



View of Hilbre Island from West Kirby with walkers at low tide.

West Wirral (Dee Estuary)

West Kirby is the start of the 12 mile long Wirral Way, the 'backbone' of Wirral Country Park, the old Hooton to West Kirby railway line that closed in 1963.

This is a horse, cycle and pedestrian route, which has undergone a recent renovation, the path provides some wonderful views over the Dee Estuary to Wales. It passes the Thurstaston Visitor Centre being the Information Centre for



Wirral's Coast, before passing through Heswall and Parkgate where high tides flood the saltmarsh and provide spectacular birdwatching during the winter months.

Thousands of wading birds take to the air and birds of prey can be seen perched waiting for an opportunity...

West Wirral (Dee Estuary)

West Kirby - Caldy

(Cubbins Green)



① *Wirral Country Park & The Wirral Way*

Wirral Country Park was the first designated Country Park in Britain. It was opened in 1973 and covers a 75 hectare site. It is a linear park which follows the route of the disused

Hooton to West Kirby railway line adjacent to Wirral's Dee Coastline. The former railway line has been converted into an off-road route for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders., now known as the 'Wirral Way', this forms the backbone of the country park and is 6 miles long from West Kirby to the boundary where it continues into Cheshire and onto Hooton.



③ *Ashton Park, West Kirby*

This Green Flag awarded Park was laid out in 1899 and it covers some 5 hectares, either side of the Wirral Way. It is an outstanding example of an early Edwardian public park. The upper and lower areas of the

park are linked by an iron bridge which passes over the Wirral Way.



View across to Wales from the Wirral Way.



② *Cubbins Green*

A small grassland area fronting the Dee Estuary. A short path takes visitors from the trail and onto Cubbins Green where you can access the beach. There is a small pond and picnic site

that affords spectacular views of West Kirby, Hilbre Island and the Dee Estuary across the mud flats to Wales. During the summer months, an abundance of wild flowers can be found including the rare Bee Orchid. The area is ideal for local birdwatching and sea fishing.



④ *Caldy Golf Club*

Stunning scenery and the glorious combination of wonderful links and inland holes make for a memorable game of golf for players of all standards. It has also been the scene of many major events

and was a qualifying course for the European Open.



West Wirral (Dee Estuary)
West Kirby - Caldy
(Cubbins Green)



Anti-clockwise:

West Kirby (Cubbins Green) - Caldý

18- 19 From the Wirral Way at Cubbins Green, continue on for about half a mile to the Caldý car park. Cross the road and go up the short slope to rejoin the Wirral Way and the trail. Continue straight on, passing alongside Caldý Golf Club.

Clockwise:

Caldý - West Kirby (Cubbins Green)

19 - 18 By passing alongside Caldý Golf Club, continue to the Caldý car park, cross the road and up the short slope to rejoin the Wirral Way and trail. Continue along the trail to Cubbins Green.

Opposite the entrance of Cubbins Green from the Wirral Way is Melloncroft Drive that links directly to the public footpath network on Caldý Hill and Thurstaston Common.



The beach at Cubbins Green.

Thurstaston



① *Wirral Country Park Visitors Centre, Thurstaston*

At the Visitor Centre, there is some genuinely beautiful scenery. The Visitor Centre is open throughout the year, and is the base for Ranger and

Information Services at the park. Refreshments and toilets are available, and there is a small exhibition area, bird hide and activities for children.



③ *Dawpool Nature Reserve*

The Reserve is a very popular birdwatching site. At low tide it is safe to walk along the causeway which fishermen use to gain access to their boats. The causeway goes out from below the car park and gives

you a feeling that you are right in among the birds. Please don't be tempted to walk out any further on to Dawpool Bank; there is thick mud here and we don't want you to get stuck with the tide rushing in.



Thurstaston Beach and out towards Liverpool Bay.



② *The Dungeon*

The Dungeon is a small, sheltered mature woodland of oak, beech, sycamore and alder, with some scrub and heathland. The stream running through the steep sided valley forms an attractive waterfall where it

cascades over the sandstone bedrock. Trees provide shelter for insects and woodland birds.

The name is probably from the Old English dunge or denge meaning land next to the marsh.



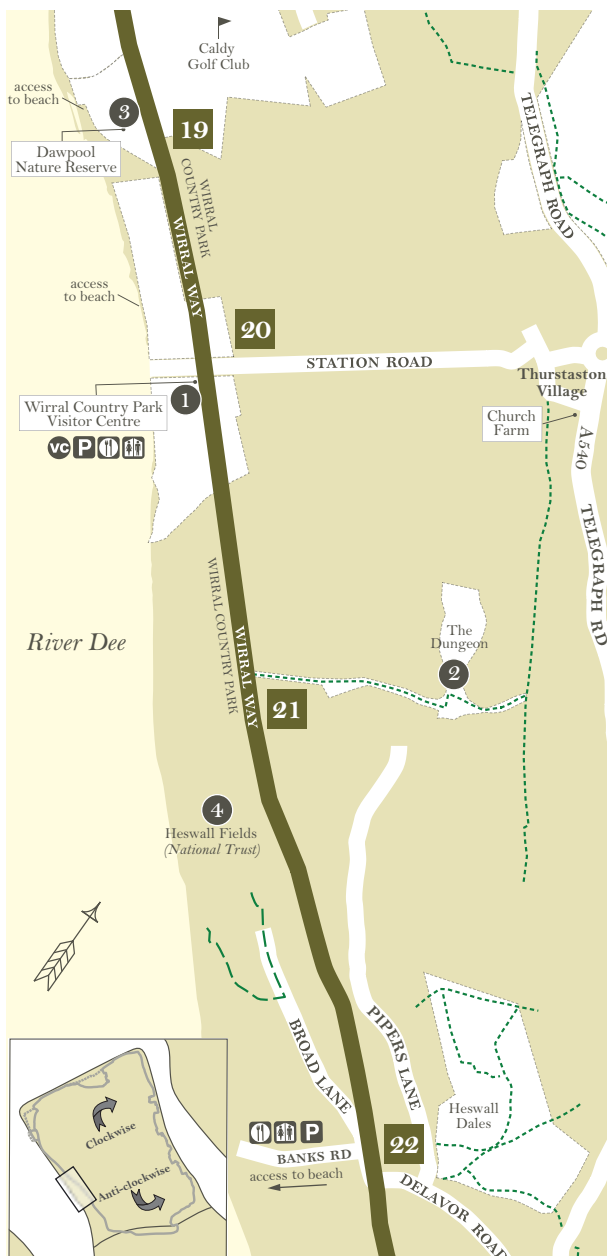
④ *Heswall Fields onto Thurstaston Beach*

Heswall Fields are owned by the National Trust and if you have brought a picnic it is a great place to stop and enjoy the views. Listen for the calls of the estuary birds that feed

along the shoreline, particularly the 'peep' call of the oystercatchers. Along Thurstaston Beach you will find washed up bits of gnarled driftwood, sea shells and sand eroded rocks. The stunning cliffs, which have been eroded into almost surreal shapes and gravity defying peaks, provide a wonderful backdrop, so beware of the cliff tops.



West Wirral (Dee Estuary)
Thurstaston



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Anti-clockwise:

Caldy - Heswall

20 As you progress along the Wirral Way you will pass various points along the route that are signposted from the Circular Trail but there are also optional public paths which will take you various ways through the surrounding areas. On this section there is firstly Dawpool Nature Reserve, and then further on after the railway arch there is the Wirral Country Park Visitor Centre with parking, refreshments, information and toilet facilities. From here there is also the option to visit Thurstaston Village, or access the beach.

21 Having re-joined the Wirral Way, a little further on is the footpath sign to The Dungeon. Walk up this steep-sided valley with its stream to take you up to farmer's fields and spectacular views across the Dee. Continuing along from the visitor centre, the Wirral Way then passes the access sign to Heswall Fields which is a National Trust site overlooking and leading down to the beach.

22 Please see page 43.

Clockwise:

Heswall - Caldy

22 By continuing along the Wirral Way from the Davenport Rd section, you will see on your left the access sign to Heswall Fields which is a National Trust site overlooking and leading down to the beach.

21 Further along is the footpath sign to The Dungeon; walk up this steep-sided valley with its stream to take you up to farmer's fields. Spectacular views can be seen across the Dee to Wales.

20 After another railway arch the Wirral Country Park Visitor Centre is on your left with parking, refreshments, information and toilet facilities. From here there is also the option to visit Thurstaston Village, or access the beach. Having re-joined the Wirral Way the point of interest on this section is Dawpool Nature Reserve signposted off to the left.

West Wirral (Dee Estuary)

Heswall



1 *Heswall Dales*

Heswall Dales is recognised as one of the best remaining examples of lowland heath in the Merseyside area. In 1991 Heswall Dales was given the status of Local Nature Reserve and is one of a series of western

lowland heath plant communities occurring on the Triassic sandstone outcrops of Wirral.

During the warm summer months, the heath supports an array of insects; which in turn are a rich food source for insectivorous birds and mammals. The mosaic of birch scrub and european gorse is an important habitat for breeding birds. The reserve has, in the past, been used as a grazing area and a quarry for sandstone extraction.



3 *Davenport Road*

Heswall Station opened in 1886 but was closed to passengers in 1956 and to goods in 1962. The British Railways Board sold an acre site for housing, including the station and good yard fronting

onto Davenport Rd in 1966 for £30,250. Some of the houses have been built on the site of the railway line.



Heswall Golf Course from the Wirral Way.



② *Gayton*

The Cottage Lane access leads up to Gayton. After the golf club entrance is Gayton Farm Road that takes you past Gayton Windmill which was built in the 17th century and is probably the oldest surviving

tower mill in Wirral. 100 years ago this area was called Little Gayton and at the end of the cobbled road is the rear entrance to Gayton Hall. In 1330, ownership of Gayton passed to the Glegg family (Baskervyle Glegg from 1758). The Gayton Well (pictured) is nicknamed the Pin Well, as it was said that you would have your wish granted if you dropped a pin into it.



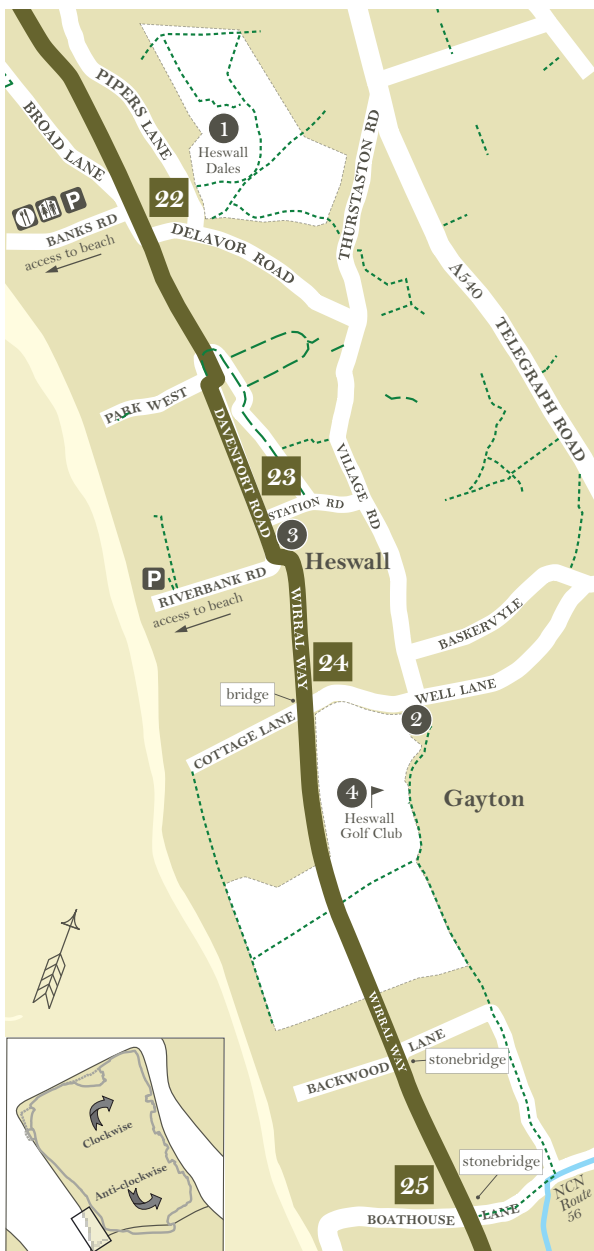
④ *Heswall Golf Club*

A distinguished and beautiful 18 hole course. It has been the venue for a number of national championships in recent years. The club has a very active playing membership and in recent years, has hosted a

number of county, national and international fixtures.



West Wirral (Dee Estuary)
Heswall



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Anti-clockwise:

Banks Road, Heswall - Boathouse Lane, Parkgate

22 At this location it is possible to access Heswall Dales via Banks Rd, Delavor Rd and Pipers Lane.

23 - 24 Continue on until the trail joins Davenport Rd and continues along the road past Station Rd on the left. At the right bend rejoin the trail at the Wirral Way sign. Stay on the Wirral Way, passing the small picnic area. Continue on, passing under the bridge and access points to Cottage Lane.

24 - 25 From Cottage Lane follow the Wirral Way towards Neston, crossing the public footpath that goes right for the foreshore and left up into Gayton. Continue on under the stone bridges of Backwood Lane and Boathouse Lane from which there is limited pedestrian access. Continue along to the wooden bridge where it is possible to turn right to go straight into Parkgate Parade.

Clockwise:

Boathouse Lane, Parkgate - Banks Road, Heswall

25 - 24 Continue along the Wirral Way passing under the stone bridges of Boathouse Lane and then Backwood Lane both of which have limited pedestrian access. As you cross Heswall Golf Club you will see the public footpath that will take you left to the foreshore and right to Gayton. The Wirral Way continues along to Cottage Lane, Gayton.

24 - 23 Having passed under the Cottage Lane bridge and all its access points, continue along the trail to where here, the trail joins Riverbank Rd and into Davenport Rd. Passing Station Rd on the right, rejoin the trail at the Wirral Way on the right at the point where the road bends around to the left.

22 At this location it is possible to access Heswall Dales via Banks Rd, Delavor Rd and Pipers Lane.