

# Lancashire Walks



## Darwen Tower

*Almost immediately on joining the M65 at Bamber Bridge you will see Darwen Jubilee Tower on the skyline ahead. It stands on the northern edge of the West Pennine Moors. This walk is a good introduction to the area. It takes you to this outstanding viewpoint, visits the ancient settlement of Tockholes and finally winds its way through the woodlands of Roddlesworth. [Sadly since we published this walk the Tower suffered damage in the autumn gales of 2010. The walk is still a good one]*

**Starting point:** Information Centre, Ryal Fold. From junction 3 M65 follow signs to Bolton A675 to Bolton. 2½ miles after Abbey Village turn left onto Crookfield Road which leads onto Tockholes Road. The information centre is on the right close by the Royal Arms.

**Distance:** 11 Km or 6½ miles

**Time:** 3 - 4 hours

**Terrain:** A short but sharp ascent is needed to reach Darwen Moor but thereafter mainly easy along tracks and across fields.

### 1. Ryal Fold to Darwen Tower: 2 Km or 1¼ miles, 30 mins

From the car park turn left by the bus stop and follow a bridleway sign to the right of a terrace of cottages. **(Pic 1)** The bridle way passes through a gate and onto the pasture beyond. The track dips down into woodland before arriving at Darwen Moor. **(Pic 2)** Here the main track goes up ahead but you turn left and immediately cross a stile on the right. At first the path is steep, but it soon levels out to provide an airy platform on the edge of the moor. Keep ahead until the tower comes into sight. **(Pic 3)** Ascent of the 86 foot tower is recommended but, for those of you who suffer from vertigo, the views at its base are still impressive.

### 2. Darwen Tower to Tockholes: 3 Km or 2 miles, 40 - 60 mins

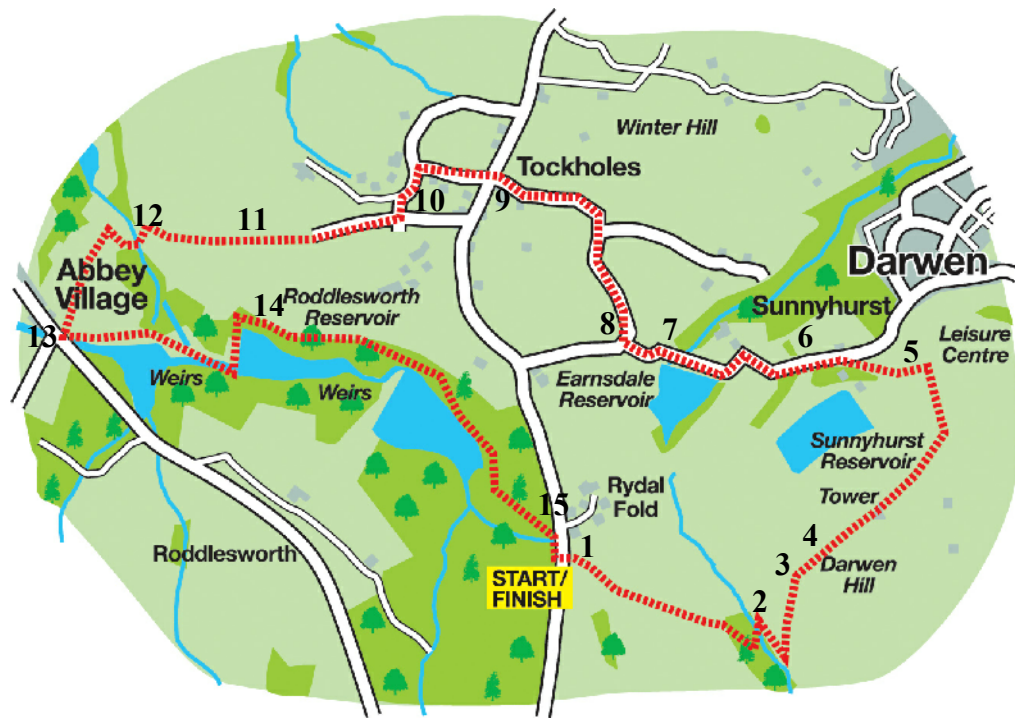
From the front of the tower descend by a broad track ahead **(Pic 4)** Just beyond a gate and a signboard turn left onto a footpath. **(Pic 5)** After crossing a pasture this will put you on a reservoir service road. Turn right and walk down towards a stone house. Bear left past the house and where the track divides, **(Pic 6)** take the right fork. Keep on this as it descends to Earnsdale Reservoir, taking the left fork at the next junction. After the walkway above the dam, you reach a junction of paths on the far side. **(Pic 7)** Turn left to follow an upward cobbled path to reach a second junction, where you turn right. **(Pic 8)** This track brings you to Weasel Farm and then Weasel Lane which brings you to Tockholes Road. Cross into Long Lane **(Pic 9)** down the hill to Chapels Lane. Before you lies the graveyard of the United Reform Chapel – the dead centre of Tockholes.

### 3. Tockholes to Abbey Village: 2 Km or 1¼ miles, 30 mins

Turn left into Chapels Lane and follow it past the chapel turning first right and then left. When you reach Old School Lane at the top of a brow turn right. **(Pic 10)** Follow the track down passing converted farm buildings on the right. Just beyond Winnowing Barn, the route follows a walled path for 200m to reach a stile. Cross it and turn right in the direction of the waymark arrow. Crossing a wide field a waymark post will assist you in keeping on route. **(Pic 11)** Another pair of stiles later you come to Red Lea Farm. Follow waymark signs into the courtyard and then to the rear of the complex. **(Pic 12)** Another pair of stiles will put you on a downward path to a footbridge across a stream. Turn right onto the tarmac track. This track leads to the edge of Abbey Village with the Hare and Hounds on your right.

### 4. Abbey Village to Ryal Fold: 3 Km or 2 miles, 40-60 mins

Turn left onto a service road **(Pic 13)** that quickly brings you to the first of a trio of reservoirs. At its far end follow the track as it bends past a house and drops to a footbridge and ford. Take your pick. Once across the channel bear right through a gate and walk a wooded track until you arrive at the second reservoir. Turn left along its dam wall. Follow the track into the woods beyond. **(Pic 14)** The main rule here is to keep forward on the main track with water on your right. The track descends to the final reservoir and then arrives at a junction. Here keep on the left side of the stream. At the next junction of paths a sign post will indicate the direction to the information centre to the left. Follow it upwards. In a little over 5 minutes you will arrive at Tockholes Road – directly in front of the Royal Arms. **(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



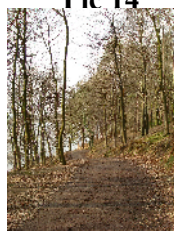
Pic 12



Pic 13



Pic 14



Pic 15



Pic 16