

# Walk into History

A series of walks curated by

## Swaledale Museum

The Green

Reeth

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[www.swaledalemuseum.org](http://www.swaledalemuseum.org)

### Walk 7

## Chapels of Arkengarthdale

Total Distance: 5.25 miles / 8.5 km

Total Ascent: 500 ft / 155m

Approx Time: 2.5 – 3 hrs

Grade: Easy

# Chapels of Arkengarthdale (easy)

An exploration of Arkengarthdale's history of non-conformism is a perfect way to take in its scenery, via riverside meadows, a delightful section of quiet, elevated single-track road and the much-filmed village of Langthwaite.

## Start

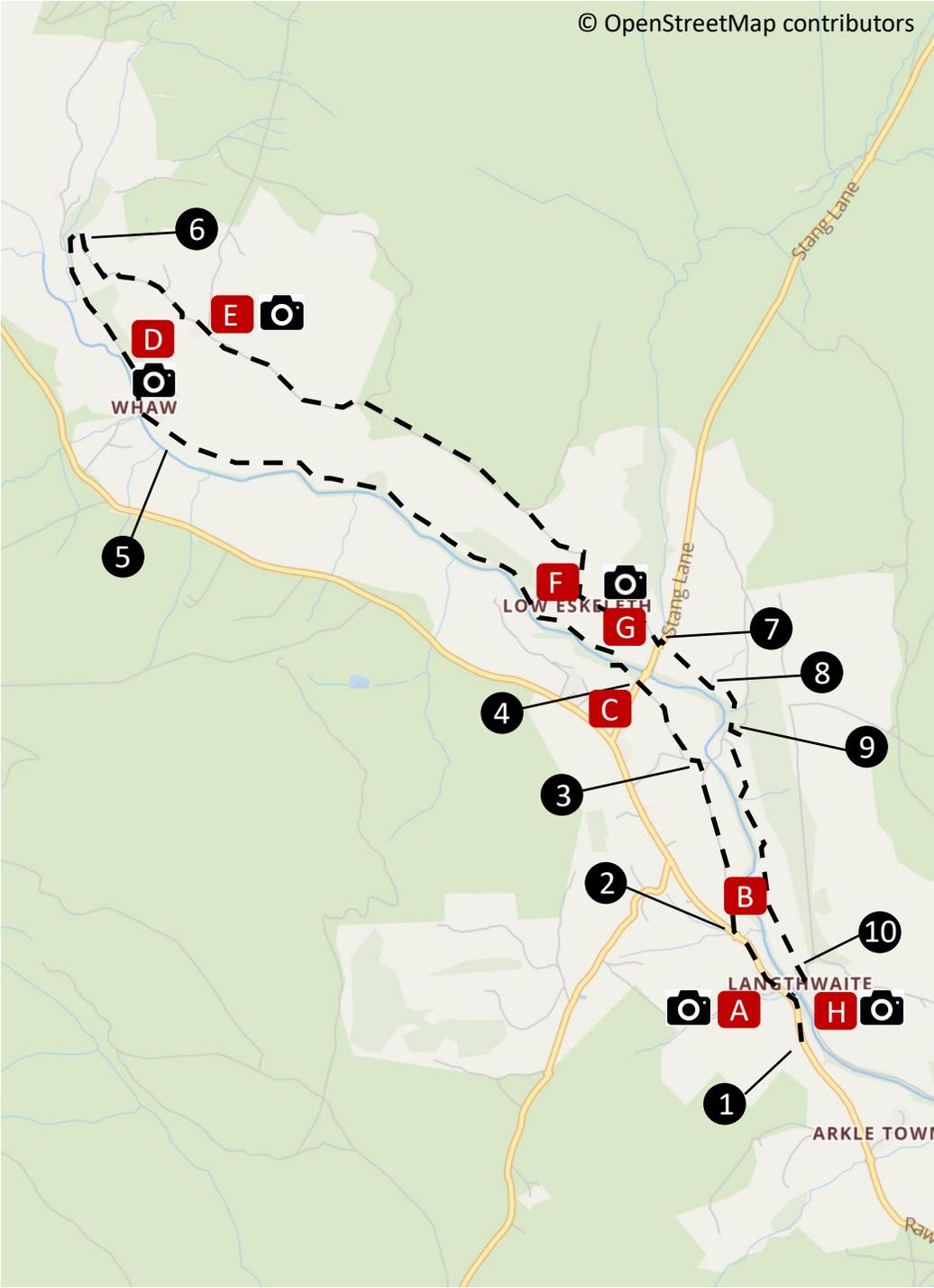
Car Park in Langthwaite, just S of bridge  
Grid Reference: NZ 00522 02303

## Refreshments

Pubs in Langthwaite

## Historical Photos

Langthwaite, Eskeleth



WHAW

LOW ESKEBETH

LANGTHWAITE

ARKLE TOWN

Stang Lane

Stang Lane

6

5

4

3

2

1

7

8

9

10

D

E

F

G

C

B

A

H

- 1 Turn R out of the car park, passing bridge on R, cluster of houses and then war memorial on L.
- 2 Fork R to pass in front of St Mary's Church, and continue along Scar House drive.
- 3 Just beyond West House (with its sundial) on R, fork L across grass to stile. Turn L, then shortly R to keep on track that leads across fields to road.
- 4 Cross the 'Stang' road and take footpath opposite signposted 'Whaw'. After 100m, cross footbridge on R then turn half L to a stile. From here, continue with river on L for 1.8km to Whaw.
- 5 Pass through gate then continue along road with river still on L, passing Whaw on R. When the road bends steeply up to R, keep with it.
- 6 Continue on this quiet, elevated road for 2.6km until it ends back at the Stang road. Although you are on tarmac there is much to see and the views up and down Arkengarthdale never fail to please. Look out for a 'Cheese Room'.
- 7 Cross the Stang road (again), onto a footpath signposted 'Langthwaite' to cross a field aiming for Scar House ahead.

At far end of field, look for a yellow FP marker on a slight rise to your L. Follow this to cross a small beck in trees.

- 8 Immediately after beck, climb to your L to find a well hidden stile. After the stile, keep to a level, passing a small barn on R, then climb gently beside woodland to cross two wooden footbridges. Continue to reach drive.
- 9 Here turn L to reach the walls of Scar House, then take FP diagonally down to R.  
Skirt anti-clockwise round a house to take a waymarked wooden gate into field. Continue in a straight line to Langthwaite with a wall on your R after a stile.
- 10 Take the gate into Langthwaite and turn R at the junction, passing the Red Lion to cross the bridge, then turn L for the car park.

## **Optional Extension**

From the car park it is a 1.5km round trip to see the site of the original Arkengarthdale Church in Arkle Town, of which just a few gravestones are now visible.

Turn L out of the car park and walk carefully along the roadside for 500m, then turn L opposite a post box and walk through Arkle Town. Where the road bends L, look for a stile on R to enter the site.

**A**  Stand facing the graveyard on L in Langthwaite and you have the old Methodist chapel (now called Lion House) to your L, and the 'new' Methodist chapel to your R, which opened in 1883.

The original chapel was built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (prior to which local Methodists met in the CB Inn just up the road) and was later converted into a Sunday School and Training Centre.

**B** St Mary's Church was consecrated in 1820, replacing an earlier church in Arkle Town. It has a 14<sup>th</sup> century font (probably from the earlier church) and an oak altar carved by Robert Thompson (the 'mouseman').

**C** Visible across the fields between points 3 and 4, the hexagonal powder house was built in 1807 to store explosives at a safe distance from mines and houses.

**D**  On the R when walking N out of Whaw is the 'Old Chapel', built around 1840 to replace the previous one at point E.

**E**  Immediately E of a large, grey, modern barn at Seal Houses, and opposite a farm gate, the wall of the older thatched chapel remains, with window sills and doorway still visible. Clearly marked on the 1841 Tithe Map, worship here dates back to at least 1803.

**F** You drop down from high ground to pass Low Eskeleth Farm, the probable first meeting place of Methodists in Arkengarthdale. As early as 1760, 14 members met in a room to which a gallery, pulpit and seats were added. When numbers outgrew the room, services moved to the CB Inn.

**G**  On the N side of the road, 250 W of the junction with the Stang Road, it is hard to miss the distinctive windows of Eskeleth Chapel, founded by the Christian Brethren (Bakerites) in the 1850s.

The house across the road occupies a site where a New Connexion (Kilhamite) chapel was started, but never completed.

**H**  After lay preacher Hugh Bourne was expelled from the Methodists in 1808, he formed a new movement known as the 'Primitives' (or 'Ranters'). A 'Ranters Chapel' (now a house) was established in Langthwaite in 1839. With your back to the Red Lion, it is behind the electricity pole in front of you, and can be identified by 'chapel' windows.

The Red Lion pub featured in several episodes of the hugely popular BBC 70s/80s series 'All Creatures Great and Small' (amongst others) and the bridge was in the opening credits.

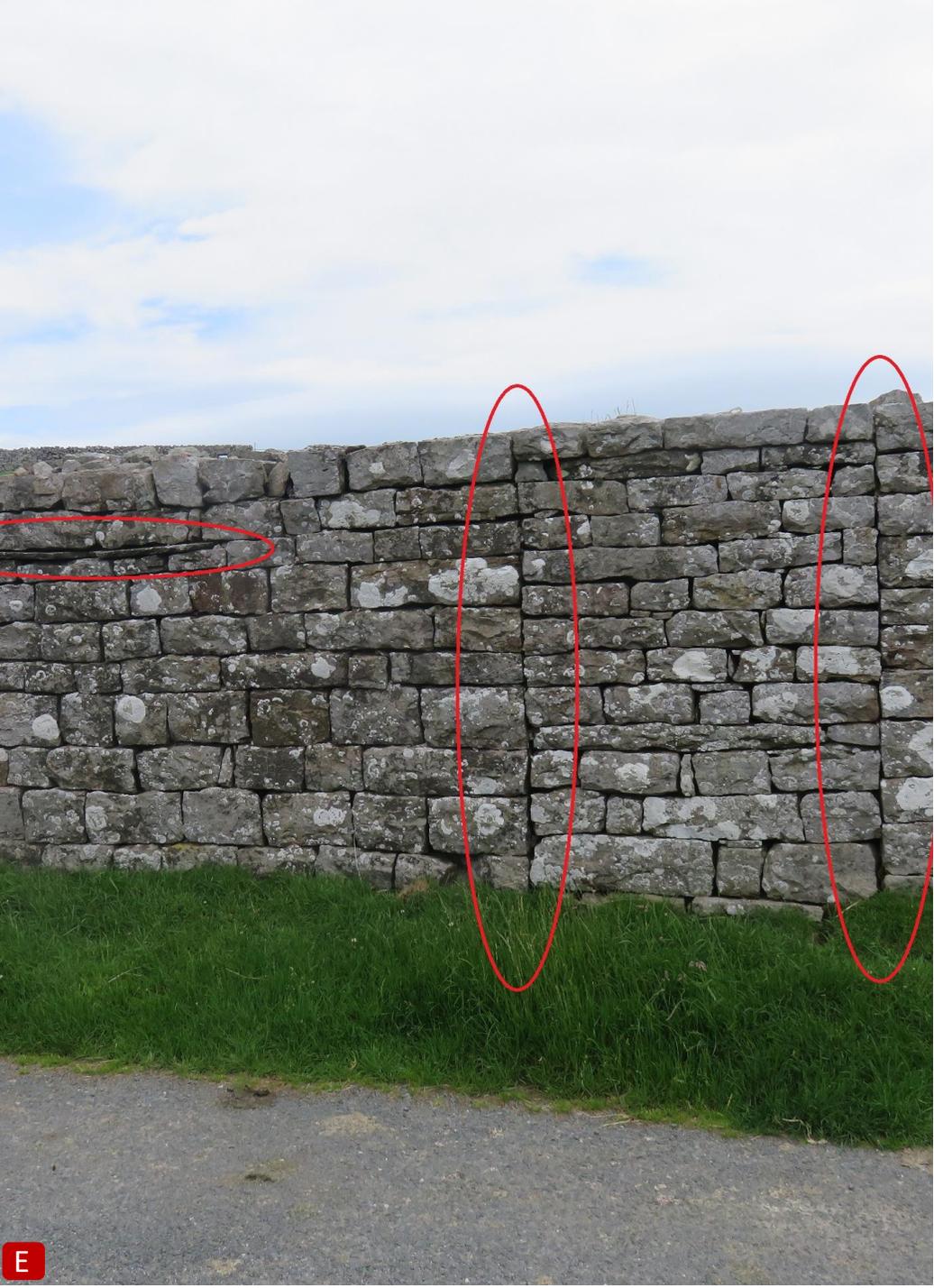








WALSLEY  
CHAPEL  
ERIGED  
1815















The Swaledale Museum has special panels devoted to Philip Lord Wharton, Methodism and the local Chapels. The online Image Archive also contains old photographs of the chapels and churches of the Dale.

## Credits

Many thanks to Tracy Little for the original idea and considerable research that made this walk possible. Old photos are from the Swaledale Museum online image archive. Modern photos by Tracy Little.

Photos cropped for presentation.

## Further Reading

**Batty, Margaret**, *A View of Arkengarthdale, 1982* <sup>3</sup>

Written to celebrate the centenary of the Methodist Chapel, this little book is packed with information, with quotes from local people and primary sources.

**Fieldhouse, R. & Jennings, B.**, *A History of Richmond and Swaledale*· Phillimore 1978 <sup>3</sup>

Chapter 11 Religion since 1580 is especially useful.

**Fraser, Rhoda**, *A Right Mix of Memories Arkengarthdale Chapel 1882-2014*, 2014 <sup>1,3</sup>

A lively and personal collection of reminiscences capturing the heart of chapel life.

**Hardy, John**, *The Methodists of Swaledale & Arkengarthdale and their Chapels*, 2006 <sup>3</sup>

**Stell, Christopher**. *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-Houses in the North of England*, London, HMSO, 1994 <sup>3</sup>

**Ward, (Rev) John** , *Methodism in Swaledale and the neighbourhood*, 1865

**Wright, G. & R**, *Arkengarthdale ... a moment in time*, Arkengarthdale Millennium Project, 2000 <sup>3</sup>