

8 traffic-free bike rides in the North West



Suitable for all abilities




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Easy and enjoyable rides for all abilities

From a gentle cycle along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal to sweeping seaside trails, the North West of England has some great options for easy cycle rides.

As the custodians of the **National Cycle Network** we've put together some of our favourite traffic-free rides in the North West.

Key to route maps:



Bike Hire



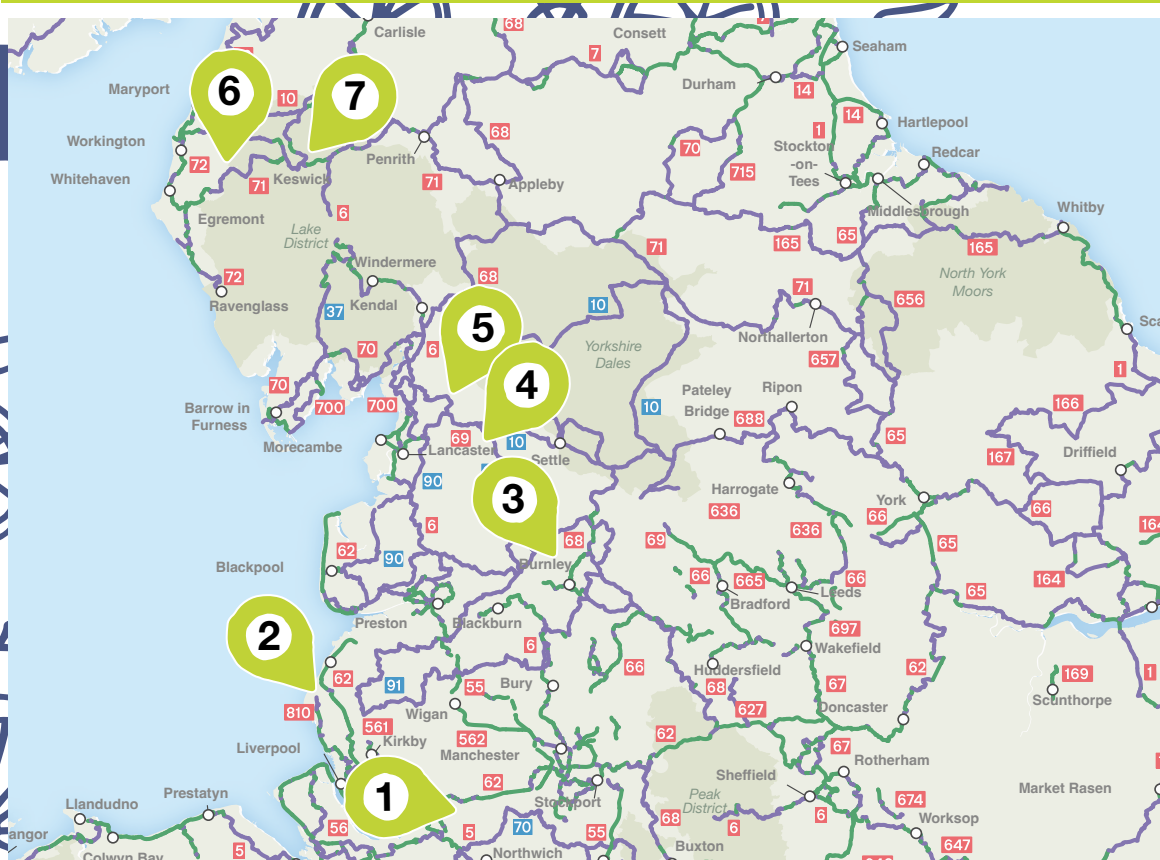
Pub



Café



Restaurant



Routes Menu

Tap on a desired route below or scroll

MENU



Route one – Cheshire

Chester Railway Path



Route two – Liverpool

Sefton Coast Path



Route three – Lancashire

Leeds and Liverpool Canal



Route four – Lancaster

Lune Valley Trail



Route five – Lancashire

Lancaster to Heysham



Route six – Cumbria

Whitehaven to Rowrah



Route seven – Lake District

Keswick to Threlkeld



Route eight – Cumbria

Maryport to Allonby



Top Tips & Accessibility



Buy the guide





Route one

Chester Railway Path, Chester



Chester Railway Path

Part of National Route 5, this cycle ride takes you along a green corridor from the walled city of Chester to gorgeous open countryside. The route crosses the Welsh border into lush Flintshire farmland and across Hawarden Bridge, before joining the Wales Coast Path. You will love the view of the Snowdonia mountains near the old railway station at Blacon.



Key route information:

Start:	Chester
Finish:	Connah's Quay
Time:	1 hour
Length of ride:	8 miles



Start

Chester

Lime Wood Fields,
Chester CH2 2LL

GPS: 53.206543,
-2.869479

Finish

Connah's Quay

Dock Rd, Connah's Quay,
Deeside CH5 4DS

GPS: 53.22062,
-3.05783

Terrain, gradients and access

Flat with a tarmac path. Traffic-free with train station access at Chester, Hawarden Bridge and Shotton.

Ideas for things to do:

- At Northgate Ponds Park, take the signed detour to visit the cathedral, Roman amphitheatre and medieval streets at the heart of Chester
- Connah's Quay is a great spot to do some wildlife watching on the River Dee. You might even spot an otter or water vole
- Turn your cycle into a loop by following National Route 568 River Dee Path from Hawarden Bridge to Chester.

Route one

Chester Railway Path, Chester





Route two

Sefton Coast Path, Liverpool

Route two

Sefton Coast Path, Liverpool

Sefton Coast Path

Part of the Trans Pennine Trail, the Sefton Coastal Path connects central Liverpool with the seaside town of Formby. This memorable coastal trail takes in Liverpool skylines, ocean views, tumbling dunes and a marine lake. Make sure you stop at Crosby beach to take in the 100 haunting cast iron figures that stare out at the ocean.



Key route information:

Start:	Waterloo, Liverpool
Finish:	Formby
Time:	45 minutes
Length of ride:	7 miles

Route two

Sefton Coast Path, Liverpool

Start

Waterloo (Merseyside) train station

Waterloo, Liverpool
L22 0LY

[GPS: 53.475375,
-3.025634](#)

Finish

Formby train station

Formby,
Liverpool
L37 2JF

[GPS: 53.553524,
-3.070810](#)

Terrain, gradients and access

Flat tarmac path and stony trail. Sand from Crosby beach spills onto the path making it necessary to get off and push. Short, on-road sections at Waterloo, Hightown and Formby.

Ideas for things to do:

- Plan your cycle for low tide to get a full look at the sculptures at Crosby beach
- At the halfway point, sit at the staggered white 'Pebble' sculpture and enjoy the ocean views
- At the end of the traffic-free path, continue North for one mile to reach the Formby Nature Reserve where you can spot rare native red squirrels.

Route two

Sefton Coast Path, Liverpool





Route three

Leeds And Liverpool Canal,
Lancashire



Leeds and Liverpool Canal

Britain's longest single canal makes for a gorgeous traffic-free cycle ride. This peaceful section between Burnley and Barnoldswick is an easy cycle along the towpath. Take in impressive industrial architecture against sweeping Pennine views, before finishing in the breathtaking Yorkshire Dales.



Key route information:

Start: Burnley

Finish: Barnoldswick

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Length of ride: 15 miles



Start

Towneley Park

Burnley
BB10 4PJ

GPS: 53.77683,
-2.21752

Finish

Lock Stop Café

Greenberfield Locks,
Barnoldswick BB18 5SU

GPS: 53.92986,
-2.17198

Terrain, gradients and access

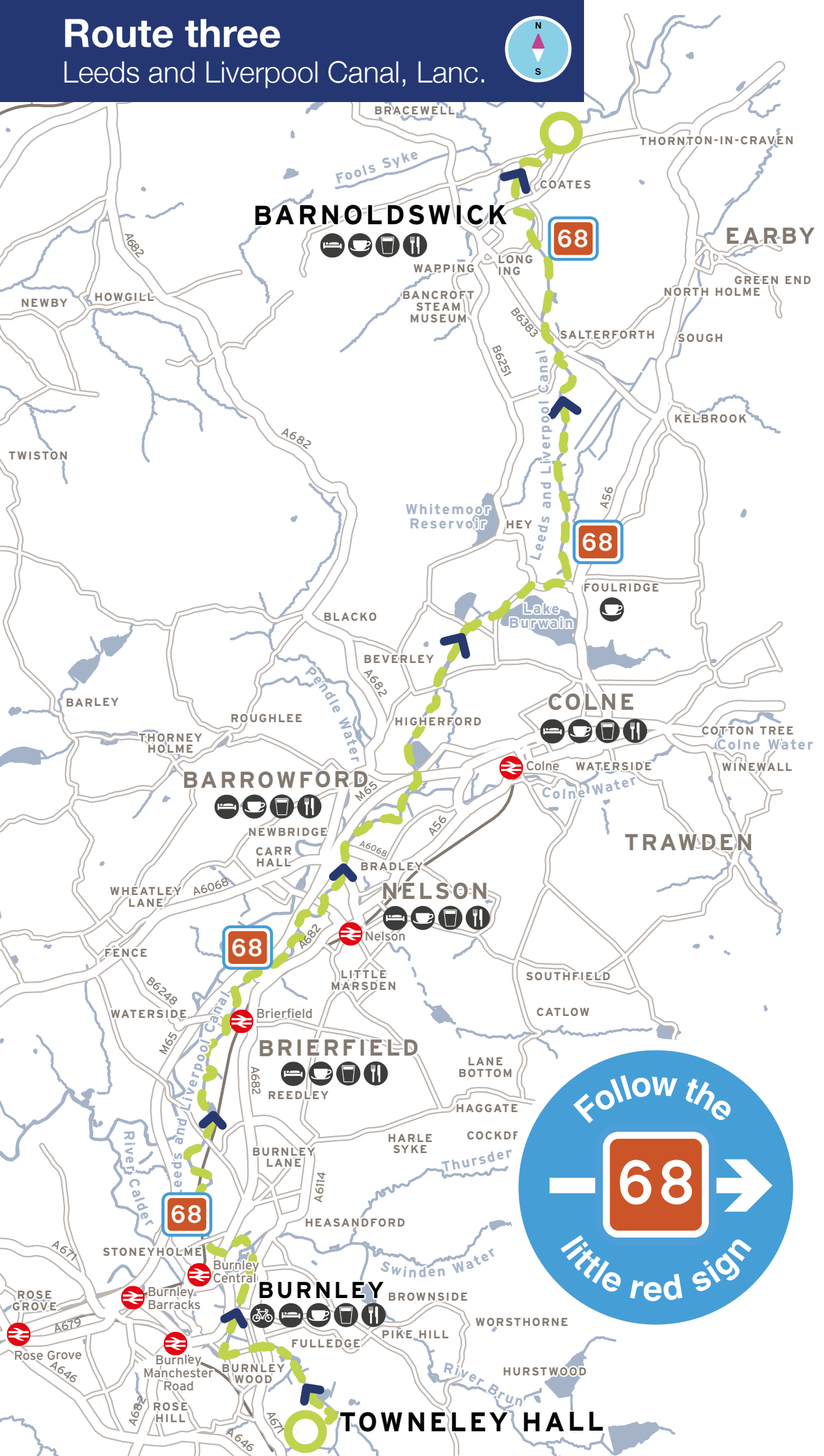
Flat tarmac before Foulridge and crushed stone afterwards. Take care at bridges with restricted sight of oncoming traffic and one low bridge arch. Access the route via Burnley train station. Cycle hire available at Burnley.

Ideas for things to do:

- Explore Towneley Hall and its beautiful gardens, known as the jewel in Burnley's crown
- Stop at the beautiful and popular Thompson Park by the towpath for a snack
- Head off the canal early at Salterforth's Blue Anchor pub and follow the main road cycle lanes to end your ride in Barnoldswick's quaint town centre. Here you can explore a variety of independent cafes and shops.

Route three

Leeds and Liverpool Canal, Lanc.





Route four

Lune Valley Trail,
Lancaster



Lune Valley Trail

Lune Valley Trail is part of Way of the Roses, a coast to coast route from Morecambe to Bridlington. This leafy trail along the River Lune takes you from Lancaster's Millennium Bridge into the western edges of the Forest of Bowland. Highlights include passing beneath the incredible Lune Aqueduct and crossing over the Crook O' Lune, a distinctive kink in the river shaped like a shepherd's crook.



Key route information:

Start:	Millennium Bridge
Finish:	Bull Beck picnic site
Time:	30 minutes
Length of ride:	5 miles



Start

Millennium Bridge

Lancaster
LA1 1AY

GPS: 54.05258,
-2.80247

Finish

Bull Beck

Picnic site, Lancaster
LA2 9QR

GPS: 54.078743,
-2.701557

Terrain, gradients and access

Easy ride accessible via Lancaster train station. Very gradual ascent on tarmac path with some road crossings. Take care crossing to Bull Beck picnic site at the end of the route.

Ideas for things to do:

- Take a break beside the River Lune and look out for mute swans, herons and cormorants
- Park your cycle at the former railway station at Halton and cross the bridge into the historic Halton village
- Pause and look up to spot buzzards circling over the ancient woodlands on the river's north bank upstream.

Route four

Lune Valley Trail, Lancaster



MENU





Route five

Lancaster to Heysham,
via Morecambe Bay



Lancaster to Heysham

This is a classic English seaside ride on National Route 69. Follow the River Lune's north bank to join the green link from Lancaster straight to the seafront at Morecambe. You will then cycle the arc of Morecambe Bay's promenade, where you can enjoy seafront views and spot the Furness Peninsula in Cumbria across the water.



Key route information:

Start:	Millennium Bridge
Finish:	Heysham
Time:	45 minutes
Length of ride:	6 miles



Start

Millennium Bridge

Lancaster LA1 1AY

GPS: 54.05258,
-2.80247

Finish

Heysham

Morecambe LA3 2PF

GPS: 54.048739,
-2.897648

Terrain, gradients and access

Access the ride via Lancaster or Morecambe train station. Flat tarmac path and wide promenade.

Some small roads to cross and a couple of gates between Lancaster and Morecambe.

Cycle hire available at Morecambe Bay.

Ideas for things to do:

- On the promenade, take a short detour past the stone jetty and Art Deco Midland Hotel to get to the iconic statue of comedian, Eric Morecambe
- Look out for wading birds, ducks and geese on Morecambe Bay's sandflats
- Once you get to Heysham, check out the ruins of the eighth Century St Patrick's chapel or even take a ferry to the Isle of Man.

Route five

Lancaster to Heysham



MENU



Follow the

6 69



little red signs



Route six

Whitehaven to Rowrah,
Cumbria



Whitehaven to Rowrah

This easy ride gives you dramatic Cumbrian scenery without any tough hills. The route follows a disused railway line to the edge of the Lake District at Cleator Moor before finishing at Rowrah village. The railway line was built in the 1850s to carry coal and iron ore, and the sculptures along the route reflect the path's rich heritage.



Key route information:

Start:	Whitehaven
Finish:	Rowrah
Time:	1 hour
Length of ride:	9 miles



Start

Whitehaven Harbour

13 Slipway, Whitehaven
CA28 7LH

[GPS: 54.548429,
-3.592007](#)

Finish

Rowrah Village

CA26 3XJ

[GPS: 54.553790,
-3.462212](#)

Terrain, gradients and access

Gentle ascent on tarmac path with some road crossings and short, on-road sections at Whitehaven and Rowrah. The route can be accessed via Whitehaven train station or Corkickle train station.

Ideas for things to do:

- Stop in the sensational Ennerdale in the Lake District for a picnic or drink on the grassy verges
- Spot the sculptures and artworks along the route
- Continue beyond Rowrah on a short on-road section to reach the rich hay meadows of High Leys National Nature Reserve.

Route six

Whitehaven to Rowrah, Cumbria



MENU





Route seven

Keswick to Thelkeld, via Keswick
Railway Path



Keswick Railway Path

Keswick Railway Path is a fantastic family-friendly ride that takes you from the picturesque town of Keswick through some of the Lake District's best scenery. You will love cycling through the spectacular Bobbin Mill railway tunnel. Spot the River Greta winding along your route as you cycle through thick magical woodland towards Threlkeld, a village in the shadow of the Blencathra mountain.



Key route information:

Start: Keswick

Finish: Threlkeld

Time: 30 minutes

Length of ride: 4 miles



Start

Old Railway Station

Keswick CA12 4NQ

[GPS: 54.60357, -3.13223](#)

Finish

Threlkeld Village

CA12 4RS

[GPS: 54.61430, -3.06305](#)

Terrain, gradients and access

Very gentle ascent along stony trail. Several gates and a short, on-road section into Threlkeld village. Nearest train stations are Aspatria and Penrith. Cycle hire available at Keswick.

Ideas for things to do:

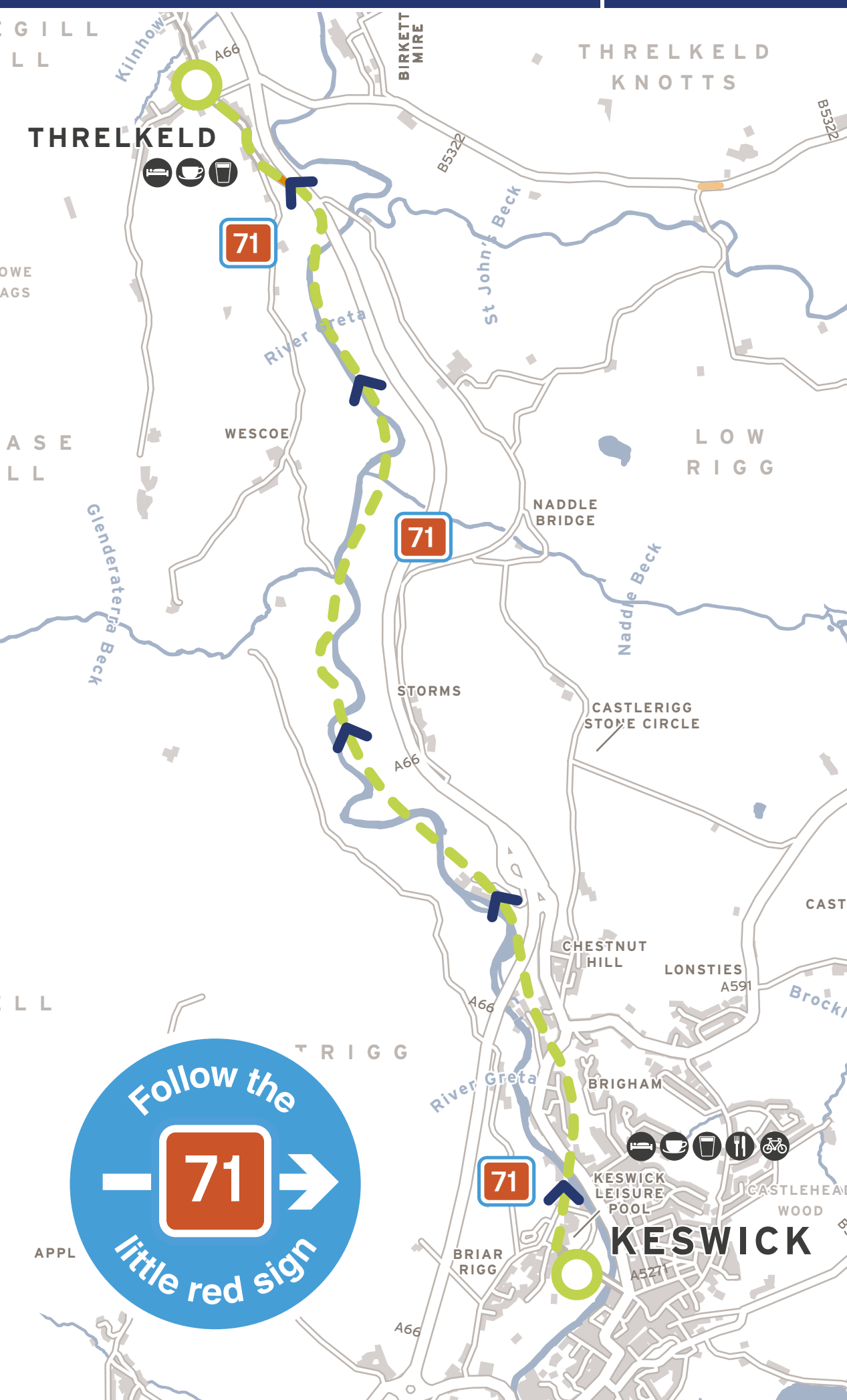
- Enjoy a shaded riverside picnic and see if you can spot herons, dippers and wagtails on the River Greta
- Make the most of Threlkeld's superb mountain views at the village's lovely coffee shop
- From Threlkeld you can follow the C2C on a mix of traffic-free path and quiet roads to reach the bustling town of Penrith via Greystoke.

Route seven

Keswick Railway Path, Cumbria



MENU





Route eight

Maryport to Allonby,
Scotland



Maryport to Allonby

This promenade cycle ride is part of the famous Hadrian's Cycleway, crossing into the World Heritage Site of Hadrian's Wall. The section between Maryport and Allonby boasts amazing views across the Solway Firth towards the mountains of southern Scotland. Cycle this route at the end of a clear day to experience one of Allonby's incredible sunsets.



Key route information:

Start:	Maryport Harbour
Finish:	Allonby
Time:	40 minutes
Length of ride:	5.5 miles



Start

Maryport Harbour,

Marine Rd, Maryport
CA15 8AY

GPS: 54.714460,
-3.506835

Finish

Allonby

Maryport
CA15 6QD

GPS: 54.774961,
-3.429401

Terrain, gradients and access

Train station access at Maryport. Mostly flat path but with some gently undulating sections. Wide concrete promenade, tarmac path. Some road crossings and an on-road section at Maryport.

Ideas for things to do:

- Pop in to the Maryport Maritime Museum at Maryport harbour to discover the area's maritime heritage
- At Crosscanonby Road, take a break in the wetlands of Crosscanonby Carr Nature Reserve to do some birdwatching
- From here you can cross the road on foot to see the Saltpans of Crosscanonby ancient monument, or walk to the top of Swarthy Hill to see the Roman remains at Milefortlet 21.

Route eight

Maryport to Allonby, Scotland



MENU





Bike ride checklist

You don't need special or expensive equipment to enjoy a short bike ride but here are some items you'll certainly find useful.

For you:

- A hat and suncream if it's sunny
- Waterproofs and extra layers of clothing
- Bike helmet – it's not compulsory to wear one in the UK but a well-fitted helmet is especially recommended for children
- Snacks and drinks to keep energy levels up
- Mobile phone and money

For your bike:

- Water bottle
- Puncture repair kit and pump
- Tyre levers, a bike 'multi-tool' or Allen keys and adjustable spanner
- Spare inner-tubes (saves you having to repair a puncture immediately)
- Bike lights
- Bike lock
- Bike bell – when on a shared-use path a friendly tinkle will let people know you're approaching.



ACCESSIBILITY ON THE NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK

Please be aware that routes may not be accessible to everyone.

Find out more



Top Tips & Accessibility

Useful information to know

Keep it safe and fun

Here are some tips to keep in mind when out on your ride:

- Let the slowest rider in your group set the pace for your ride.
- Ride in line on busy paths with any children in the middle of the adults. If there's only one adult, ride at the rear so you can keep an eye on everyone in front.
- Take extra care along any on-road sections and at road crossings. You may prefer to push your bike, especially with younger children or less experienced riders.

Plan your route



The routes in this guide are signed and easy to follow – just look out for the National Cycle Network blue and red signs. You can also check out your route in detail on our website and Ordnance Survey's online mapping.

Check your bike



Before you set off on your ride, check your bike is in good condition. We've put together a guide to help you safety check your bike in 11 easy steps.

Fix a puncture



Thankfully, punctures don't happen often and are easy to fix yourself. All you need is a pump, puncture repair kit and a set of tyre levers. Watch our video to learn how to repair a puncture.

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Please help us to look after and improve the National Cycle Network for everyone to enjoy.

Buy the guide

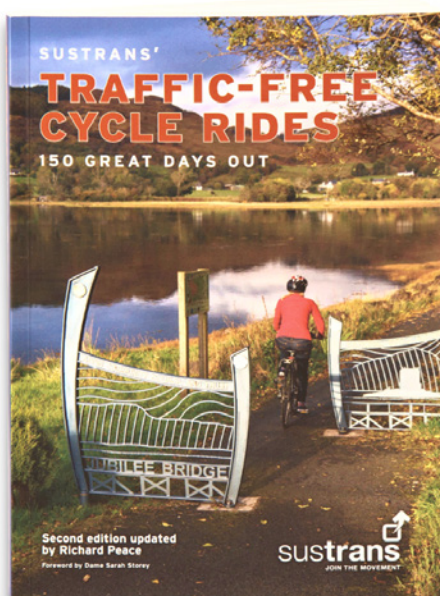


For more inspiring bike ride ideas buy our Traffic-Free Cycle Rides guidebook. It includes 150 hand-picked routes across the UK to help you plan the perfect day out.

Buy a regional map



Find and explore every local route and mile of the National Cycle Network in the UK with one of our pocket-sized regional cycle maps.



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We have taken all responsible steps to ensure that these routes are safe and achievable by people with a reasonable level of fitness. However, all outdoor activities involve a degree of risk. To the extent permitted by law, Sustrans accepts no responsibility for any accidents or injury resulting from following these routes. Walking and cycling routes change over time. Weather conditions may also affect path surfaces. Please use your own judgement when using the routes based upon the weather and the ability, experience and confidence levels of those in your group.

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