

Wind Turbine Spotting from the Carlisle - Barrow Railway

Heading South from Carlisle to Barrow

Pirelli The tyre company has planning consent for a single 3 MW turbine on its land in Carlisle, which will produce nearly a quarter of the electricity needed on the site. It is understood that plans to develop the turbine are well advanced, and the turbine will be visible on the right after leaving Carlisle station.

Great Orton 3 minutes after Dalston station, look out for the gravel pit on the right, then glimpses of turbines on the right before they become clearly visible on the skyline in the distance. In the summer they are partly masked by trees in leaf. The original 10 two-bladed 300kW machines were an early prototype for low wind speed areas. They were built in 1992 on RAF Great Orton airfield, and replaced by the current six 660kW machines in 2000. They were seen all over the world as the area was made infamous as the foot and mouth burial site, now Watchtree nature reserve. They provide electricity for 2,000 houses.

High Pow The tips of these three 1.3 MW turbines are visible briefly on skyline on the left between two transmitter masts 7 minutes after Dalston on approach to Wigton station, then visible again against the hillside 4 minutes after Wigton station. They form the smallest wind farm on the route and became operational in March 2007, providing electricity for 2,000 households.

To provide a historical perspective note the disused windmill at Wigton station. It was one of several cornmills in the area, testament to the wind resource. There are two more similar mills in surrounding villages. Now there are no sails to be seen and it is used by a local joiners shop

Wharrels Hill The turbines were still being erected as we did the research for this leaflet (June 2007). The eight 1.3MW machines are visible 9 minutes after Wigton on approach to Aspatria station on left and again 2 minutes after Aspatria on leaving cutting, providing enough electricity for over 5,800 homes.

Eastman This chemicals company is clearly doing its bit to reduce both costs and carbon footprint. It has two slow and stately 2MW turbines glimpsed 2 minutes after Maryport on approach to Flimby station, then visible on left on leaving Flimby station.

Siddick & Oldside

One minute after Flimby station along the left side of railway track (between railway and road) the seven turbines of Siddick become visible, then the nine turbines of Oldside heave into view on the left beyond the Siddick turbines, They are then passed on right shortly before approach to Workington station. The two developments were built in 1996 as separate but linked and together provide sufficient for 5,300 homes

Winscales visible in the distance on the left 3 minutes after Flimby on approach to Workington station, then tips visible behind houses 1 minute after Workington. Three 660kW turbines were built in 1999, and then eight more 850kW machines

were added in 2005. These two developments provide electricity for 4,900 households and a planning consent has been granted for seven more turbines.

- Robin Rigg will be built offshore in the next two years starting operations if all goes to plan in 2009. On days of good visibility distant views of the sixty 3MW turbines will be seen from long stretches of the railway line. It will provide electricity for half the homes in Cumbria.
- Lowca visible first on right 3 minutes after Workington on approach to Harrington station – seven 600kW turbines built in 2000, then as the train rounds the headland the turbines are stunningly situated on the cliff above the railway to the left. Together they provide electricity for 2500 average homes
- No more wind turbines to be seen for an hour! However you do pass then a small freestanding domestic turbine on the last bungalow on the beach one minute before Netherton station.*
- Soon afterwards you pass the Sellafield nuclear waste processing site, and the Drigg nuclear waste dump. Friends of the Earth does not believe that nuclear power is the answer to climate change. Wind energy is a cleaner and better alternative.*
- Haverigg first visible briefly on the right 3 minutes after Bootle station, then 3 minutes later on approach to Silecroft station., Due to the twists and turns of the railway line and coastline they are also visible across the estuary after Askam station. There are now eight turbines – four 600kW built in 1998, one owned by the Baywind Cooperative, and four 850kW built 2005, replacing five 225kW turbines built 1992. This was the first wind farm built in Cumbria, only the second commercial one in the UK and gained very positive press coverage. It provides enough electricity to power 3,000 houses.
- Kirkby Moor These turbines were built in 1993 on a Site of Special Scientific Interest and were therefore not supported by Friends of the Earth, however there has been no significant damage to the site. At 400kW they are the smallest remaining turbines in Cumbria, but still manage to supply 2,600 houses. Eight turbines are visible across the Duddon estuary on the skyline on the right 5 minutes after Millom station and as they are on the far side of the hills, visibility comes and goes. However they are visible several times all the way to Kirkby station. There are twelve turbines, but they are never all seen at once.
- Askam The seven turbines of the Far Old Park Farm at Askam become visible on the left on the approach to, and when stopped in Askam station, above the village. They power 2,500 houses.
- Harlock Hill Not technically visible from the railway, but worthy of a mention and a bike ride. Britain's first co-operatively owned wind power project at Harlock Hill is situated near Ulverston. It is a 2.5 MW wind farm and consists of five 500kW turbines, and produces enough clean electricity each year to meet the average needs of 1,300 typical homes.

Barrow has become an offshore wind energy hub, with the 90MW Barrow Offshore Wind project already operational. It is not visible from the railway but its 30 turbines are just visible off the south end of Walney Island Nature Reserve. (50,000 homes) The Ormonde project is an innovative combined gas and wind project consented February 2007 combining 30 wind turbines and a gas platform. In total it will power 155,000 homes, 60,000 of them from the wind energy.

For further information about West Cumbria Friends of the Earth
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