

Crab and Winkle

The Crab and Winkle Line was the second railway line that George Stevenson built in the early 19th century and runs from Canterbury West Railway Station to Whitstable. It was demolished in 1952/3. A cycle route, following as closely as it can to the path of the original railway was built by Canterbury City Council. The route opened on Sunday October 3rd 1999. This route is dedicated to use for Cycles. The distance is about 6 miles and it should be possible to ride this route in about an hour. If you wish to extend the ride you can along the coast to Herne Bay and the ruined Abbey and Roman Fort at Reculver.

1. From Canterbury West Railway Station turn left and ride through a new housing estate. Go straight ahead at mini roundabout and look for a cycle path on the left. Follow it and pass under the railway line. At a large green bear left and at the end bear right. At T junction with Forty Acres road turn left, and almost immediately turn right into St. Michael's Road.
2. Follow Cycle Route signs to the University as it winds through a housing estate. The cycle path then climbs through parkland to the University. Go straight ahead at the mini roundabout and straight ahead at the large roundabout. At T junction turn right, join the Cycle path at the traffic lights and follow the road round to the left. Continue down this road until playing fields and at the end turn right into the Crab and Winkle Way.
3. Descend hill and climb the other side, passing St. Cosmos and Damien Church, Blean on your left. At crossroads with tarmac road go straight across. Continue along gravel track through orchards. By farm shop on your left at Amery Court Cottage. Pass through fields and enter woodland. at crossroads turn right and at T junction in track turn left. You are now riding on the old trackbed of the Crab and Winkle Line. 25m after this junction on your left is a beautiful clearing with a pond. An excellent spot for a picnic.
4. Continue along this track descending a gentle slope. At the bottom of the main track forks right and starts to climb. At the top of a short rise be prepared to bear left and descend through woods until you rejoin a main track and bear right. Continue to descend this farm track with care.
5. In a while track crosses main Thanet way by a new bridge and then rejoins a track on the other side. The track eventually comes out on a tarmac road by some farm buildings. Turn left and after 200m (immediately after a turning into Millstrood Road), go almost straight ahead onto a Cycle track and follow. This again is the old Crab and Winkle trackbed. Suddenly cycle route comes to an abrupt end. There are several ways to ride into town.
6. Turn right into Ivy House Road and left into Church Street. Follow this road down going straight ahead at junctions. Later road becomes Castle Road. Turn left and follow main road into Harbour.
7. Return to Canterbury by the same route.