



Arkengarthdale. Takes almost as long to say it as it does to walk it.

photographer could capture the whole shebang in one beautiful shot? Hmm.

All too often we found great pubs with so-so walks; or great pubs sitting in enormous car parks. Great walks with rubbish pubs. Great pubs in horrendous-looking buildings. Aagh! You get the picture. Even if we didn't.

And so it was that as this issue loomed, the minions pored over the guidebooks once more, and flitted between 'Good Pub Guide' and OS maps until our eyeballs itched.

And then, illumination. It came as we planned our annual trip to the Yorkshire Dales for the Boots & Beer Walking Festival. Fearing that it would be one of our last windows of opportunity, I spent a day going through the new edition of 'The Good Pub Guide' and seeking out any featured pub that happened to be in the Yorkshire Dales. Just as hope was fading, I briefly clicked on the website of The Charles Bathurst Inn in Arkengarthdale.

Hold on – what was that? Did I just see a whitewashed frontage? A hillside rising beyond, peppered with stone barns and latticed by drystone walls? A sublime green valley sitting directly beneath the pub? Quick – get it back!

Yes... yes... all looking good, and the guide loves the pub. Let's check with

Mark Reid, Yorkshire walking expert and author of 'The Inn Way' guidebooks. "The CB? Aye, it's a good 'un is that."

That'll do for me. Now what about a path? Grab the map. Launch 'Google Earth'. Hallelujah, sacre bleu and rock on! Little green dots leading right the way down the hill to the pub's front door! We shall go to the ball!

Er, the pub. Obviously.

THE GRAIL

The sky broods as Tom and I pull up at The Charles Bathurst Inn. Autumn is afoot here: the moor behind the pub (known locally as 'The CB') is turning from green to yellow to orange in the space of one day; roiling towers of cumulo-nimbus come sneaking up the dale and drop the odd squally shower, only to be torn apart by shafts of brilliant golden sunshine and blue sky. Arkengarthdale is absolutely alive in this crisp, muddled-up sort of day.

It's a lovely dale, this. It's narrower than most of the others in the national park, making it more intimate and easier to criss-cross, as this walk does twice. It's also quieter, as it's stuffed away at the remote northernmost end of the park (hence the uber-Norse name) and a bit of a drive to get to.

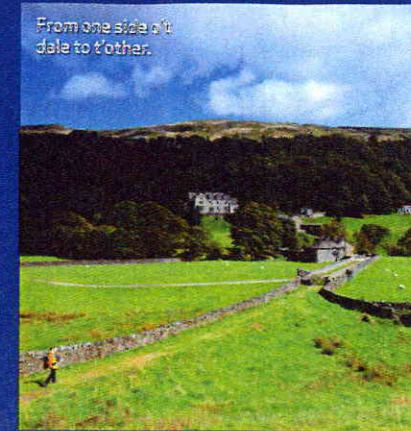
The dale is pitted with the remnants

of Charles Bathurst's lead-mining exploits of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. You can barely pass any point on Route 18 without finding some leftover slate-cone or crossing a lumpy moraine that was once a spoil-heap.

The walk drops down behind the pub and into the depths of the dale, passing through the pretty village of Langthwaite. We climb out of the depths to arrive at the best place name in this whole darn issue: the hamlet which is marked on OS maps as Booze. If only it had a village sign! Sadly it's too small to merit one.

From here it's out on to open moorland. The change is sudden and striking. Looking across the valley you can see it's the same story: the green meadows and cultivated fields creep halfway up the dale rim, then hit one wall and switch instantly to brown-purple grouse moor.

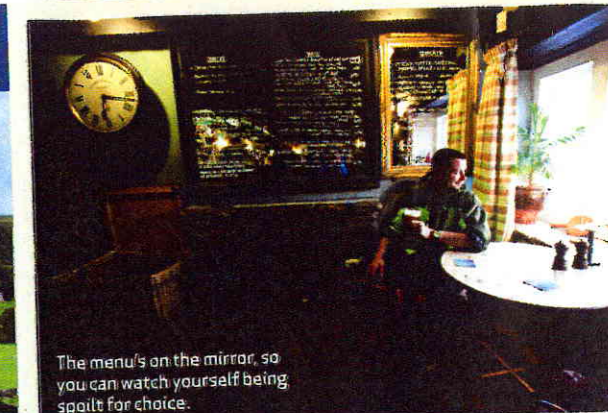
We wander on past lead-mine scars and over a lovely natural shelf called Dry Gill Edge, then on past ravines and side-valleys and hillside farms which are so ancient they have no access tracks at all. All the while, the white splodge of the pub is visible back down there in the dale. The walk makes almost a perfect circuit around it; you might call it the 'Tour de Pub'. ▶



From one side of a dale to the other.



Green pastures and purple moorland.



The menu's on the mirror, so you can watch yourself being spoilt for choice.

THE PUB

The CB might just be the perfect walkers' pub. Derelict in 1996, it was bought by Charles and Stacy Cody, who realised that in order to bring people here, to this hard-to-reach dale, they'd need to offer bed and board. Over the next few years they added extra dining areas and accommodation, and brought in some seriously good chefs. BUT – it's not a gastro-pub. The food is wonderful (check out the menu, as written daily on a mirror in the bar), but the floors are wooden and muddy boots are welcome, as are walking groups.

In short, we think you'll love it.

Main beers Timothy Taylor Landlord, Black Sheep, Theakston's, Bitburger
Sample bar meal Bacon and brie baguette with chips, £6.95

Contact 01748 884567, www.cbinn.co.uk



SPECIAL OFFER
BUY ONE, GET ONE FREE!

Simply take this token to The Charles Bathurst Inn, Langthwaite, between now and February 1st 2011 and get a free pint of beer (or non-alcoholic alternative) when you buy one pint of your choice. Cheers!

May be used only once. Photocopies not accepted. If you don't fancy cutting a hole in the magazine, why not just take the magazine itself? The walk starts and finishes at the pub, so there's no need to carry it all the way.