

Lancashire Walks



Marton Mere

It's a safe bet that of the ten million visitors attracted to Blackpool every year few have ever gone there for a walk in its countryside. Yet the countryside is surprisingly accessible as shown on this walk from Stanley Park. In a short distance you will find yourself on the edge of the Fylde and in a landscape that provides a clue to what Blackpool was like before it became the most popular holiday destination in the UK. And since Blackpool is not far away from much of the wonderful countryside described each week on this page perhaps visitors should be encouraged to pack a pair of walking boots, as well as a bucket and spade.

Distance: 7 Km or 4½ miles

Time: 2– 2½ hours

Terrain: Flat and easy.

Start: Stanley Park; visitor's car park on West Park Drive, by Sports Centre. From M55 follow A583 towards the town centre. Following signs for Stanley Park and the zoo, take A587 towards North Shore and Fleetwood. At mini roundabout before the park, turn left into West Park Drive. The Sports Centre is on the right.

Note: There are well signed cycle/pedestrian routes through the park and around Marton Mere. Indeed this is such a well signed route that further description is almost rendered unnecessary. What is offered here is a suggested route.

Directions: First opened in 1926 Stanley Park was once considered as much a part of the Blackpool experience as a visit to the Tower Ballroom. While perhaps the three hundred and ninety acre park will not see those glory days again, its future is at least promising, having attracted funding for regeneration.

(See www.friendsofstanleypark.org.uk) The start of the walk takes you through the park, and it is worth as much exploration you have time for. Particularly recommended is the art deco style café close to the Italian Gardens. From the car park walk towards the imposing monument in the centre of the park, beyond the sports arena. This is the Cocker Tower dedicated to William Henry Cocker whose years of public service were dedicated to making Blackpool the popular holiday resort it became. **(Pic 1)** From here make your way to the Italian Gardens and then the boating lake. **(Pic 2)** Follow signs in the direction of the hospital. **(Pic 3)** Pass the boating lake on your right. On reaching East Park Drive cross it at traffic lights and directly opposite take the footpath to the right of Victoria Hospital's service road, (with a golf fairway on your right.) **(Pic 4)** The path is tree lined on the right and has the retaining wall of the hospital on the left. At the end the path meets the tarmac of the cycle path. Turn right. At the next junction turn left on a track that provides a perimeter to a golf course. (To the right you will notice a world war two pillbox **(Pic 5)** built to defend the aerodrome which was on the site of the zoo close by. The aerodrome was used as an RAF training centre during the war.) This route is well signed. **(Pic 6)** Follow it in the direction of Staining and Marton Mere, with the golf course on your right. **(Pic 7)** (If refreshment is required a pleasant detour can be made into Staining **(Pic 8)** where the Plough has a varied menu and cask ales. **(Pic 9)** Just follow the signs to the village.) Continue on the track **(Pic 10)** until you arrive at Marton Mere. **(Pic 11)** This sheet of water is one of two natural lakes in Lancashire. It is now an important nature reserve. The information board at this point displays a map, as well as illustrations of the range of bird-life to be seen. At this junction, either of the paths will soon take you back to Stanley Park but by going left and circling the mere in a clockwise fashion, you will have a greater appreciation of this amenity. **(Pic 12)** The Rangers Service building by the caravan park offers further information for visitors. Moreover there are numerous hides permitting better viewing of the birdlife. With the mere on your right you will reach a junction of paths a little way past the vast Marton Mere Holiday Village. **(Pic 13,14)** From here follow signs back to Stanley Park. **(Pic 15)**



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

