

MEANDERS AROUND MELLING

This 4.6 mile (7.4 km) circular walk, starting and ending at Maghull railway station, passes through the historical village of Melling. The settlement of Melling (from Mellingas, literally 'The followers of Mealla') probably dates back to the 6th Century AD, and is one of the earliest English place names. Its location above the marshy lowlands of Hengarther Lake, which separated Melling from Maghull, would have made it a natural area for settlement.

From the station turn right along Station Road and head towards Maghull, passing the former home of Frank Hornby of Meccano, Hornby Trains and Dinky Toys fame. After 190 yds (175m) turn left into Rutherford Road to reach the Leeds Liverpool canal at Draper's bridge. Cross the bridge and turn left to join the canal towpath leaving Maghull behind, passing first under the railway embankment and then the motorway to reach Melling Stone Bridge (no.11).

This section of the canal was built between 1771 and 1774 connecting Liverpool to Wigan. Its main purpose was to supply coal for industrial and domestic use. Coal was also exported, particularly to Ireland.

Continue along the towpath up to Holmes Swing Bridge, leave the towpath and cross the bridge, passing the site of Bridge Cottage on your right and ascend the hill to New House Farm. Pass straight through the farmyard and continue along the track, which in places has the underlying surface of red sandstone, to reach Melling Rocks.

St Thomas' Church and the Bootle Arms are visible on the left. The origin of the burial ground at Melling Rock predates recorded history. It has gravestones dating back at least 700 years. The Chapel of Holy Rood (Holy Cross) was established by 1190 AD and may be predated by an ancient cross, the base of which is in St Thomas' churchyard .

Bear right and follow Tithebarn Lane out of the village. After 275 yds (250m) the Tithe Barn can be seen on the left. This was built in 1831-1832 of dressed sandstone to store the tithe due to the Rector of Halsall.

Continue past Pear Tree Farm to Sandy Lane which is followed to the left. At the junction with School Lane, you can see on the right Melling School, built in 1844.



Holmes Swing Bridge



Giddygate Lane



St Thomas Church

Continue along Sandy Lane to reach Leatherbarrow's Lane, turn left and then right at a footpath sign pointing to Giddygate Lane adjacent to the pumping station, which supplies borehole water to St. Helens.

Follow a long straight path along the field edges, crossing Moss Nook Lane to reach a small triangular paddock with a private fishing pond.

Pass through the paddock, and at the far end is Giddygate Lane, ignore the footpath opposite and turn left along Giddygate Lane. After 330yds (300m) you will reach Guest Farm on the left. As Giddygate Lane bends to the right, turn left joining the footpath parallel to the motorway. Continue along the track, crossing the bridge over the motorway and then follow the tarmac road to the left, running alongside the motorway to reach Leatherbarrow's Lane.

Descend steps opposite, turning left at the bottom to follow a track into Balls Wood Park. Tree planting here is re-establishing Balls Wood.

Reaching Melling Lane you turn right and follow the lane to Maghull Station, so completing the circuit.



Keypoints

Distance - 4.6 miles (7.4km)

- 1** Frank Hornby's House
- 2** Melling Stone Bridge
- 3** St Thomas Church (site of a medieval chapel)
- 4** Balls Wood Park