

BURSCOUGH TO LIVERPOOL LEEDS & LIVERPOOL CANAL

1

TRIP TYPE : SOLO CYCLE

OBJECTIVE : CYCLE FROM BURSCOUGH TO LIVERPOOL ON THE
LEEDS & LIVERPOOL CANAL, RETURNING BY TRAIN
FROM CENTRAL LIVERPOOL.

DISTANCE : 27 MILES

TIME : 3.5 HOURS 7.8 mph

NICHOLSON: GUIDE 5, PP 95-105

COSTS : FREE PARKING IN BURSCOUGH. TRAIN FROM
LIVERPOOL CENTRAL OR MOORFIELDS TO BURSCOUGH
JUNCTION, 1 PER HOUR (MORE FREQUENT IF JUST
GOING TO ORMSKIRK), £8.60.

DIFFICULTY : FAIR

OVERVIEW: The towpath is quite poor between Burscough and Lydiate, but then mostly good quality into Liverpool. The ride passes close to Martin Mere bird reserve, and Aintree Racecourse, before an urban trek into the heart of Liverpool, finishing at the Stanley Flight which drops down to the River Mersey. Although the towpath is poor in places, there are no significant obstacles and therefore the ride is categorised as Fair.

1. BURSCOUGH TO LYDIATE (9.5 MILES)

Park in Mill Lane, Burscough, L40 5UX, towards the mill end of the street. Cycle back along Mill Lane to Liverpool Road, A59, and turn right to cross the canal bridge.

Once over the bridge, you can turn sharp left back to the canal, and negotiate the awkward cycle gate, or turn right on Lord Street, then through the wharf car park to

the towpath. In either case, once at the towpath, turn right to head west.

Initially you are on a gravel path, but after a mile, at New Lane Bridge, where the cycle path goes off to Martin Mere reserve, it turns to narrow earth. It is fairly flat, with a few bumps and stones. This continues to Lydiate, the approach to which is particularly poor, one section in particular being very narrow, stony, with holes in the banking so take care.

2. LYDIATE TO STANLEY FLIGHT (14 MILES)

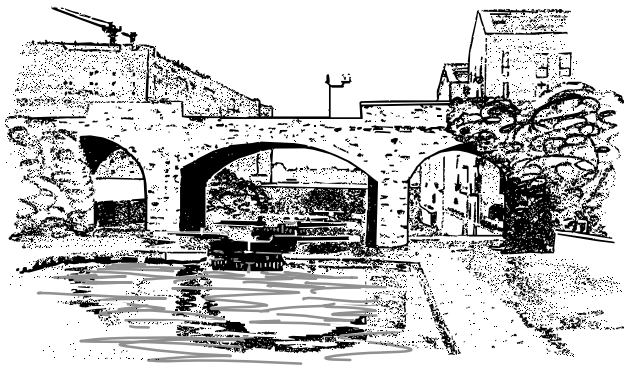
Once into the suburbs the path is much improved, part patchy tarmac, part wide gravel. After Lydiate comes Maghull. The towpath turns to earth again as you pass Aintree racecourse (you can't see much of the course due to a high fence), then improves again at Litherland all the way into the city centre.



Once in Bootle, look out for the Salt & Tar pop up bar. Just before this, having passed under the A567, Stanley Road, double back on yourself up the ramp to cross the Stanley Road Changeling Bridge, 2A, and after 400m cross back on the Caroline Street Changeling Bridge, 1 (after this point the bridges on the canal are lettered A to O). Continue along the final section through Sandhills to the sharp bend at the top of the Stanley Flight.

Cycle down 3 of the 4 locks, then take the path to your right alongside the new apartments, which saves you

tricky narrow footbridge at the bottom lock. The canal then disappears underneath Great Howard Street, and the remaining section is not accessible by bike.



Stanley Flight,
Leeds & Liverpool Canal

Emerging onto Great Howard Street, turn right, cross the road and cycle down Walter Street to the Dock Road. Turn left to cycle back over the canal on your way towards the Pier Head. There is a dedicated cycleway as you approach the Liver Building, which I considered to be the end of my ride, although you could continue to Albert Dock, where the new canal extension finishes (fyi bridges on this section are lettered AA to EE).

3. LIVERPOOL TO BURSLOUGH (2 M or 5.5 MILES CYCLING)

Trains to Burscough Junction go from Liverpool Central or Moorfields to Ormskirk, where you change. Moorfields is slightly closer to the Pier Head, but I enjoyed walking my bike through the buzzy city centre to Central. Metro trains to Ormskirk are frequent. However, trains for the short journey on to Burscough Junction are only 1 per hour, so I chose to cycle the $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles back to Burscough, which takes 20 minutes, and is partly along the main A59 road (but mostly on pavements).

To cycle back to Burscough: turn left when emerging from the station down a track. When you reach the T junction turn left, under the railway, emerging on Old Boundary Way. Continue to Burscough Road and turn right. At the junction with A59, High Lane, turn right on the main road. At the roundabout go straight on (slightly right) into Burscough. Turn right on Junction Lane, then left on Glenroyd Drive back to Mill Lane.

If you take the train back to Burscough Junction, turn right out of the station entrance onto the path to Ainscough Drive, which leads to Mill Lane.

There are plenty of historic and other pubs in Liverpool city centre (my personal favourite being the Roscoe Head on Roscoe Street, L1 2SX), and I would also recommend the Thirsty Duck, Burscough Wharf, or the Hop Vine, Liverpool Road, just over the canal bridge from Mill Lane, in Burscough.

