

Ulverston to Barrow-in-Furness



The new Walney to Wear route has been categorised as a challenge route. However, this is the comparatively easy bit before the climbing really starts, taking you through the rich pastureland of Low Furness, a relatively undiscovered corner of Cumbria.

The ride begins in Ulverston, giving you the advantage of a slight prevailing downhill trend. Ulverston bills itself as South Lakeland's friendliest market town, (markets on Thursdays and Saturdays). Its cobbled streets and small shops invite further exploration, and the town is proud of Stan Laurel, its most famous son. The Laurel & Hardy museum contains a wealth of ephemera, and screens the pair's

classic films. You can also see Cumbrian crystal being made at the Lakes Glass Centre.

The ride begins at The Gill, once the site of hiring fairs. Follow the blue Regional Route 20 signs out of town, mostly on minor roads but with one short main road section – you can always walk your bike along the pavement at this point. Once out of town you are on minor roads through farmland, passing the old iron ore mines as you approach Lindal-in-Furness. The route here avoids the busy A590 by taking you on a hairpin detour to Whinfield. You can then cross the trunk road at the toucan crossing into Lindal itself, where you can dip your own candles at the Colony Candles factory, or stoke up at the café. The route bypasses Dalton-in-Furness, but a left turn will take you into the town where the tower of the 14th century castle houses an exhibition (open on Saturday afternoons) of the paintings of George Romney, who is buried in

the churchyard next door. You can either retrace your steps to the signed route, or ride down the hill to the Red Lion and turn right, rejoining the signed route at the remains of 12th century Furness Abbey, now in the care of English Heritage after centuries of neglect.

You are now entering the maritime town of Barrow-in-Furness, where the route takes you right past the Dock Museum – built on a Victorian graving dock, and full of fascinating insights into the social and industrial history of the area. It also has a themed adventure playground for children, loos and a café, and admission is free. You can follow the route a little further to its western extreme across the Walney Channel to Sandy Gap, but extreme care should be taken on the bridge. Morecambe Bay is an important haven for overwintering seabirds, so you may want to have your binoculars handy.

There is a direct train service from Barrow-in-Furness back to Ulverston.

The Route

Regional Route: 20

Distance: about 12.5 miles

Terrain: minor roads, rolling contours, nothing too steep

Public transport: railway stations at either end

Maps: Walney to Wear Cycle Route Map available for £4.50 locally or from Sustrans

OS maps: Explorer OL6, Landranger 96

Tourist information:

Barrow-in-Furness TIC - 01229 894784, Ulverston TIC - 01229 587120

Places to search for on Sustrans website mapping: Barrow-in-Furness, Ulverston

Furness Abbey
Credit: Stuart Mackin

