

Starting point: The Siding Lane Ranger Centre

The Siding Lane Ranger Centre car park is located to the northwest of Rainford and is clearly signposted from the A570 Rainford bypass.

If arriving by public transport, Rainford railway station is located approximately 1 mile to the east, while regular bus services pass the railway station and stop on the Rainford bypass near to Siding Lane.

- 1 (Start & Finish)** Turn left out of the Ranger Centre car park and proceed west along a narrow tarmac road. At the end of the tarmac road, turn left before passing a yellow vehicle barrier and proceed through the disabled car park onto the open field picnic area.

i Siding Lane Local Nature Reserve was the site of an 1860s colliery owned initially by the Rainford Coal Company Ltd, whose general manager at the time was Mr George Boole. Following the 1926 miners' strike, the colliery finally ceased production in 1928.

The site is a designated Local Nature Reserve and is managed by St.Helens Council's Ranger Service.

- 2 (400 metres)** At the edge of the picnic area, you will find two concrete-capped shafts with an interpretation board explaining more about the former Rainford Colliery. After viewing this, retrace your route back through the disabled car park. Turn left and pass the yellow vehicle barrier. After a short distance, you will see a small pond to your left.

i This pond is home to a wide range of aquatic plants and animals, most notably the Southern Hawker dragonfly. This insect is known to be very inquisitive and may fly over to have a closer look at you as you walk past!

Having passed the pond, turn left at the next junction of paths and proceed along a narrow signposted public footpath, keeping the railway line to your left and open fields to your right.



Southern Hawker dragonfly



Pink-footed Goose



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- 3 (920 metres)** Turn left up a small slope to the Liverpool & Wigan railway line. Listen and watch out for passing trains in either direction along this single-track railway, before using the gated level crossing.

Having crossed the railway, walk down the steps and follow the cart track towards the distant pine trees of Nursery Plantation, which you keep to your left. Please respect the signs and keep out of this plantation, as it is private.

- 4 (1.8km)** When you reach the tarmac Dairy Farm Road, look out for passing vehicles in both directions before carefully crossing over, then follow the signposted footpath straight ahead along the field edge. You may see lavender fields along this section.

Continue in a southeasterly direction for approximately 1km before turning left onto Moss Nook Lane. Walk for a short distance until you arrive at the bicycle lane at the side of the Rainford bypass.

- 5 (2.8km)** Using the bicycle lane, head southeast towards Mossnook Farm, taking care when crossing the vehicular entrance to Inglenook Farm.

Lavender fields





To your left, good views can be had of the village of Rainford, which became established as a settlement between the 11th and 12th centuries. It is named after the Rainford family, the local Lords of the Manor, who originated from Randers Fjord on the coast of Denmark. The Rainfords were kinsmen of William the Conqueror and claimed to be descendants of the early Danish Kings, arriving in England at the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066. The family originally lived at Gupshill Manor in Gloucestershire before they were granted lands in what is now Merseyside and Lancashire.

6 (3.3km) Turn right off the bicycle lane along the main track towards Mossnook Farm. Continue past Mossnook Farm before heading southwest along the same track towards Moor Game Farm.

Having passed Clare's Wood tree plantation on your left, you will come to a T-junction with other tracks, where you turn right.

7 (4.1km) Proceed in a westerly direction towards the northern edge of Clare's Moss Plantation. Follow this track as it turns to the left and heads south following the western side of this plantation.

8 (5.0km) At another junction of tracks, turn right and proceed westwards towards a tree-lined tarmac road, which was Lord Derby's Old Coach Road.

9 (5.6km) On reaching the Old Coach Road, turn right and head in a northerly direction, eventually meeting a vehicle access gate after 1.1km.



The Old Coach Road is an excellent place for birdwatching throughout the year. Resident birds include Lapwing, Yellowhammer and Corn Bunting, and these are joined in spring and summer by migrant species such as Cuckoo and Whitethroat. Winter sees the arrival of spectacular numbers of Pink-footed Geese from breeding grounds in Iceland, Greenland and Svalbard. In the winter of 2008, there were an estimated 10,000 birds in these fields! These flocks can often contain rarer species of geese such as the Ross's Goose that comes all the way from Arctic Canada.

As well as an array of small birds, these fields contain large numbers of small mammals. This combination in turn attracts a wide range of birds of prey. Kestrels, Sparrowhawks and Buzzards are the commonest of these, however nationally rare species have also been seen. These have included Merlin, Peregrine and Hen Harrier in winter, whilst Hobby, Marsh Harrier and Montagu's Harrier have been seen during the summer months.

10 (6.7km) Having passed the vehicle access gate, take the next right turn onto Dairy Farm Road. Proceed northeast along this straight road, passing several properties on your right and also the entrance to a former World War 2 ammunition storage area, now privately owned and used for commercial and industrial purposes. Take care and watch out for passing vehicles.

Eventually you will reach the corner of Nursery Plantation, a point you crossed earlier in the walk. Having now walked 7.9km, turn left and head north towards the railway line and back to the Siding Lane Ranger Centre car park.

The total distance of the walk is 9.5km.

Start/Finish

The walk starts and finishes at Siding Lane Ranger Centre WA11 7SR

Map Ref: SD463020

Sheet 108 1:50000 OS map

Sheet 285 1:25000 OS map

Route Distance – 9.5km (Approx 6 miles)

Estimated time – 3-4 hours

Going – Moderate

Further Information

To find out more about walks in your local area, please contact St.Helens Ranger Service on 01744 678073, or taylorparkrangers@sthelens.gov.uk

www.sthelens.gov.uk/rangers



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Welcome to Rainford Loop Trail & Map



Rainford Village



Kestrel

