



Cathedral Cavern – via Slaters Bridge

Difficulty: (out of 10) 4
Good family walk and easy for pets
Distance approx. 4 ½ miles

This is a short circular walk starting in Elterwater, and perfect for the whole family, with beautiful views across Little Langdale and some “cavern adventure”.

Leave the NT car park in Elterwater and turn left over the bridge and along the Coniston Road past the Hostel on your right and the entrance to the Elterwater Inn on your left. As the road climbs a little with the hotel on your left there is a right fork in the road – take this fork, which passes a few properties and then becomes a rough track. Continue up the hill, until you come to a gate, ignoring any other turns. Through the gate on up across the top and then down the path to join the lane which



passing the farm to your left and follow the path down towards Slaters Bridge.

Slaters Bridge is 16th century slate built bridge and part of the early packhorse routes and later used by workers in the slate mines all across these hills to Tilberthwaite.

Little Langdale Tarn is on your right, with views across to Pike of Blisco and the start of the



comes to a staggered junction. Wrynose Pass.

Go straight across this towards High Birk Howe farm,

Cross Slaters Bridge then up to the bridleway, and turn left.

After about 100 meters there is a right fork over a stile/gate up towards disused quarry workings. Walk up this track a short way and you will see the entrance to a narrow tunnel with a notice from the National Trust. You can enter this narrow tunnel without the need for a head torch. The tunnel opens out into a large manmade cavern with a supporting pillar and skylight. The acoustics in this cavern are fantastic, and the pool of water is home to a goldfish, if you can spot it?

You can climb through the other end of this cavern into the quarry at the back, and there is another longer tunnel back out which exits a little higher up from the entrance you came through – you will need a torch in this longer cavern. Please be careful around these quarry workings, and do not stray in the tunnel – there is a gated section leading to a dead end which is not safe.

After exploring the various caves and workings, leave back down the track to re-join the bridleway, turning right to continue your walk. After a short walk you come to a wooden bridge on your left which takes you back over the river with the ford on the right – take the terrace to avoid getting wet feet and follow the lane back up into Little Langdale past the Three Shires Inn, which provides a welcome stop. Continue along the lane passed the pub, and take the left turn signposted for Elterwater, through Wilson Place farm and back up to the hill and bridleway which takes you back down into Elterwater where you started.

Back into Elterwater, and the Britannia Inn and Maple Tree Café provide welcome refreshments and a relaxing break.

A variation on this walk is to include Colwith Force, Skelwith Force, down to Skelwith Bridge taking a break at Chesters Café, and then taking the path back along the Brathay to Elterwater.

PLEASE NOTE

Hill walking and outdoor pursuits can be hazardous. Please ensure you have appropriate clothing and foot wear and exercise caution.