A CIRCUIT FROM ORMSKIRK
Distance approx. 33.8 km/ 21 miles

There are no major climbs on this circuit, though Clieves Hills can feel surprisingly testing. However, there are plenty of undulations and twists and turns to keep up the variety and a couple of places where the views are remarkably extensive.

Arriving by train: Ormskirk can be reached by trains from either Liverpool or Preston. In case of mechanical problems, or bad weather, it's easy to bale out at Town Green, on the Liverpool-Ormskirk line.

Arriving by car: Parking in Ormskirk is difficult, with many car-parks limited to 2 hours, and it might be better to start from Town Green.

Public Toilets: In the centre of Ormskirk.

Refreshments: Pubs at regular intervals; cafe at garden centre near end.

Start (A). Follow the cycle path down the side of the station car park. Keep straight ahead at the 1st fork then R at T junction. The path emerges to a suburban street by the gates of a residential home. Go L up the street to T junction and turn L again. Follow the road downhill and out into open country. Turn R into Lathom Lane then R again into Castle Lane. Follow this to the A577 at Westhead. Go L, then 1st R into School Lane. After 1km go R on Vicarage Lane then 1st L (Wellfield Lane). At its end go R then 1st L, climbing gently past a prominent ‘flying saucer’ (actually a water-tower). Go straight across the A570, then immediately fork L. Go R at Cropper’s Lane and follow it to T junction. Go L (Long Lane) and follow it straight ahead to reach the A506. 10.5km/ 6.5 miles.

B. Turn L and then 1st R, passing a converted windmill and over the M58 into Bickerstaffe. Just past the church follow the road round R then steadily downhill with views ahead over Liverpool to the Welsh hills. As the road levels out bear R into New Way, signed ‘Unsuitable for Heavy Goods Vehicles’. Continue, with a slight dog-leg where New Way crosses Back Lane, to T junction. Turn R and re-cross the M58 to reach the cross-roads. Go straight ahead into Bowker’s Green Lane and follow this to another crossroads on the BS197, and the Derby Arms pub at just over half-distance.

Go SA at the crossroads into Mickering Lane and follow it, passing under the railway, to the outskirts of Aughton. Bear L here (not sharp L into Beech Road). At a crossroads by a large pub, the West Tower (currently derelict), go SA into Swan Lane. Cross the dual-carriageway A59 into the continuation of Swan Lane.

Follow the road round R where it becomes Back Lane then swing L on Sudell Lane. At T junction turn R on Pygon’s Hill Lane. Go up to a bridge over the canal. 500m further on bear R at a junction with triangles of grass into Eager Lane. 22.5km/ 14 miles.

C. Pass some old sluices and up to a swing bridge over the canal. Continue to T junction with the B5195. Turn R then 1st L on Clieves Hills Lane, which gives the biggest climb on the route. Panoramic views encompass the Lake District as well as the Welsh hills. Turn then 1st R onto Narrow Lane. Continue to T junction and turn R.