

Ingleborough Walks

Walk 10

Across the Ingleborough Ridge from Ribbleshead to Clapham



This walk over Ingleborough summit is one of the great classic walks of the Yorkshire Dales; a wonderful way of experiencing some of the most spectacular limestone scenery of the Ingleborough area and Ingleborough itself.



The Walk

From the railway station walk down the approach track to the Station Inn. At the road, turn left and walk under the railway bridge. Immediately after the bridge, leave the road and turn left to follow the track parallel to the railway. This soon arrives at a gateway into Ingleborough National Nature Reserve, marked by an interpretation panel explaining the significance of this remarkable place. The track continues past the board and into the old quarry, where Great Scar limestone was once worked. Disused since 1958, the remains have become a home to diverse species of plants. The route through the quarry is marked by green topped posts which lead you down to the floor of the workings before weaving around the left-hand side. At the end of the quarry, pass through a gate into the rough pasture known as Gauber. Keep ahead on the track for a further 274 metres to come to another gateway, near the corner

of the enclosure.

Passing through, keep to the grassy track which crosses rough grassland with the great wedge of Park Fell rising ahead. In another 366 metres, it meanders around to a gate in the wall to the left. Continue beyond this across the squelchy pasture along the base of Park Fell, heading for the buildings at Colt Park. When you come to the wall, don't go left to the farm buildings, instead turn right and follow the path, now on the right-hand side of the wall, heading directly up Park Fell.

Now the climb begins! A grassy path accompanies the wall for most of the way up the first ascent to Park Fell (563m). Nearing the top of the hill, it veers right to pass a little way to the northwest of the summit itself. The route now lies across open moorland with extensive views across Ribbleshead to the mighty bulk of Whernside opposite. A slight descent leads to the broad saddle between Park Fell before another, shorter climb around

the side of Simon Fell. As it climbs, the path leaves the wall and later crosses a stile. It now nurses the edge of the steep escarpment, overseeing the vast limestone pavement of Southercales Nature Reserve below.

Eventually arrive at a path junction where the vertiginous, stepped Three Peaks route from Chapel-le-Dale joins from the right. Go through the gate ahead and climb the paved steps to conquer the final gritstone cap of the mountain. On the way, the path from Horton trails in from the left before coming to the edge of Ingleborough's summit plateau near a large cairn. This is a remarkable place, the top of Yorkshire with views as far as Morecambe Bay and the Forest of Bowland. But it is also confusing, especially in mist, so take care with navigation at this point. You may want to visit the true summit and trig point 183 metres ahead across the plateau, but you need to return here as the route to Clapham leaves the plateau almost exactly where you gained the broad flat top.

Turn south here and soon pick up a path which goes around the perimeter of the escarpment for a short while, before a diagonal rocky descent to a moorland saddle. Keep going on a clear but soggy path for ½ mile to the end of the ridge at Little Ingleborough. Crossing some rocky hollows, the path veers left and drops steeply down rocky steps. Soon, gain a well-made path descending the moorland buttress of the mountain.

Towards the bottom of the slope, the path splits. The direct path to Clapham takes the right fork, but the short deviation to the left allows a close-up view of Gaping Gill. This great abyss is one of the largest pot holes in the UK. Regaining the main path, keep forward through an area studded with eroded limestone pavement and skewered by potholes on either side of the path. Cross the double stile in the wall beyond.

Instead of following the main route alongside the wall down the dry valley to the right, follow the path across the moor, half right. Soon this drops quite steeply into Clapham Bottoms, crossing the head of the small dale and curving up the other side to the right to arrive at a gate. At this point the bridleway from Horton joins from the left. Go through the gate and walk along the walled track, Long Lane, passing above Clapdale and the entrance to Ingleborough Cave.

After 1½ miles, at a T-junction, turn right. A walled lane descends back to Clapham, diving through a short tunnel beneath the estate. Buses between Settle, Ingleton and Kirkby Lonsdale serve the village. The railway station is a further ¼m off, reached by a quiet road from the other side of the village, crossing the busy by pass through a subway.

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Travel Information

Distance: 8½ miles (plus ¼ miles to Clapham station).

Time required: At least 5 hours, with time for stops.

Start: Ribbleshead station.

Finish: Clapham village or Clapham station.

Travel: **Outward:** Leeds-Settle-Carlisle Line train to Ribbleshead. Check www.dalesbus.org for Summer Sunday buses to Ribbleshead.

Return: Bentham Line train from Clapham Station (approx. ¼ mile from Clapham village) or Craven Connection bus 581 from Clapham village.

Terrain/grade: Strenuous. Prolonged high level, exposed route, though no technical difficulties. Map and navigation skills essential in poor weather.

Refreshments: Station Inn, Ribbleshead. Variety of cafes and pub in Clapham.

Toilets: National Park car park, Clapham.

