

# In and around Barrow-in-Furness



## Welcome to Barrow -in-Furness where beaches and ancient woodlands meet industry past and present

Barrow-in-Furness and the surrounding islands lie at the tip of the Furness Peninsula. The coast and islands are dotted with rich industrial and military heritage and wonderful wildlife. The specially protected sand dune habitats here are perfect for rare natterjack toads, claimed to be Europe's noisiest amphibian.

### Don't Miss...

There's so much to see and many hidden corners to explore, but these top 3 highlights are not to be missed!

- 1 Explore secluded beaches and watch grey seals on the Isle of Walney**
- 2 Visit Sandscale Haws National Nature Reserve (NNR), spectacular sand dunes with dramatic panoramas**
- 3 Follow the footsteps of Cistercian monks through ancient woodlands around the ruins of Furness Abbey**



natterjack toad

© Dave Talbot

### In this guide you will find...

- **Seasonal highlights**
- **Three great days out**
- **How to get around**

### On a rainy day...

Pop into Barrow Dock Museum to find out more about our maritime history, call 01229 876400, admission is free. Take shelter in one of the hides at South Walney nature reserve (one accessible by wheelchair) open everyday, call 01229471066.

### Fascinating fact

Look out for bee orchids at Sandscale Haws NNR (May – June). These orchids mimic a bee to encourage bees to pollinate them.

### Seasonal Highlights

This area is full of wildlife, with something spectacular and different to see whatever the time of year:

#### Look out for:

#### SPRING

Regal eider ducks arriving at their most southerly breeding site at South Walney and orchids blooming at Sandscale Haws.

#### SUMMER

Special flowering plants adapted to sunny and salty seaside habitats, like Walney geranium, which is found nowhere else in the world!

#### AUTUMN

Wonderful colourful displays of deciduous trees like oak, ash and sycamore in Millwood and Abbots Wood.

#### WINTER

Grey seals are easy to spot from the comfort of cosy hides on South Walney.



grey seal

© Ben Andrew

## Island Hopping

There are 11 islands around Barrow-in-Furness. Spend a day exploring the coast and see if you can find secluded beaches, sand dunes, grey seal haul outs, breeding bird colonies, and our very own King of Piel!

Cumbria Wildlife Trust's nature reserves at South Walney and Foulney Island, Natural England's NNR at North Walney and Piel Island are great places to take a walk on the wildside, explore nature and experience the windswept wilderness of the area.

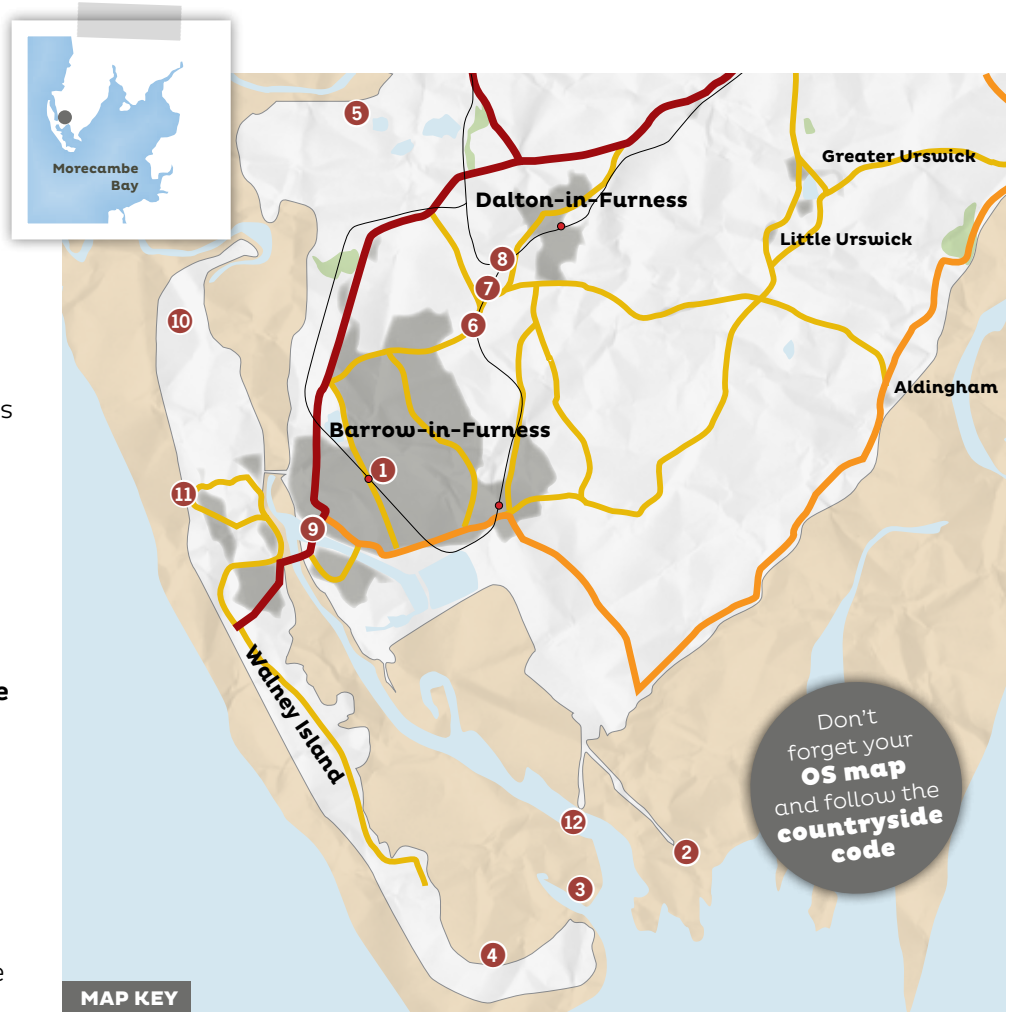
- While away a morning on the Isle of Walney at South Walney Nature Reserve. Choose from a 5km or 3km circular walk between hides dotted along footpaths. As well as spectacular nature, including breeding terns and gulls, and a colony of grey seals, enjoy fabulous views across Morecambe Bay.

Entry is free for Cumbria Wildlife Trust members. There is a car park and toilets, or you can get here by bike along the quiet roads. To explore Walney on horseback call Seaview Riding School on 01229 474251.

- From Earnse Bay, a popular beach with locals, walk for 1.5km along the coast to North Walney NNR. This diverse area of mudflats, dunes and heathland is home to an amazing array of special flowers able to cope with both hot sunshine and biting winds. The Walney geranium is so perfectly adapted to this area that it isn't found anywhere else in the world! North Walney is rich in military history with WWI practice ranges and a WWII rifle range.

You can get to Earnse Bay by bus from Barrow town and there is parking and toilets here.

- No trip around Barrow would be complete without a journey to Piel Island by boat from Roa Island. Here you'll find the ruins of Piel Castle, a fortified grain and wool store built around 1327. Look out for kestrels on



### MAP KEY

- |                        |                             |                      |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Barrow Train Station | 5 Sandscale Haws NR         | 9 Barrow Dock Museum |
| 2 Foulney Island       | 6 Furness Abbey             | 10 North Walney NNR  |
| 3 Piel Island          | 7 Abbotswood Nature Reserve | 11 Earnse Bay        |
| 4 South Walney NR      | 8 Millwood                  | 12 Roa Island        |

the ramparts and flocks of knot flying past. The Ship Inn is home to the King of Piel (it's landlord) and the Seldom Seen Visitor Centre.

For ferry information contact the Ship Inn on 07516 453784, or John Cleasby on 07798 794550 or 07799 761306. Or join the Barrow walking festival on one of its guided walks across the sands to Piel Island.

- For those who prefer to stay on dry land, visit Foulney Island nature reserve, which is connected to Roa Island by a causeway which can be walked along at low tide. In summer the 2.5km walk to the edge of the island is worth it to see the breeding terns that have travelled vast distances to nest here. Look out for rare flowering plants in the shingle too. In autumn and winter

massive flocks of curlew, knot and oystercatchers are mesmerising to see. THE ISLAND MAY BE CUT OFF AT HIGH TIDE. Check tide times at [www.tidetimes.org.uk](http://www.tidetimes.org.uk)



Piel & wharf

© Susannah Bleakley

## Spectacular Sand Dunes and around the estuary

Along the secluded west coast of the Furness peninsula lies the National Trust's Sandscale Haws NNR, one of the best places to see rare sand dune flowers in the UK. You'll find specialities like coralroot orchid, bee orchid, dune helleborine, dune pansy, sea holly and sea bindweed.

Spend some time exploring the vast dunes along paths and board walks, relax on the beautiful beach and take in the panoramic views across the Duddon Estuary to Black Combe and seek out the myriad of butterflies, moths, birds and flowering plants that abound.

- In spring you'll hear the croaking call of the natterjack toad which breeds in the pools of water in the spaces between the dunes (called slacks).
- In summer the pools dry out and the slacks are filled with flowers frequented by clouds of the beautiful common blue butterfly.
- In winter thousands of waders and wildfowl overwinter around the reserve, feeding on the molluscs and seafood in the rich estuary water, mud and sand.

Sandscale Haws is best accessed by car, follow signs for Roanhead along Oak Lea Road to the car park.

- There are plenty of chances to explore the Duddon estuary without a car, sit back and enjoy the views on a train ride to Foxfield or Millom. Right next to Foxfield station is Natural England's Duddon Mosses NNR - home to adders and lizards and even red and roe deer. Walk or cycle from Millom station to explore RSPB's Hodbarrow nature reserve. The coastal lagoons are remnants of past iron ore works and provide a haven for grebes and terns to breed and the surrounding dunes are home to natterjack toads and bee orchids.



sandscale haws dunes

© Neil Forbes National Trust

## Magical Woodlands

Follow the footsteps of Cistercian Monks at Furness Abbey and head into the wooded valley of Bekansgill just north of the town. An Abbey was founded here in 1127, and the red sandstone ruins really are a sight to behold. At one point it was the second most powerful Cistercian monastery (after Fountains Abbey) in England.

- Take the train to Roose Station and walk along the Greenway to Furness Abbey. Explore the Abbey, its installations and the ancient woodlands around it. From the Abbey, Abbots Wood is just a short walk up the hill. Abbots Wood was formerly the grounds of Sir John Ramsden's mansion, a key figure in the development of Barrow-in-Furness. The area is covered in woodland - look out for some really big beech, oak and hazel trees.
- On the forest floor you'll see wood anemones - a sign that this is an ancient woodland. If you are lucky you might also see (or hear) great spotted woodpecker drumming overhead.

- Follow the signposted paths around the 19 acre site. In summer see how many different butterfly species you spot in the flower rich meadows. Extend your adventure by following paths north to Millwood, an unusual marshy woodland which floods in winter and attracts birds like heron and lapwing.



Wild Ransom

© ANOB

## Getting here

We believe that a car free journey is a care free journey.

- **Arrive by train to the heart of Barrow-in-Furness. Call National Rail Enquiries on 08457484950.**
- **The Walney to Wear (W2W) National Cycle Route 70 starts in Barrow and the flat coastal roads are perfect for cycling. Visit Barrow Tourist Information Point for cycle route leaflets, or visit the Sustrans website.**
- **The number 6 buses run to Ulverston, Newby Bridge, Bowness and Windermere, and the X6 runs to Grange-over-Sands and Kendal.**

## Getting Around

The quiet footpaths, greenways and lanes are perfect for exploring by boot and bike.

- **Take a compass and a map (OS Explorer Map OL6) and wear appropriate clothing**
- **Visit the Tourist Information point or [www.barrowtourism.co.uk](http://www.barrowtourism.co.uk) for information about walks**
- **Explore the area by boot using the 'Greenways' from Roose Station to Furness Abbey, Walney Greenway and Westfield Greenway.**
- **Remember to check tide times before travelling to Foulney Island [www.tidetimes.org.uk](http://www.tidetimes.org.uk)**
- **In summer and during the Barrow walking festival guides lead cross bay walks from South Walney to Piel Island**
- **Take a boat trip with Barrow Bay Charters (07747717587) or Topline II (0787328718)**
- **You can hire bikes from Cycles 100 Ltd on Ramsden Street, call 01229 836996 (closed Sun and Mon)**



curlew

© Tony Marshall RSPB

## Staying Longer

There is a great choice of accommodation in and around Barrow, with camping on Piel Island, and comfortable hotels and inns in the town. Call Barrow Tourist Information Centre or visit [www.golakes.co.uk](http://www.golakes.co.uk).



birkrigg stone circle

© Morecambe Bay Partnership

## Moving on

Look out for other itineraries in this series at [www.morecambebaynature.org.uk/discover](http://www.morecambebaynature.org.uk/discover).

- **Cycle along the coast road to mosses and woodlands around the town of Ulverston.**
- **Take the train around the bay to Silverdale and explore woodlands and reedbeds.**



## Useful contacts: call or search online

- [www.barrowtourism.co.uk](http://www.barrowtourism.co.uk)
- [www.cyclingw2w.info](http://www.cyclingw2w.info)
- **South Walney (Cumbria Wildlife Trust) 01539 816300**
- **North Walney (Natural England) 015395 31604**
- **Sandscale Haws (National Trust) 01229 462855**
- **Furness Abbey (English Heritage) 01229 823420**
- **National Rail Enquiries 08457484950**
- **Dock Museum 01229 876400**

This leaflet is brought to you by Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership's Nature Improvement Area and Morecambe Bay Partnership's 700 Days to Transform the Bay scheme. It is funded by Defra, DCLG, Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, Coastal Communities Fund and RSPB Futurescapes EU Life Comms +.

The routes described are for guidance only. Please use an up to date map when exploring this area. It's a good idea to plan your route in more detail before you set off, and to check the weather forecast and tide tables. Wear appropriate clothing and don't forget to take food and water. The Partnerships above cannot be held responsible in the unlikely event of injury or accident whilst exploring this area. For more information on the exploring the nature of Morecambe Bay visit [www.morecambebaynature.org.uk](http://www.morecambebaynature.org.uk)