

# ST ANNE'S TOWN TRAIL

Walk 1

South Fylde  
Line Walks



2 miles / 3.25km with an optional extension  
of 1 mile / 1.61km, level throughout.

# ST ANNE'S TOWN TRAIL –

from the station, round the town returning to the station.

This Trail aims to encourage people to appreciate the attractive and varied environment of St Anne's-on-the-Sea, and provide some historical background to the development of 'a Garden Town by the Sea'.

Until the 1870s present day St Anne's was an area of sand dunes, fields and farms, known as Heyhouses. The Clifton family of Lytham Hall owned the land and from the 1840s, under the guidance of their Land Agent, the Cliftons began planning for a new town.

They also invested in the railway between Lytham and Blackpool, and in the early 1870s they laid out the road from Starr Hills (Fairhaven) to the present St Anne's Square.

The Trail starts at the Station.

*A station opened on 1 November 1873 called Cross Slack. It was renamed St Annes-on-the-Sea two years later. The station lost one of its platforms in 1986 when the line was reduced to single track and the old station was demolished.*

Facing you is the Town House, but it was originally the site of the St. Anne's Hotel, which was demolished in 1985. *In the basement of the Town House is the town's original foundation stone laid by seven year old John Talbot Clifton in March 1875. A replica foundation stone has been installed at the entrance to the station car park opposite the Town House.*

Walk to the left and into the square. *Note the wide pavements and open nature of the square with a public performance area, planters, car parking and attractive mosaics.*

- ① Visit the 'arena' to view the mosaic. *Note the fine decorative tile work on the upper floors of the Boots building of 1906. On your right above the betting shop is an ugly gargoyle which is said to have been put there to 'face out' a rival shopkeeper across the road.*



1



3

Continue on and turn right into Garden Street. *Look down the alleyway to your left to see the cream and terracotta brickwork, typical of the side and rear elevations of the stone Porritt buildings.*

On the right is the Palace Building, the former Public Hall and Picture House, now a Masonic Hall, market and shops. It was designed by John Dent Harker, a local architect, and it is one of several highly decorative town-centre buildings having interesting faience and terracotta detailing in the art nouveau style.

A little further on you come to an entrance to Ashton Gardens. Lord Ashton of Lancaster paid for the Ashton Gardens as a gift for the people of St. Anne's, and they are named in his honour. *A separate leaflet on the history of the Gardens can be*

*obtained from Supporters of Ashton Gardens (SOAG) [www.ashtongardens.org.uk](http://www.ashtongardens.org.uk)*

Walk through the gates, between the two original lodges and take the left hand path passing the new Ashton Pavilion and on towards the memorial.



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② *Designed and sculpted by Sir Walter Marsden MC, the memorial was unveiled in 1924. Made of white granite with bronze statuary, it is one of the finest in Lancashire.*

③ Turn left and down the path to the gates to view the crest of the former St. Anne's Urban District Council with

the motto “Salus Populi Supreme Lex Est” (The welfare of the people is the highest law). The hand and dagger symbol reinforces the link with the Clifton family.

Opposite is a terrace of fine imposing houses known as Porritt houses.

*The architect William John Porritt was born in Ramsbottom in East Lancashire but lived for part of the year in St Anne’s. The houses he built were distinctive and became known as “Porritt” houses.*



- 4** Turn left and you approach the United Reformed Church which opened in 1896. *The church was founded as St. Anne’s-on-the-Sea Congregational Church in September 1880. It was financed by businessmen from East Lancashire who for religious reasons had been prevented from investing in the area where they lived.*

A few steps further on, is the original waiting room of the Blackpool, St Anne’s and Lytham Tramways Company with a similar modern building

adjoining it. It is now a cafe but was used previously as a Tourist Information Office. *Note the blue plaque on the front whilst the door at the back of the building gave access to a toilet for the tram drivers on route to Lytham.*

Cross the road at the traffic lights and head towards the Pier, noting on the right set in the gateways are the initials IH. *The Imperial Hydro once stood on this site before the magnificent Majestic Hotel replaced it. Despite it being regarded as one of St. Anne’s finest treasures, it was demolished in 1975 and replaced with a block of unflattering red brick flats.*

On your left is the Town Hall, originally built as the Southdown Hydro Hotel. *Note the chiselled stone pillars at the car park entrance and the decorative pebbles on the walls, a typical local feature.*

- 5** Cross the promenade and head right into the sunken gardens to come upon the statue of comedian Les Dawson, who lived locally.
- 6** Retrace your steps to approach the Pier. *The Pier opened in 1885, the entrance added in 1899 and in 1903 a Moorish Pavilion completed the structure. The Pavilion was destroyed by fire in 1974 whilst the Floral Hall suffered the same fate in 1982.*

Walk by the boating/paddling pool and ornate Bandstand and view the impressive stone memorial to the



crew of the LAURA JANET, designed by Edinburgh architect W.B. Rhind. *The LAURA JANET set out on the stormy night of the 9th December 1886 to give help to the German ship the Mexico. All the crew were lost, together with most of the crew of the Southport lifeboat. It is still the worst disaster in RNLi history - 27 crewmen died in total, leaving 50 orphans.*

Continue on passing a restored Edwardian shelter and take the path to the right of the fountain to gain access to the Promenade. Turn right and skirt the boating lake. You will come to the new Lifeboat House which houses the Lytham St Anne’s ocean-going lifeboat and a small museum and shop.

Turn left by the side of the Swimming Pool building to regain the promenade and continue on, passing two converted railway carriages now used as shops and a cafe.

Further along you reach the Edwardian promenade gardens. There are several structures in the gardens worthy of note. Cross the pebble-decorated bridge noting the varied designs.

Look across at the Grand Hotel from the Promenade Gardens. *Built in 1896, the building is still largely unspoilt - note the variations in the cobble boundary wall and the tiling on the turrets. It is said that 3000 hand cut tiles were used to create the round shape but that they had to be cut twice as the first time the tiles were the wrong shade.*

Cross the road and take Links Road – look out for the period houses featuring much stained glass. At the end of the road you are afforded views of St. Thomas’ Church which opened in 1900. It was designed by Lancashire architects Austin & Paley.





Turn left and on your left is the former St Anne's Technical School, with a date stone of MDCCCXVII (1907). The St. Anne's crest is again to be seen in stained glass above the entrance doors. This building was saved from demolition after being listed by English Heritage.

- 7 Alongside is St. Anne's Library, designed by John Dent Harker. *This interesting building, with its copper domed roof, opened in 1905, with the benefit of a grant from the Carnegie Foundation. Recently a Reading Garden and a mosaic depicting the Owl and the Pussycat have been added thanks to the Friends Group. Note the blue plaque.*



Continue left along the Drive and you will pass the District Club, on the corner of Hornby Road. Built in 1875 this was formerly Kilgrimol School.

Turn left into Eastbank Rd and on your right can be seen the Old Lifeboat House which was the home of the LAURA JANET.

Retrace your steps and turn into the Drive Methodist Church, built in 1891. Behind it to the right is the Chapel in the Dunes. *Built in 1877, the first non-conformist place of worship in St Anne's. The Chapel was designed by James Maxwell (of Blackpool Tower fame) and, apart from Heyhouses School, is the only known surviving example of his work in St Anne's.*

Cross Clifton Drive and you stand before Hardaker Court. *In 1890, JR Banister who had just resigned as head teacher of Heyhouses School set up St. Anne's Grammar School for Boys on this site. Eventually the school closed and the building became the Sandown Hotel, and was later chosen as the site for the Headquarters of the Football League.*



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*It was redeveloped into Hardaker Court and named after the long-serving Football League secretary Alan Hardaker.*

- 8 On the opposite side of Clifton Drive, is one of the most significant and important historical buildings in the town, the Public Offices. This was the first public building to be erected in St Anne's, and is a visible statement of early civic pride. *This is a Grade II Listed Building has remained largely unchanged and retains many original features. The Public Offices opened on 22 January 1902. The building is now used as a Furniture Showroom.*

Turn right Wood Street known as the 'cafe quarter'. Look at the upper storeys of the buildings to the right and left to see the architectural detailing. Turn left into Orchard Road and note the fine features of the buildings

At the end of Orchard Road look across the square at the tiling above Tesco Express. Originally a Booths Supermarket, they commissioned the

colourful mural in the 1960s. The shops here were once private houses with gardens.

Turn right into the square and stop outside the Fresh Cafe. A blue plaque on the wall honours Frank Dickinson, optometrist and inventor of the micro lens.

Dependant on time, continue on to the Parish Church or return to the station

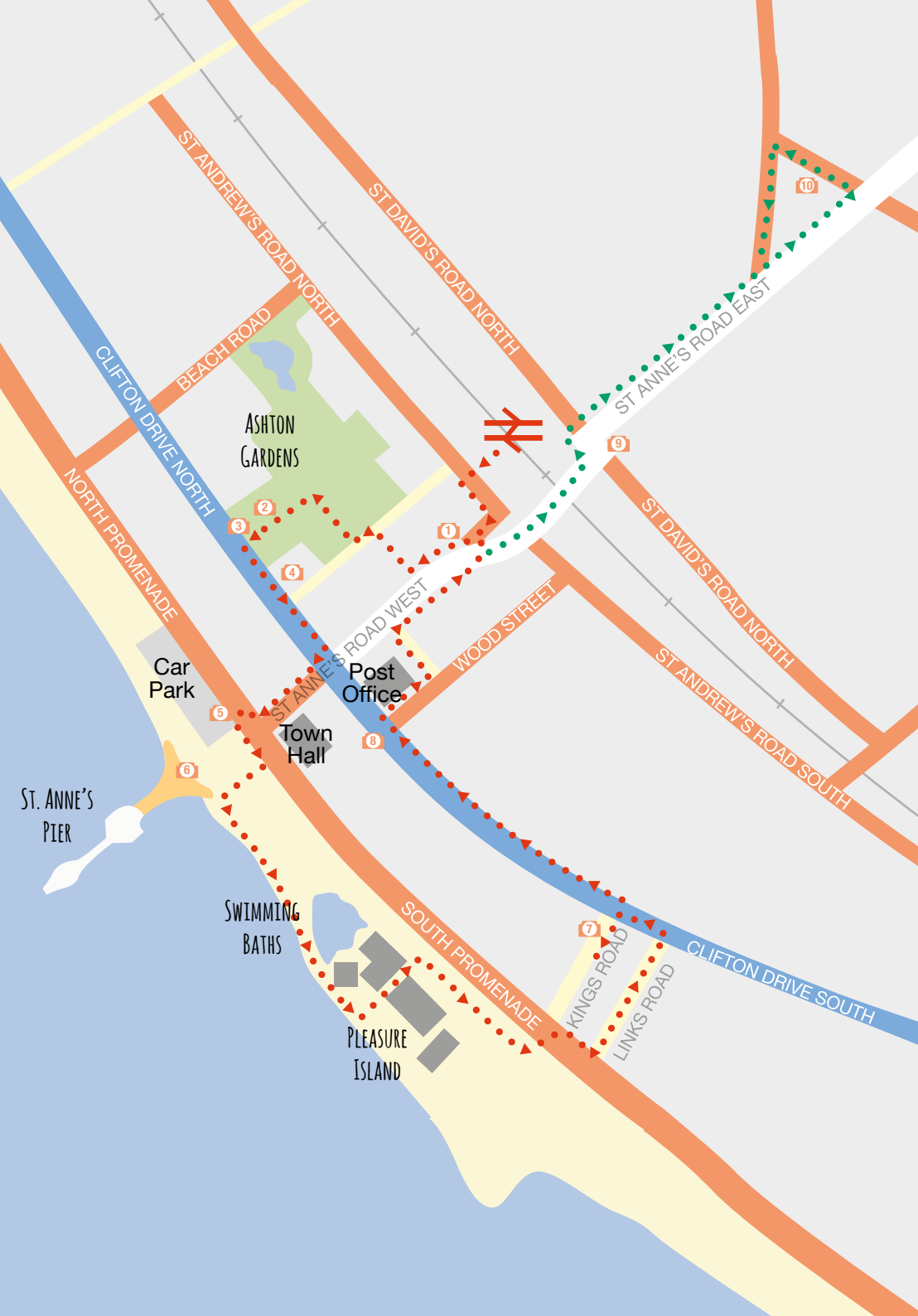
- 9 Take the right fork over the railway bridge ahead of you is the Church of Our Lady, Star of the Sea built in 1890 to a design by Pugin and Pugin, with a weather vane in the form of a yacht.

Continue up St Anne's Road East and at its junction with Headroomgate Road stands the lamp by the Lych Gate of the Parish Church, commemorating Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897.

Continue up St Anne's Rd East and at the traffic lights to your right can be seen the Victoria Hotel of 1898, also designed by John Dent Harker.



9



ST ANDREW'S ROAD NORTH

ST DAVID'S ROAD NORTH

ST ANNE'S ROAD EAST

10

CLIFTON DRIVE NORTH

BEACH ROAD

ASHTON GARDENS

2

3

4

1

9

ST DAVID'S ROAD NORTH

NORTH PROMENADE

Car Park

Post Office

WOOD STREET

ST ANDREW'S ROAD SOUTH

5

Town Hall

8

ST ANNE'S ROAD WEST

ST. ANNE'S PIER

6

SWIMMING BATHS

SOUTH PROMENADE

KINGS ROAD

LINKS ROAD

CLIFTON DRIVE SOUTH

PLEASURE ISLAND

7



10 St Anne's Parish Church, designed by Lancaster architects Paley & Austin has a date stone over a small doorway that records its dedication in 1873. A grave to the right of the porch holds the bodies of five of the St. Anne's lifeboat crew who were lost in the Mexico Disaster of 1886. Visits to St. Anne's church are by prior arrangement with the Parish Office Tel: 01253 722736. The fine church interior contains a millennium tapestry illustrating the history of the town. A booklet explaining the tapestry is available to purchase inside.

Retrace your steps to return to the station.

Based on the Town Trail which was revised and produced by St Anne's on the Sea Town Council and Lytham St Anne's Civic Society in 2010.



Cross Church Road to view the original part of Heyhouses School designed by Maxwell and Tuke (the architects of Blackpool Tower) in 1879. To your left in the school grounds, a plaque commemorates Captain John Alcock, a former pupil, one of the two men who made the first non-stop aerial crossing of the Atlantic.

## Further Information

### Maps of the Area

- OS Explorer 286 Blackpool & Preston
- OS Landranger 102 Preston & Blackpool
- [www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk)

An hourly train service runs between Preston and St. Annes. For more details go to:

Web: [www.northernrailway.co.uk](http://www.northernrailway.co.uk)

[www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

Tel: **08457 484950**

For information on local attractions, events, places of interest and accommodation please contact:

Web: [www.discoverfylde.co.uk](http://www.discoverfylde.co.uk)

[www.communityrail Lancashire.co.uk/lines/south-fylde-line](http://www.communityrail Lancashire.co.uk/lines/south-fylde-line)

Tel: **01253 725610**



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[www.communityrail Lancashire.co.uk](http://www.communityrail Lancashire.co.uk)