

**Bamber Bridge to Preston along Route 55**

*For most people living in the towns and cities of Lancashire the countryside is not a great distance away just a short car journey or bus ride. But in many places it is even closer than that. Rivers, canals, disused railways and cycleways provide excellent opportunities for walking in what seem at first glance, unpromising townscapes. In general the linear nature of this type of walking necessitates use of public transport if the less interesting "there and back" option is to be avoided.*

*The five routes described are examples of this type of walk. Many tourist information offices have more detailed guides/leaflets, mostly free of charge, and of course will carry bus/train timetables.*

**Start:** Bamber Bridge Railway station, Station Road.

**Distance:** 6 Km or 4 miles

**Time:** 1 - 2 hours

**Terrain:** Pavement and cycle path all the way. No need for boots, comfortable walking shoes or trainers will do just fine. This is a very easy walk.

**Map:** OS Explorer 286 Blackpool & Preston

**Directions:** From the station turn right into Station Road. This is the B5258 and if this stretch seems unpromising, it gets worse! 600m (10minutes) along turn right into Havelock Road, which then leads onto a pedestrian/cycle path Holme Road. This weaves its way through a large industrial estate, the very antithesis of country walking.

At Cuerdale Way turn right. Walk past Matalan and then turn right onto a pedestrian/cycle path with the roar of the A6 on left and wire mesh fence on right. (Pic 1) After a low railway bridge, turn left under A6 and then right onto Browndedge road. (Pic 2) Using the traffic island and exercising great care cross immediately before the roundabout to pick up the cycle path opposite.

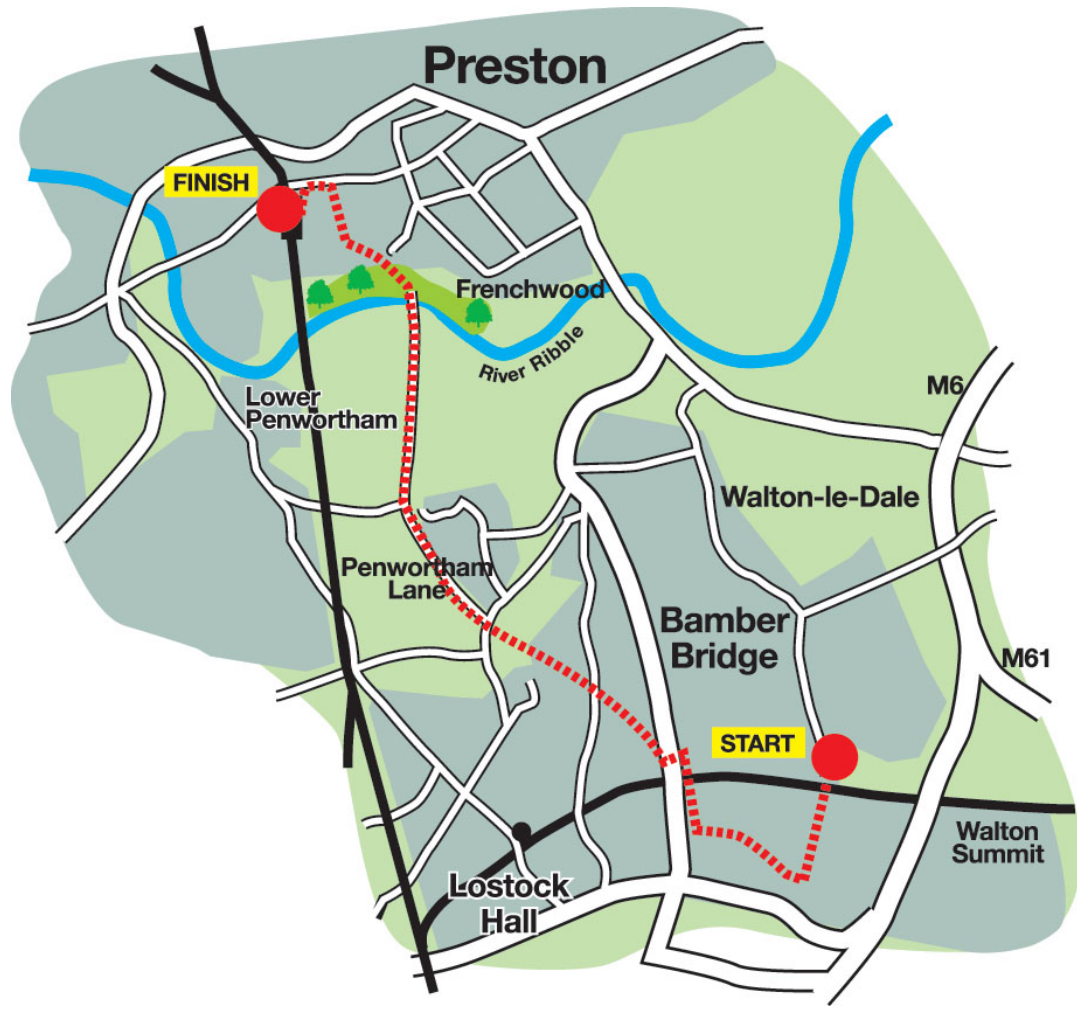
Now matters begin to significantly improve. Here you are following the line of an old railway, but now adapted to new use as a cycle path. This stretch forms part of the National Cycle Network Route 55 connecting Preston to Chorley and Manchester. It also forms part of Preston Junction Local Nature Reserve. Like a portal to a different world, passing through the gate, you are presented with a pleasanter scene. (Pic 3)

After skirting a field behind a stable, the path dips down to a reedy pond then rises to cross Todd Lane. Once again take care in crossing Todd Lane and follow the long straight track ahead. After a stretch along a cutting dotted with ponds and hawthorn, the route passes through woodland. (Pic 4)

At all times of the year there is a variety of bird life to be seen. At the end of Factory Lane a junction of tracks is reached. The line of the former railway veers to the left along a raised embankment. Bear to the right ahead and enter a long avenue of impressive trees. (Pic 5)

*This section follows the line of the Old Tramway built in 1803 by the Lancaster Canal Company to link Lancaster Canal with the rest of the canal network at Walton Summit. Competition from railways forced its closure in the middle of the 19th century. Beyond the trees to either side grassy meadows will be seen, often containing cattle remarkable considering the bleak industrial estatescape at the walk's beginning.*

On reaching the River Ribble cross the wide Old Tram Bridge into Avenham Park. Paths upwards will bring you to Avenham Lane and Preston Centre beyond. Or you may wish to take refreshment in the award winning Avenham Park Pavilion which is open throughout the year. This is a little way off to the left after you have crossed the bridge. Note the County Council have published leaflets on Old Tramway Route and Preston Junction Local Nature Reserve.



Pic 1



Pic 2



Pic 3



Pic 4



Pic 5

