

**Cycle Route: Eskdale
 Eskdale and Ravenglass**

Three main routes follow the River Esk along Eskdale to its mouth at Ravenglass. These are a road, a narrow gauge railway (Ravenglass to Eskdale Railway) and, of most interest to mountain bikers, a bridleway. The bridleway starts at Whahouse Bridge just below Hardknott Pass and gives eight miles of easy off road riding through pleasant woodland and along good farm tracks. This route is ideal for beginners and family groups (children will need prior experience for although it's technically not difficult it is quite a long ride and a busy 'A' road is encountered). There are numerous access points from the bridleway to the valley road allowing the route to be shortened if necessary.

Grade: Strenuousness 2, Navigation 2, Technicality 2

Start/Finish: Dalegarth Station (NY 174 007)

Distance: 20 miles (32 Km)

Time: 4 - 5 hours

Maps: OS landranger 89 & 96, OS Outdoor Leisure 6, Harveys' Superwalker Western Lakeland (part coverage)

1. From Dalegarth Station follow the valley road East for 3.2 km to Whahouse Bridge. Cross the bridge and join the bridleway on the other side. Follow the bridleway South alongside the River Esk then up through the woods to a T-junction. Turn right and head West along the bridleway through Penny Hill Farm to Doctor Bridge on the river.
2. Do not cross the bridge - instead turn left and follow the bridleway as it heads South West to a junction at Low Birker. At the junction turn right and follow the bridleway West for 1.7km to a ford and footbridge. Cross the ford and continue heading West along the bridleway. After 2km the bridleway swings South West alongside the river and joins the valley road at Forge Bridge.
3. From Forge Bridge take the valley road North then West to Eskdale Green Station. Do not cross the bridge over the railway - instead take the bridleway at the back of the station buildings and follow it South West along the lane, across the ford then up through woodland. Once out of the trees the bridleway swings West across pasture to join a track after 250m. Turn left onto the track then follow it South to Muncaster Head and turn right onto another track. Follow the track as it heads generally South West for 2km to a fork just after High Eskholme. Take the left branch and follow the bridleway South then South West alongside a plantation. Once past the trees the bridleway swings South again then finally West to join the A595.
4. Turn right onto the A595 and follow it North then West for 2km to the Ravenglass turning. Turn left and follow the road into Ravenglass.
5. The return leg is all by road. From Ravenglass back-track to the A595 which is then followed East then South for 3.2km to the Eskdale turning - 250m after crossing the River Esk at Muncaster Bridge. At the junction turn left and follow the road for 4.8km as it winds its way North East to a T-junction. At the junction turn left and follow the road North to another junction at the King George IV pub. Turn right onto the Eskdale valley road and follow it East for 2.8km back to Dalegarth Station.

Map

