

Lancashire Walks



Hest Bank (2)

Just north of Lancaster the land becomes pinched to produce a narrow corridor between the vast expanse of Morecambe Bay to the west, and an area of relatively high ground to the east. Consequently all communications between north and south have exploited this strip of land – canal, railway, main trunk road and motorway, each a chapter in the history of transport, lie side by side, within a distance of just two miles. This short walk begins on the Lancashire Coastal Way but will bring you to the Lancaster Canal and along a particularly pleasant reach of it through the villages of Bolton-le-Sands and Hest Bank.

Start: Foreshore Car park on A5105 at Hest Bank. From junction 34 on M6 follow signs for Lancaster City Centre. Once in the one way system take A6 north to Kendal crossing the River Lune. After 1½ miles take the first road on the left, Hest Bank Lane. This will bring to Hest Bank. Across the canal bridge turn right into Station Road and then, at the A5105 go straight across over a level crossing. The car park is on the left a short distance from the junction.

Distance: 8 Km or 5 miles

Time: Allow 2 hours

Terrain: Easy walking – coastal path and tow path.

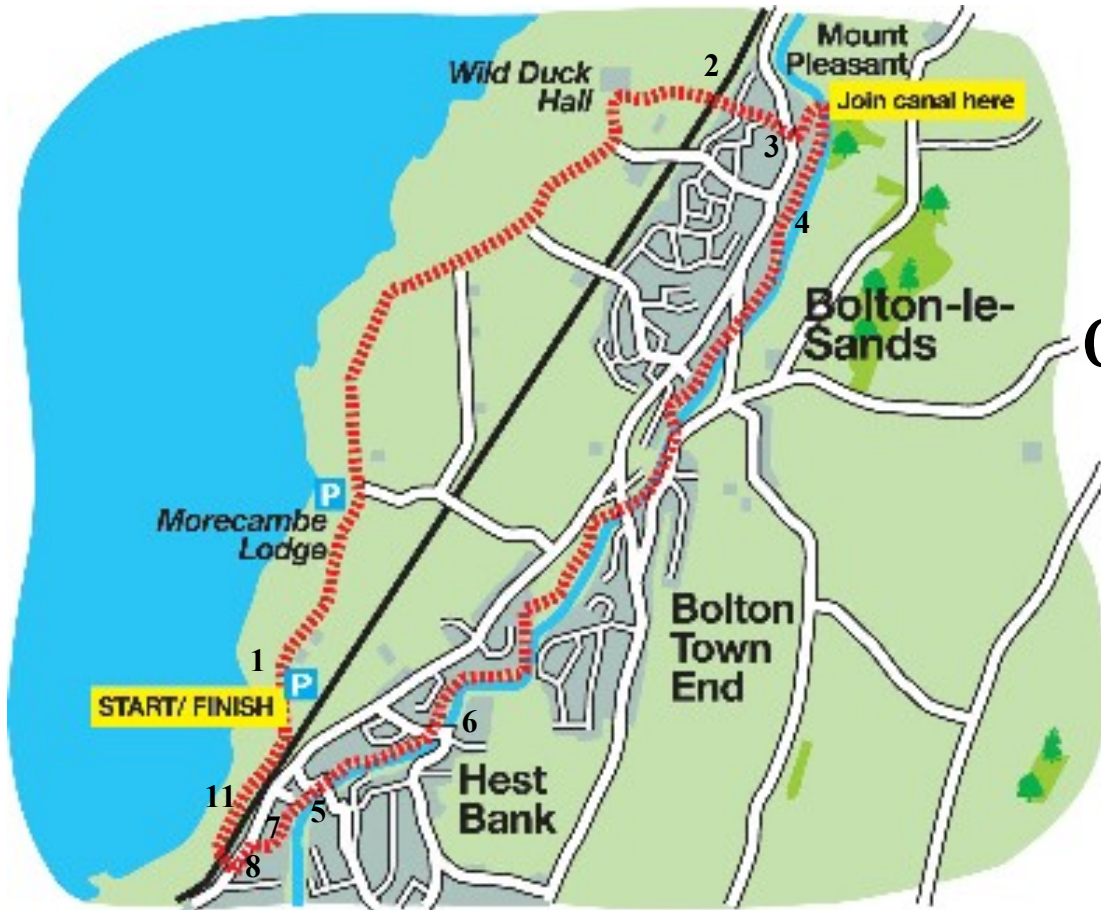
Map: OS Explorer 296 Lancaster, Morecambe & Fleetwood

1. Foreshore Car Park to Bolton-le-Sands (3 Km or 2 miles: 50 mins)

This car park is quite often the starting point of the famous cross Bay walk. **(Pic 1)** Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES should readers attempt to do this for themselves. At frequent intervals the crown appointed guide, Cedric Robinson, will lead a walk across the Bay, and under his expert supervision you will be able to safely cross the Kent Estuary into Cumbria. With Morecambe Bay on your left follow the Lancashire Coastal Way northwards. You will notice that this is a coast line of campsites and caravan parks. It is also a coast rich in birdlife – at low tide the sands attract thousands of waders. The prominent hill ahead is Warton Crag within the Arnside/Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. After 30mins or 2k, just before Wild Duck Hall, turn right onto St. Nicholas Lane and after passing beneath the main West Coast Line **(Pic 2)** you will reach Bolton-le-Sands. (Incidentally the 4 mile stretch of railway between Hest Bank and Carnforth is the only contact the 400 mile West Coast Line actually has with the coast!) Keep on St Nicholas Lane to arrive at the A6. **(Pic 3)** After carefully crossing the road Whin Grove will lead you to the canal past a short parade of shops.

2. Bolton-le-Sands to Car park (5 Km or 3 miles)

The Lancaster Canal, **(Pic 4)** as well as being one of the most charming of inland waterways, remains a remarkable feat of late 18th/early 19th century engineering. From canal basin in Preston to canal basin in Kendal it required the construction of only one set of locks on the main branch at Tewitfield. This enabled the establishment of a fast link between the two centres of commerce. The 57 mile journey could be done in less than 8 hours. Of course these journey times were soon to be overtaken by the coming of the railway in 1846 but by the standards of the day they were considered swift. On reaching the canal turn right onto the tow path. Follow the canal for 3k 2m until bridge 117 **(Pic 5)** as it gently contours through Bolton-le-Sands and Hest Bank. The Hest Bank Hotel **(Pic 6)** close to Bridge 118 as well as being an agreeable place for refreshment, has its own place in the history of Morecambe Bay, in that one of its first floor windows was used as “the guiding light” to help travellers in times past crossing the sands. After passing below bridge 117 leave the tow path up a flight of steps to the right, **(Pic 7)** and then turn left onto a footpath **(Pic 8)** that leads through a housing estate **(Pic 9)** to the busy A5105. Cross with care onto a footpath that will bring you to a bridge **(Pic 10)** over the railway line. Once across turn right onto the Lancashire Coastal Way. **(Pic 11)** In about 500m you will return to the car park.



Map by
Chris Wyatt
at The
Blackpool
Gazette

Pic 1



Pic 2



Pic 3



Pic 4



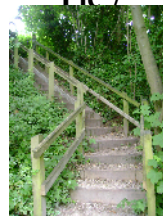
Pic 5



Pic 6



Pic 7



Pic 8



Pic 9



Pic 10



Pic 11

