



*by Merseyrail to 5 countryside cycle tours*





# Rideabout

## 5 EASY CYCLE RIDES BY MERSEYRAIL



Cycling is great fun. It is healthy, non polluting and allows a sense of freedom which is lost when in a car. It's no wonder that more and more people are buying bikes. This booklet describes five short cycle rides which are either traffic-free or on roads where the level of traffic is usually low.

It explains how you can get to these rides using Merseyrail. They are ideal for half day outings or summer evening rides.

What's more, accompanied cycles are welcome on Merseyrail trains free of charge, subject to space being available. In the interest of safety and the comfort of all passengers, it may be necessary to implement restrictions at busy times.

Cyclists are asked to co-operate with other customers and staff in these circumstances. Travelling at quieter, off-peak times makes a lot of sense.



Each cycle ride has something different to offer, great views along the coast, riding through historic villages or seeing wildlife at close quarters. Most include off-road sections and they are ideal if you are getting used to cycling again.

Here is a summary of the routes...



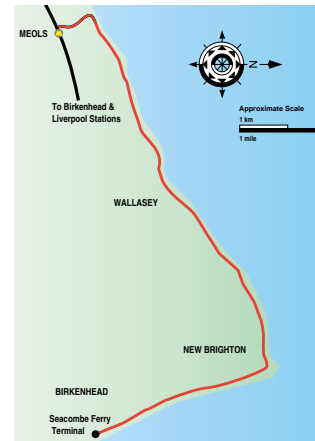
Cycling Merseyside

<b>Travel Information</b>	<b>0870 608 2 608</b> National Call Rate
OPEN 8AM TILL 8PM 7 DAYS A WEEK	
<a href="http://www.merseytravel.gov.uk">www.merseytravel.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Rail Travel</b>	<b>National Rail Enquiries</b> <b>08457 48 49 50</b> Local Call Rate
24 HOURS A DAY	

This information can be provided in alternative formats on request.

### Ride 1 North Wirral Coaster

This is a real transport of delight - a ferry ride across the Mersey, a walk along Seacombe Promenade, a cycle along the promenade at New Brighton and then onwards along the North Wirral Coast by Mockbeggar Wharf through to Meols Station from where you catch the train back. **9 miles.**



See page 6



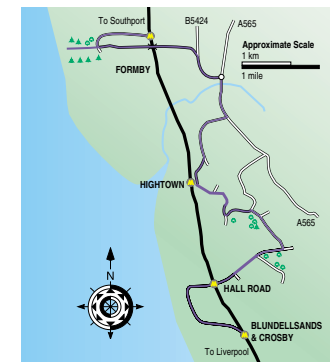
Dove Point on the North Wirral Coast

### Ride 2 Along the Sefton Coast

From Blundellsands and Crosby Station ride along the coastal road to Hall Road Station then inland to Little Crosby with its fine church and hall, home to the Blundell family in earlier centuries. Ride through rich farmland to Hightown and continue through to Formby, said to originally have been founded by Vikings. **6 or 9 miles.**



Picnic Site, Lifeboat Road, Formby



See page 8

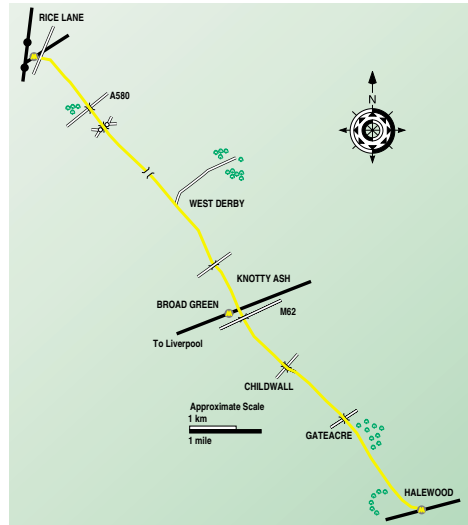


### Ride 3 Old Liverpool Loop Line

Begin your route at Halewood Triangle Country Park where wildlife thrives in what was a major complex of railway sidings. The disused railway offers several miles of traffic free cycling through cuttings and along embankments to Rice Lane, with a diversion to Croxteth Country Park en route. **9 miles.**



Halewood Triangle



See page 10

### Ride 4 Ainsdale Circular

This easy ride from Ainsdale Station takes you to the level landscape of Downholland Moss where you are bound to see geese set to flight as you cycle along the long-abandoned northern section of the old Cheshire Lines route. It feels like cycling in Holland! **18 miles.**



Migrating Geese



See page 12

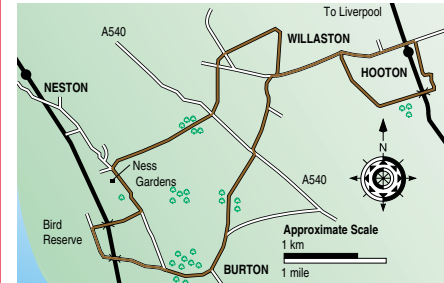


### Ride 5 South Wirral Tour

This circular route is mainly on back lanes through a number of homely South Wirral villages such as Willaston and Burton, but the highlight is the beautiful Ness Gardens. There is a little more traffic on this route and a few climbs but nevertheless it is a great ride. **11 miles.**



Ness Gardens



See page 14



### Hints and tips

Before beginning your trip you can always ring the **Traveline on 0870 608 2 608** to check the times of trains and ferries. See the Merseyrail Network Map on the back cover of this booklet.

On some trains the amount of space available for carrying bikes is limited so try to avoid peak periods. Most Merseyrail trains can usually carry two bikes per carriage, but some trains (for example on the City Line services between Liverpool and Manchester) can only carry a maximum of two bikes per train. Advice on taking cycles on City Line trains can be obtained from **0845 604 0231**.

Train conductors reserve the right to refuse cycles if the train is very crowded or if there are already the maximum number of cycles on the train.

Tandems, tricycles, trailers or any form of motorised cycles cannot be conveyed on trains.



For details of lead rides and events visit [www.getravelwise.com](http://www.getravelwise.com)



# RIDE 1 NORTH WIRRAL COASTER

**Start:** Pier Head, Liverpool or Seacombe Mersey Ferries terminal

**Finish:** Meols Merseyrail Station

**Ride Time:** Allow 3 hours

**Distance:** 9 miles

**Traffic:** Traffic free except for the last short section to Meols Merseyrail Station.

## Places to Visit

### New Brighton

The ride from Seacombe offers a great perspective across the Mersey to Liverpool's historic waterfront. There are particularly fine views of the Pier Head and the Liver Building. In New Brighton, you will pass by Fort Perch Rock. The Fort dates from the late 1820s and was built to protect shipping during times of war although it saw little or no action. New Brighton itself was established as a seaside town from 1830 by James Atherton who hoped that it would come to outrank the resort of Brighton on the south coast. In Victorian times there was even a tower higher than the one at Blackpool. The restoration of the promenades make them a joy to walk and cycle along. There are several places to take refreshment en route.

### The North Wirral Coastal Park

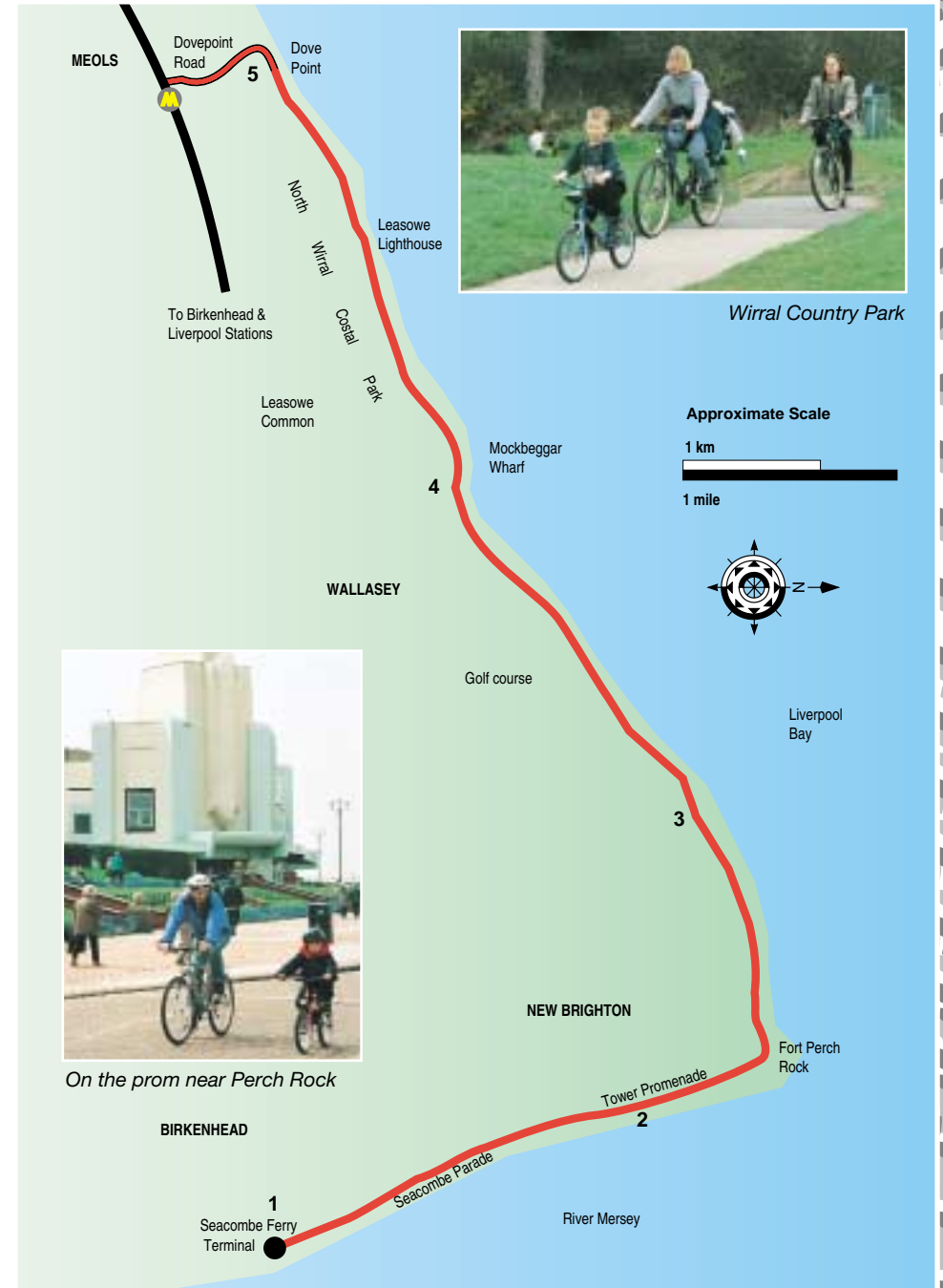
The coast is known for its wildlife, especially wading birds which visit during their migration - oystercatcher, dunlin, redshank and turnstone near to the water's edge for example. In prehistoric times the land was heavily forested and it is sometimes possible on rare occasions, at very low tide, to see the scant remains of a submerged forest at Dove Point, dating from the Stone Age.

From the Coastal Path you'll see Leasowe Lighthouse where the North Wirral Coastal Park rangers are based.

It was built in 1763 as one of several beacons used to guide ships safely into the Mersey estuary. Along the coast is Meols, a name derived from the Norse word for "sand hills". Until recent times it has always looked to the sea for its wealth.

## The Ride

- 1 The ferry arrives at Seacombe and you need to wheel your cycle through the terminal. Then go right, along a no through road. You then join the designated cycle path that runs from Seacombe Ferry, up the promenade. On the way you pass Wallasey Town Hall, Speaker's Corner (by all means feel free to make a speech!) and Vale Park. It is a 2 mile ride through to New Brighton but the views across the estuary are splendid.
- 2 You arrive at New Brighton to ride along Tower Promenade. Pass the Floral Pavilion. Opposite, on the right and beyond the Marine Lake, is Fort Perch Rock. The cycle route runs ahead along the promenade of Kings Parade. Take care at the points where it crosses access roads.
- 3 At the far end of the Parade keep ahead along the Coastal Path. This leads to the Derby Pool Picnic Area. Go left here to join the track running parallel to the embankment access road. This runs ahead to Leasowe Sand Dunes Car Park and continues ahead above Mockbeggar Wharf.
- 4 The route joins the concrete road to sweep around Leasowe Bay. Please give way to pedestrians along this section as it is a shared route. You rise up to run above Leasowe Common where you can see Leasowe Lighthouse and Ranger's Office on the left.
- 5 The North Wirral Coastal route eventually reaches Dove Point where you join a road, Meols Parade. Keep ahead at first but then turn left into Dovepoint Road. This leads to the main road (A553) where you bear left to ride up the rise to Meols Merseyrail Station.





## RIDE 2 ALONG THE SEFTON COAST

**Start:** Blundellsands and Crosby Merseyrail Station

**Finish:** Hightown Merseyrail Station (or, for a longer ride, Formby Merseyrail Station)

**Ride Time:** Allow 2 or 3 hours

**Distance:** 6 miles to Hightown or 9 miles to Formby

**Traffic:** The ride is mainly on wide roads with low to moderate levels of traffic, 1 mile off-road.

### Places of Interest

#### Sefton Coast

The Sefton Coast offers many miles of sandy beaches and lovely views. Through careful management by Sefton Council Ranger Service, English Nature and the National Trust you will find along the entire length of the Sefton Coast stretches of sand dunes and pockets of woodland which are home to rare species of plants and wildlife, it's especially noted for natterjack toads and red squirrels. There are several nature reserves which you can visit on foot especially from Lifeboat Road in Formby. It is important to keep to the paths to conserve these sensitive areas. You will need to lock your cycles up at a picnic area before venturing towards the sea.

There are opportunities to take refreshment in Blundellsands, Hightown and Formby.

#### The Ride

1 From Blundellsands and Crosby Merseyrail Station (platform for trains to Southport) go right into Blundellsands Road West which leads into the very wide Burbo Bank Road along the Front. Keep ahead towards the Coastguard Station. This area was developed in the late 19th century as Blundellsands Park and there are still many of the original Gothic-style villas nearby.

On the way you will see St Nicholas fountain (1881) on the other side of the road. A biblical inscription reads:

*"Drinkers of this water shall thirst again but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst"*

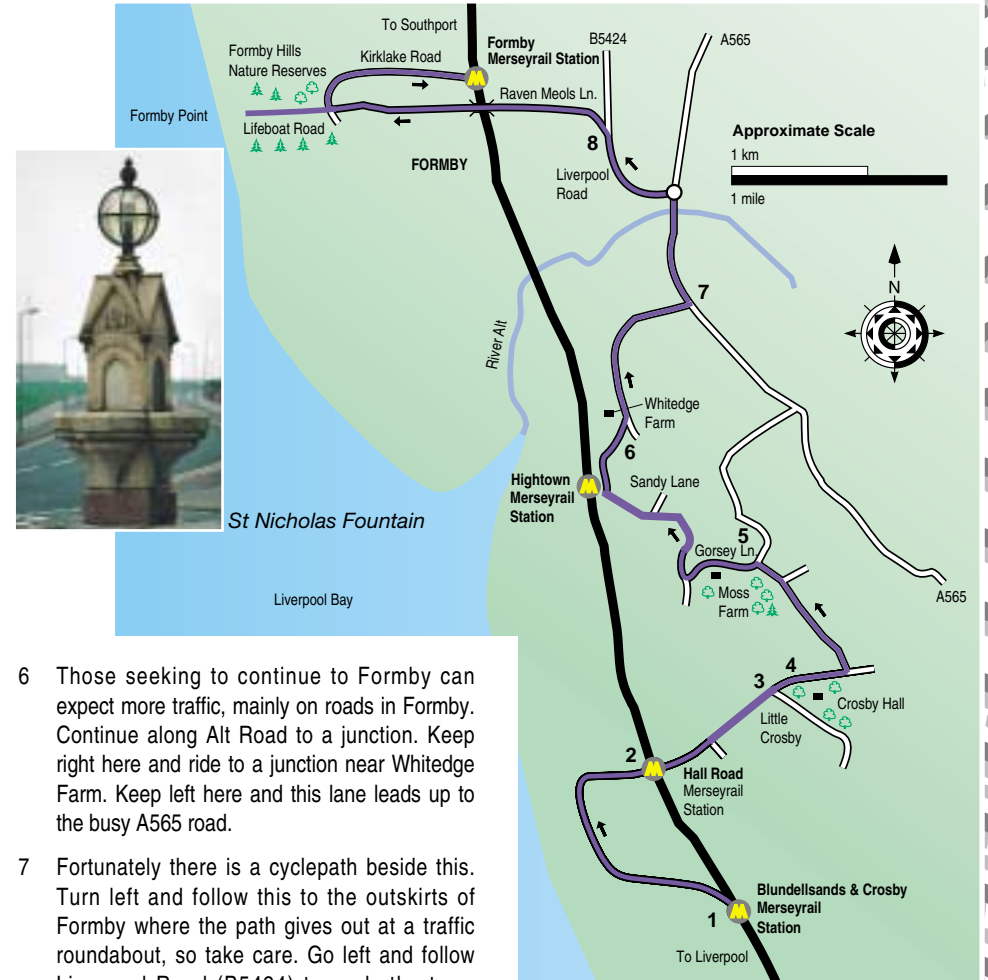
*St John, IV, 13&14.*

At the end go right into Hall Road West.

- 2 Pass Hall Road Merseyrail Station and follow Hall Road East until it bends sharp right to become Manor Road. Here you keep ahead along a bridleway, Dibb Lane, which runs between fields to Little Crosby.
- 3 On reaching the road in the village pause a moment or two. Ahead is the pretty St Mary's church, much restored by William Blundell in the 1840s. He even had the level of the roads lowered here to make the church look more impressive in the landscape! Nearby is Crosby Hall, several estate cottages and buildings which date mainly from the 17th and 18th centuries. Records indicate that there has been a hall on this site since the 13th century although the building seen now is 17th century, built by the influential landowning family, the Blundells.
- 4 Ride ahead on the B5193. It bends left to leave the village and once again you can feel the breeze on your face as you proceed along Moss Lane towards Hightown. This road is busier so be wary of traffic. Within half a mile you reach a junction with Gorsey Lane by a pocket of woodland known as Flea Moss Wood. Unusually for this area, the woodland is full of rhododendrons.
- 5 Go left to follow Gorsey Lane. It bends right and then left by Moss Farm. Just beyond you reach a junction with a track on the right. There's no signpost. Go along this through fields towards Hightown. It reaches houses and becomes a road again, Sandy Lane, which leads to Hightown Merseyrail Station on the left.



St Nicholas Fountain



- 6 Those seeking to continue to Formby can expect more traffic, mainly on roads in Formby. Continue along Alt Road to a junction. Keep right here and ride to a junction near Whiteedge Farm. Keep left here and this lane leads up to the busy A565 road.
- 7 Fortunately there is a cyclepath beside this. Turn left and follow this to the outskirts of Formby where the path gives out at a traffic roundabout, so take care. Go left and follow Liverpool Road (B5424) towards the town centre. The road bends right and you approach a number of shops.
- 8 At the mini roundabout go left along Raven Meols Lane. Continue over the level crossing and then ahead into Queen's Road and then Bushby's Lane, towards the sea. At the end of the road there's a junction with Lifeboat Road ahead and a track on the left known as St Luke's Church Road. You can go ahead here along Lifeboat Road to the information point on the right. Obviously, there is no cycling beyond

this point. Your bike would soon grind to a halt in the soft sand so dismount at the car park. It is, however, a great spot for a picnic. There are also many fine walks through to the nature reserves along the coast so lock up your bike and explore a little.

- 9 Otherwise, at the junction with Lifeboat Road go right to pass St Luke's Church, then right again along Kirklake Road to Formby Merseyrail Station which can be accessed from the road above the railway line.



# RIDE 3 OLD LIVERPOOL LOOP LINE

**Start:** Halewood Merseyrail Station  
**Finish:** Rice Lane Merseyrail Station  
**Ride Time:** Allow 2 hours  
**Distance:** 9 miles  
**Traffic:** Traffic free route

## Places of Interest

### The Old Liverpool Loop Line

This runs through Halewood Triangle Country Park, which at one time was a busy junction and network of sidings linking several railways both to Liverpool Docks and Southport. Nature has re-colonised rapidly during the past 10 years and the Park contains one of Merseyside's few remaining areas of native woodland.

You join what is part of The Trans-Pennine Trail, a long distance route which runs between Southport, Liverpool and Hull by a partnership of local authorities and other organisations. The section on which this ride is based is managed by Sustrans and rangers from Liverpool City and Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Councils. Throughout the route there are reminders of the old railway but there's no better feeling than when riding through the cuttings towards the old West Derby station platforms and buildings.

It is easy to divert off the route for refreshment between Halewood and Rice Lane.

### The Ride

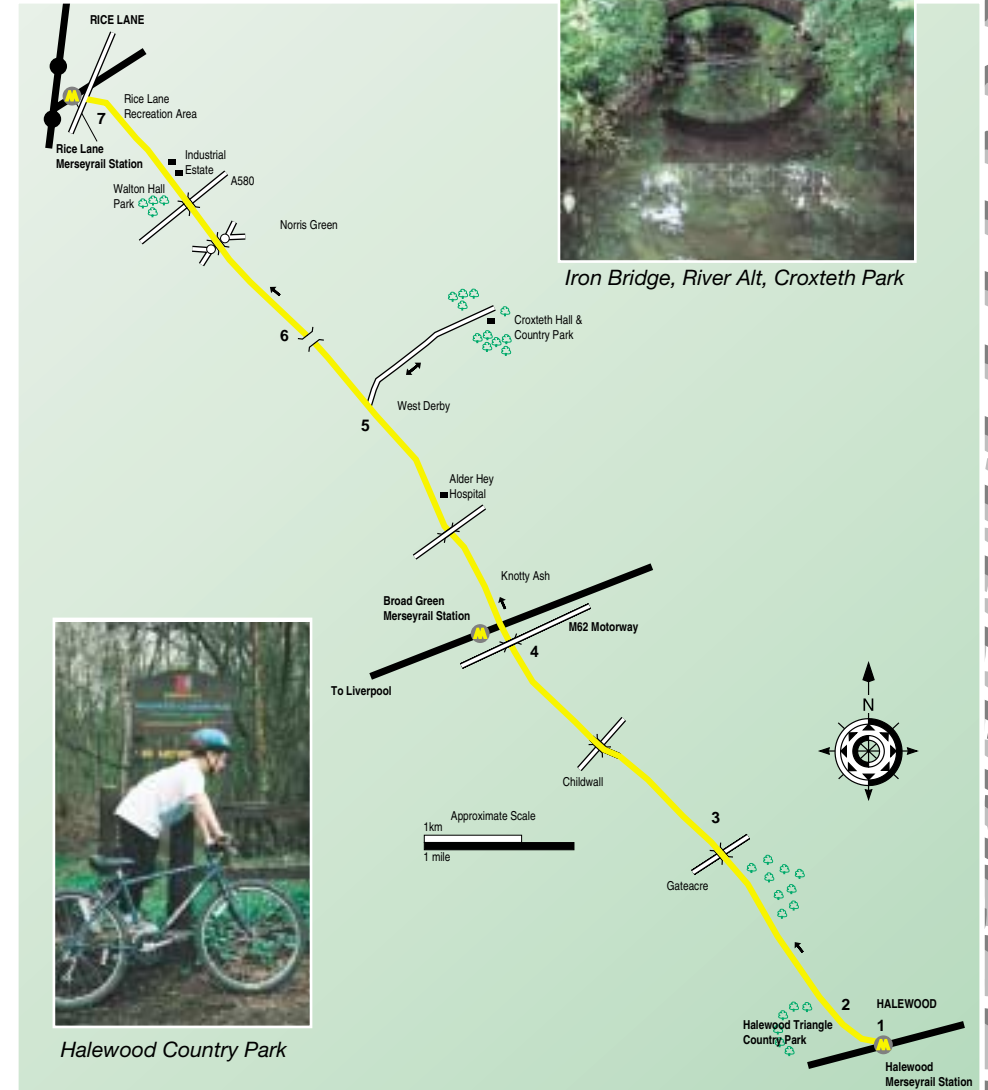
1 From Halewood Merseyrail Station cross over Hollies Road then go right and immediately left to join a track. Keep ahead to cross Rainbow Drive and beneath the Triangle sculpture which looks like two giant whalebones. Proceed onward through a car park and by a barred gate. The route is signposted.

- The path runs between young birch trees to a junction where it meets a wider track. Go right here as signposted to Gateacre. Proceed ahead along the old railway trackbed which runs along an embankment above fields and houses.
- You cross a bridge over the main road at Gateacre and the line takes you between houses. You will see a red brick church on the left at Childwall and then you cross another bridge over a main road.
- The next main landmark is the M62. You pass beneath it, another highway and the Merseyrail City line to St Helens. On emerging once more there is, on the left, an exit for Broad Green Merseyrail Station for those who wish to finish their ride at this mid-way point.
- From here onwards to the old West Derby railway station the line runs through several cuttings, offering a little haven for wildlife in an urban area. At the station there is the possibility of a short detour to Croxteth Country Park. To take this, ride up to the main road, Mill Lane. Cross over, go right and at the first junction bear left towards West Derby church and into Croxteth Country Park. These roads are moderately trafficked so take care.
- If not diverting to the Country Park then proceed ahead, passing a shopping centre, then crossing above a double roundabout. The route remains on an embankment until you cross over the A580 road. It then curves right by an industrial estate. At the end of this section there is an underpass and the route becomes much rougher.
- Here, you need to keep left to exit by way of Rice Lane Recreational Ground. Wheel your cycle across it to Rice Lane, a very busy road. At the main junction access to Rice Lane Merseyrail Station can be found on the left.

To find out how to get to any of the rides detailed in this publication ring the Traveline on 0870 608 2 608



Iron Bridge, River Alt, Croxteth Park



Halewood Country Park



# RIDE 4 AINSDALE CIRCULAR

**Start:** Ainsdale Merseyrail Railway Station

**Finish:** Ainsdale Merseyrail Railway Station

**Ride Time:** 3 hours

**Distance:** 18 miles

**Traffic:** There is moderate traffic on the first mile of route and low levels experienced on the roads between Gore House Farm and Downholland Moss. Otherwise the route is traffic free.

## Places of Interest

### Riding through Downholland Moss

The main feature of the ride is the rich "moss" farmland through which you pass, where arable crops have been grown for local markets throughout the ages. It is often possible to see flocks of geese or other birds gathering on these fields before taking flight to some distant land. In many respects it feels like the Netherlands; it is after all the lowlands of the North West.

The Cheshire Lines Cycle Path was developed by Sustrans, a charity that campaigns for sustainable transport, in association with Sefton and West Lancashire Councils. It links with the old Liverpool Loop Line Path as part of the Trans Pennine Trail. Sustrans has launched a campaign to establish a national network of cycle routes with about 5,000 miles already developed and in use, including this section\*.

### Ainsdale

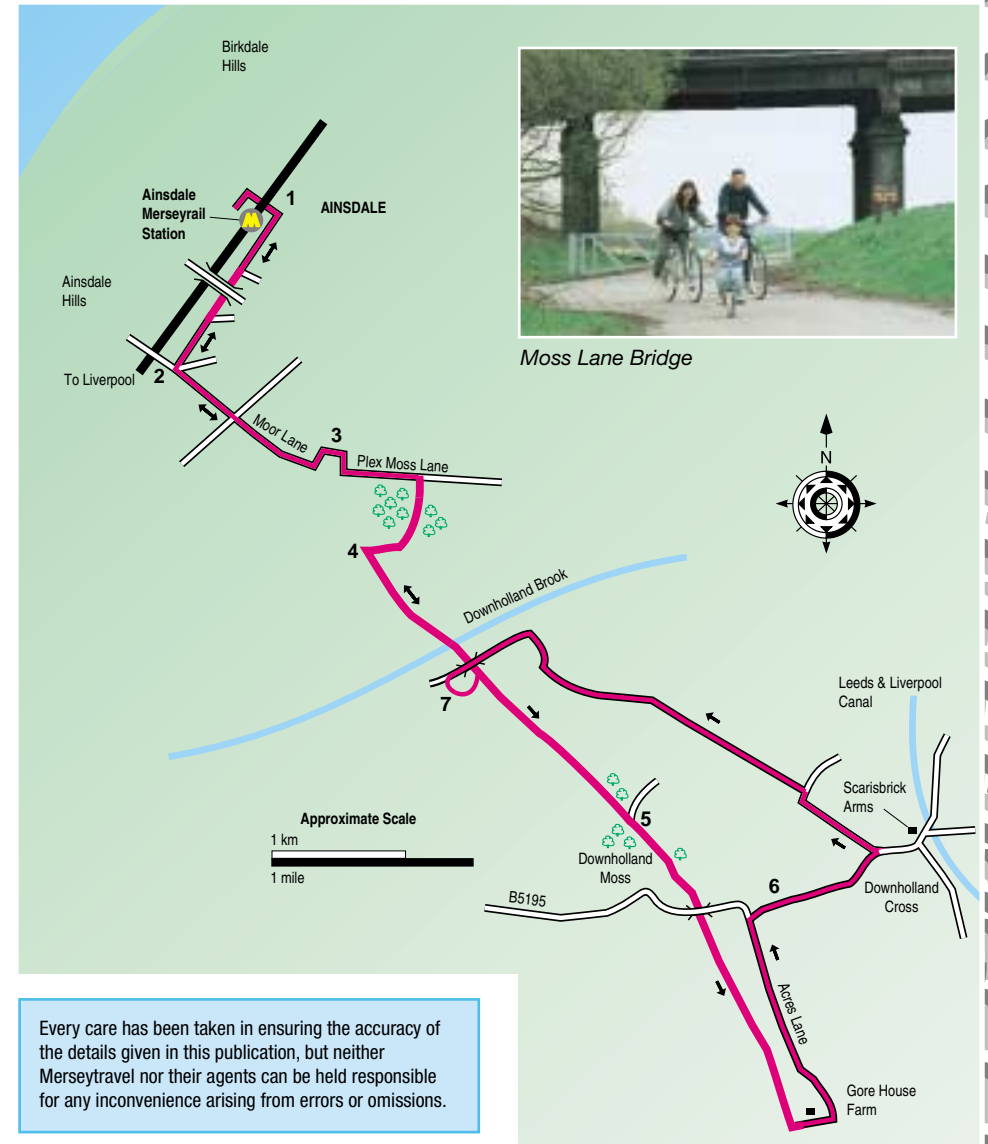
When in Ainsdale it is worth locking up the cycles to explore the Ainsdale National Nature Reserve and Ainsdale Hills local nature reserve on foot as both feature dunes and woodland.

## The Ride

- 1 Leave Ainsdale Merseyrail Station into Shore Road and go immediately right into Chesterfield Road. It is safer to simply wheel your cycle into Chesterfield Road. At the end beside Chesterfield Close you proceed ahead under the road bridge. Emerge into Bridge End Drive and go right along Easedale Drive and then keep right into Kendal Way.
- 2 You reach a junction with Pinfold Lane. Cross over to a path and turn left along the cycle route which follows the coastal road out of Ainsdale to a junction with the main A565 road. Cross straight over into Moor Lane, which soon becomes Plex Moss Lane and narrows.
- 3 It bends left, right twice and left again. The surface is very uneven because of subsidence. About 300 metres ahead look for a track on the right. This is the access track to the Cheshire Lines Cycle Path. Pass by the edge of a wood and follow the track as it bends right.
- 4 You reach a junction where you go left. Ride through perfectly flat countryside across Downholland Moss. Cross Downholland Brook and then the path becomes a metalled road running alongside a major drainage channel. You will pass under a road and then come to a junction with another old trackbed, a rail line which at one time ran into Southport.
- 5 Keep ahead to ride beneath the B5195 and to the left of a waterworks. In approximately half a mile you reach a semi circular small parking area. This is where you turn left along a track to pass Gore House Farm. Go left into Acres Lane. It winds to a junction with the B5195, appropriately known as Flatman's Lane. Turn right along this.
- 6 Pass a farm on the left and another on the right. The road bends sharply right to rise up to the Scarisbrick Arms at Downholland Cross, a public house which stands by the Leeds & Liverpool Canal.

However, your way is left at this bend along a narrower lane signposted to Haskayne. The road bends right then you turn left. This quiet lane links up with another. Keep ahead and follow this road as it rises up over the Cheshire Lines Path.

- 7 Apply your brakes on the descent as you bear left at the bottom along an access road to return to the cycle route. Go left and retrace your wheels back to Plex Moss Lane and Ainsdale.



\* For further information about the National Cycle Network phone 0845 113 0065.



# RIDE 5 SOUTH WIRRAL TOUR

**Start:** Hooton Merseyrail Station

**Finish:** Hooton Merseyrail Station

**Ride Time:** 4 hours

**Distance:** 11 miles

**Traffic:** You will encounter low levels of traffic on some lanes and moderate levels in places. There are more junctions and turns than on the other rides and the route is more hilly.

## Places to Visit

Liverpool University's Ness Gardens are renowned for their rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias in spring and roses and lilies in summer. There is so much more here though, including rare fruits, superb tropical and conservatory displays and a collection of British wildflowers which are available to see all year (entry fee payable).

The ride offers exquisite views of the Dee estuary, especially along Denhall Lane, but the endearing feature of the route has to be the number of pretty villages through which it passes. Burton was at one time the port for Chester. The Manor was a home of the Gladstone family, descendants of the Victorian Prime Minister W.E. Gladstone. The splendid beechwoods above the village are National Trust property, the nearby church is also worth visiting.

At Willaston you pass by Hadlow Road Station on the Wirral Way, a well restored country station where information about the area is available. There are several 17th and 18th century buildings throughout the village. Nearby, the windmill in Mill Lane is quite a sight. Built in the early 1800s it is very tall and is said to have ceased milling in the 1930s. It is now a private residence. You will cycle right by it.

The Deeside marshes beside Denhall Lane are a renowned bird reserve, bright in summer months with the flowers of sea asters. Hard to believe that there were coalmines hereabouts until 70 years ago, working the little known West Cheshire Coalfield.

The ride is based on "On Your Bike" published by Ellesmere Port and Neston Tourism, a series of cycle routes in South Wirral. The pack of routes is available at local tourist information centres for a small charge.

There's a cafe at Ness Gardens and several inns on the route.

## The Ride

- 1 From Hooton Merseyrail Station wheel your cycle out to Waterworks Lane (right). Go right along it and turn right into Oakfield Road. Turn right along Heath Lane and climb to pass over the railway. You bear right and rise to cross the Wirral Way but cycles are not allowed on this section so continue to the main B5133.
- 2 Turn left to ride into Willaston village. Go left by the Nag's Head pub along the B5151 Hadlow Road and left again at the old Hadlow Road railway station buildings to admire the fine restoration work at this country station.
- 3 Return to and continue along the B5151 road to the main A540 Chester High Road which is crossed at traffic lights. Go straight over and ride along Dunstan Lane to the pretty village of Burton.
- 4 The road continues through the village where you turn left into Station Road to cross over the railway and descend to the marshy margins of the Dee estuary. The road bends sharp right and is now known as Denhall Lane as it rises up to a junction.

- 5 Go left on the Neston Road to pass by the entrance to Ness Gardens. Once you have visited continue ahead to Ness village. Just before the Wheatsheaf public house turn right with care. This is known as Mill Lane and is very narrow in places. Rise up to the main A540 road where you cross straight over at the traffic lights into Damhead Lane. Along here you pass the entrance to Leahurst, a Liverpool University building.
- 6 Cross Hanns Hall Road with care as there is more traffic here. This leads into Lydiate Lane. Come to another junction with the B5151, Birkenhead Road, once across which you enter the much quieter Mill Lane to pass by the windmill on your right.
- 7 This bends round to Willaston village where you go left to ride along the B5133 Hooton Road to Hooton Merseyrail Station. It is better to dismount to cross the road into Waterworks Lane and the station.



Arriving at Hooton Station



Wildfowl Reserve at Denhall Lane

