

## **New Brighton Kings Parade to Birkenhead Park**

**Walking & Cycling:** Continue along the sea front walk and cycle track. When the two separate at the far end Derby Pool car park, walkers stay on the sea defence path. Cyclists can push their cycles along this section.

Alternatively cyclists can follow the signs for the Wirral Circular Trail to the main Leasowe Road and turn right. This is a 40mph dual carriage-way with no specific cycle routes at present. Leasowe Castle is then on your right. Continue straight along, bearing right to the Lighthouse when the main road turns left.

If you stay on the sea defence path, Leasowe Castle and then the Lighthouse are on your left.

**Driving:** At the last roundabout on Kings Drive, turn left for the M53, then at the 2<sup>nd</sup> roundabout, take 1<sup>st</sup> left along Harrison Drive onto Wallasey Village and right at the roundabout for the A551, Leasowe Road. Follow this road, noting the bypass flyover, past Leasowe Castle on the right and then the Lighthouse ahead.

### **Heritage Site 5 Leasowe Castle:**

Built by the Earls of Derby in the late 16th century, this Grade II\* 'Castle' has been altered and enlarged over the centuries, serving among other things as a sporting lodge, a castellated mansion, an hotel, a nobleman's residence and a railwayman's convalescent home. Today it is once again a hotel.



**Leasowe Castle**

## Heritage Site 6 Leasowe Lighthouse:

The oldest brick-built lighthouse in Britain, it was erected in 1763 by the Liverpool Docks Committee. Originally it was one of four lights on the north coast of Wirral, the others being two at Hoylake and another - a lower light - at Leasowe. This latter was destroyed by the sea and replaced in 1771 by a lighthouse on Bidston Hill, subsequently rebuilt in 1873. Leasowe lighthouse remained in use until 1908. Managed by volunteers. Open to the public once a month. Grade II listed.

[www.leasowelighthouse.co.uk](http://www.leasowelighthouse.co.uk)



Leasowe Lighthouse.

## Leasowe Lighthouse to Bidston Village:

**Walking and cycling:** From the Lighthouse, take the track back in the direction you have come from with the sea wall on your left across the field and about 200yds after the lighthouse turn right onto the track that goes across the field to run alongside the River Birket.

At the junction with Pasture Rd, cross over the road, turn left and then immediately right onto the continuation of the River Birket cycle track keeping the river on your right. Go as far as Reeds Lane, where you turn right and then immediately, left onto the River Birket cycle track, keeping the river this time on your left. Keep going until you get to the metal bridge where you turn left and then immediately right passing Davis Rd on the left. Follow this grassed track keeping the river on your right and the houses on your left & follow the grass path around to the left, keeping the river and the path to the Golf Club on your right, and continue along until the embankment reaches the end of the line of houses.

Turn left to go across the playing field to the surfaced path. Turn right onto this path which leads out to Leasowe Rd. The route now follows Telegraph Lane that is diagonally right across the road. Take care crossing the busy dual carriageway. Consider using the pelican crossing or roundabout nearby. Follow this bridleway to the end, where you turn right onto the National Cycle Network Route 56 along Green Lane to the end following the signs for Route 56, left onto the cycle track alongside the bypass and right into Bayswater Road that becomes Greenleas Road, straight over at the traffic lights into Cross lane and follow the Route 56 Cycle route under the M53 flyover, across the marshes behind B&Q and into Bidston Village.





**Bidston Village collage**



**Bidston Hall:**

Grade II\* listed and one of Wirral's oldest halls. Acquired by the Stanleys in 1397, it dates from a late C16 or early C17 re-building of an earlier structure. It passed to Lord Kingston in 1662 and to Sir Robert Vyner, royal goldsmith and banker and sometime Mayor of London, in 1680. The enclosing wall of the Hall's forecourt and its impressive gateway, probably late C16, are listed Grade II\* while the wall to the rear, of similar date, is Grade II.



Clover Cottages –part of formerly a pair of alms houses, dated 1901, built for G.R.Clover & C, the Birkenhead shipbuilder, to the design of the architects Woolfall and Eccles. (Grade II listed)



At the heart of the village is St Oswald's Church (Grade II listed) built about the middle of the C13th with a tower added in the 1500s but substantially rebuilt in 1855-1856, to the design of W. & J. Hay. The windows in the south aisle, installed in 1912, include work by Morris & Co. Bidston was originally a large parish, serving Birkenhead, Claughton, Moreton and Saughall Massie and the churchyard includes some substantial graves.

### **Other key buildings in Bidston include:**

Bidston Hall Farm, the largest in the village and formerly part of the Bidston Hall estate. Probably late C18, (Grade II listed) its outbuildings have been converted into cottages.

Yew Tree Farm which bears a 1697 datestone, with the initials T.H.W. for Thomas and Hannah Wilson, married at Bidston in 1694. The timber gable to one of the buildings suggests it is of earlier date. (Grade II listed)

Ivy Farm and its outbuildings, originally called the Green Farm, which now form two separate dwellings. It is largely late C18-early C19 but with earlier origins.

Church Farm (Grade II listed), built over a period of time, originated in the early C16 but is mainly C17. A kennel for the farm dogs is built into the steps of what was the granary. Excavation on its site produced roman pottery.

Stone Farm, once the Ring O'Bells, is mainly C18 but with earlier origins. (Grade II listed)

Lilac Cottage, once a farmhouse, is now subdivided. Dating from the late C17 it has been extensively restored. (Grade II listed) Its former outbuildings – a barn range and stables - are now converted into dwellings. (Grade II listed)

Clover Cottages – formerly a pair of alms houses, dated 1901, built for G.R.Clover & C, the Birkenhead shipbuilder, to the design of the architects Woolfall and Eccles. (Grade II listed)

2-4 School Lane, a pair of cottages, one now divided into flats, are probably C18. (Grade II listed)

Wirral Council Website [bit.ly/bidstonvca](http://bit.ly/bidstonvca)

### **From Bidston Village, leaving the War Memorial on your right:**

**Walking:** Follow the footpath into Eleanor Road on the right, through the gap past the barrier, left up onto Bidston Hill and turn right along the hill ridge passing both the **Obervatory and Lighthouse** on the left, continue to **The Windmill**, over the footbridge and left to

**Tam O'Shanter Cottage and Farm with Flaybrick Cemetery opposite.**

**Driving & cycling:** take the 1<sup>st</sup> right Boundary Road, passing the **Obervatory and Lighthouse** on your right, go over the cross roads to **Tam O'Shanter Farm** on your right for **Tam O'Shanter Cottage & The Windmill.**

**Flaybrick Cemetery** is on the left.

### **Bidston Lighthouse and Bidston Observatory:**

#### **Heritage Site 7 Bidston Lighthouse:**

The first lighthouse on Bidston Hill was built in 1771, further from the shore than any other lighthouse in Britain. It was intended to be worked as a pair, in conjunction with the lighthouse at Leasowe, when the lower lighthouse there became 'useless due to the encroachment of the sea'. The present lighthouse was built by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board in 1873. It is in private hands, but visits can be arranged. G .II.

### **Heritage Site 8 Bidston Observatory:**

Observatory and former director's house of 1866. Designed and built under the superintendence of its first director, John Hartupp. Important both for its original function of rating mariners' chronometers and later for its pioneer work in analysing tidal flows, which led to reliable tidal predictions worldwide. The white domed observation towers originally housed a transit and a comet telescope. G.II



**Bidston Lighthouse and Observatory**

### **Heritage Site 9 Bidston Windmill:**

A brick built tower mill, erected to replace a wooden peg mill, destroyed by fire in 1791 and used for grinding corn until 1875. Most of its machinery remains, but it is no longer in working order. Opening times can be found on the internet.



**Bidston Windmill**

### **Heritage Site 10 Tam O'Shanter Cottage:**

Probably a squatter's cottage. It got its name in the early 19th century when the occupier, a local stone mason, Richard Lea, carved the stone slab depicting the Robert Burns poem 'Tam O'Shanter', now on the gable wall. Extensively damaged by fire in 1975, and subsequently vandalised, it faced demolition. Saved by the Birkenhead History Society, it was rebuilt and a Trust formed to open it to schools. In 1986 four acres of land around the cottage were developed as an urban farm. Open to visitors every day.



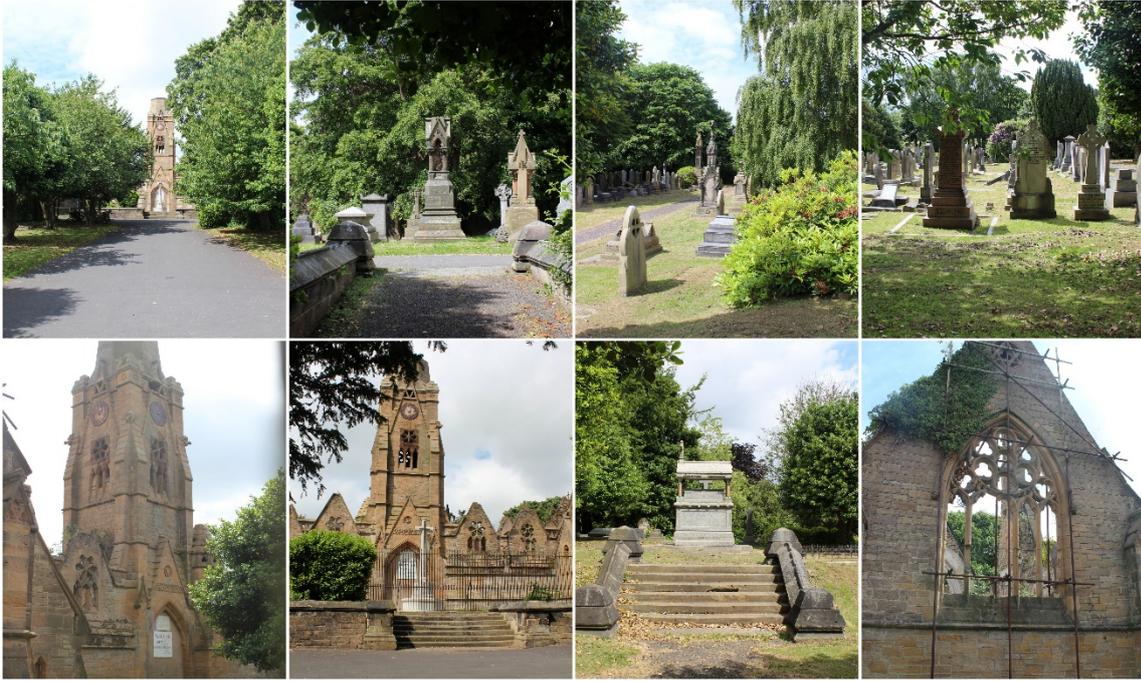
**Tam O'Shanter Cottage**

## Flaybrick Cemetery Conservation Area:



Flaybrick Cemetery Conservation Area is bounded by the walls of this outstanding Victorian cemetery, which is listed Grade II\* on the national Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Within the Conservation Area there are 7 listed buildings and structures, including the impressive linked Gothic Revival chapels, built by the Liverpool architects Lucy and Littler. The cemetery laid down by the noted Victorian landscape gardener, Edward Kemp, still preserves all the key features of his original lay-out, design and planting.

Since 2016, Wirral Council has been working with Historic England to stabilize the derelict chapels and prepare a Conservation Management Plan to secure the future of the cemetery and remove the site from the national Heritage at Risk Register.



**Flaybrick Cemetery collage**



The chapels, one for Anglicans and one for Non-Conformists are joined by a central entrance beneath the originally imposing spire. Each had a nave, aisle, side chapel, outer porch and apsidal east end. The spire was partially taken down and the roof removed in 1980s and the chapels are in very poor structural condition. However, recent works to consolidate the building fabric have revealed that many internal features, including carved stonework and decorated tiles do survive.



It is estimated that over 100,000 people are buried in Flaybrick and there are over 10,000 graves and monuments. Some are of artistic significance, but the majority are interesting simply because they represent changing fashions in the design of grave markers and their cultural significance.

Among the most important people buried or commemorated in Flaybrick are:  
Edmund Kemp – one of the leading landscape designers of the mid-19th century, who worked with Joseph Paxton at Chatsworth and Birkenhead Park and whose notable works included Flaybrick Cemetery, Anfield Cemetery and Grosvenor Park in Chester.

Isaac Roberts – a pioneer of astronomy. His monument is an outstanding Egyptian design, rich in symbolism relating to his life, work and belief.

Lewis Hornblower – landscape designer responsible for the major structures in Birkenhead Park including the Grand Entrance Lodge.

Numerous members of the Laird family. The family crypt of William Laird features a Celtic cross with a carved dog and a boar guarding the now blocked entrance.

In contrast to the many impressive and imposing monuments, large unmarked pits for pauper burials can be seen in the Anglican section.

There is a large monument to casualties of the First World War and a number of individual war graves throughout the cemetery. Important events linked to Birkenhead include the graves of Joseph McLoughlin who drowned on the Lusitania and Charles Morgan a victim of the Titanic.

Wirral Council website [bit.ly/flaybrickca](http://bit.ly/flaybrickca)

**Walking, Cycling and driving from Flaybrick Cemetery to Birkenhead Park:**

From Boundary Road with Tam O'Shanter Farm on your right and Flaybrick Cemetery on your left, continue to the traffic light lighted junction with Upton Road and turn left. Follow The Upton Road down the hill past the shops and the College and turn right into Park Road.

**Walkers and cyclists can enter Birkenhead Park on the left,** and go along Park Drive to the Visitor Centre.

**Driving:** continue Park Road and turn left into Ashville Road and then 2<sup>nd</sup> right into Park Drive.

Continue to the visitor centre. You should now be in Birkenhead Park,

RT 24<sup>th</sup> November.