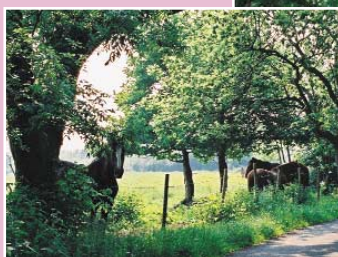


Walkabout

MERSEYSIDE COAST & COUNTRY



Knowsley & St Helens



Walkabout

MERSEYSIDE COAST & COUNTRY

There's a joy in treading the paths of old from town to village by fields of swaying barley-corn. The rich red sandstone walls of Rainhill give way to tilled soils between Cronton, Tarbock Green and Halewood. Church towers and spires provide guiding landmarks as light falls over Runcorn Bridge and the shining waters of the Mersey. These are the sights that make a walk memorable.



Carr Mill Dam (see Walk 2)

History often hides itself away but here's a chance to see one of the very first canals and railways near Earlestown where George Stephenson's handsome viaduct stands as a tribute to pioneering days. Beneath is the line of the old Sankey Navigation.

To the north of St Helens are the rippling waters of Carr Mill Dam, built to supply water to the Sankey Navigation, providing a haven for wildlife in this area.

There's no better way to enjoy our countryside than an outing by train. Merseyrail's City Lines take you to the five short walks featured in this booklet, suggested by Knowsley and St Helens Rangers. They are easy going and can be enjoyed at any time of year. That's the fun of Walkabout!

Each walk introduces you to the countryside of Knowsley and St Helens and features local country parks and places of interest.

The walks described in this booklet have been chosen because they can be reached easily by public transport. All stations mentioned have a regular weekday service and hourly Sunday rail service.

Walk 1 Carr Mill Dam from Garswood

A ramble to remember as you soon leave houses behind to walk the fields between Garswood and Chadwick Green, by the bubbling waters of the brook which leads to Carr Mill Dam, water which at one time powered nearby mills.

Walk 2 Into the Sacred Valley from Earlestown

Walk into the Sankey Valley where the tranquil scene of anglers by the St Helens Canal belies the stirring times of the past. You will soon enjoy the fresh air of the Sankey Valley Country Park along the waymarked walk known as the Bradlegh Loop.

Walk 3 Rainhill to Pex Hill


An easy ramble from the centre of Rainhill through farming country to the historic village of Cronton and the intriguing Pex Hill Country Park.

Walk 4 On the Halewood Trail

A saunter through Halewood Triangle Country Park and along the embankment of a stretch of the old Cheshire Lines railway to a small nature reserve, returning along leafy paths and roads to Halewood.

Walk 5 Knowsley Farms and Fields

A walk between the railway stations of Hough Green and Halewood along lanes and field hedges near Tarbock, an early village mentioned in the Domesday Book. You soon reach the church and old quarter of Halewood.

 *These walks are probably unsuitable for wheelchair users due to adverse surface conditions and restricted access.*



This information can be provided in alternative formats on request.



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When walking through the countryside, you are reminded to follow the countryside code which can be viewed on www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk/countryside_code



Ash Lane near Hough Green (Walk 5)

Merseyrail's City Line network with services from Liverpool to St Helens and Wigan, to Earlestown and Manchester, Halewood and Warrington make the countryside to the east of Merseyside easily accessible.

The area also enjoys a good level of bus services and you might like to use a bus to return from Cronton (Walk 3) rather than retrace your steps.

The full Merseyrail Network is shown on the map on the back cover.

For further information on rail, bus and ferry services phone the **Traveline** on **0870 608 2 608** or visit your local Merseytravel Centre.

Knowsley's Parks and Countryside Service may be contacted on 0151-443 3682 or 3683. For information on Knowsley's Parish Paths Partnership and rights of way phone 0151-443 2276.

For further help and information about country walks in St Helens ring the St Helens Countryside Rangers on 01744 739252.

Please note that walking times and distances given in this leaflet are approximate.

Walk 1 - Carr Mill Dam

Start and Finish: Garswood Merseyrail Station

Walking Time: 2-3 hours

Distance: 4½ miles / 7 km

An ideal walk for nature lovers amidst an oasis of farmland near to St Helens. Choose an early summers day for a superb walk coloured with wildflowers and alive with wild birds, or an autumn stroll amidst the glorious changing foliage.



Ducks and Geese at Carr Mill Dam

From Garswood Station turn left up Station Road to reach The Stag pub. Carefully cross the main road, turn right then immediately left through the signposted field gate between houses. Follow the field track up a long, gentle rise to the crest.

Over the crest the track bends left, narrowing to a fieldside path above a brook to your right. At one point the path crosses and recrosses this beneath a massive ash tree. Carry on, brook still to your right, to a T-junction. Turn right along the field road here, dipping into and out of the wooded dingle called The Goyt. Stay with the field road to reach another T-junction, here turn left.

This field road winds to reach high wooden railings. Keep these on your right and follow the track to and beyond the corner of these railings surrounding racehorse paddocks. In about 200 yards turn right at the T-junction, following the raised path between cropped fields to a walled path between cottages and onto a lane. Your way is left. This is the hamlet of Chadwick Green which retains many old buildings.

Follow the roughening Carr Mill Road to the cottage on your right (c. 200 yards). Go right at the footpath sign here, passing by this renovated mill cottage (complete with large millstone) and along the wide tree-lined track. This eventually becomes partly tarred; remain with it past the ornate old building at



Late Autumn above The Goyt

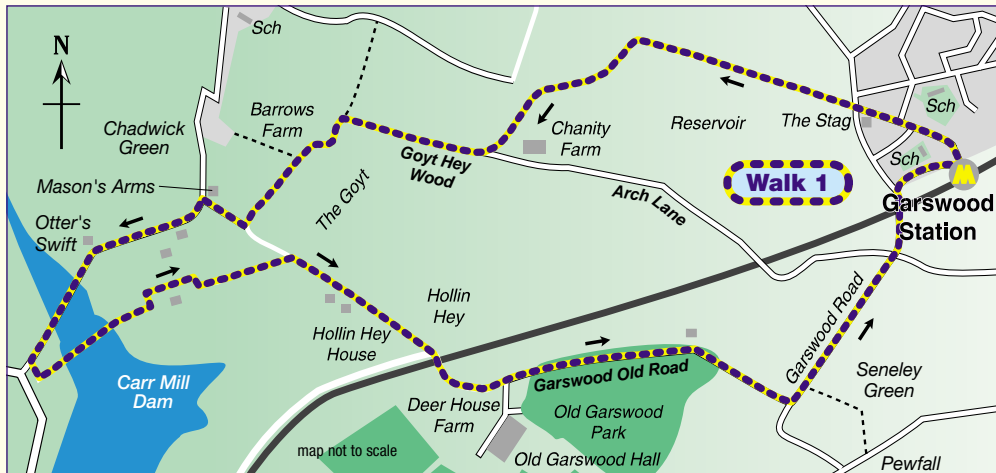
Otter's Swift and across the arm of the lake to reach low concrete bollards on your left. Go between these, in 50 yards turn left onto the causeway across Carr Mill Dam.

Once simply a mill pond built to power Carr's Mill, this was hugely expanded in the 1750s to provide water to the new St Helens Canal, about a mile away. The lake is a firm favourite with locals, busy with anglers and water sports enthusiasts. It's also a great place for birdwatchers - look out for herons, great crested grebes, coots and various species of duck and gull.

Climb the steep path at the far end of the causeway and take the narrow, fenced path. This skirts the pasture edge to a metal stile, climb this and walk up the drive towards the stone farmhouse. Take the signposted footpath immediately outside the garden fence (left of the house) along a narrow fenced path to a stile. Beyond this, keep ahead to the rough lane. Bear right and wind right, then left with it. As it turns left again (200 yards) turn right along a dirt path to reach a footbridge.



The Goyt



Walk ten paces beyond the bridge and bear half-left, up the wooded bank to a field corner stile. Keep to the left of the field, climb another stile and follow the fenced grassy path. Pass by the imposing houses, over the railway and turn left along the tarred lane 100 yards beyond.

This is Garswood Old Road. In the woodlands to your right is an open cast coal mine; the fields on your left were also a mine until a few years ago. This shows how efficient reclaiming land can be. This peaceful tarred lane (beware the occasional coal lorry!) winds through rich farmland, waving with barley in summer. The verges are a riot of wildflower colour, the hedges and trees alive with finches, linnets and thrushes. Look, too, for peewits and kestrels.

At the end turn left along Garswood Road. Go left again at the main road (still Garswood Road) and then right along School Lane (past the railway bridge) to find Garswood Station.



Garswood Old Road



Carr Mill Dam

Walk 2 - Into the Sacred Valley

Start and Finish: Earlestown Merseyrail Station

Walking Time: 2 hours

Distance: 3 miles / 5 km

In the old tongue, Sankey meant “Sacred Valley”. This easy walk explores a stretch of this lively little river as it flows through an area that was once at the heart of Britain’s engineering and transport industries. It’s now a green and pleasant Country Park, but to get there involves a transit of today’s industrial landscape.



The Swing Bridge

Turn left from Earlestown Railway Station and walk to the crossroads. Turn left along Earle Street, named after the railway pioneer Sir Hardman Earle. Left again along Junction Lane takes you past a recycling centre and into an industrial estate. Turn left again at the crossroads to walk past warehouses and factories. The road bends right; as it bends right again, take the signed footpath ahead-left and walk the tarred path down to a swing-bridge across the Sankey Navigation, built in 1757 as England’s first modern canal.



The Sankey Navigation at Red Brow



George Stephenson's Sankey Viaduct

Keep ahead to cross a footbridge over the Sankey Brook. It’s pretty clean these days, but 50 years ago took the nickname “Stinking Brook!” Trace the path up beside the woods and on through to a cross path and fingerpost. The way here is left; to your right the imposing Sankey Viaduct strides across the valley, opened in 1830 to carry what was the first passenger railway in the world.

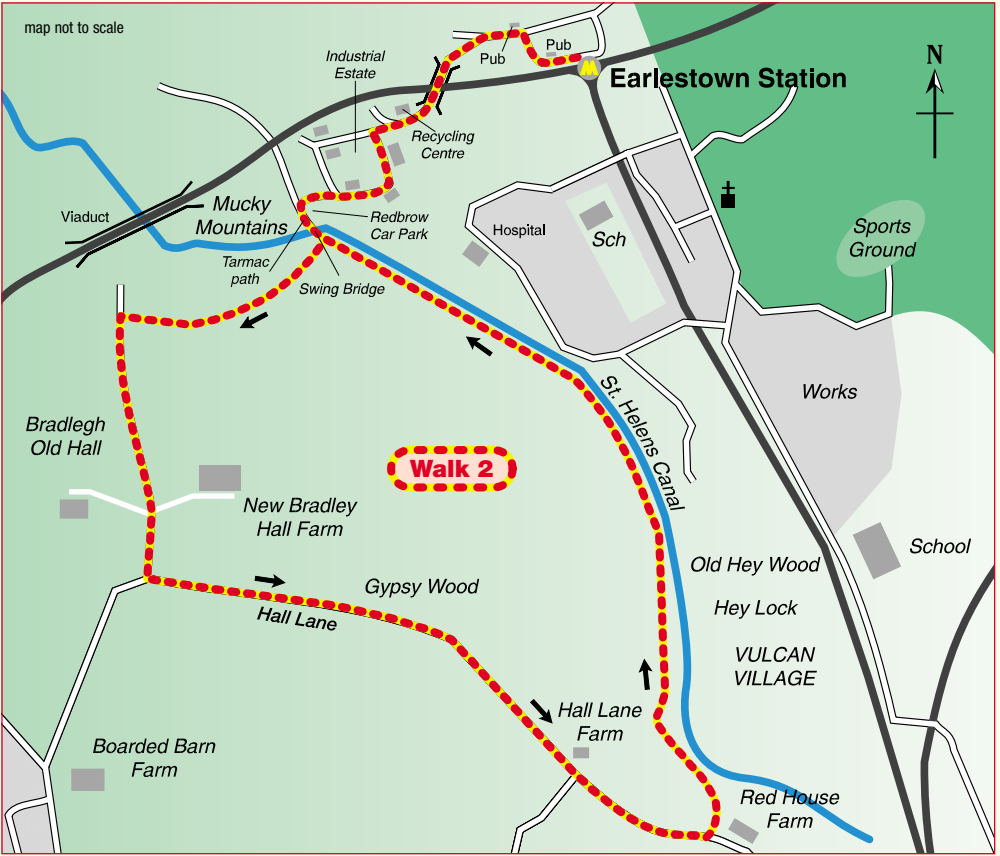
Follow the wide gravelled track to a gate and continue straight along the tarred lane beyond.



The Gatehouse to Bradlegh Old Hall (private)

To your right in the trees is a moat and old gatehouse all that remain of Bradlegh Hall, a medieval house where King Richard III once stayed. (This is a private property.)

At the junction turn left along Hall Lane. This is a very peaceful stretch alongside Gypsy Wood, with its remarkable gnarled old oak trees to one side and rich farmland to the other. Keep an eye out for plover (pewits), woodpeckers, jays and countless other wild birds.



The Sacred Valley

Stay with the lane for 250 yards past the farm to reach, on your left, a footpath sign near a bend. Turn left, cross the footbridge over Sankey Brook (look out for fishermen and herons here) and follow the path across fields to the old canal. Turn left.



Footpath to Sankey Brook

At Hey Lock is a local history information board. You can follow a route either side of the canal from here to return to the swing-bridge crossed earlier. From this simply retrace your steps back to Earlestown Station.

Walk 3 - Rainhill to Pex Hill

Start: Rainhill Merseyrail Station

Finish: Cronton Village - bus stop

Walking Time: 2 hours

Distance: 3 miles / 5 km

From the historic location of the early railway trials at Rainhill to the homely village of Cronton, this walk is packed with interest.



Rainhill heading to View Road

As you leave Rainhill Station (via foot bridge) walk straight along Victoria Street. Cross over the main road (The Victoria pub is on the right) and walk along View Road. Pass Rainhill St. Anne's Primary School on the right and the library on the left, then by some big old houses.

At Old Lane, turn left and immediately right down Blundell's Lane. There is an excellent view to the left towards Frodsham and Wales. Eventually you will reach Blundell's Hill Golf Club, keep going for about 100 yards and then turn left following a footpath sign. Walk this wide track past the car park to gates and a barrier. Go ahead along the path between banks and marked with a green footpath notice. This sunken path cuts through the golf course to reach a dirt lane at the far side. There's a gate to your right, but you



Blundell's Lane



Leaving Hall Lane for Rough Head

should bear left, tracing the old lane through to the road at a motorway bridge. Go right over the motorway and turn right on the other side where the wooden sign post reads 'Penny Lane $\frac{3}{4}$ mile'.

Go down steps and along a track following the other side of the motorway. In about 400 yards you'll reach a stream. Keep this on your right until it bends away into the woods. Here, remain with the field-edge path outside the woods (right), following waymarked posts across duckboarding and onwards to a green, fieldside track leading to Penny Lane. Turn left, ignore the signposted footpath shortly off to your right and walk through to a junction. Turn right to another junction.



Hall Lane in Cronton

Here, fork left along Hall Lane, past the old village cross and, shortly, Cronton Hall. Remain on Hall Lane right through to its junction with the main Cronton Road. The bus stop for Liverpool buses is to the right and across the road.

Before catching the bus, it is well worth making the short detour up Pex Hill, a high bluff of heathland from which are magnificent views across to Wales. To get here turn left up Mill Lane (just before Cronton Road).



Footpath to Pex Hill



Pex Hill Country Park

To return to Liverpool city centre from Cronton there's an hourly 6 or 6A bus (Mondays to Saturdays until mid evening) or H5 bus (Sundays, every two hours) running via Huyton and Broad Green Stations.

At the corner, go ahead through the barrier and up the hedged track. Turn right at the quarry edge and look for the waymarked gate beyond to climb to the viewpoint. (Note that the former Visitor Centre here is no longer open to the public.)



The path back to Cronton

Walk 4 - Halewood Trail

Start and Finish: Halewood Merseyrail Station

Walking Time: 2½ hours

Distance: 3½ miles / 5.5 km

A walk through old woodland and along one of Britain's new National Trails.

From the ticket office cross into Halewood Park and take the path along the left edge. Fork left at the railings up to an old railway line. Remain on it across a road to reach a high wooden Triangle across the path and a Visitor Centre.

Just past the Triangle, turn left through the barrier. Walk for 150 yards to a tall metal fingerpost. Turn right here to join a boardwalk through the boggy woodland. This, Halewood Triangle Country Park, is amongst the oldest surviving native woodland in Merseyside and is home to a wealth of wild birds and seasonal wildflowers.

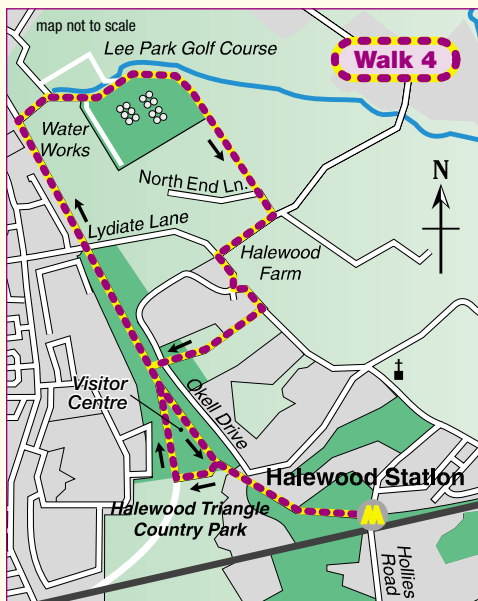


On the Halewood Triangle

At the old railway turn right and follow it for 1 mile. This is part of the Trans-Pennine Trail, a multi-user path across England from Southport and Liverpool to Hull. Well past Lydiate Lane bridge is a wider, metal-parapet bridge. 100 yards past this descend the steps, right and then turn right along the path. Shortly, fork right along a path beside the waterworks fence. At the bend turn right again at a signpost for Gerrard's Lane, remaining beside the fence and above a brook.

A golf course appears across the water. At a fingerpost turn right outside the fencing and leave the stream. Take the kissing gate into a hedged path and then ahead along North End Lane. Turn right to traffic lights. Turn left along Church Road and go straight on at the roundabout. In 150 yards turn right at the wooden gate.

Follow this woodland edge path to and between housing. Cross an estate road to reach another, cross the zebra crossing and go up to the old railway. Turn left and follow signs to the Visitor Centre. Go under the Triangle Arch and retrace your steps to Halewood station.



Every care has been taken in ensuring the accuracy of the details given in this publication, but neither Merseytravel nor their agents can be held responsible for any inconvenience arising from errors or omissions.

Walk 5 - Knowsley Farms and Fields

Start: Hough Green Merseyrail Station

Finish: Halewood Merseyrail Station

Walking Time: 2-2½ hours

Distance: 4 miles / 6.5 km

A gentle, rural walk to Halewood. The walk takes you along paths where hawthorn, oak and ivy are common, and many wild flowers are growing by the old hedgerows.



Ash Lane near Bosco Hall Farm

Cross the zebra crossing at the top of the station approach road and go ahead along Ditchfield Road. In 500 yards turn right beside the Post Office, along Ash Lane. Stay on this as it bends left and take the "Private Road". Pass cottages and Bosco Hall Farm and swing right with the roughening lane to reach the motorway embankment.

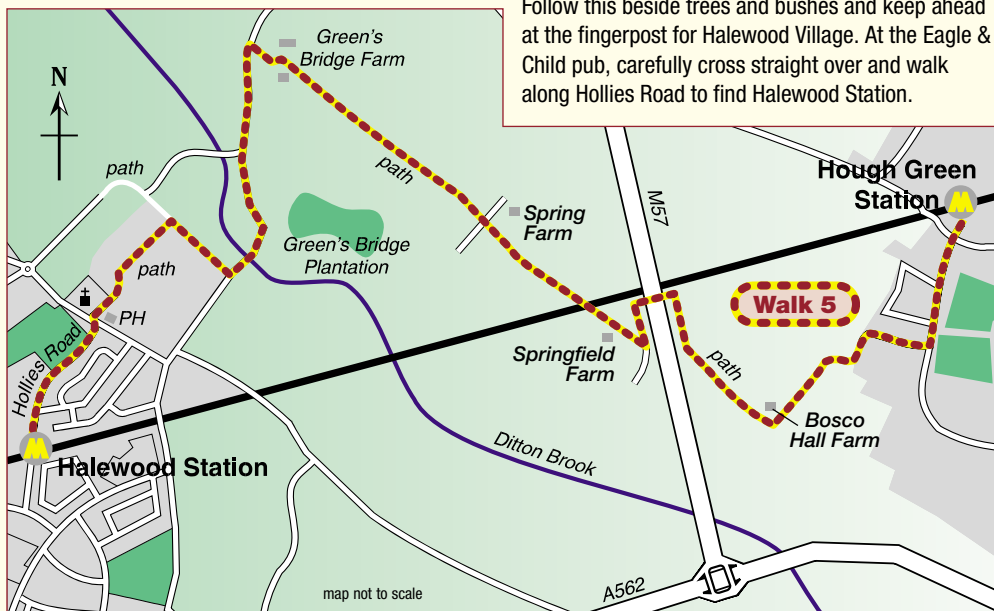


The Eagle & Child at Halewood

Keep this to your left; then go under it and trace the lane around to a junction of tracks. Keep ahead and walk through the farmyard at Springfield Farm; go under the railway and onwards to a crossing of tracks in about 500 yards. Keep straight ahead (signed Grn's Br Road), following the grassy field road through to the buildings at Greens Bridge Farm.

Keep right of the buildings to the bungalow. Just past this turn left before the poplar trees and then right opposite old gateposts along an old green track to the road. Cross and turn left. Pass the traffic lights at Ditton Brook Bridge and go around the bends. Maybe 120 yards before the roundabout turn right along the path between hedge and railings. Keep to the left side of the former playing fields to reach blue railings. Take the gap on the left at the wide old gateway here, turn left then immediately right along a tarred path (new buildings off to your left).

Follow this beside trees and bushes and keep ahead at the fingerpost for Halewood Village. At the Eagle & Child pub, carefully cross straight over and walk along Hollies Road to find Halewood Station.





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