

In and around Lancaster



Welcome to Lancaster, where wading birds gather against a backdrop of rich maritime history

The River Lune flows through this historic city and into Morecambe Bay. The bay brings nutrients to marine life that has attracted both birds and people throughout the ages. Sunderland Point on the north bank has a magical atmosphere and important maritime remnants, while Glasson Dock on the south bank is still a lively port.

Don't Miss...

There's so much to see and many hidden corners to explore, but these top 3 highlights are not to be missed!

- 1 Fabulous flocks of birds like knot and curlew at Sunderland Point**
- 2 Exploring popular routes from Lancaster along tree-lined canals and old railways**
- 3 Perfect spots for picnics and looking for kingfishers and otters along the River Lune**



curlew, dunlin and knot

© Ben Hall rspb images

In this guide you will find...

- **Seasonal highlights**
- **Three great days out**
- **How to get around**

On a rainy day...

Discover our fishing, shipbuilding and trading heritage at Lancaster Maritime Museum, explore Lancaster Castle, the city's galleries and shops, or take shelter in ancient public houses along the river and canal.

Fascinating fact

Sunderland Point is one of only a few places in England where you can find belted beauty moths. In early spring look out for the wingless black and yellow striped furry females on old fence posts near Potts Corner car park.

Seasonal Highlights

This area is full of wildlife, with something spectacular and different to see whatever the time of year:

Look out for:

SPRING

Gatherings of shelduck along the Lune estuary and saltmarsh creeks as they prepare to mate.

SUMMER

Little Egrets with their impressive white plumage as they stalk the saltmarsh and River Lune.

AUTUMN

Mesmerising murmurations of knot in autumn around high tide at beaches and coastal edges.

WINTER

Blow away the cobwebs - this is the best time to see ducks and wading birds like wigeon, dunlin and lapwing



little egret

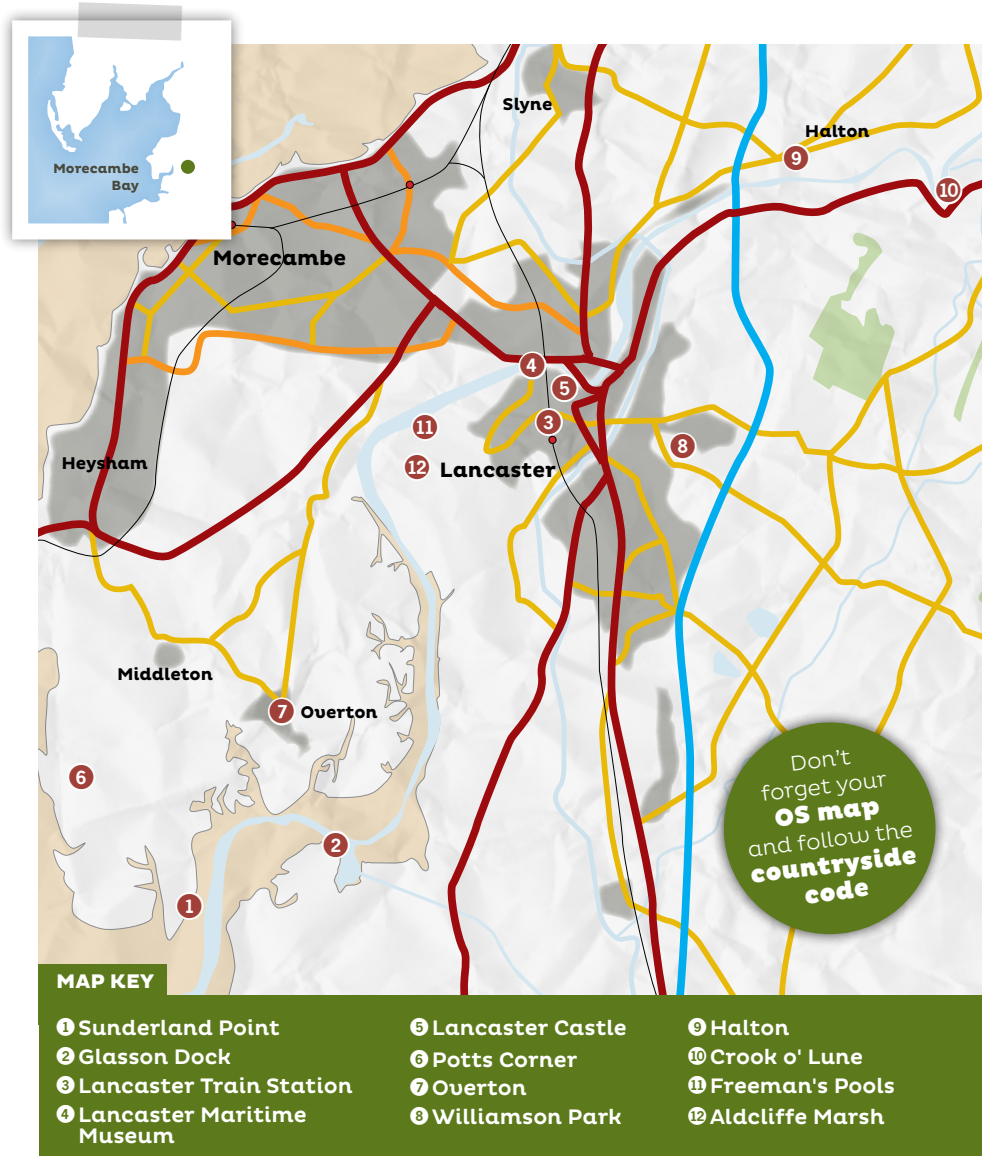
© Paul Chesterfield rspb images

Sunderland Point

Sunderland Point is a truly special place for both its heritage and nature, it has a magical atmosphere and important maritime remnants. It's location at the tip of the headland at the mouth of the River Lune led to it being chosen as the site of an out port for Lancaster at the start of the 18th century.

At one point Lancaster was the third busiest port in the country and Sunderland port was allegedly the first landing place in Britain for cotton. Today you will find fisherman's cottages, mooring posts, and the ropewalk. Mooring posts for the boats were used by the vessels carrying gun powder, transported from here to Powderhouse Lane in Lancaster. There is also a grave on the western shore of the point of a cabin boy or slave known as "Sambo", who some thought was left behind by his master.

- **The adventure to Sunderland Point starts as you leave Overton and ford the estuary at Ladies Bridge and follow the intertidal causeway road over saltmarsh to the port. Look out for shelduck with their chicks in the saltmarsh creeks in spring. Note this road is flooded at high tide – check tide times before you visit: www.tidetimes.org.uk.**
- **Walk around the coast to the headland to see the immense panorama of Morecambe Bay come into view. Here the saltmarsh and bay provide a major feeding area for up to 40,000 waders including knot, bar tailed godwit, and dunlin.**
- **Continue along the coast towards Potts Corner to discover the small grave site of Sambo, still well tended 200 years after his death. Stop a while to reflect on the poetry and messages, or continue to seek out more bird spectacles.**
- **Visit Potts Corner and Red Nab in autumn at high tide to see the black and white flashes of knot as massive flocks swoop in unison - known as murmurations.**



Below the water of the bay is a plethora of marine life. The fishermen and women here regularly catch salmon, shrimps and whitebait. Seals and porpoises were commonly spotted in the past, so keep your eyes peeled and see if you're lucky.

After the demise of the port, holidaymakers wanting to experience the healing muds and waters visited Sunderland and it became known as "Little Brighton on the Lune". While the cold waters may not seem appealing today, the views certainly still have an uplifting and therapeutic effect.



Lancaster

Lancaster is a vibrant city with a rich heritage linked to the river and Morecambe Bay. Amongst the hustle and bustle of popular markets, regular festivals and fascinating museums are some great spots to get away from it all and get closer to nature.

The River Lune runs through the heart of the city. It is tidal in nature and the sand banks and saltmarsh along its edge provide a haven for wildlife. The Lancaster Canal is another nature rich corridor through the city. These, together with parks, woodlands and small nature reserves make for a green city experience.

- **Williamson Park just a short walk from the town centre is home to beautiful gardens, Ashton Memorial and Butterfly House. Visit the Butterfly House, then climb the steps inside Ashton Memorial for great views across the bay.**
- **Follow the River Lune path by boat or by bike to the Crook o' Lune. Along the river stop and admire the massive aqueducts, which make great viewing point for looking for kingfishers. Look out for otters at Halton. A walk to Grey's Seat is worth the effort for the view immortalised in a painting by Turner in 1816 and hasn't changed since then. Take a picnic or enjoy food in local pubs at Caton.**
- **Visit an inner city oasis at Freeman's Pools and Aldcliffe saltmarsh.**
- **The pools about the River Lune and are regularly used by both wintering and breeding waders and wildfowl. Green Sandpiper, Gadwall and Little Egret can be seen in winter. Aldcliffe saltmarsh is home to 1000's of lapwing and pink footed geese each winter. You'll also see swans, curlew and golden eye.**

To get here head to St Georges Quay and then New Quay road in Lancaster. The road ends at the start of the Glasson Dock/ Lune Estuary walk/cycle track.



Lancashire Wildlife Trust's reserve is situated about 300m on your right along the cycle track with Aldcliffe saltmarsh a little further along the track. Walk out along the track and back along the paths nearer the river to your starting point, or continue along the River Lune route to Glasson Dock.

- **Take a trip on a narrow boat along the Lancaster Canal and look out for ducks, kingfisher, swans and dragonflies. Explore by bike and you can cycle to Glasson Dock and return along the River Lune cycle/walk route where you'll see waterfowl and wading bird spectacles.**

Glasson Dock

In 1779 the Lancaster Port Commission decided to build Glasson Dock on the south headland of the River Lune. The lively little dock is popular today and a visit to the Port of Lancaster Smokehouse is a must. Pubs and cafes here are very popular and most have great views out into the estuary.

In 1826 a canal branch was built to connect Glasson Dock with the main Lancaster Canal. In 1883 a railway line connected Glasson Dock to Lancaster, but closed in 1974. You can follow the canal towpath from Lancaster all the way to Glasson Dock

and the old railway is now a cycleway. Both are great traffic free routes perfect for a day out exploring.

- **While away the hours exploring the village and coastal paths. Walk to Cockersands Abbey along the coast path to see lapwing in summer, dunlin in autumn and knot, curlew, oystercatchers and godwits in winter. Or, stay closer to the docks and explore the walk along the estuary to Conder Green to see greenshank, redshank and lapwing. The best time to see them is 2 hours before and after high tide.**
- **Roe deer have been seen swimming across sections of the River Lune - keep your eyes peeled!**



Getting here

We believe that a car free journey is a care free journey.

- **Arrive by train, Lancaster train station is on the western mainline. Call National Rail Enquiries 08457 48 49 50. Look out for a Duo ticket when two adults travel on Northern Trains**
- **Arrive by bus from Preston on bus number 40 or 41, from Blackpool on bus service 42, or Keswick and Windermere on the 555**
- **By bike, National Cycle Route 6 leaves Preston along the Lune into Lancaster, and follows Lancaster Canal to Carnforth**

Getting Around

The quiet footpaths and lanes are perfect for exploring by boot and bike.

- **Take a compass and a map (OS Explorer Map OL7) and wear appropriate clothing**
- **Take the whole family for a day out using the traffic free paths along the River Lune – south to Glasson Dock and north to the Crook o' Lune**
- **Cycle the quiet lanes of the Lune Valley or for the more adventurous try the Lancashire Cycleway (Route 90)**
- **Visit www.celebratingcycling.org for more routes**
- **You can hire bikes from Lakeland Cycles, Bolton le Sands 01524 735465, or Sunshine Cycles at Coopers Amusements, Morecambe, 01524 414709**

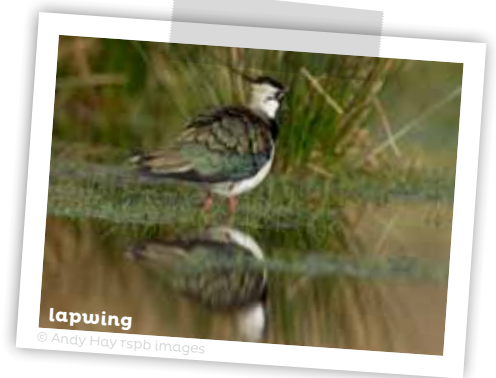


© Andy Hay rspb images

Staying Longer

Lancaster is a great base for a long weekend or a short break.

- **Choose to stay at the heart of the city or in the surrounding countryside inns, hotels and guesthouses. Find out more at www.citycoastcountryside.co.uk**
- **Call Lancaster Visitor Information Centre on 01524 32878**



lapwing
© Andy Hay rspb images

Moving on

Look out for other itineraries in this series at www.morecambebaynature.org.uk/discover.

- **Cycle to Arnside & Silverdale AONB, famous for its wildlife and a haven for butterflies in particular**
- **Visit the Wyre Estuary and Rossall Point for bird spectacles.**



Useful contacts: call or search online

- **Lancaster Visitor Information Centre 01524 582394**
- **Lancaster Maritime Museum 01524 382 264**
- **Williamson Park Butterfly House 01524 33318**
- **www.lancashirewalks.com**
- **www.canalrivertrust.org.uk**
- **www.citycoastcountryside.co.uk**



This leaflet is brought to you by Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership's Nature Improvement Area and Morecambe Bay Partnership's 700 Days to Transform the Bay scheme. It is funded by Defra, DCLG, Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, Coastal Communities Fund and RSPB Futurescapes EU Life Comms +.

The routes described are for guidance only. Please use an up to date map when exploring this area. It's a good idea to plan your route in more detail before you set off, and to check the weather forecast and tide tables. Wear appropriate clothing and don't forget to take food and water. The Partnerships above cannot be held responsible in the unlikely event of injury or accident whilst exploring this area. For more information on the exploring the nature of Morecambe Bay visit www.morecambebaynature.org.uk