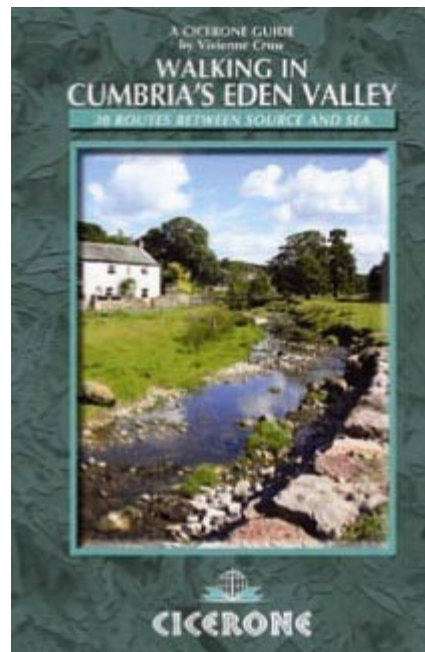


An extract from the Cicerone guidebook
Walking in Cumbria's Eden Valley by Vivienne Crow

www.cicerone.co.uk



This route makes for a perfect Sunday morning stroll. It starts from one of the loveliest of the Eden Valley's villages and then enters pretty woodland beside the river. Having visited the hamlet of Longdales, the route heads along a seemingly forgotten track between hedgerows that are a riot of colour in the early autumn. If you time things carefully, you should arrive back in Armathwaite just in time for pub opening.

The Eden Valley is a gorgeous, undulating and tranquil landscape, with a rich natural heritage. From gentle riverside strolls to serious day-long moorland hikes, the routes in the complete guidebook are designed to visit as much of this beautiful area as possible.

Have a great walk!

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WALK 22

Armathwaite and Coombs Wood

Distance: 3½ miles (5.8km)

Total ascent: 186m (610ft)

Start/finish: Duke's Head Hotel, Armathwaite (NY 505 460)

Terrain: Good tracks and quiet country roads

Walking time: 1½ hrs

Grade: 1–2

Maps: OS Explorer OL5 or OS Landranger 86

Transport: Armathwaite is on the Settle–Carlisle railway and is served by the 133 and 134 buses

Refreshments: Duke's Head Hotel and Fox and Pheasant Inn, Armathwaite

This makes for a perfect Sunday morning stroll. It starts from one of the loveliest of the Eden Valley's villages and then enters pretty woodland beside the river. Having visited one of Cumbria's more off-the-beaten-track hamlets, Longdales, the route heads along a seemingly forgotten track between hedgerows that are a riot of colour in the early autumn. If you time things carefully, you should arrive back in Armathwaite just in time for pub opening.

Starting with your back to the Duke's Head Hotel in **Armathwaite**, turn right along the road. Immediately after the road bridge over the **River Eden**, cross the stile on the left and follow the path round to the left and under the bridge so that you are heading upstream with the river on your right along a clear, tree-lined path.⁴ Ignoring a couple of narrow trails down to the right, keep to the main path until you draw level with Mill Farm on the other side of some rapids. There is a clear fork here, but, instead of taking either of the two options straight ahead, turn sharp left, almost back on yourself. It is very unclear on the ground, but there is a faint path climbing north-east towards a waymarker post just visible among the trees.

Look for Armathwaite Castle on the opposite bank. This pele tower was converted into a country house in 1752 by William Sanderson.



The tree-lined path beside the River Eden on the edge of Armathwaite.



The post marks a junction with a clear path, along which you turn right. Climb easily to a stile in a fence and continue along a wide track through the forest. (You soon pass one of the Eden Benchmark sculps, 'Vista' by Graeme Mitcheson, carved from St Bees sandstone.) Another track comes up from the right as you swing left to head deeper into **Coombs Wood**, surrounded by tall, slender conifers. As you approach the end of the forest track, the trees on your right disappear and the wonderful views that you have been snatching tiny glimpses of up until now are suddenly and dramatically revealed.

Far below, the River Eden has carved a beautiful valley the graceful curvy sides of which are covered in wood-land and rolling farmland. Beyond the metal gate, turn left along the road and then take the next road on your right. Immediately after passing the cottages in **Longdales**, turn left along a track. This climbs to a high point of about 170m, from where you get a superb view of the rolling farmland to the north and the Pennines to the east. Those views stay with you as you continue straight ahead between hedgerows. Turn left along the road. Follow it back across the River Eden and then retrace your steps into **Armathwaite**.



The track heading north from Longdales.

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For more information on the area visit www.visiteden.co.uk