THE WETLANDS & WATERWAYS ROUTE

The area around this walking route has some of the flattest land in West Lancashire. Pretty cottages, nature reserves and quaint waterside pubs are just some of the things you can see along the way.

There is some interesting architecture and wonderful wildlife and visitor attractions to discover. You will explore the area via field paths, tracks and canal towpaths, many of which are well signposted.

1 Starting at Burscough Bridge, look for the gate in the fence on the northern platform. Go through the gate and take the path to the left. Continue along this path until you reach the level crossing at Crabtree Lane. Turn right here and continue along the Lane, until the road bends to the left, after the bench turn sharp left, leaving the road walk ahead towards the gates of Mereside Cottage.

2 Turn right before the gates along a field edge path, then left at the end of the fence. Follow the sign to Martin Mere Wetland Centre for a few metres and then turn left at the waymarker and walk across the field. Cross at the level crossing and continue ahead over more cross field paths, and through a farm yard, until you reach the towpath of the Leeds Liverpool Canal.

3 Turn right and walk along the towpath until you pass under bridge number 29. Leave the towpath via the track towards the road; do not cross the canal bridge but walk towards the Martin Lane/Gorst Lane junction. Continue ahead along the footway to the Martin Inn where you cross the Merscar Lane junction and continue straight ahead to The Farm Tea Rooms.

4 Opposite The Farm Tea Rooms on the right is the signpost towards Martin Mere, follow this sign along a field edge path, turn left at the end and walk past the pond. Turn right, almost a U turn, and walk past the smaller pond following the path towards the trees in the distance. The path then skirts around the trees and heads towards the railway line. Turn left and walk along the path adjacent to the railway line until you reach the level crossing where you cross the track to continue.

5 After crossing the railway continue ahead and turn right at the sign by an old barn. At the end of this track is a field gate, pass through and turn right and follow the tree line on your left until you go through a kissing gate, and then another kissing gate just to your left.

6 You are now entering the free section of Martin Mere, the Reedbed Walk. You can take time here to do a bit of bird watching as the path passes a couple of hides.

7 If you are continuing on the Wetlands and Waterways route walk ahead towards the Martin Mere visitor centre.

8 If you are doing the Burscough Loop then through the next field gate turn right to exit the site onto Marsh Moss Lane. You can now take the field edge path across the road to take you back to Burscough Bridge.

9 Continuing on from No. 7, at the end of the track turn left if you wish to visit Martin Mere Wetland Centre, our route continues across the road turning right along Fish Lane for about 130m until you turn left and follow the track towards Mere Sands Wood Nature Reserve which is well signed. Section 10 explains the route in more detail.

10 Walk along the track (do not bear towards the farm buildings) continue ahead, passing a derelict cottage on your left. The track now bears right and when you reach the ditch you turn sharp left, keeping the ditch on your left. At the end of the ditch turn right along a trodden path between fields, then turn left before the next ditch. Pass through a kissing gate turning immediately right and cross the wooden footbridge just ahead, (if you turn left here you can visit Windmill Animal Farm) then the next footbridge just ahead again. Continue ahead until you reach the surfaced track and the road bridge on Sandy Way.

11 After crossing the road bridge turn right along the Rufford Boundary Sluice and continue until you reach Mere Sands Wood. If you are continuing on the Wetlands and Waterways route then go to number 13. For the Rufford or Meres and Mosses routes go to 12.

12 Enter the wood, then keep right and walk parallel to the ditch along the perimeter of the reserve until the path takes a very sharp left, go straight ahead here through a kissing gate, past Rufford Cricket Ground and onto Cousins Lane. Cross the road and follow the partially boardwalked footpath, crossing 3 roads, until you reach the A59 where you can rejoin the canal towpath over the causeway bridge. For the Mere and Mosses Loop turn right along the tow path and continue at number 16. Turn left for the Rufford Loop and follow numbers 15 to 13 in reverse.

13 Enter the wood and turn left at the 1st junction and right at the junction over the sluice into the pine woods. Turn left at the pine woods junction and follow the path to the perimeter of the reserve following the visitor centre signs. At the visitor centre leave via the driveway, cross over the road, turn right and walk along the footway.

14 After about 150m turn left along a track, the route bends to the right and passes through a group of barn conversions before it continues along the edge of the wood and down Croston Drive where you reach the A59.

15 Cross the A59 and continue ahead up Spark Lane, turn right into Croston Road and then cross the road to go down the steps onto the Rufford branch of the Leeds Liverpool Canal. Go under the bridge and enjoy the views along the canal, including Rufford Old Hall on the opposite bank (access is from A59 only), St Mary's and Fettler's Wharf Marinas.

16 Continue south along the Rufford branch for 3.5Km after the causeway bridge until you reach Top Locks at the end of the Rufford branch. Cross the canal via one of the footbridges near to the Ship Inn (where you can also hire one of our cycles for £1 an hour) and continue right along the towpath. Shortly you pass Burscough Wharf where you can stop for refreshments.

17 The Burscough Loop continues along the towpath where you pick up directions from point 3. For the Wetlands and Waterways route walk through the Wharf, exiting through the main gates, into Burscough Village. Here you will find further cafes and pubs for you to enjoy. Follow the main road to the right until you return to Burscough Bridge Interchange.

There are many more lovely walks within the area covered by the VISIT Project, please visit our website at www.visitseftonandwestlancs.co.uk for more leaflets and ideas for walks, cycle rides and days out.

This leaflet hopes to encourage you to get out and about in the Burscough area and discover the area's wonderful public rights of way network.

The public regularly uses all the footpaths in this leaflet without let or hindrance as public rights of way; however, please respect the privacy of landowners, tenants and farmers and the possession of this leaflet is NOT to be taken as a guarantee of any particular right of access.

WHAT TO WEAR AND BRING WITH YOU

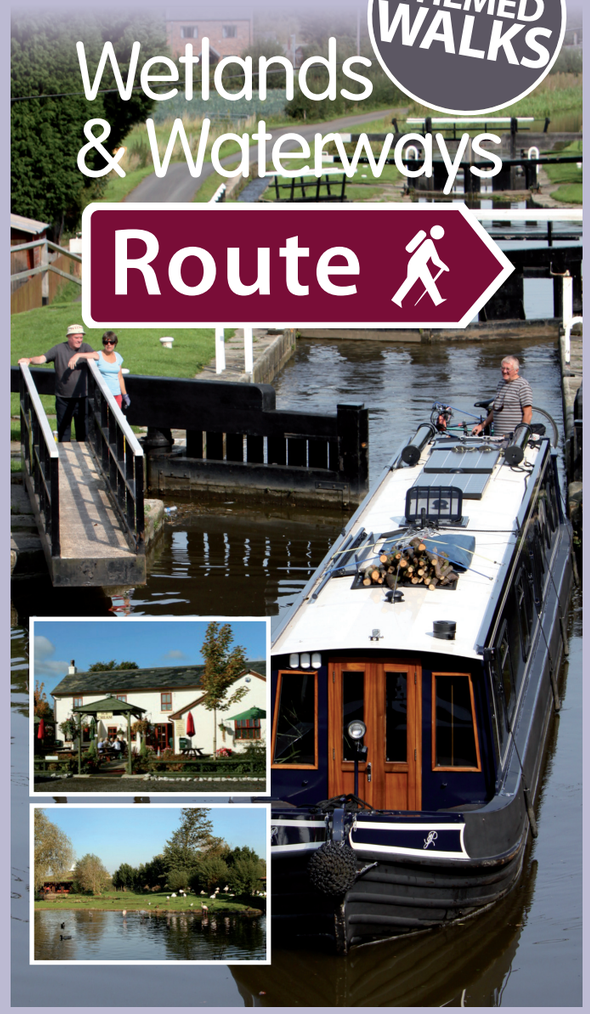
- When walking any distance, good quality walking shoes or lightweight waterproof boots are advisable, as is a daypack to carry your maps, food and drink and extra warm clothing or waterproofs.
- In winter be aware of the wind chill effect in exposed areas and that some sections can become muddy, suitable footwear should be worn.
- In summer it would also be sensible to pack a hat, sunscreen and plenty of water, especially as this route is mostly over exposed open fields.
- Why not take a small digital camera to record your walk, we would be happy to share your experiences and receive your feedback on the route.
  Contact us via the website: www.visitseftonandwestlancs.co.uk
- @VisitSefWLancs Visit Sefton and West Lancs

VISIT– Visitors in Sustainable Integrated Transport

Funded by the Department for Transport through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund

BURSCOUGH THEMED WALKS

Wetlands & Waterways Route



- Moderate/Difficult
- Villages, canal towpaths and field paths
- Distance 14.5 miles
- About 6 hours

Walk • Cycle • Park • Ride
Visit
Sefton & West Lancashire

Holmeswood
Smithy Wood
Nuck's Wood
Mere Side Wood
Wiggins Ln
Cross Meanygate
Mere Side
Holmeswood Rd
James Porter's Wood
Spring Wood
Liverpool Rd
Alma Wood
Rufford Old Hall
Caunce Wood
Sandy Way
Berry House Rd
Windmill Animal Farm
Fish Ln
Mere Sands Wood
Rufford
Cousin's Lane
Brick Kiln Ln
The Causeway Bridge
Fettler's Wharf Marina
Meadow Ln
Martin Mere
Tarlscough
Low Meadows
Rufford Rd
Daub Ln
Sandy Ln
Tarlscough Ln
Burscough Moss
A59
Marsh Moss Ln
Crabtree Ln
Red Cat Ln
Burscough Wharf
Footbridge across canal
Drummersdale Ln
New Lane
New Ln
Burscough Bridge
Smithy Lane Ends
Merscar Ln
Gorst Ln
Martin Lane
Burscough
Meadow Ln
Top Locks
School Ln
Wheat Ln
Cycle Hire at The Ship, Lathom
Narrow Boat on Canal
KEY
Full Wetlands & Waterways Loop 14.6 miles
Burscough Loop 6.5 miles
Rufford Loop 4.5 miles
Meres and Mosses Loop 12 miles
Windmill Animal Farm
Rail Station
Pub
Refreshments
Marina & Café
Visitor Attraction