



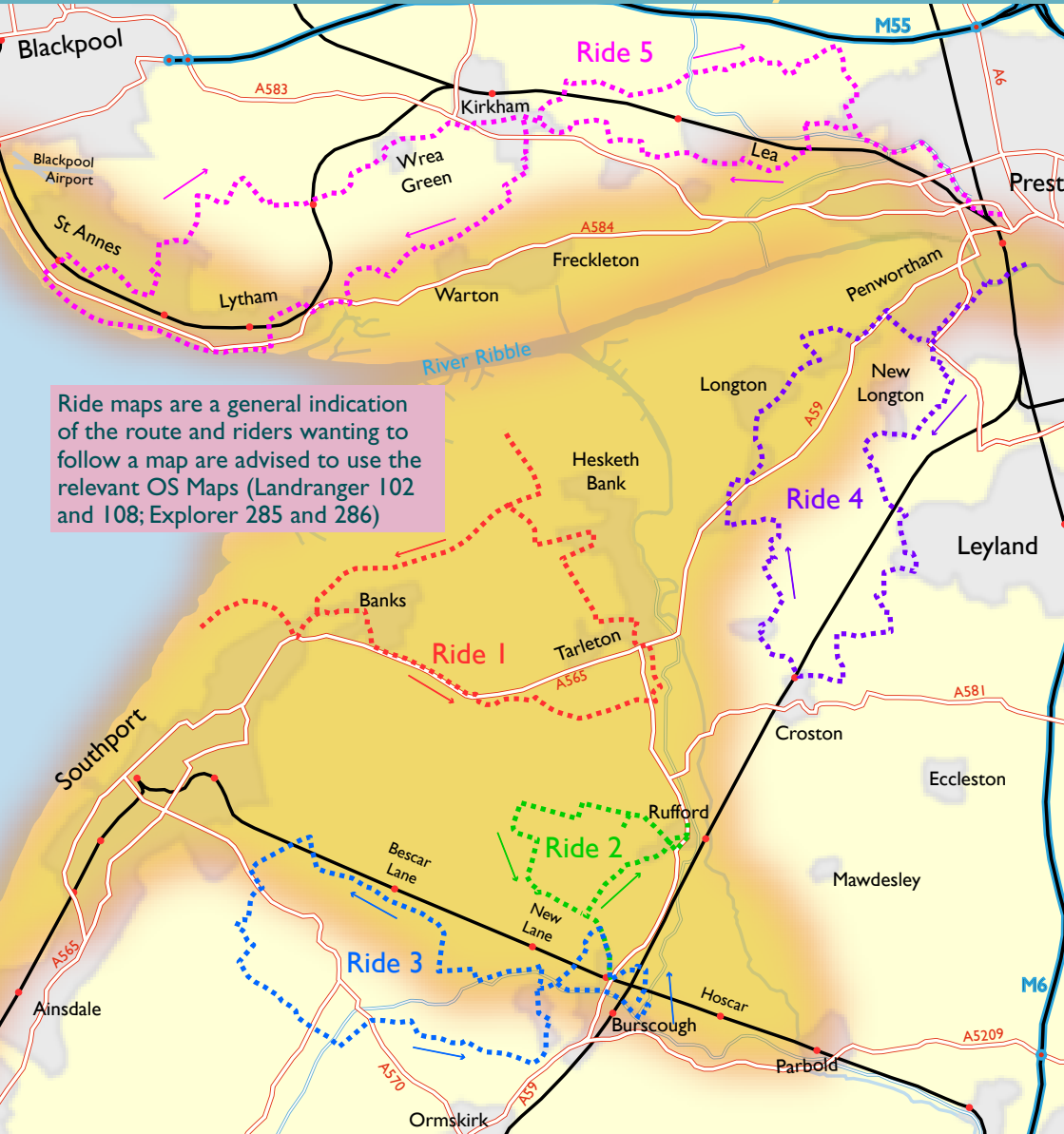
Ribble Coast
& Wetlands
Regional Park

Ribble Coast and Wetlands Cycle Rides



Five Rides from 16 - 36km (10 - 22 miles)

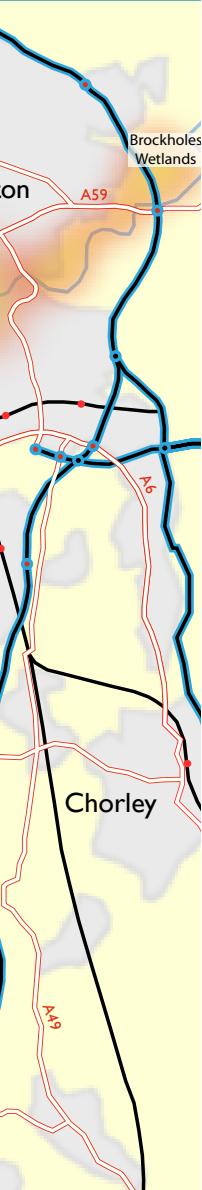
Ribble Coast and Wetlands Cycle Rides



Ride maps are a general indication of the route and riders wanting to follow a map are advised to use the relevant OS Maps (Landranger 102 and 108; Explorer 285 and 286)

The Ribble Coast and Wetlands is a fascinating patchwork of different habitats, roughly bounded by the resorts of Southport and Lytham St Annes in the west and the city of Preston in the east. It takes in the tidal waters and sands of the Ribble Estuary itself, the salt-marshes and dunes which line its shores. These are surrounded by an intricate patchwork of wetlands, mossland, woodland and farmland.

This special area is one of the most important places for birdlife in Europe, especially for ducks, geese, swans and wading birds. In the winter it teems with visiting species such as Pink-footed Geese and Wigeon; in summer Avocet, Redshank, Skylark, Lapwing, Gulls and Terns breed on the marshes while Shelduck, Gadwall, Pochard and Tufted Duck favour the wetlands.



Ribble Coast and Wetlands by Bike

Sites such as Fairhaven Lake, Marshside, Hesketh Out Marsh, Mere Sands Wood and Martin Mere are ideal for observing this tapestry of life and all can easily be visited by bike. Cycling is a natural and enjoyable way to explore this area and you'll see far more than you would when travelling by car. Riding is easy as the area is low-lying and largely flat. It's readily accessible from surrounding centres like Southport, Lytham, Blackpool, Chorley and Preston, and good rail links add to the options.

Large areas have few trees or hedges and the land stretches almost uninterrupted to the horizon. It makes for easy cycling (except when there's a breeze against you!)

Travelling by train

Bikes and trains are natural partners; better for the environment and, often, more convenient than using a car. Ribble Coast and Wetlands is well served by rail lines, giving many options for place-to-place rides as well as circular routes. Rural stations allow you to start a ride without doing battle with urban traffic. There are three main routes: Southport–Wigan; Preston–Lytham–Blackpool South; and Preston–Ormskirk (no Sunday service). Northern Rail operates trains on all three lines; bicycles are carried free of charge but space is limited.



For further information telephone 0845 000 0125 or visit www.northernrail.org. Other operators run trains to Blackpool North, stopping at Kirkham and Wesham. Ormskirk is linked to Liverpool via Merseyrail.

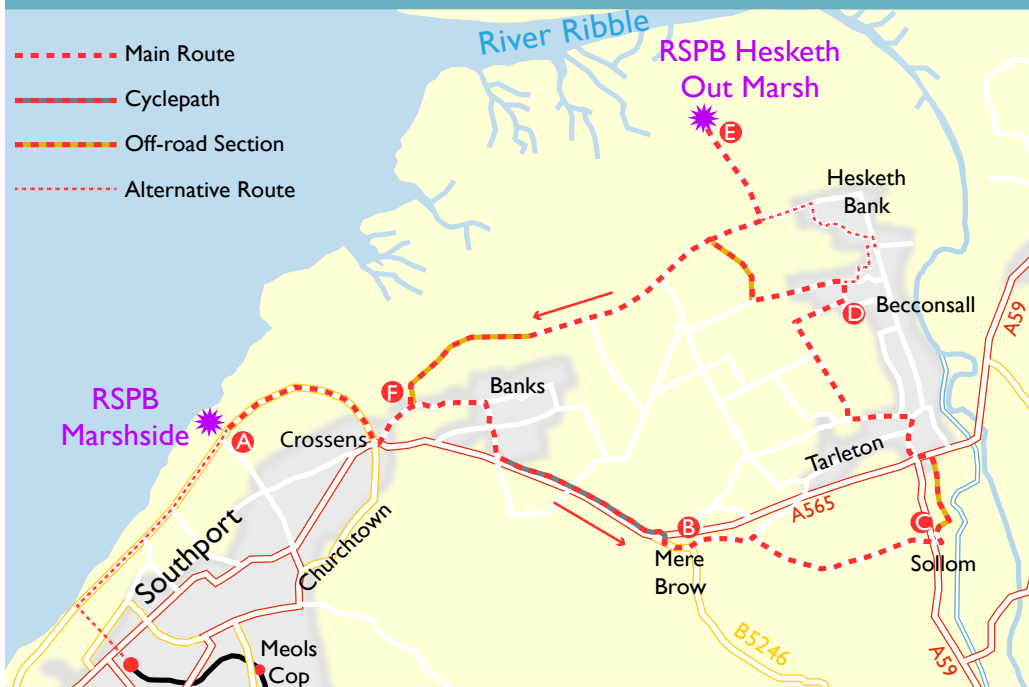
National Rail Enquiries: 08457 48 49 50 or visit www.nationalrail.co.uk

Travelling by car

All the rides are also readily accessible by car. In some cases this may mean starting from a slightly different point; the route descriptions give clear details. This may also mean the ride is slightly shorter than the distance stated at the head of the page.

I: A Circuit from Southport

Distance approx. 35.2km/ 21.9 miles



A circuit through the rich agricultural land south of the Ribble Estuary, with a chance to visit the RSPB reserve on the wide expanse of Hesketh Out Marsh. There are three off-road sections; the middle one of these is the toughest, but it's quite short. An alternative route is given. The others are easier, though there can be puddles. The route is suitable for most bikes, but not for thoroughbred road bikes.

Arriving by train: Southport is the obvious choice, with good links to Wigan and Liverpool.

Arriving by car: RSPB Marshside Car Park on Marine Drive (cycle-racks here too).

Refreshments: Pubs in Banks, Mere Brow and Tarleton.

Attractions: RSPB reserves at Marshside and Hesketh Out Marsh; West Lancashire Light Railway in Hesketh Bank.

The route is described starting at the RSPB Marshside Car Park on Marine Drive. From other parts of Southport it may be easier to follow one of the designated cycle routes as far as Crossens Roundabout (e.g. the advisory

route along the A565). Those arriving by train should head straight out to Marine Parade and then turn R along Marine Drive.

A. Exit the car park and turn L (east) along Marine Drive. There's a cycle path most of the way but it runs out just before Crossens Roundabout: take care on this busy stretch. At the roundabout turn L on Banks Road and continue straight ahead as it becomes Ralph's Wife's Lane. Continue into Banks and opposite a church turn R on Hoole Lane.

Continue straight ahead into Guinea Hall Lane and meet the A565 at a double roundabout. Turn L on the cycle track alongside the main road for 2.5km. At a large roundabout continue a few metres then use the cycle lane



opposite side of the road); go through a yard between glasshouses and then straight ahead on a rougher track. This becomes unkempt and grassy, though should always be rideable if you're fairly strong. At least the route is obvious, as it follows a small power-line on wooden poles. The tough section is about 600m long, improving gradually as it nears the end.

Reaching a road (Shore Road), turn R if you want to visit the RSPB site at Hesketh Out Marsh (if not, just

turn L straightaway). After 800m turn L on a tarmac track (Dib Lane) with a small RSPB sign. Ride all the way to the end where there is a car-park with bike-racks, but no other facilities; it's worth the 3-minute walk to the elevated viewpoint. The obvious industrial site across the marshes is the BAE airfield at Warton, on the other side of the Ribble, used for developing a range of (mostly military) aircraft.

E. 23.8km. Return to Shore Road and turn R then keep straight ahead for 4km until the road makes a sharp L bend. Go straight ahead into a bridleway with a firm gritty surface and follow it for almost 2km, past a couple of crossing tracks, until it bends L towards the end of a row of houses. This last short stretch can be a bit muddier but rarely difficult.

F. 31.7km. Exit onto a road; this is Ralph's Wife's Lane. Turn R and retrace the outward route to Crossens Roundabout and back into Southport.

** To avoid the grassy Bridleway, turn R on Moss Lane, L at the end on Station Rd, then L on Chapel Rd and L at its end on Shore Rd.*

to turn right, across the A565 and into the B5246 at Mere Brow.

B. 8.3 km. Where the B5246 bends R, continue straight ahead on Mere Brow Lane, joining the Lancashire Cycleway (NCN 91). Follow the Cycleway as it turns R into an unnamed minor road (Green Lane) near a cluster of glass-houses. The narrow lane sits well above the surrounding fields, which have shrunk over the centuries; subsidence makes the ride bumpy but it's delightfully quiet. At the end go straight across the A59 into Sollom. At a T-junction turn L then keep straight ahead as the Lancashire Cycleway goes off R.

C. 12.7km. As you come back to the A59 there's a large entrance on the right by the junction; the easiest way into it is by walking along the pavement for a few metres. Go through a concrete yard and continue on a rougher track (Back Lane), which soon swings left to head north. This may have big puddles in winter but generally has a good firm surface.

At the end turn left on the A59 for 150m to traffic lights (if in doubt walk this short section). Turn right on Church Road into Tarleton. Go across a mini-Roundabout then, at another one near the Health Centre, turn left on Gorse Lane. Follow this out of the village then turn right on Johnson's Meanygate. Where this makes a sharp L bend, go straight ahead on a track (continuation of Johnson's Meanygate) for 500m then turn R onto a tarmac lane (Boundary Meanygate).

D. 17.7km. Swing L into Boundary Lane and ride to a T-junction with Moss Lane*. Turn L. After 1.3km turn R (Bridleway sign on the

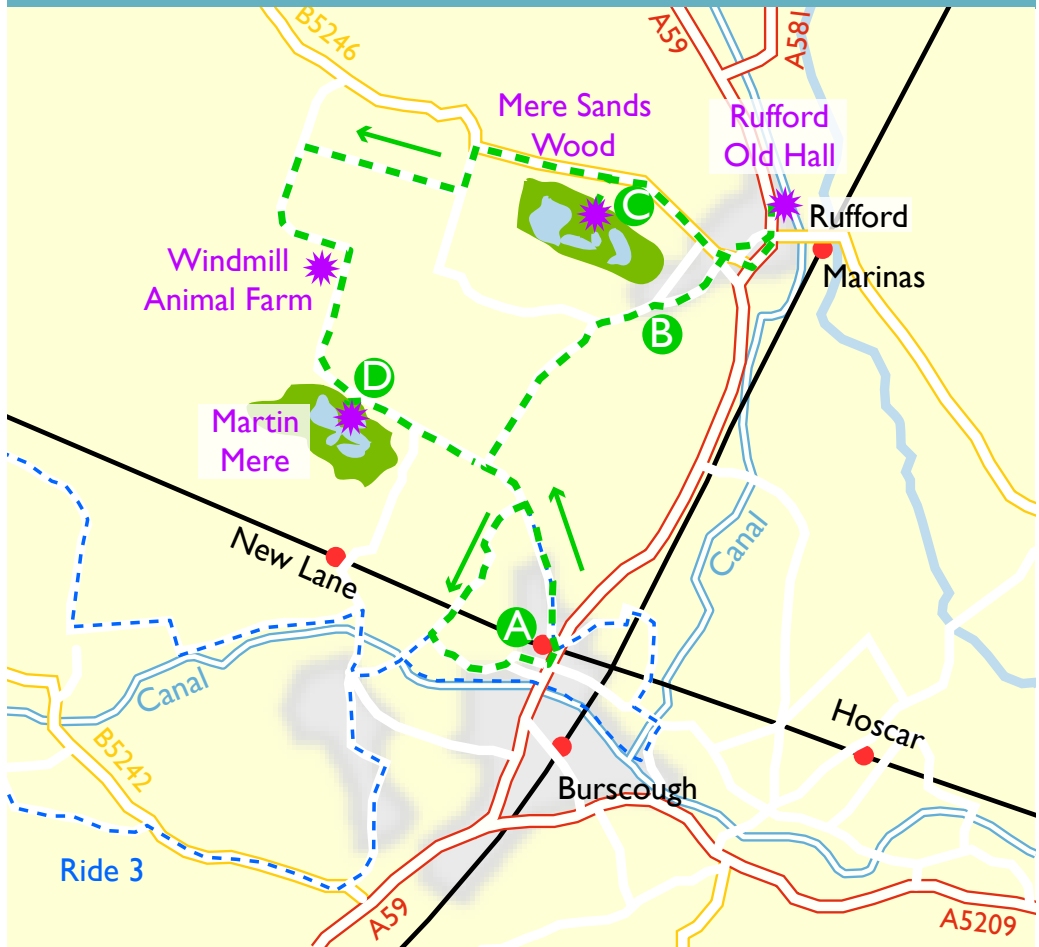
Marshside and Hesketh Out Marsh

Many of the Ribble estuary's internationally important numbers of birds use the RSPB's sites. Hesketh Out Marsh was recreated from farmland in 2008.



2: Rufford and Martin Mere

Distance approx. 16.6 km/ 10.3 miles



Several of the area's most important visitor attractions can be visited on a short ride from Burscough, including the rich nature reserves at Martin Mere and Mere Sands Wood as well as Rufford Old Hall, a magnificent sixteenth-century house now in the care of the National Trust.

The ride is short and entirely on tarmac so it's suitable for all bikes, and with so many attractions along the way it's ideal for all the family, though some of the roads do carry a fair amount of traffic.

Arriving by train: Burscough Bridge is on the Wigan–Southport line. The rural station at New Lane is also close to the route. Burscough Junction is on the Preston–Ormskirk line.

Arriving by car: Several car-parks in the centre of Burscough.

Refreshments: Several pubs and cafes along the route (including Martin Mere).

Attractions: Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Martin Mere; Windmill Animal Farm (familiar and exotic animals, miniature railway); Rufford Old Hall (historic house and gardens); Mere Sands Wood nature reserve.

Start: Burscough Bridge Station (to link from Burscough Junction turn R on the B5241 and R again with care on the A59).

A. Exit the station; from the south platform use either Station Approach or steps from the platform up to the A59. Turn L on the A59 then L again on Red Cat Lane (from the north platform exit directly onto Red Cat Lane). Follow this as it swings R and heads out into open country. Take the first lane on the R (Curlew Lane), about 1.5km from Burscough. Follow this to a T-junction and turn R, then follow the road round R as it reaches houses (Brick Kiln Lane) on the edge of Rufford.

B. 4.4km. Follow this to its end, meeting the B5246. Turn R then first L on Flash Lane. Follow this to the A59. This is busy and there's no cycle-lane, but it's only about 200m to Rufford Old Hall.

Retrace down the A59; unfortunately Flash Lane is one-way, so continue on the A59 past a L turn on the B5246 (this leads to Rufford's two canal marinas, both of which have cafés. The Boathouse at St Mary's Marina has bike racks). Turn R on the B5246, Holmeswood Road. After 1.3km turn L on a signed track to Mere Sands Wood (also signs for Kennels).

Mere Sands Wood is owned by The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside. Its mixed woodlands, meres and wetlands are a haven for wildlife - in the summer it's a great place to see several species of dragonfly, for instance. There's a small visitor centre with toilets and hot and cold drinks are available.



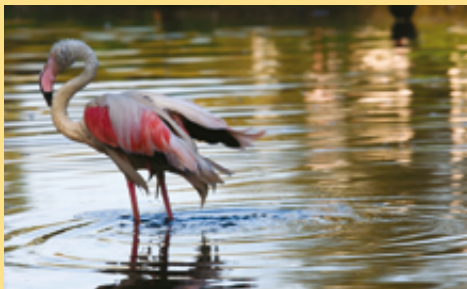
Rufford Old Hall, ancestral home of the Hesketh family, is one of Lancashire's finest Tudor houses. Its most spectacular feature is the Great Hall, where a young Will Shakespeare once performed. The gardens are also impressive, and there's a pleasant café.



C 7.9km. Return up the access track to the road and turn L. Where the road bends sharply R, turn L on Sandy Way, then second R on peaceful Cross Meanygate. Meet another busier road at a T-junction, opposite Homestead Farm (café). Turn L and follow the road through several bends, passing Windmill Animal Farm before arriving at Martin Mere.

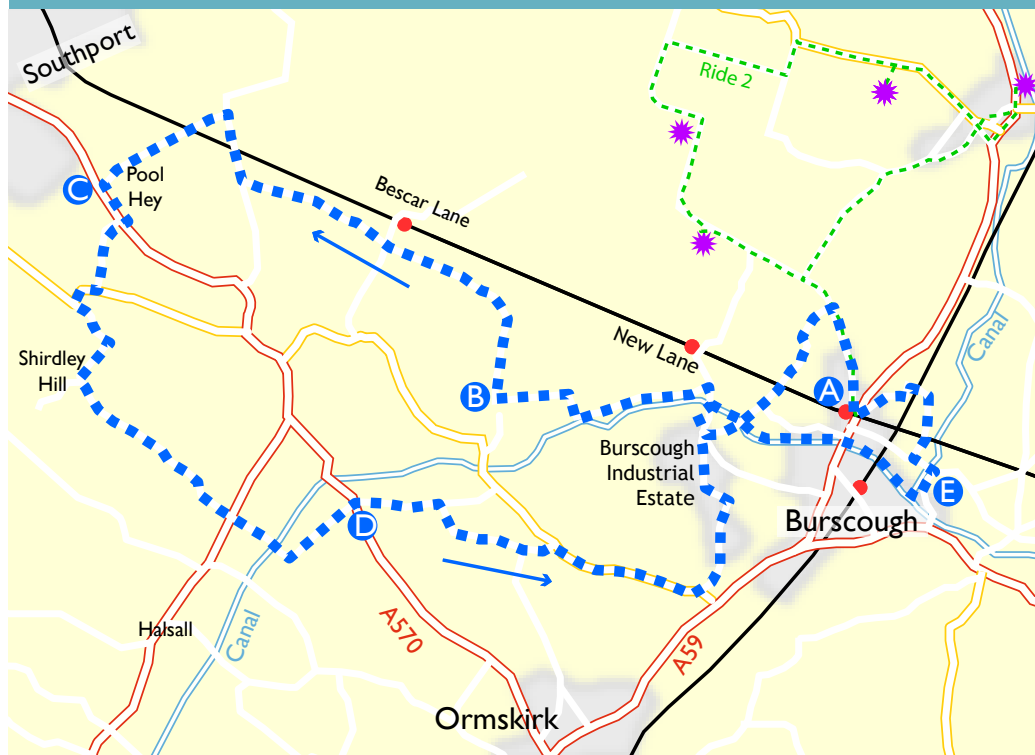
D 13.7km. Continue along the road for about 2km (passing Brandreth Barn tea-room) then turn R on Crabtree Lane. After the level crossing turn L (Orrell Lane) into Burscough. Turn L on Mart Lane then follow it round R to meet the A59 just south of the station.

Martin Mere is one of the most important wildlife sites in the UK, famous for wintering wildfowl and breeding waders and ducks. It also hosts exotic species such as Flamingos. The site boasts a breeding pair of European beavers, reintroduced to Lancashire after an absence of 500 years. And cyclists receive a discount on admission!



3: Burscough and the Mosses

Distance approx. 31km/ 19.3 miles



Once much of this land lay under the waters of a vast lake, of which the present-day Martin Mere is just a remnant. Most of the land has been drained, creating wide expanses of black soil under vast skies. The flat terrain makes for easy cycling—until the wind gets up, when the open landscape offers little shelter.

For most of the way the surroundings are rural, but there is a short section through an industrial estate, which is preferable to the busy A59. Surfaces (including the towpath) are generally good and the ride is suitable for most bikes.

Arriving by train: Burscough Bridge station, where the described ride starts, is on the Wigan–Southport line. The route can also be joined or left at New Lane or Bescar Lane. To access the route from Burscough Junction on the Preston–Ormskirk line, turn L on the B5241. At a T-junction turn L on the A5209. After 500m turn L on Wheat Lane. Pass the Ship Inn and meet the main route at Point E.

Arriving by car: Several car-parks in the centre of Burscough.

Refreshments: Several pubs and tearooms along the route.



Start (A). From the south side (westbound platform) exit through the car-park and turn L on the A59 to go over the bridge, then turn L onto Red Cat Lane. From the north side (eastbound platform) exit directly onto Red Cat Lane. Follow it out of town then turn L on Crabtree Lane. Continue over an interesting level crossing then straight ahead at a junction and over a canal swing bridge by the Slipway Inn. (The route uses this towpath later).

At a T-junction turn R and soon cross the canal again by the Farmer's Arms. Turn L on Gorst Lane (sign for Martin Inn, Cycleway sign). Follow the road to a T-junction. (Where the road bends L by the Martin Inn, The Farm tea-room is 200m away down a side-lane).



B 6.5km. Turn R (Bescar). Keep straight ahead at a crossroads (Bescar Lane station is a short distance to the R) then go R at a T-junction (signed Churchtown). Cross a level crossing. The road narrows to single track with passing places. Turn 1st L, go over another level crossing and on to Pool Hey and a T-junction with the A570.

C 13km. Turn L, using a cycle track alongside the busy main road. In 500m turn R on to Turning Lane. Go R at a T-junction on the B5243 then 1st L and round into the small village of Shirdley Hill. Follow the road round L and continue to the A5147. Go straight across into Morris Lane. Continue over a canal bridge; the road swings round L. Continue 1km to the village of Pinfold and meet the A570.

D 19.8km. Go straight across into Smithy Lane. After 1km turn R on Moorfield Lane and follow it to a T-junction (B5242). Turn R here then go L at a roundabout and wind through

Burscough Industrial Estate. After 1km turn R at a crossroads where the main route initially appears to go straight ahead, and after another 500m turn R again on Langley Rd. At the next crossroads go straight ahead into Crabtree Lane. At the swing bridge by the Slipway Inn turn R on the towpath.

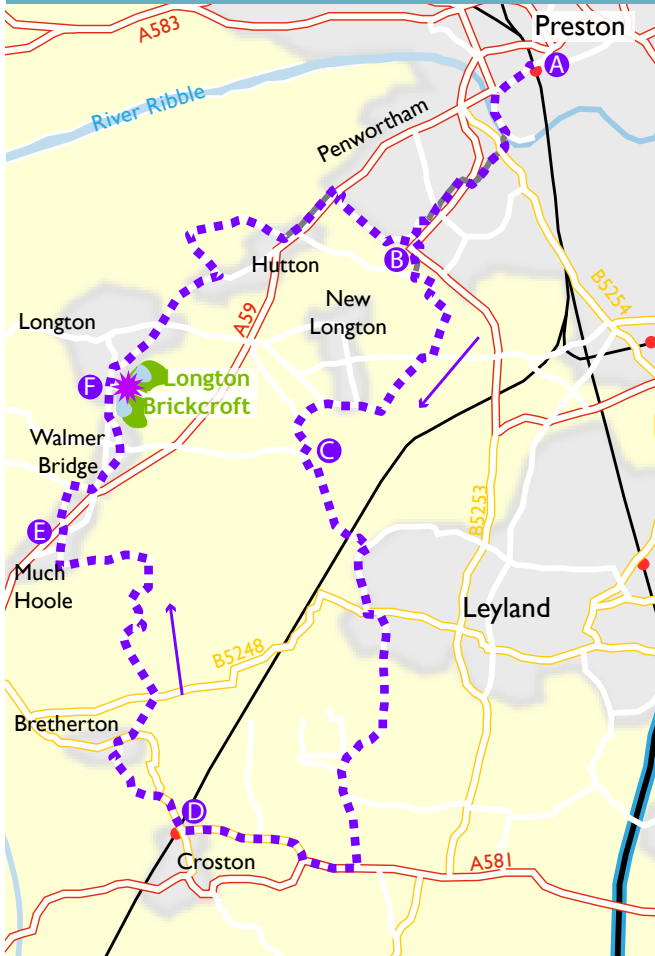
Follow the Leeds & Liverpool Canal towpath into Burscough and easily through the town. Pass an old mill with a tall chimney then go under the railway (Preston–Ormskirk line) and over a humped bridge at the start of the Rufford branch of the canal. Turn L immediately over stone setts (not officially a cycle route so walk 100m) and pass behind the Ship Inn to emerge on a lane.

E. 28.8km. Turn L at a T-junction, over the canal again then 1st R on Warper's Moss Lane. Follow this to the A59 and turn L. For trains to Wigan and Manchester, turn R into Red Cat Lane then L down the station access. For Southport trains, follow the A59 over the bridge and then turn R.



4: South Ribble Mosslands

Distance approx. 36.1 km/ 22.4 miles



This ride explores the area south and west of Preston, threading through a number of interesting villages between stretches of typically wide, open countryside. The reclaimed industrial site of Longton Brickcroft gives a fascinating glimpse of a habitat that was once typical of much of the area.



Arriving by train: Preston is the obvious starting point. Croston (on the Ormskirk–Preston) line then offers a halfway bale-out point. Alternatively, by starting at Croston, the urban link from/to Preston can be omitted.

Arriving by car: It's probably most convenient to start in Croston: pick up the route at Point D.

Public Toilets: Preston station, Longton Brickcroft.

Refreshments: Numerous pubs and cafes along the route. Croston alone has no fewer than 6 pubs!

A. Exit Preston Station and turn L on Fishergate. Descend steadily, keep L near the bottom and swing L into Broadgate. Turn R onto the old Penwortham Bridge. Cross the river, turn L on Riverside Road then R on a cycle route signed for Hutton.

Cross the B5254 and follow the cycle track, alongside an old railway embankment then a dual carriageway (A582). Go under a bridge and follow the track circling up L, to cross the bridge you just passed beneath. Cross over the A582 then turn L, still following 'Hutton'.

The track ends near traffic lights. Bear L to follow the cycle route through the junction, then turn R onto Cromwell Road. In 30m bear

L on a cycle path leading into another quiet street. Turn L at a T-junction and continue to another short cycle-path, emerging beside a roundabout.

B. 3.6km. Go L, cross the main road (A582) and follow the cycle-path around the roundabout, crossing two more roads. Now the route bends away from the roundabout and soon meets a lane.

Continue to a T-junction and turn L, then at another T-junction turn R. After 150m turn L into Green Lane. At its end turn R on Chain House Lane then in 150m turn L on Long Moss Lane. Follow this through its twists and turns; it eventually becomes Wholesome Lane.

C. 8.2km. At a T-junction turn L (Midge Hall Lane) and follow it over a level crossing (Preston–Ormskirk line). At a T-junction turn R on Long Meanygate. At the next T-junction turn L (B5248 Dunkirk Lane), then 2nd R on School Lane. Continue ahead—the road becomes Ulnes Walton Lane. After passing the entrance to Wymott Prisons, the Lancashire Cycleway joins from the R.

At a T-junction turn R on the busier A581 (Conservatory Cafe at garden centre). Keep straight ahead at a junction where the A581 goes L, now following Moor Lane (B5249) and continue into the outskirts of Croston. The road rises to a junction. Turn L for access to Croston station and the attractive centre of the village, including the historic St Michael's and All Angels church.

D. 17.1km. To continue with the main route, bear R at the junction, over the railway bridge. (If starting in Croston, turn L out of the station and L again over the bridge). After about 1km follow the Cycleway L onto narrow Back Lane. After approx. 500m turn R on another narrow lane and follow it to meet the B5247 again, in Bretherton. Turn R then bear L on Marl Cop. Follow this to a crossroads. Go straight across into Doles Lane and continue about 2km. At the junction with Moss House Lane turn L. Turn R on Smithy Lane, then beside the Smithy Inn bear R on Liverpool Old Rd. Where this bends R, turn L on Brook Lane.

E. 23.5km. Cross the A59 with care to continue on Brook Lane. At a T-junction turn R and meet the A59 again at a roundabout. Go L into Liverpool New Rd, then fork R by a petrol station into Liverpool Old Rd. This leads through Walmer Bridge where there are pubs, shops and cafes. Rejoin the busier Liverpool New Rd and soon pass the entrance to Longton Brickcroft.

F. 26km. Continue on Liverpool Rd through a slight dip then bear R on School Lane. Pass St Andrew's church then rejoin Liverpool Road in the centre of Longton. Continue another 1km then turn L on Skip Lane. Turn R on Ratten Lane and follow it to meet the A59. Turn L on the cycle track for 1km. Where the dual carriageway ends on the edge of Penwortham, turn R into Howick Moor Lane (approach from the end of Howick Cross Lane, using the reservation at the end of the dual carriageway). Follow the lane into another cycle track which soon emerges beside another road. Follow this round R then cross to its other side and emerge at a roundabout, which you may recognise as the one which you partly circumnavigated on the outward route from Preston.

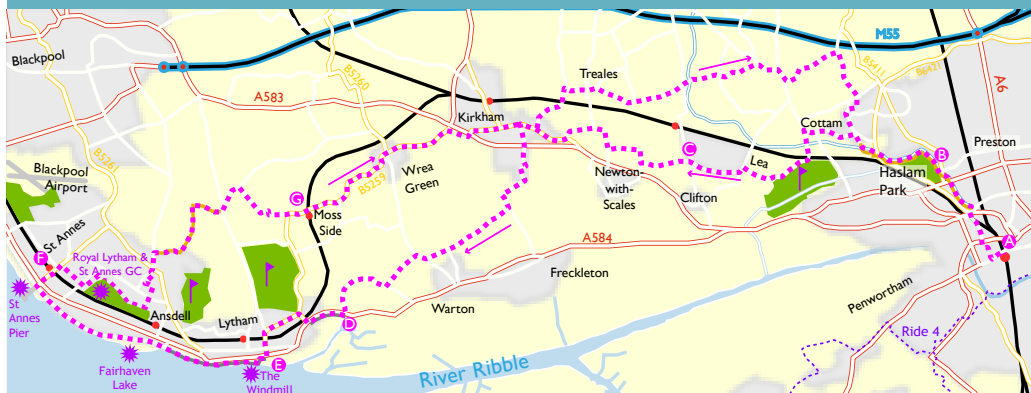
B again. 32.5km. Go L into the short cycle-path to begin retracing the first part of the route.

Or, if returning to Croston, cross the main road (A582) and continue from B above.



5: Preston—Lytham St Annes

Distance approx. 31.5km one way, 62.1km return.



The conjoined resorts of Lytham and St Annes offer a characterful destination with many family-friendly attractions. There's a limited choice of cycle-friendly routes to get you there. The suggested route (mostly following National Cycle Network Route 62) makes good use of existing roads slightly further inland. Use of the train makes the return leg optional, but it has lots more good riding (much of it common with the Lancashire Cycleway).

Cycle-paths do run alongside the busy A584 for most of its length, providing an alternative short ride back, but it's not the most enjoyable route.

Surfaces (including the towpath) are generally good and the ride is suitable for most bikes; the track across the mosses north of Lytham on the return leg is susceptible to puddles.

Arriving by train: The ride can be accessed (and escaped!) by train at numerous points, including Preston, Kirkham-with-Wesham, Lytham and St Annes. The rural halt at Moss Side allows the ride to be left before it leaves the Ribble Coast and Wetlands area.

Arriving by car: A good starting point is Haslam Park, which is easily found off Blackpool Road (A5085).

Public Toilets: At Haslam Park, in Kirkham, near Lytham Windmill and several points along the Prom.

Refreshments: There are numerous pubs and several cafes along the route.

Attractions: Lytham Hall, Lytham Windmill and Lifeboat Station, Fairhaven Lake and RSPB Ribble Discovery Centre, St Annes Pier.

For more on routes in and out of Preston, see the Preston Cycle Map and Canal Cycle Route leaflet (see p15).

A. Exit Preston Station and turn L on Fishergate. Pass County Hall then turn R (care) on Bow Lane. Go 4th L on Gerrard St then cross the dual carriageway (A59) at a pedestrian crossing. Go up R a short way (possibly walking), L on Croft St, 1st L on Lodge St then turn R on Wellfield Rd. Follow this over a railway bridge (Blackpool line) near St Walburge's Church with its tall spire. Take next L on Abbey St, follow it round then L on Steeple View, and continue into a cycle path.

Cross a street and down to a crossing controlled by lights (Fylde Rd). Cross here and bear R on a back-street, then L on another cycle-path. Climb a flight of steps (very few people can ride up this!) to reach the Lancaster Canal.

Follow the towpath for about 3km, passing the open spaces of Haslam Park.

B 2.8km. If you're starting from Haslam Park, turn right from the carpark and keep bearing R to soon reach the towpath and turn L.

Follow the towpath until you pass under a canal bridge near the UCLan Sports Arena. Turn sharp L to ride up and over this bridge (NCN 62 signs: these occur regularly along the route). Follow a cycle-track then turn L alongside a road (Cottam Way). Follow this to a roundabout, pass this on the cycle route then continue on the road almost straight ahead.

Pass a school and turn sharp L on a quiet lane. Pass over canal and railway and continue to a T-junction. Turn R, ride through Lea Town (just a village). At a T-junction turn R then follow the road round, and ride past the large works (Springfields, formerly BNFL) to a crossroads.



C 9.8km. Go straight ahead, past the Windmill Tavern. At the next T-junction turn R and follow the lane round to another T-junction. Turn R again and follow the road as it turns west then south to another T-junction on the outskirts of Kirkham. Turn R on a busier road (B5192); climb a little then descend into the centre of town.

At a mini-roundabout at the bottom, turn L on Freckleton St. Cross the busy A583 at traffic lights and continue through several bends and out of town before a R turn into Hillock Lane. At a T-junction turn R then soon L into Carr Lane. At the next T-junction turn R again, over a little bridge. Follow the lane round to meet a main road (A584). There are cycle-paths both

sides; it seems best to cross immediately then turn R along the far side.

D 21.8km. Follow the cycle-path to the outskirts of Lytham. On the L is Lytham Dock, a channel with yacht moorings. Join the road and follow the marked cycle-lane to a roundabout. Turn R here (Saltcotes Rd) and ride to another roundabout. Bear R then almost immediately turn L onto Green Drive, a pleasant traffic-free path.

At the end turn L, keeping L of an island, and follow a busier road. Cross over the railway and it becomes Station Road. Keep straight on to reach the open space of The Green, with its conspicuous windmill. Cross a road and follow a path (best to walk this) to reach the Windmill. Built in 1805, it's now a museum. It's hoped that the adjacent old lifeboat station will reopen in 2010.

E 25.2km. Remount and turn R along the promenade. Follow this for over 2km, passing a narrow belt of dunes before the Prom meets a road. Turn L along this road. Pass Fairhaven Lake, where the RSPB has its Ribble Discovery Centre. Continue for nearly 3km, with more dunes appearing on the left, to St Annes Pier.

Turn R on St Annes Road W, ride up to the main road and go straight ahead into the town centre. The road is busy but there's a good choice of cafes and pubs, and it leads directly to the station (access on L before the bridge over the railway).

For the return route to Preston see overleaf.



St Annes—Preston

Distance approx. 30.6km one way

F 31.4km. Continue over the railway (from the station turn L to reach the bridge) then take 2nd R on St Patrick's Rd South. Continue straight ahead into Links Gate and follow it L by the clubhouse of the Royal Lytham & St Annes Golf Club, one of the most famous in the world of golf. The course—laid out in 1897—has hosted ten Open Championships and will do so again in 2012. The route now skirts the course for some distance.

At a T-junction turn R then fork R (Beauchlerk Rd); at the end continue almost straight ahead on a cycle path: on the L are the grounds of Blackpool and The Fylde College's Ansdell Campus. Emerge into a street and at a crossroads turn L. Go straight ahead at a crossroads, following Worsley Rd. At a T-junction turn R then 1st L on Edwinstowe Rd. On a L bend turn R on a short cycle-path to meet a busier road near a complicated junction. Bear L to follow Blackpool Rd (don't take the sharper L onto Heyhouses Lane). On the R now is an extensive development of nearly 600 new houses, known as Cypress Point.

At the far end of the development turn R on a track which skirts the northern edge of Cypress Point. Keep L at a junction as you leave the estate behind and follow the track across open fields reclaimed from Lytham Moss. Pass a farmyard to a T-junction and turn R on a surfaced track. Follow this into the hamlet of Higher Ballam. At a T-junction turn L. After 700m turn R on Brays Rd. At another T-junction bear L on a busier road (B5259). In 400m pass Moss Side station.



G 40.6km. Continue into Wrea Green. The road skirts the green itself (largest in Lancashire). Go straight over a crossroads. Pass the large leisure development at Ribby Hall Village then turn R on a cycle-path. Cross the dual-carriageway then bear right into Kirkham. Briefly join the outward route but after the climb out of the town centre turn L on Carr Lane.

Follow the winding lane (Lancashire Cycleway/NCN 90) for 4km, passing through Treales and ignoring all side turnings. Cross the canal: cycling is not officially permitted on the towpath here, so continue along the road for another 2km to a junction where the Cycleway goes L but we bear R. Pass the entrance to Bartle Hall then turn L on Bartle Lane.

At a T-junction turn R. At the next T-junction turn R for 20m then L down the side of Miller Green. At the end turn R then on a bend turn L into a signed cycle path. Follow this, crossing two roads. At the second crossing the route meets the outward route; continue straight ahead back to the Sports Arena and the canal to return to Haslam Park or on into Preston.



Other Routes



Preston – Brockholes

An interesting short route (6.5km) which forms a remarkably tranquil ride out of the city to approach the large lakes (former gravel diggings) at Brockholes Wetlands Nature Reserve, a site presently under development by Lancashire Wildlife Trust and set to become a major national wildlife and visitor attraction. It's also linked to National Cycle Network Route 6. A descriptive leaflet (*River Ribble Cycle Route*) is available from information centres and as a download.

More Information

Visit www.ribblecoastandwetlands.com/cycling for additional routes, updates and information about local bike hire and other cycling facilities. There are also links to the excellent cycling web-sites hosted by Lancashire County Council and Sefton Council.

Lancashire County Council publishes cycling maps covering many parts of the county, including the following maps covering parts of Regional Park area: *Preston and South Ribble* (including Leyland); *Chorley, Ormskirk*; and *Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre*. Sefton Council publishes cycling maps of their area. The *North Sefton* cycle map includes Southport and the surrounding area.

These maps are downloadable and also available in paper version from the Councils on request and from Tourist and County Information Centres.

Preston Guild Wheel

The Brockholes route will link into the Preston Guild Wheel, a circular route around Preston due to be fully open by 2012.

The National Cycle Network

Spearheaded by the charity Sustrans, the NCN is a combination of dedicated cycle-routes, quiet streets and roads stretching from Land's End to John O'Groats. From small beginnings in 1995, it now covers over 16,000km (10,000 miles). See www.sustrans.org.uk

The Lancashire Cycleway

This figure-8 route takes in much of the best cycling the county has to offer. The northern and southern loops, each around 225km/ 140 miles, meet at Whalley in the Ribble Valley. There is a guidebook by Jon Sparks, published by Cicerone Press.

Trans-Pennine Trail

Southport is the start of the Trans-Pennine Trail, a 346km (215 mile) route for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders, much of it on old railway tracks and canal towpaths. Its eastern end is at Hornsea on the Yorkshire coast. Its official website is www.transpenninetrail.org.uk



Southport–Cycling Town

Southport has been designated a Cycling demonstration Town, marking a new drive to improve facilities and participation. Its existing cycle network already links to routes in this leaflet (see pp 6-7) and many new routes are being added, particularly around the seafront and along the Sefton Coast. There are cycle-hire schemes, guided rides and cycle training. See www.Southportcycletown.gov.uk

Ribble Coast and Wetlands Cycle Rides

Five rides from 16–36km (10–22 miles)

The Ribble Coast and Wetlands is a fascinating patchwork of estuary, salt-marshes and dunes, wetlands, mosslands, woodland and farmland. It's one of the most important places for birdlife in Europe. Cycling is a natural and enjoyable way to explore this area and you'll see far more than you would when travelling by car. This guide contains detailed descriptions and maps of five routes.



Acknowledgments

Research, text, photographs and maps
by Jon Sparks.

Additional photography by
Dave McAleavy.

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