



UK Coastal Research Conference

Liverpool 2025

Hilbre Island Field Trip

Join us on a walking tour of Hilbre Island in the middle of the Dee Estuary - the area is a RAMSAR listed wetland reachable only during the lower half of the tide and cut off by Liverpool Bay's 10m tidal range for the rest of the time. Hilbre Island has a long history dating at least as far back as the Middle Ages when it was occupied by monks. It still retains the ruins of a Victorian lifeboat station and stone slipway, a scatter of buildings including one of the original semaphore stations used to relay shipping information from Holyhead back to merchants in Liverpool, a few original Navy's huts, relocated after the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal, and a range of rare flora and fauna, along with the odd dinosaur footprint eroding out of the sandstone rocks.

Come prepared for a long walk over wet sand and potentially slippery rocks - if you are not ready for the moderate physical demands of walking across the sand flats, then this trip is not for you. Your feet WILL get wet - so bring appropriate footwear and clothing appropriate to weather than can change from sunshine to howling gales and torrential rain in minutes. Sunblock, a hat and sunglasses are advised on a sunny day, waterproofs advisable the rest of the time if only to protect from the wind. Binoculars would be great to see the local seals and seabirds and a bottle of water would be advisable (for you, not the birds and seals!).

There are public inconveniences at the beach in West Kirby and composting toilets on the main island, but no other facilities once we set off from West Kirby beach. West Kirby is also a major wind surfing attraction, with a shallow marine lake protected by a sea wall that overtops and allows water exchange during high spring tides.

See <https://www.hilbreisland.info/> for more details of the islands and photos of various stages of the walk.