

Ingleby Incline

A challenging route taking in high moorland, scenic views and a remarkable feat of Victorian engineering

Getting here

Take the train to Battersby – esksvalleyrailway.co.uk

Length

9½ miles (15km)

Time

4 hours walking/2 hours cycling

Start/finish

Battersby Station, TS9 6LT
NZ 589 073

Map

Ordnance Survey OL26

Refreshments

Kildale

Toilets

Kildale Station



North York Moors
National Park



Suitability



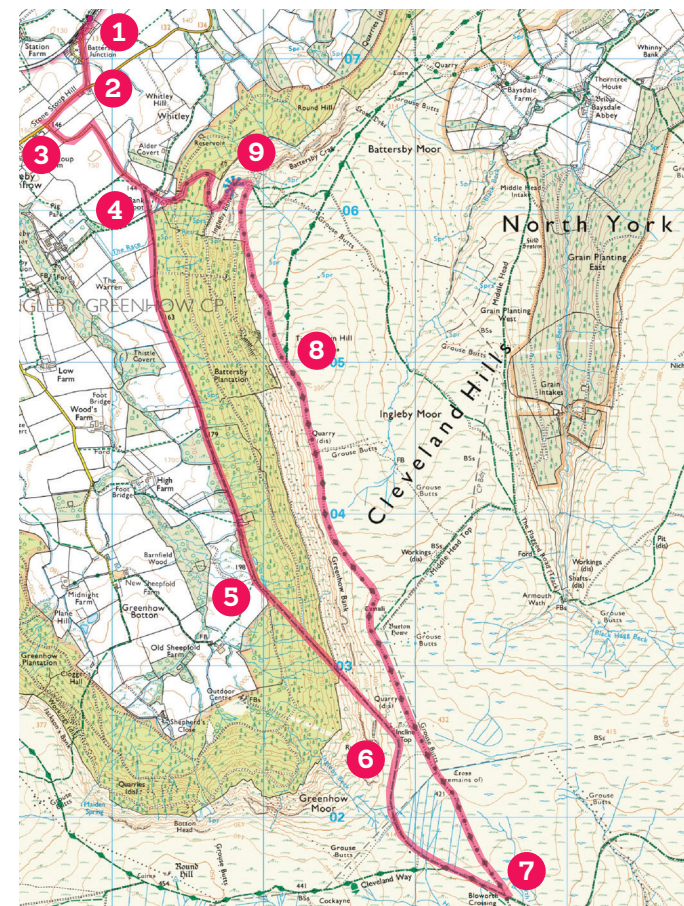
You can walk but the long route to the Incline, both in and out, means this journey is better done on a mountain bike. Some steep descents and ascents, including rocky terrain on the return.



Route unsuitable for most wheelchairs. Experienced Trampers can negotiate the very steep incline (RADAR key required for gate), but the rest of the loop can't be recommended.



Please keep dogs on a short fixed lead at all times to protect ground-nesting birds, wildlife and sheep.



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1 From Battersby Station head out of the village towards the main road.

2 Turn right and go along the main road for 400 yards (365m).

3 Take a left turn to 'Bank Foot'.

4 When you reach the houses, turn right along the forestry road. Follow this for 1¾ miles (2.8km).

5 At the bottom of the incline, after taking a deep breath, start the long climb up.

6 From the top of the incline follow the

old railway track for nearly 1 mile (1.6km) until you reach Bloworth crossing.

7 Turn sharp left to follow the Cleveland Way.

8 Stay on the Cleveland Way for 2¼ miles (3.7km) until the path forks, taking the left hand stone track downhill. Take care on the descent as the track can be rough and rocky.

9 From the edge of the escarpment descend the steep track. Go down through the forest, past the farm, re-joining the road to Battersby.

Exploring Ingleby Incline

Victorian engineers never shied from a challenge. Here, at Ingleby Incline, they were tasked with transporting ironstone – brought from across the moors in Rosedale – down the steep incline, to connect with the main railway line at nearby Battersby.

The incline is almost a mile long (1.6km) and the gradient is mostly 1-in-5 (20%), which meant steam engines couldn't tackle the hill. The answer was an incline cable railway that used gravity to lower loaded wagons down the steep slope. It was built in just seven months in the 1860s by an army of navvies using gunpowder and picks to blast through the bedrock. If the cable snapped, the wagons could reach 113mph by the time they hit the bottom and cause absolute devastation. An energetic walk or bike ride up or down the incline today shows how challenging the landscape was to 19th-century entrepreneurs.

It's a very steep climb, longer and tougher than it looks from the bottom! Take your time and pause halfway for a breather



1 Benchmarks

This is a surveyor's symbol, marking a vertical height or elevation reference. The horizontal line above the arrow was made to form a 'bench' for the surveyor's levelling rod, to ensure the position stayed consistent. You often see them carved into the sides of buildings and bridges. There are five marked on maps of the incline, but we have only found four on the ground.



2 Stovepipe hat birdman

Nobody knows who carved this or why, but it is likely to date from the Incline period as it depicts a man in a stovepipe hat, common at the time. Is the bird a carrier pigeon? The company that built the Incline was based in Newcastle, a day's journey away, so the quickest way to send a message might have been by carrier pigeon.



3 Initials

At various places, people carved their initials into the rock – probably navvies working on the incline. For example, the initials JA can be seen here.



4 Drum House remains

If you look closely at the scattered remains of the Drum House, you can see Roman numerals on some of the stones. It is likely that the stonemasons carved these as a reference to help in the construction of the building.

