

Lancashire Walks

Aughton



Aughton is one of those places known to many (because they have passed through it on the way to Liverpool) but visited by few. This walk will surprise and interest in numerous ways. To begin with you'll wonder how quickly the busy A59 is left behind. Then you will be rewarded with a viewpoint with a remarkable sense of elevation considering it is barely 50m above sea level. The walk will introduce you to the wide open spaces of our county and scenes of historical significance. So after this build up you'll just want to put on your walking boots and go. You'll not be disappointed.

Start: Aughton, close to Christchurch, the C of E church (**Pic 1**) at the top of the rise on the A59 immediately after Ormskirk. There is limited parking in Long Lane which is on the left immediately after the church if travelling towards Liverpool.

Distance: 12 Km or 7½ miles

Time: 3 – 4 hours

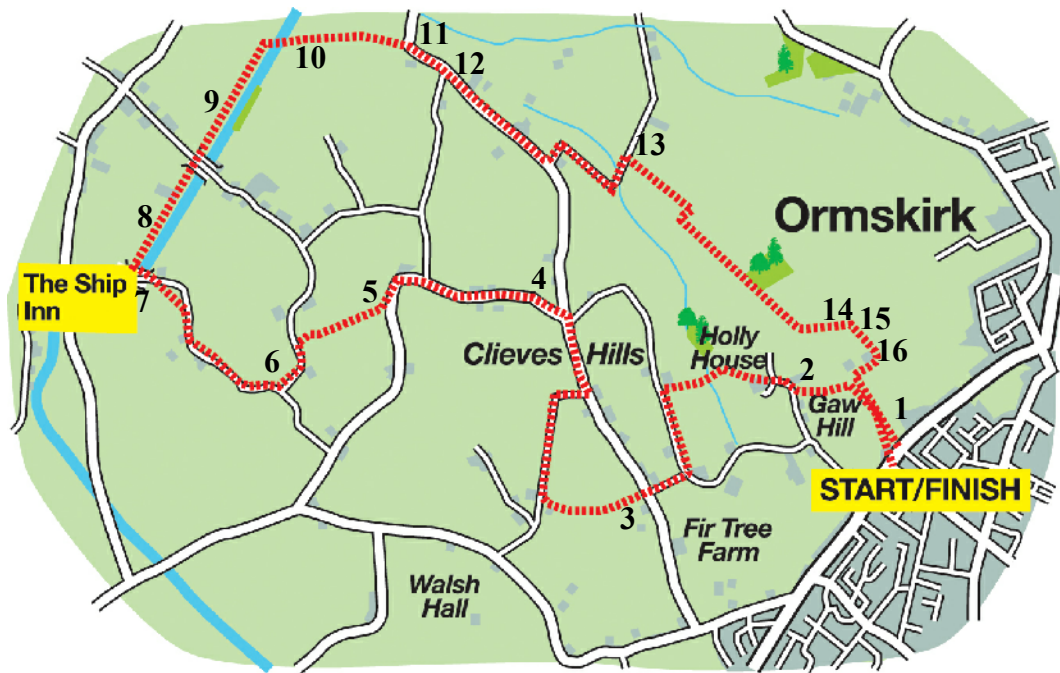
Terrain: Very easy along quiet lanes, towpath and farm tracks

1. Aughton to the Ship Inn, Haskayne (6½ Km or 4½ miles:1½ hours)

From the church cross the A59 by the pedestrian crossing and follow a utilities service road across to a utility facility marked by a prominent mast and tall grey railings. Immediately before the site turn left over a stile and follow a footpath around the edge of the complex. Through the railings look out for a triangulation column marking the summit of Gaw Hill, an impressive 81m above sea level. (**Pic 2**) The path drops down to Holly Lane. On reaching it turn left and then right onto Gaw Hill Lane. This begins a gentle descent. After the lane turns to the right take Small Lane on the left. At the next junction cross the road to a track that crosses open fields. (**Pic 3**) This will place you on Clieves Hills Lane. Turn right. After passing a property the road gently rises to bring you to a viewpoint. Considering you are barely 50m above sea level the panorama from this station is remarkable – the world seems to be at your feet. Continue along the lane and at its junction with Fir Tree Lane turn left. At the next crossroads turn left into Shepherd's Lane. On a more pronounced descent pass Shepherd's Farm and turn left at the next junction. (**Pic 4**) After passing Dicconson's Farm take a footpath on the right across fields. (**Pic 5**) This will put you on Plex Lane. Turn left and follow the lane to its junction with Rosemary Lane. (**Pic 6**) When you reach Rosemary Lane turn right and keep on it until you come to the canal bridge. The Ship Inn is across the bridge on the left. (**Pic 7**)

2. The Ship Inn to Aughton (6 Km or 4 miles: 1½ hours)

The Ship Inn claims to be the oldest inn on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. It retains the atmosphere of a traditional country pub, which the licensees Paul and Stacey have worked hard to achieve. It would be a shame not to sample its fare and Camra award winning ales. From the Ship return to the bridge and turn left onto the towpath. (**Pic 8**) Soon after the next bridge the canal enters a cutting which is of huge significance in its history for it was here that the first workings were carried out making it the oldest part of the canal thereby justifying the Ship's claim. A small plaque denotes the spot. (**Pic 9**) Continue to the next bridge and then leave the towpath and cross the bridge to the far side. Bear left to follow a ditch across fields (**Pic 10**) to Halsall Lane and a hamlet called Bangor's Green. (**Pic 11**) Keep ahead and then continue into Narrow Lane. Stay on this and where the main lane bears right up towards Clieves Hills turn left. Now on wide open prairies follow the road around a right bend then 300m further on follow the lane as it bends left. After 250m take a footpath on the right. (**Pic 13**) In just under 400m the track makes a pronounced turn to the right just before a pond and then turns left to the right of a hedgerow. Continue a gentle climb up the hill with a drainage ditch on your left. Just beyond a plantation on the left the footpath enters a nature reserve. (**Pic 14**) Maintain the direction of travel and as you crest the hill keep ahead along a footpath (**Pic 15**) which will bring you to the perimeter fencing utility facility encountered at the start of the walk. (**Pic 16**) Follow this around to the service road. Turn left for the A59.



Map by Chris Wyatt at The Blackpool Gazette

Pic 1



Pic 2



Pic 3



Pic 4



Pic 5



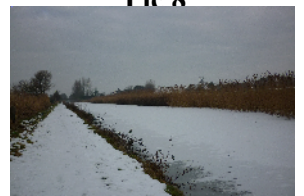
Pic 6



Pic 7



Pic 8



Pic 9



Pic 10



Pic 11



Pic 12



Pic 13



Pic 14



Pic 15



Pic 16

