



Parkgate Parade.

South Wirral

This section of the Circular Trail joins South West Wirral at Parkgate to South East Wirral at Eastham and in doing so crosses the boundary of Wirral Borough and into Cheshire West & Chester.

By remaining on the Wirral Way within the Wirral Country Park the route passes through the western and southern parts of the town of Neston.

The route leaves Neston through a long sandstone cutting, created for the railway line and then continues across the tranquil rural farmland of northern Cheshire.



Next stop is Hadlow Road Station adjacent to the attractive village of Willaston with all its facilities.

The Wirral Country Park extends to Hooton where it meets the Chester to Liverpool main line railway.

The route of the Circular Trail splits into a walking and cycling route to go under the M53. The two routes rejoin in the historic village of Eastham and then leads onto Eastham Country Park, adjacent to the start of the Manchester Ship Canal.

Parkgate - Neston



1 *Parkgate*

Parkgate's name originated from Neston Park, where deer were hunted in the Middle Ages. But the village only grew here from the 1600s as people began to earn their living from the sea. At first

Parkgate was a ships' anchorage, later becoming a major passenger port between England and Dublin. Where you now see saltmarsh, grand sailing ships with up to three masts once anchored. The village also became a sea-bathing resort where it was fashionable to parade along the seafront.

Parkgate's fishing industry and popularity as a seaside resort declined in the 20th century due to the receding tides. But even now the waters still occasionally cross the RSPB owned saltmarsh to remind us of the village's origins, and visitors still come for Parkgate's character, wildlife and views...and, of course, the ice cream!



3 *Neston*

The historic market town of Neston nestles in the Cheshire countryside and it tranquil appearance, with its many interesting buildings, belies its long and strategically important history. With its

evidence of Viking settlements in pre-Norman times and its significant record in the Domesday book of 1085, there is much to see in the town. The sandstone church situated in the centre of the town dates back in part to the 14th century and contains many treasures.

Today, Neston is still retains its market town flavour with weekly Friday markets and monthly farmers' markets.



② *The Old Baths, Parkgate*

Parkgate Baths were created as a naturally recharging sea water baths in 1923 by Mr A. G. Grenfell, the Headmaster of Mostyn School. Initially, the baths were created for use by the pupils of the school but

were later opened to the paying public.

As the Dee estuary gradually silted up and the marsh spread, water had to be pumped over greater distances until eventually it became uneconomic and impractical to continue. The baths finally closed at the end of the Second World War and the old bath house was demolished.

The site is now a picnic area which is a prime spot for birdwatching, as it offers fantastic views across the Dee Estuary Salt Marsh, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), to the Welsh coast and the Clwydian hills beyond.

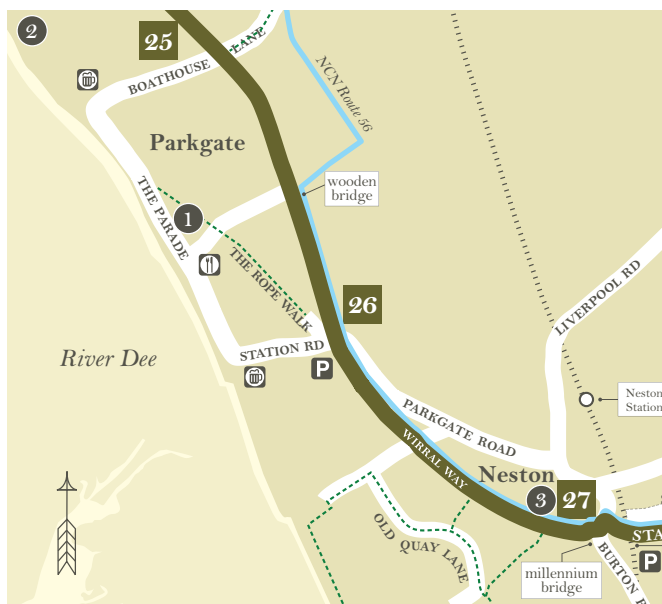


④ *Ness Botanic Gardens*

Ness Botanic Gardens was born of one man's passionate interest in plants and his desire to share that interest with others. When the Liverpool cotton merchant, Arthur Kilpin Bulley, began to create a garden

in 1898, part of which he opened to local residents, he laid the foundations of one of the major botanic gardens in the United Kingdom. Overlooking the Dee Estuary, the gardens contain the finest collection of rhododendrons and azaleas in the North-West, plus one of the best-known heather gardens in Britain and an outstanding collection of Himalayan and Chinese plants. The gardens can also boast a magnificent herbaceous border, specimen shrubs and a herb garden containing all the major culinary herbs.

Parkgate - Neston



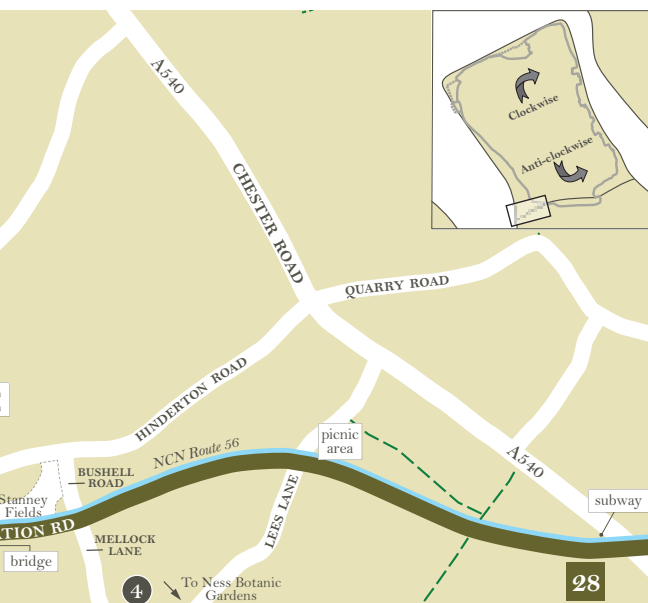
© Crown copyright and database rights 2011. Ordnance Survey 100019803.

Anti-clockwise:

Parkgate - Neston

25 -27 Follow the Wirral Way. At the wooden bridge you can turn along the track into Parkgate. Otherwise continue to the main road. Turn right onto Station Rd. Pass Rope Walk on your right. Turn left into the car park and onto the Wirral Way. You can stay on the main road into Parkgate. The Wirral Way has options to visit the Old Quay of Neston or explore Neston town centre. Pass over the Millennium Bridge and into the car park.

27 -28 From the car park in Station Rd, pass under the railway bridge, go along Station Rd which forms part of the Wirral Way, beware of motor vehicles also using this particular section, passing Stanney Fields Park on your left. At the end of Station Rd cross over Bushell Rd and Mellock Lane straight over onto the Wirral Way track, which then continues along and through a deep cutting and then up through the sandstone bedrock. Pass Lees Lane picnic area on your left and take care on the narrow wooden footbridge, and then under the subway of the A540.



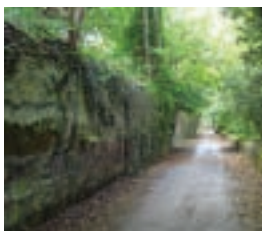
Clockwise:

Neston - Parkgate

28 - 27 From the subway of the A540, continue along the Wirral Way taking care at the narrow wooden bridge. Shortly after the Lees Lane picnic area the route drops down into a deep cutting; follow this until you reach the end of the track. At the junction with the main road where Bushell Rd becomes Mellock Lane, cross over into Station Rd. The Wirral Way follows Station Rd for about half a mile keeping Stanney Fields Park on your right. Pass under the railway bridge and pass the car park on your left and then turn immediately left onto the Wirral Way.

27 - 25 Cross over the Millennium Bridge and continue along the Wirral Way. There are options to visit the Old Quay of Neston or explore the nearby town centre. When you get to the car park you can turn left which leads to Parkgate Parade. The route, however, turns right passing Rope Walk on your left, and shortly after you turn left onto the Wirral Way. At the wooden bridge you can turn left along a track that will take you straight into Parkgate Parade.

Willaston - Hooton



1 *The Walls of the Rock Cutting*

The walls of the rock cutting in Neston still bear pick axe marks from when it was dug by the navigators who built the railway line. The shady cutting provides a good habitat for

mosses and ferns as ground water seeps through the porous sandstone. The cutting is a Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS) and the walls show the rippled sediments in the sandstone known as 'current bedding'.



3 *Willaston Village*

Willaston Village is an attractive village and the history of the village shows it has been an important agriculture settlement for over a thousand years. Traces of its importance as a farming

community can be seen in the buildings around the village green which include several former farmhouses.



Wirral Country Park, Hooton to Neston section.



② *Hadlow Road Railway Station*

Hadlow Road Station in Willaston is the only station building left along the line, apart from the operational stations of West Kirby and Hooton. The station was built in 1866 and is designated as a Grade II Listed Building.

To visit the ticket office is to step back in time, as it is kept as it would have looked when the trains were in operation. It looks as though the ticket clerk has just stepped out for a moment.

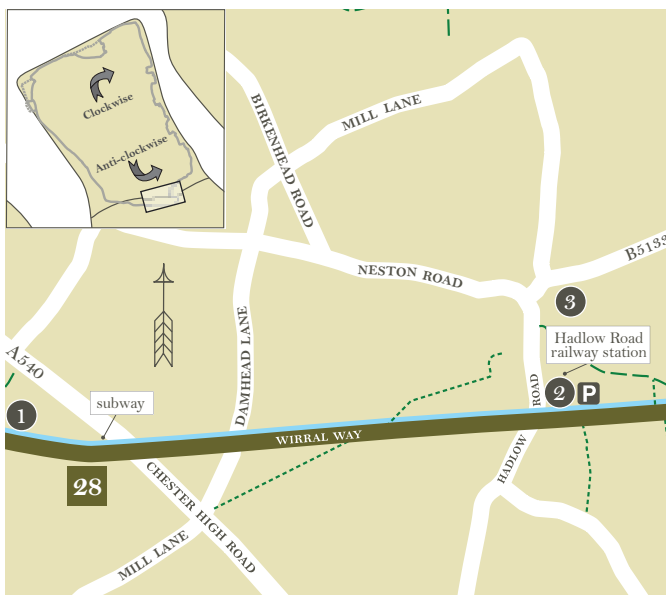


④ *Hooton end of Wirral Country Park*

The Hooton end of the Country Park is home to a colony of glow worms. These unusual beetles are very much in decline and the colony is one of only a handful left in Cheshire.



Willaston - Hooton



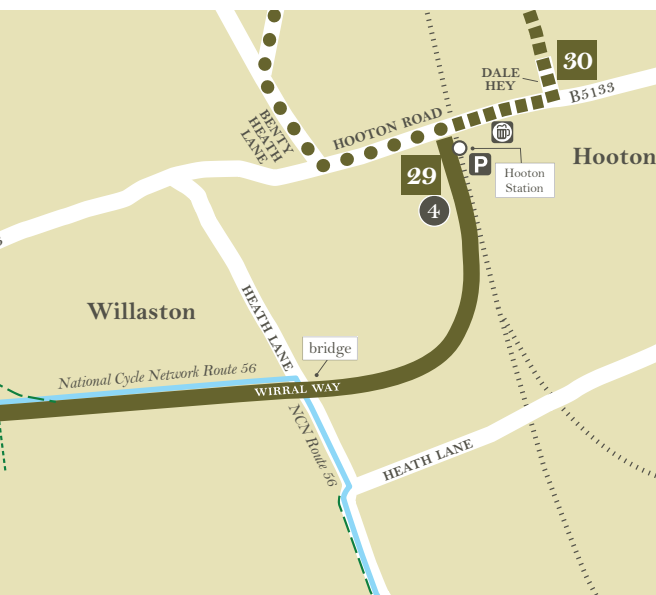
© Crown copyright and database rights 2011. Ordnance Survey 100019803.

Anti-clockwise:

Willaston - Hooton

28 - 29 From the subway under the Chester High Rd A540 follow the Wirral Way until you come to Hadlow Road Station. The village of Willaston is along on your left. Pass the old platform and station on your left, and continue on, eventually passing under the Heath Lane bridge and onto Hooton Railway Station which is where the Wirral Way and Wirral Country Park terminates.

Although walking and cycling is permitted to Hooton, horses are not able to go past Heath Lane on the Wirral Way. The National Cycle Network Route 56 turns right at Heath Lane which continues south onto Chester.



Clockwise:

Hooton - Willaston

29-28 Having entered the Wirral Way and Wirral Country Park from Hooton Rd, follow this track along in the direction of Willaston.

Although walking and cycling is permitted from Hooton, horses are then allowed from Heath Lane and westwards towards Neston. NCN Route 56 turns left at Heath Lane which continues south onto Chester. Continue on under Heath Lane railway bridge to the old Hadlow Road railway station. At the main Hadlow Rd crossing, the picturesque village Willaston and all its facilities are available on the right. Otherwise continue along the Wirral Way and pass under the Chester High Rd A540 subway towards Neston.

Hooton - Eastham Village



1 *Hooton*

Hooton is a small settlement at the start of the A550 which is the main road to Chester and North Wales from the A41, just south of the M53. Via the Hooton Road (the B5133 to Willaston) is Hooton Station

for the Liverpool and Chester mainline railway. Alongside the station is the old railway line that now forms the Wirral Country Park route to Neston and West Kirby.



3 *Eastham Village*

Discover the ancient Church of St Mary's, the war memorial and village cross, and meander through the twists and turns of this medieval village. Stop to marvel at the 1,500 year old yew tree in the churchyard

before continuing on to explore the Victorian buildings of this conservation area, many of which are Grade II listed.



Eastham Village.



② *St Mary's Church*

Built in 1152AD, St Mary's is the beautiful church at the heart of Eastham Village, mentioned as 'Estham' in the Domesday Book. Take time to admire the ancient building, with its broach spire, stunning stained glass

windows by Kempe and the churchyard with its lych gate and ancient yew trees.



④ *War Memorial*

The cross located on the Church side of the war memorial in the picture dates back to 1891. The war memorial itself is to honour those that lost their lives in the Great European War

between August 1914 - November 1918.



South Wirral
Hooton - Eastham Village



Anti-clockwise:

Hooton - Eastham Village

29 From Hooton Station it is necessary for walkers and cyclists to take a separate route.

29 - 31 *Walkers:* From the Hooton Rd railway bridge at the start of the Wirral Country Park/Wirral Way, with Hooton Railway Station to your right, turn right along the Hooton Rd for a short distance until you get to Dale Hey on your left. Turn left into Dale Hey and go to the end, then turn right on to the footpath. Follow this footpath along and through the line of trees until you reach the field. Enter the field and veer left in between some newly laid out copses and continue to the underpass under the M53.

On exiting the underpass, follow the path to the road where you turn right and follow the road keeping the houses on the left and the fields on the right. Follow the hedge line along across the open space with the playground until the road turns left into Thornleigh Avenue and then right into Crosthwaite Avenue. Follow this around until it goes into Mill Park Drive and up to the junction with Eastham Rake at Tesco's. Turn right to the main traffic lighted junction with the A41.

29 *Cyclists:* From the Hooton Rd railway bridge at the start of the Wirral Country Park/Wirral Way, with Hooton Railway Station to your right, turn left along the Hooton Rd. At the first main junction on the right turn right into Benty Heath Lane. Continue along and turn right into Eastham Rake and follow this road under the M53 passing Eastham Rake Railway Station on your left. Continue along until you reach the main traffic lighted junction with the A41. All cyclists must take care along this road section.

31 Both walkers and cyclists continue over the A41 crossroads and go straight on towards Eastham Village. Follow Stanley Lane to the War Memorial where you fork left and then immediate right in Eastham Village into Ferry Rd, following the signs for Eastham Country Park.

Hooton - Eastham Village

Clockwise:

Eastham Village - Hooton

On entering Eastham Village turn left from Ferry Rd into Eastham Village Rd and then almost immediately right in front of and keeping to the right of the Great European War Memorial and continue past St Mary's Parish Church on your left. Continue along and cross the traffic-lighted junction with the A41.

31 *Walkers:* In front of the Tesco store, walkers turn left into Mill Park Drive, left into Crosthwaite Avenue and left again into Thornleigh Avenue. Following the road around to the right keeping the fields on the left. Continue over the grass area (with the playground on the right) into Kingsley Avenue with the woods and fields on the left.

The M53 can be seen ahead and as Kingsley Avenue veers right. The route turns immediate left into Lowfields Avenue. Follow that round to the right and then turn left onto the public footpath under the M53 subway opposite Norley Avenue. (To access Eastham Rake Station, continue straight on, keeping the woodland on your left until you come to the main road. Turn left and Eastham Rake Station is on the right).



Lowfields Woods next to the M53.

After the underpass, fork left across the field between the fenced areas of new woodland. Keep left of the gated field and climb the stile to follow the footpath through to the woods. The path turns right and then left out into Dale Hey.

30 Walk to the end of Dale Hey and turn right at the main road, past the Hooton pub and Hooton Station is on the left.

29 Cross over this busy road on the bridge over the railway line, and take the path signposted to the Wirral Country Park/Wirral Way, immediately after the bridge on the left.

31 - 29 *Cyclists:* Continue straight on, passing the Tesco store on the left. Follow the road named Eastham Rake past Eastham Rake Station on the right to the end of Eastham Rake. Turn left into Benty Heath Lane towards Hooton, and then soon after turn left into Hooton Rd. The route turns right into Wirral Country Park/Wirral Way just before the railway bridge at Hooton Station.

All cyclists must take care along this road section.

