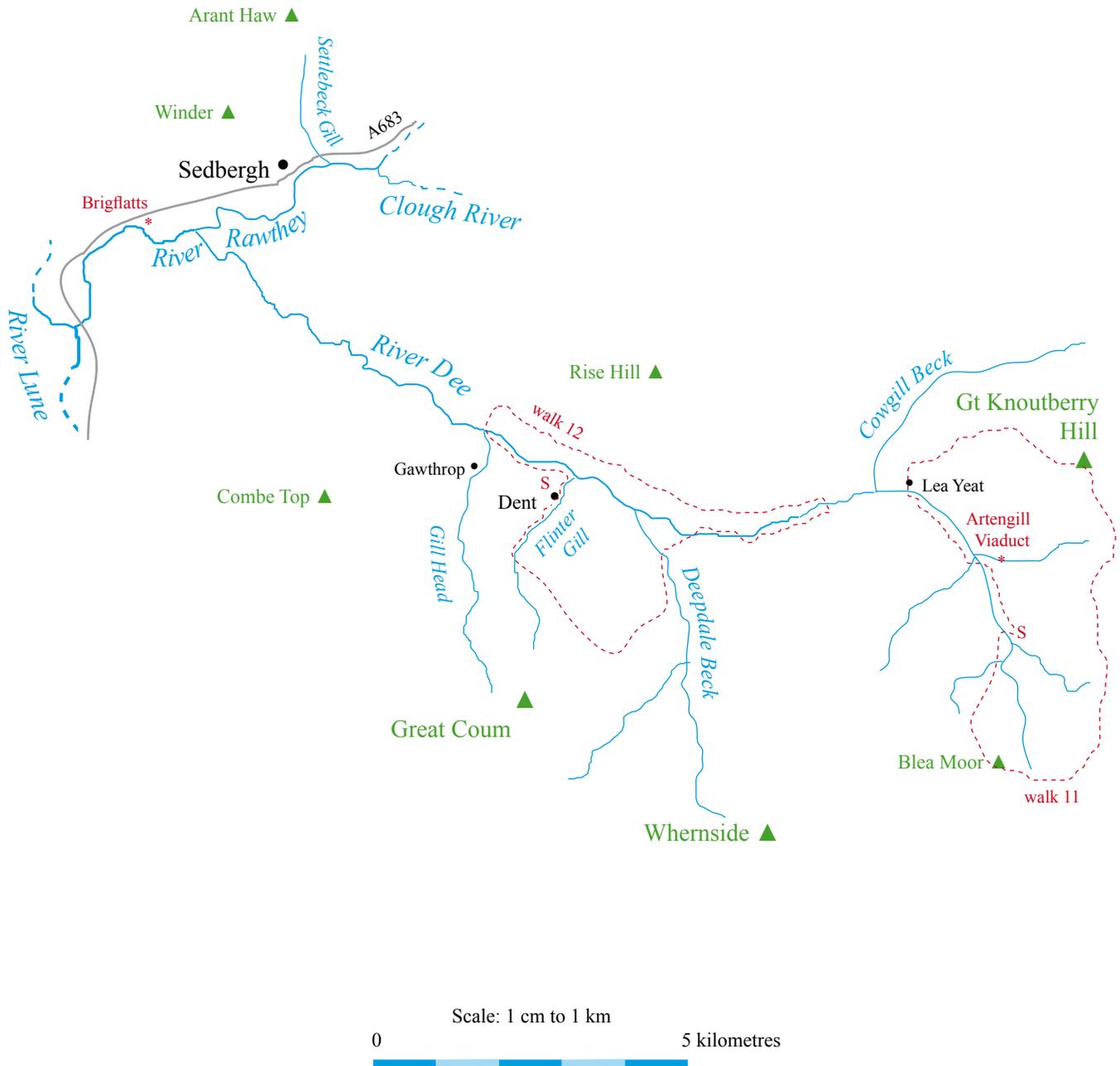


**CHAPTER 5:
Lower Rawtheydale
and Dentdale**



The Rawthey from the Clough ...

The Clough, having travelled much the same distance as the Rawthey up to this point, almost doubles the size of the Rawthey, which now changes character and relaxes into a double bed, as it were, some 50m wide. Opposite the junction is the old Stone Hall, with a three-storeyed porch and large round chimneys, the latter also to be seen at nearby Hollin Hill. I have not seen such chimneys elsewhere in Loyne and, being an inquisitive soul, I have tried to find an explanation. I understand that they are 'Flemish chimneys' and that there is a preponderance of similar chimneys in Pembrokeshire, for some reason, and presumably also in Flanders. Why they are here I have been unable to discover.

On the outskirts of Sedbergh the Rawthey is joined by Settlebeck Gill, which runs past the earthwork remains of the Castlehaw motte and bailey. The motte, at 9m high, must have been a good observation post. The remains are on private land but seem in good shape, as can be best seen from the slopes of Winder.

Sedbergh oozes contentment, and why not? Basking below Winder, it gains strength from its one thousand years of history, serenity from the playing fields of the five-hundred-year-old school, and self-confidence from its newfound status as a 'book town'.

Sedbergh was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 and Castlehaw confirms its strategic importance, lying near the meeting of four rivers, the Lune, Rawthey, Clough and Dee. A market charter was granted in 1251. St Andrews Church has a Norman doorway and lists vicars back to 1350 but was largely rebuilt in 1886 (although the clock has a date of 1866, for some reason). Within the church are several plaques to local notables, including John Dawson, an eminent mathematician, born in Garsdale and "beloved for his amiable simplicity of character." My favourite is that of the Rev. Posthumus Wharton, who was headmaster of Sedbergh School from 1674 to 1706.

Sedbergh School was established as a chantry school in 1525 by Roger Lupton, provost of Eton and born in the parish of Sedbergh. After the Dissolution of the

Monasteries (1539), it was re-established as a grammar school in 1551. The school has not always flourished: in 1865, when it had only ten pupils, an inspection considered that "it simply cumbers the ground". Amongst recent alumni are the rugby stars, Will Carling and Will Greenwood. Although Sedbergh School is not in the top division of independent schools, it is central to Sedbergh's image.

This image perhaps helped Sedbergh to persuade itself to become England's first book town in 2005 (the pioneering book town, Hay-on-Wye, being just in Wales). Book town status is not formally defined: what makes a place a book town is simply a decision to proclaim itself one. By convention, a book town is a small town in which little else happens apart from the selling of old books. This description may deter non-bibliophiles but presumably Sedbergh hopes that overall a boost will be given to the local economy and culture. The obligatory Book Festival takes place in the autumn and a more innovative Festival of Ideas in the summer, although the latter lapsed in 2009, which is a shame as we are all in need of good ideas.

*Two pages before: Deepdale and Dentdale.
Below: Stone Hall, near Sedbergh.*





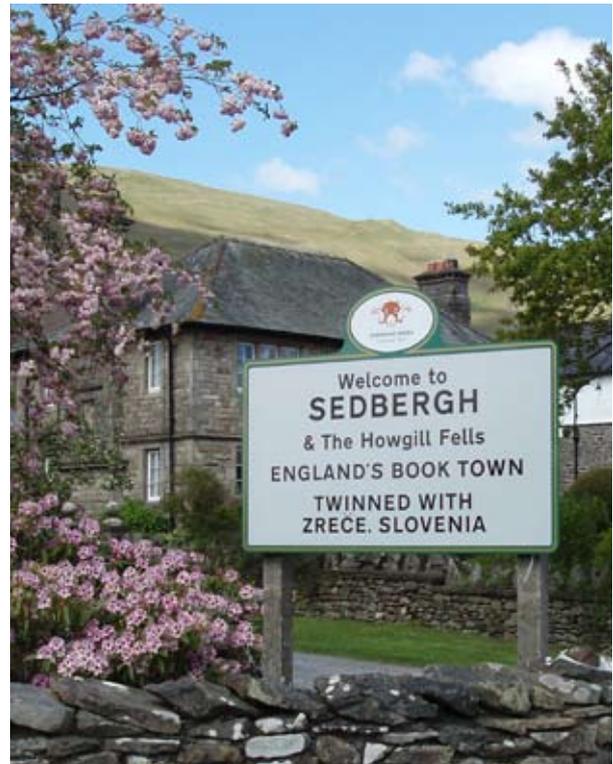
Sedbergh's self-image is also reflected in its participation in 2004 in the BBC TV programme *The Town that Wants a Twin* in which, over twelve long episodes, Sedbergh auditioned four towns for the honour of becoming Sedbergh's twin. The citizens of Sedbergh duly voted for Zreče of Slovenia. This one-way process does not seem to reflect the spirit of twinning as an equal partnership.

There are pleasant, well-used paths on both banks of the Rawthey. At Millthrop Bridge we rejoin the Dales Way, which follows the Rawthey for 4km before veering north to join the Lune. As you might expect of a village whose sign proudly calls it a "hamlet", Millthrop itself is a set of cottages too pretty for words – at least, any words of mine.

After a further kilometre, the Rawthey goes over a weir that was used to power Birks Mill for cotton spinning and then, after a bend, is joined by the River Dee from the south.

Above: Sedbergh, with Winder, Arant Haw and Crook behind.

Right: Welcome to Sedbergh.



The River Dee

The River Dee rises on Blea Moor and runs 20km through Dentdale, many people's favourite of the Yorkshire Dales, even though it is now in Cumbria. Only the very highest of the headwaters of the Dee on Blea Moor are in North Yorkshire.

There is only one feature of note on Blea Moor and that we cannot see: the tunnel that runs for 2.5km under it. This is for the Settle-Carlisle line, which continues on the flanks of Wold Fell and Great Knoutberry Hill over the impressive viaducts at Dent Head and Arten Gill, built from 1870 to 1875. They have ten and eleven arches, respectively, and are both over 30m high. Their construction, in this high and remote terrain, was difficult and hazardous. On one occasion, a flood caused by 6cm of rain in 45 minutes drowned two people, buried a horse and wagon in debris, and washed away several bridges. Earlier, according to David Boulton's booklet

Discovering Upper Dentdale, in 1752 an avalanche killed seven people, which, I believe, makes that the second worst avalanche in the United Kingdom. So, although it is likely to be pastoral tranquillity when we visit, the weather can be wild here.

The two viaducts are built of 'Dent marble', which is actually a dark limestone. The marble was mined locally until the 1920s and prepared at Stone House, near Arten Gill. It was valued for ornamental masonry, such as luxury fireplaces – indeed, being so valued, it seems strange that such huge volumes were used in the viaducts. No doubt, the convenience of being to hand was the main factor. The previously rough track by Arten Gill has recently been renovated to form part of the 350-mile Pennine Bridleway National Trail.

Dent Station is 2km north of Artengill Viaduct and is a tribute to the engineer's faith in the energy of the residents in Dentdale. It is 7km from Dent itself and the final kilometre up from Lea Yeat is very steep. The



Artengill Viaduct

station platform has a notice saying that, at 350m, it is “the highest mainline station in England”. It is pleasing that someone at least regards the Settle-Carlisle line as a main line. The station is surprisingly neat, considering the weather conditions, painted dark red, and gives fine views into Dentdale. The old station building can be rented for holiday accommodation, so you could enjoy the view through its windows, obscured a little by “eciffotekcit” and “moor gnitiaw seidal”. The converted station is now the proud recipient of a North West Tourism and Leisure Award.

The road passing Dent Station is called the Coal Road and the stretch on Galloway Gate is pockmarked with disused coal pits. Coal mining stopped as soon as the railway existed to deliver coal more cheaply. The name of Galloway Gate tells us that it used to be a drove road. It is hard today to imagine this clamour of activities high up, at over 500m, on the now lonely and quiet moor.

Cowgill Beck runs from the area of the coal pits, through Dodderham Moss, one of the conifer plantations that disfigure Dentdale, past the entrance to Risehill Tunnel on the Settle-Carlisle line, to join the Dee at



Ibbeth Peril

Cowgill. The foundation stone of Cowgill Chapel was laid in 1837 by Dentdale’s most famous son, **Adam Sedgwick**, who, although living in Cambridge, continued to keep a fatherly eye on his chapel. Thirty years later, Sedgwick led a campaign to parliament to have the name of Cowgill Chapel restored when the curate changed it to Kirkthwaite Chapel. He preferred the unpretentious ‘Cowgill’ and was angry at the misspelling of Kirkthwaite, the old name for the region. The curate, however, was not to blame: the 1852 OS map has “Kirkthwaite”.

In the valley the River Dee gathers the waters than run steeply off the fells through deep gorges and cascades, and proceeds serenely down its upper reaches from Dent Head to Cowgill. The riverbed is mostly flat rock, which the river seems to shimmer over, with occasional ledges

Adam Sedgwick (1785-1873) was born in Dent and spent much of his youth scrambling over the fells collecting rocks and fossils. From Sedbergh School he went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he became a fellow. He was ordained in 1817, thus following the family tradition, as evidenced by the many memorials in the Dent church. In 1818, despite having no recognised experience of fieldwork, he became Professor of Geology.

He duly set out to become a proper geologist. His studies of the complex geology of the Lake District led to a pioneering publication in 1835. He discovered the Dent Fault, and the Sedgwick Trail in Garsdale is named after him. He became president of the Geological Society of London and organised many scientific activities.

Inevitably, he became embroiled in scientific debates of the time, such as the Great Devonian Controversy, concerning the mapping and interpretation of various geological strata. Of more resonance today is his disagreement with his ex-student Darwin over his theory of evolution. To the author of *Origin of Species*, Sedgwick wrote “I have read your book with more pain than pleasure. Parts of it I admired greatly; parts I laughed at until my sides were sore; other parts I read with absolute sorrow; because I think them utterly false and grievously mischievous”. What grieved him was the removal of the guiding hand of God from the process of natural selection, which he could not accept. This view endears him today to creationists, although unlike many of them he did, as a geologist, accept that the Earth was extremely old.

Sedgwick retained the warm-spirited generosity attributable to his Dentdale upbringing. Although he lived in Cambridge all his working life, he maintained his links to Dent and in 1868 wrote *A Memorial by the Trustees of Cowgill Chapel* that gives one of the best pictures of Dentdale life at the time.

producing little waterfalls and, at Scow, a reasonably large one.

As the Dee turns west, it enters a more turbulent phase. If you investigate the river closely – for example, around the Ibbeth Peril waterfall and along the stretch between Lenny’s Leap, where the river narrows to run in a gully 50cm wide, and Tommy Bridge – you may notice that the volume of water does not always increase as it flows west. Some of the clefts and holes that can be seen in the limestone walls and bed of the gorge are large enough to form caves, through which the river tends to disappear. As you walk on the north bank towards Tommy Bridge, water can be seen entering the Dee from below the south bank, with no beck apparent in the fields above.

The area forms the Upper Dentdale Cave System, a Site of Special Scientific Interest. It is one of the best examples of a cave system that had developed beneath the valley floor and that has been broken into by the modern river eroding its bed. The system extends for 1.7km in a narrow band under the present river and includes a 30m by 60m chamber. Under normal conditions, most of the

The Top 10 people of Loyne

Before you complain, yes, they are all men. Nominations of women are very welcome.

1. Adam Sedgwick (1785-1873), Dent, geologist.
2. John Fleming (1849-1945), Lancaster, electrical engineer.
3. Richard Owen (1804-1892), Lancaster, palaeontologist.
4. John L. Austin (1911-1960), Lancaster, philosopher.
5. William Whewell (1794-1866), Lancaster, philosopher and scientist. (Whewell is said to have invented the word ‘scientist’.)
6. Reginald Farrer (1880-1920), Clapham, botanist.
7. James Williamson (1842-1930), the son, Lancaster, businessman and politician.
8. John Lingard (1771-1851), Hornby, Catholic historian.
9. William Sturgeon (1783-1850), Whittington, physicist.
10. Laurence Binyon (1869-1943), Burton-in-Lonsdale, poet.

Walk 11: Upper Dentdale and Great Knoutberry Hill

Map: OL2 (please read the general note about the walks in the Introduction).

Starting point: By Dent Head Viaduct (777845).

Some of this walk is on roads, but they are quiet ones and the easy walking there compensates for the difficult going elsewhere. From Dent Head Viaduct walk on the road 200m northwest to Bridge End Cottage and then take the footpath opposite that leads back to Dent Head Farm and past the entrance to Bleamoor Tunnel. Once out of the plantation and past the air shaft cut across to the trig point on Blea Moor (535m) for a good view of Whernside and of the Settle-Carlisle railway line far below behind you.

Make your way east as best you can (there is no path) to join the Dales Way at Blake Rake Road. Follow the way north by Stoops Moss to reach the road. Turn right and take the path north that continues past Wold Fell (resist the temptation to conquer Wold Fell: there is no identifiable top and walking is unpleasantly uneven, being on grassed-over limestone clints) to reach the bridleway at the top of Arten Gill at the point opposite the track that leads to the Galloway Gate.

Turn right for 200m to take the waymarked path that follows the wall to the top of Great Knoutberry Hill (672m), from where the peaks of Pen-y-Ghent, Ingleborough and Whernside are wonderfully arrayed and the outline of Wild Boar Fell is impressive. Widdale Tarns can be seen to the north. Continue west by the fence past a family of cairns to the recently-improved bridleway.

Follow this track for 600m north and then take the Coal Road west, having a look at the neat Dent Station on the way. At Lea Yeat Bridge note the Cowgill Institute, a Quaker meetinghouse from 1702. Many farmsteads here served as meetinghouses in the years after George Fox visited in 1652, on his way to speak at Fox’s Pulpit. Cross the River Dee and turn left to follow the road back to Dent Head Viaduct, past (or not, if you wish) the Sportsman’s Inn, a 17th century establishment that regards grouse shooters as sportsmen. If energy permits, a detour to look at Artengill Viaduct is worth it.

Short walk variation: There are two obvious shorter walks. One is to follow the long walk as far as the road north of Stoops Moss and then turn left for 1km to Dent Head Viaduct. The other, for a medium length walk, is to continue as for the long walk past Wold Fell to reach the Arten Gill track and then to turn left to Stonehouse Farm (2km) and south along the road to Dent Head Viaduct (2km).

river is now underground and is modifying pre-existing caves. The cave system is complex and needs experts to investigate and interpret but, on the surface, we see holes and caves, with water flowing into or out of some of them.

Above the level of the floodplain Dentdale is lined with farmsteads every 200m or so on both sides. Most of the farmsteads are still actively farming, giving a predominantly rural feel to the valley. Some have been converted to holiday homes and some are derelict. The most interesting of the latter is Gibbs Hall – a ruin now surrounded by its offspring: Gibbs Hall Cottage, Little Gibbs Hall and Gibbs Hall Barn. From the road two windows with chamfered mullions and arched lintels can be seen.

On the opposite bank is the imposing Whernside Manor, originally and more properly called West House, as it is not a manor house. It was built by the Sill family, who not only became rich by exploiting slaves in Jamaica but also employed slaves in Dentdale, a practice continued long after they were supposed to be emancipated. This is now a matter of shame for locals although I overheard one in the Sun Inn who was either proud that Dentdale had had the last slaves in England or had imbibed too much of the esteemed local ale from the Dent Brewery at Cowgill.

The name of Whernside Manor reminds us that the Dee has been flowing around the broad northern slopes of Whernside, the highest point (736m) of the Yorkshire Dales, and gathering the becks that flow north from it. Despite its height, there are few impressive views of Whernside, the one from Dent across Deepdale being as good as any. It is a ridge rather than a plateau or peak and has few of the high-level cliffs that provide such distinctive profiles to other Dales peaks.

It is usually assumed that Whernside's name derives from the querns, or stone mills for grinding corn, that were extracted from its slopes. However, Harry Speight, in his 19th century guides, says that it comes from the Anglo-Saxon word for 'warn', since anyone on the ridge, which separated the Anglo-Saxons to the east and the Norse to the west, could give warnings. At least this draws attention to the differences east and west of Whernside: the Anglo-Saxons were arable farmers and lived in small villages; the Norse were sheep farmers who preferred isolated farmsteads.

Deepdale Beck is a substantial tributary of the Dee that drains the basin that lies north of the ridge separating

Deepdale from Kingsdale. Deepdale itself is a rarely visited dale, quieter even than Dentdale and with, as the name would suggest, a deeply incised valley. Its hay meadows are a Special Area of Conservation under European law. The road over to Kingsdale is not often travelled but those who do tackle it are rewarded with a roadside view of Lockin Garth Force.

The Craven Way, an ancient track linking Dent and Ingleton, leads around Whernside, reaching a height of 540m. The walk from the Craven Way past the surprisingly large Whernside Tarns provides a good ascent of Whernside. Combined with a drop down to the Kingsdale road and then a walk through Deepdale, it gives an excellent all-day expedition from Dent.

The River Dee begins to behave itself, flowing steadily over an even bed, as it passes north of Dent, the centre of Dentdale. The Domesday Book records Dentone, which became Dent Town, and now plain Dent – although it is far from plain: its narrow, cobbled streets and whitewashed walls provide a distinctive, attractive character.

The Church of St Andrews has Norman foundations and was largely rebuilt in the 15th and 17th centuries. The floor around the altar is paved with Dent marble, both the black and grey versions. Next to the church is the old grammar school (now a private home), built in 1604 from funding provided by Dentdale benefactors. The school closed in 1897 but the governors still meet for the enjoyable task of distributing money from the still-existing charities to local pupils.

Like all grammar schools, Dent's existed to educate young men in the delights of Latin and Greek grammar. Young women were trained in more practical skills, amongst which knitting was the most renowned in Dentdale. Girls were sent, not always willingly, to Dent from around the region to learn the art. The activity peaked in the 18th century when socks and gloves were supplied to the army. The narrow streets then appeared narrower still because the houses had over-hanging galleries where people sat to knit and chat.

On the streets today is the Sedgwick Memorial, a huge Shap granite boulder, in honour of Adam Sedgwick. The Dent Fault that runs through Dentdale partly accounts for the differences between east and west Dentdale. To the east, becks cut deep gills in the V-shaped valley and the fields are large and walled; to the west, the slopes are gentle with fields hedged and with deciduous trees.



One of the Whernside Tarns

In 2006 the Flinter Gill Nature Trail and the Dent Village Heritage Centre were opened, the latter helping immensely to clear the attics of local farmsteads. In fact, the leaflet for the nature trail existed before the trail did, showing it to be a fine piece of creative literature, with waulking, deiseal, sniggin, Dancing Flags and a Wishing Tree. Its wishful thinking is symptomatic of a problem with the tourist industry, upon which Dent now depends: it is liable to ruin the very things that appeal to tourists in the first place.

Self-defeatingly, Dentdale sells itself as ‘the hidden valley’. It can be entered by the railway and by five narrow roads (from Rawtheydale, Garsdale, Ribblesdale, Kingsdale and Barbondale), all of which feel like back entrances. It should be a green, restful haven but the more we are persuaded to visit it the less hidden it will become. In the summer the cobbled streets are already thronging with people and cars. There seems little need for artificial trails or for the air of desperation that pervades Dent’s publicity.

Flinter Gill provides a pleasant stroll along a stony track by small waterfalls but if the crowds are encouraged there it will soon need litter bins, barriers (to stop people

slipping on the dangerous ‘dancing flags’), and so on. The 1km trail ends at a “magnificent viewpoint” where a toposcope tells us what we can see, leaving the fells above still empty for those with a bit more energy.

Above this point, Flinter Gill runs from the northern slopes of Great Coum (687m), an underrated hill that displays its great coum or cirque towards Dentdale. All three north-facing slopes of Dentdale have their cirques, gouged out in the Ice Age (Middleton Fell has Combe Top and Combe Scar; Whernside has Combe and Combe Bottom) but Great Coum is the most impressive. The southern ridge of the cirque, past the old quarry where Dent marble was also mined, is the best ascent. The view is excellent, from Whernside nearby to the Howgills and the Lake District in the distance and to the south the lower Lune valley.

Below Great Coum, on a rise overlooking Dentdale, stand the Megger Stones, a group of ten or so cairns showing varying degrees of competence at cairn-building. The Megger Stones are just above the Occupation Road or Green Lane, as the OS map calls it. It is named from when the fells, used for common grazing, were enclosed or occupied in the 1850s. It may be assumed to be an



The Megger Stones

ancient track, like the Craven Way, but it is not marked on an OS map of 1853. It reaches a height of 520m around the head of Deepdale and, although rutted and muddy, provides a fine high-level walk.

From the Occupation Road we have a good view of Rise Hill, which some call Aye Gill Pike, although there is nothing pikey about it. It rises gently and uniformly north of Dentdale like an enormous backcloth, to reach

556m. Although the ridge now has stiles over the many walls it is no great pleasure to walk its boggy length. If you must conquer it, a frontal assault is possible from a permissive path that runs north through Shoolbred (northeast of Church Bridge). At the eastern end of the ridge, the OS map indicates “Will’s Hill or Peggy’s Hill”. Did Will and Peggy really argue over the ownership of this dismal hill, which is actually more of a morass?



*Bough Fell (in the sun) behind Rise Hill (in the shade), from Crag Hill
(I was struck by how the walls on the two hills appeared to be aligned)*

Walk 12: Middle Dentdale

Map: OL2 (please read the general note about the walks in the Introduction).

Starting point: Dent (704872).

The character of Dentdale is best appreciated in the valley, so this walk is on the lower slopes, with an optional extension to a medium height, to provide good views of the dale.

Walk through Dent, keeping left past the church, to Church Bridge and then turn left to follow the Dales Way west for 2km to Barth Bridge. At Barth Bridge take the footpath north to High Barth and then follow this path that winds its way east through a series of farmsteads (including High Hall, Scotchergill and Peggleswright) to Bankland. You will become well practised at the art of locating and passing the various stiles.

Now walk east for a little over a kilometre on the quiet road past Gibbs Hall to Ibbeth Peril waterfall. Cross the footbridge (behind the lay-by just east of the waterfall) and then take the equally quiet road west for 1km to Rise View, where you drop down to the footbridge over the Dee and then continue on the north bank to Tommy Bridge.

Cross the bridge and continue southwest to Bridge End, at which point you have a choice. If the pubs beckon, continue along the Dales Way to Church Bridge and Dent.

Otherwise, cross Mill Bridge over Deepdale Beck and immediately take the footpath (signposted "Deepdale Road 1/4m") south to Scow (about 1km). Turn right to Peacock Hill and then take the wide path of Nun House Outrake that leads up to Green Lane, which gives good views of Dentdale and of Rise Hill opposite. Take this track west and after 2km turn down by Flinter Gill, to return to Dent.

Short walk variation: Walk to Church Bridge and turn east along the Dales Way. Walk for 2km to Bridge End. From there, pick up the last part of the long walk, that is, south to Scow, along Nun House Outrake, Green Lane and Flinter Gill to Dent.

The Dee flows west to Barth Bridge, below the small village of Gawthrop, and by the Helmside Craft Centre to the north and Combe Scar to the south, and on to Rash Bridge. Here, we pause to point out a general problem concerning the maintenance of bridges. Bats like to roost in crevices under bridges and they are protected by law, it being illegal to damage or destroy bat roosts. Fifteen roosts were found under Rash Bridge in 1994, so delaying repair work. The bats subsequently returned, although they did not after similar repair to Barth Bridge upstream.

By Rash Bridge is an old woollen spinning mill. There was an even older corn mill here, as there are records of one being demolished in 1590 after a dispute over whose land it was on. Before food was readily transported, cereals were grown locally, as oats were part of the staple diet. The ownership of corn mills was, therefore, an important matter. The Normans required all grain to be ground at the lord of the manor's mill and not within individual households, which obviously gave power to the lord and his manor. The custom gradually lapsed and the corn mills that survived into the 18th and 19th century were often converted for textiles and other uses.

After a further 2km, the Dee joins the Rawthey, by the narrow Abbot Holme Bridge.



Combe Scar, with the Howgills in the distance



Whernside from the Occupation Road



Dentdale from Combe Scar, with Great Knoutberry Hill in the distance

The Rawthey from the Dee

Beyond a bridge for the old Lowgill-Clapham railway line, the Rawthey passes near Brigflatts, a building invariably described as the oldest Quaker meetinghouse in northern England (a rather odd claim as ordinary farmhouses were used as meetinghouses). Brigflatts was built in 1675, when Quakers were still being persecuted and meeting surreptitiously. Whether Brigflatts was overtly declared to be a Quaker meetinghouse in 1675, I don't know, but as George Fox stayed there in 1677 its function could hardly have been a secret. Today its peaceful sturdiness seems to embody some of the tenets of Quakerism although the earlier Brigflatts probably did so better, as until 1881 there was a soil floor across which water from the nearby pond flowed.

Brigflatts inspired the greatest work of the Newcastle-born, modernist poet Basil Bunting (1900-1985), who described himself as having been "brought up entirely in a Quaker atmosphere" but who was not a

Quaker himself. The poem *Brigflatts*, written in 1966, is described by the *Oxford Companion to English Literature* as "long, semi-autobiographical and deeply Northumbrian" (although Brigflatts was never in Northumbria).

After passing another Hebblethwaites and the Holme Open Farm, the Rawthey is joined by Haverah Beck, which runs past Ingmire Hall in the narrow finger of land between the Rawthey and the Lune. Ingmire Hall was the seat of the Otway family from the 16th century or earlier. Sir John Otway was an eminent lawyer during the Civil War (1642-51) and, as a Roman Catholic, was sympathetic to the problems of the Quakers and provided them with valuable legal advice. The hall passed through the female side to the Upton family of Cornwall. After acquiring two hyphens, a descendant, Mrs Florence Upton-Cottrell-Dormer, became a benefactress to Sedbergh, donating Queen's Gardens and the cemetery.

Beyond Middleton Bridge, the Rawthey, at last, reaches the Lune.



Brigflatts



*Two views from the same spot by the Rawthey, as it approaches the Lune:
Above: North to the Howgills. Below: South to Middleton Fell.*

