

LYTHAM TOWN TRAIL

Walk 3

South Fylde
Line Walks

1.8 miles / 2.93km with an optional extension
of 1.5 miles / 2.39km, level throughout.

LYTHAM TOWN TRAIL – a circular tour of Lytham

A short walk showing some of the interesting aspects of Lytham –
The walk starts at Lytham Station entrance.

The original Lytham station was opened on 16th February 1846 on Station Road along with the branch line from Kirkham and was the terminus. The station was about 500 yards from the current station, which opened on 6th April 1863 also as a terminus.

The station was rebuilt and opened as a through station on 1st July 1874. The station ceased to be manned after the cut-backs of the 1960s and the station building became derelict. In 1986 it was restored and transformed into a public house.



Exit the station through the brick arch and notice the recent improvements to the entrance area including gateposts and cobbled retaining wall.

Cobble walls are a particular feature of the area with stones coming from shingle banks or stannars that once protected the Fylde Coast.

Climb the steps on your left and turn left at the top and over the bridge and you come across two columns marking the entrance to Witch Wood. *These columns came from the portico of the original Lytham Station. Retrace your steps to where you started.*

Nearby is the tiny Sparrow Park with a memorial to one of the Clifton squires who died in 1872.

The ornate fountain, a mixture of stone and wood, was placed there by Lady Eleanor Cecily Clifton as a memorial to her husband John Talbot Clifton after his death in 1872.

- Follow the path through the park to the left hand corner and turn immediately right into Westby Street. Continue to the corner with Station Square.

Look down at the kerb edges which have been worn away over time by the iron rims of carriages and cart wheels.



1

Cross the road and turn right towards Hastings Place. *On your left is a building with wrought iron railings on the balcony. This is the home of the current Lord of the Manor of Lytham James Hilton Esquire.*



2

- Turn left into Hastings Place.

Note the convex crescent of houses, several of which have detailed fanlights above the doorways. Look up at the buildings to see the various architectural features and the name Hastings Place carved in stonework.



3

- Cross to the other side of Hastings Place to see the imposing Estate Offices.

From here the administration of the Clifton estates was undertaken and where local tenants, including farmers paid the quarterly rents. Look across to appreciate the building with the clock tower which used to be the market hall.

- Cross to view the features of the market hall and its blue plaque and then proceed round the building and enter the Memorial gardens containing the town's war memorial. *This was formerly the village green where local people often met. There were fish stones here originally where trading was done, but in 1847 the market hall was built so that trading could be done under cover. The market hall now houses a bank and several other businesses.*



4

Cross over to the left hand side of the road noting several shops that have retained their verandas.

- Cross Park Street and follow the east side of Clifton Street which is Lytham's main shopping street.

This was originally a row of houses with front gardens but as the commercial trade grew these were paved over. This accounts for the area between the pavement and the shop fronts which are now used by shopkeepers to display their wares.



5

Look across to the other side of the street to see the detailed brick inlays and stonework on the first and second floors. Note too on the left an arcade with a glazed veranda, the entrance to several bijoux shops and leading to Pleasant Street car park and public toilets.

- Continue on and cross Bannister Street to come upon the Lytham Institute previously housing the library and a billiard hall upstairs. *Look out for the finely detailed coloured stonework and the blue plaque.*



6

- Turn left into Bannister Street and after passing the gardens of the Hewitt Lecture Rooms part way on the right you can see the former Lytham Police Station and the attached Magistrates Court (no longer in use).

The church on the left is Lytham United Reformed Church. Note the fine cobbled wall to your right, continuing this strong feature of the town's streetscape.



Approach Westby Street and turn right. There are fine buildings with the decorative barge boards, apex roofs and intricate stonework that give Lytham its character. Facing the large imposing Rutland Villas (1888) are smaller cottages with their well-maintained gardens, matched with porches and trim appearance.

Turn right at the end of Westby Street into Station Road. The fire station now occupies the site of the first Lytham Station, the original terminus from Preston. Initially passengers had to walk from this station to the current station in order to connect

to Blackpool. Once the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway took over the route of the line was altered and the first station became redundant. The whole site is now occupied by Booths and other businesses and the original columns from the station are now being used as markers in Witch Wood (see Walk 2 - Lytham Hall).

The Railway Hotel has been refurbished and renamed (previously the Hansom Cab) by Weatherspoon's and the interior walls feature significant railway memorabilia. Round the side of the bar are pictures depicting the old Lytham station with its elegant glazed canopy.

- 8** Continue along Station Road. Note the stonework above the corner building which has also retained its veranda and decorative columns.



8

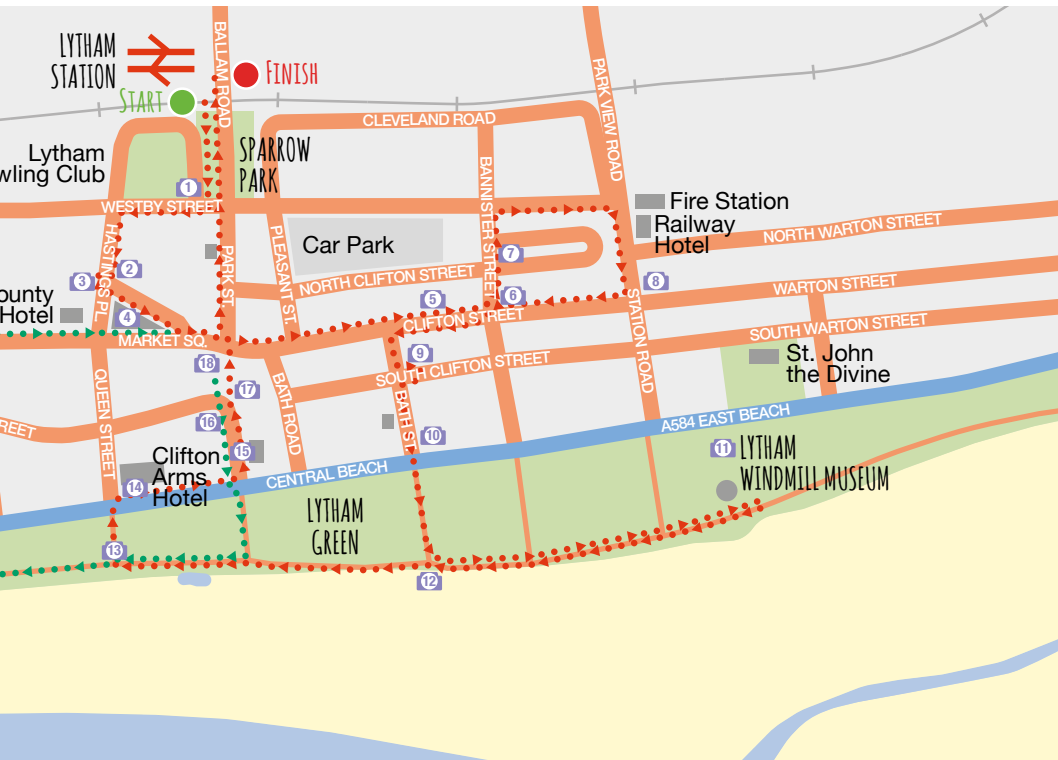
At the junction turn right along Clifton Street back towards the town centre and use the crossing to gain the western side of the street.

Turn left into Bath Street. This takes its name from the time two hundred years ago when sea bathing became popular and the houses provided bathing machines for the better-off to change in before taking a dip.

- 9** Just a short way down turn left into South Clifton Street. Here on the left is one of the newest buildings in Lytham and adjacent to it one of the oldest with distinctive cobbled walls.



9



It is shown on a map of 1720 as a stable on a farm, so must date from before then. It has two storeys and the circular hole was a pitching hole and hay or straw would be thrown up through the hole by pitchfork off a cart for storage.

- 10 Return to Bath Street and walk down the cobbled pavements with various designs laid into them.

The cobbles have been worn down over the decades, probably by iron-shod clogs in the early days. On the opposite side is the former Wesleyan Chapel dating from 1846 which became too small for a growing congregation and turned out to be redundant when a benefactor paid for a larger and more imposing church to be built in park Street in 1868. Note the blue plaque.



Just discernible is the last design in the cobbled pavement before the main road is the date 1831.

Many gardens are delineated by the cobbled walls of which there are literally miles in Lytham, all built using stones gathered from the foreshore. At the corner opposite is the Queen's Hotel, formerly called the Neptune. It once had a sea-water baths behind it.

- 11 Cross over the main road and walk to the promenade. To your left is the windmill, built in 1805. In 1918 a fire destroyed the machinery and it has never operated since. In 1997 the sails were badly damaged in a storm and had to be replaced. To its right the low building is the old lifeboat house paid for by the Cliftons and now superseded by the one you are now near. The concrete structures in front of you were formerly mussel tanks.



12

12 There was thriving mussel industry in Morecambe Bay about 20 miles further north but in the 1930s pollution of the bay led them to transfer the business here, the mouth of the River Ribble, where the water was cleaner. You will see that one tank is used by the Lifeboat Institution, another by the local sailing club and the third is now paved over.

Across the road is St. John's Parish Church on East Beach built in 1849. Facing the windmill and old lifeboat station it has been the lifeboat men's church for many years and the vicar is also chaplain to the crew.

Walk to your right along the promenade. Across the River Ribble is Southport with its churches, blocks of flats and Millennium Bridge clearly visible on a good day. When the visibility is especially good you may be able to discern on the skyline a tower on a hill, this is at Aughton near Ormskirk.

Continue to the next parking area and from here on a good day and looking south west you may be able to see across the sea to the hills of Snowdonia. Snowden itself is not visible as it is hidden by nearer mountains.



13

13 The flagpole on the promenade nearby is called Charlie's Mast, talking its name from a local inhabitant Charlie Townsend, who in 1840 raised a pole from an old farm cart to act as a navigation aid for shipping in the river.

Lytham Green is not a natural feature. In 1720 a violent storm came inland and forty houses, mostly fishermen's cottages situated where you now see the houses facing the front were destroyed. To prevent a reoccurrence, the local squire mobilised a force to bring soil and other materials to build this bank which is nearly a mile long.

The railway arrived in Lytham in 1846 and this encouraged many affluent people such as mill-owners and solicitors from places such as Manchester and Blackburn to have houses built facing the estuary. Many such houses remain but some have been replaced by apartment blocks.

14 Opposite is the Clifton Arms Hotel. Cross over to the front of the hotel and look up towards the brickwork at roof height where the Clifton family crest complete with the 'hand and dagger' is featured in the stonework.



14

15 Turn right towards the town centre again and turn left into Dicconson Terrace. The imposing building on the right complete with blue plaque was the site of the former baths, originally slipper baths with a swimming pool incorporated later. Now used as the Assembly Rooms in which various local organisations have meetings.



15

16 Continue on up towards the metal gate-like structure noting the 'hand and dagger' in the design.



16

17 The building to your left was formerly a Trustee Savings bank but now houses the Lytham Heritage Centre in which exhibitions, usually with free admission, are staged and well worth a visit.



17

18 You have now arrived at what is known as the Piazza, the centrepiece of which is mosaic designed by Maggy Howarth and installed in 1998. It depicts many features with local connections. Look for the windmill, the hand and dagger, a bird's nest, a heron, a crab and the red rose of Lancashire.



18

If you wish to extend your walk to take in Lowther Gardens, retrace your steps to gain the Green again and turn right (continued below).

Otherwise Cross over the main road at the crossing opposite Stringers and make your way back to the station, pausing to take in the Methodist Chapel, which was built in 1868 to replace the much smaller chapel in Bath Street, behind the Queen's Hotel. When first erected it was known as the Wesleyan Chapel.



19

EXTENDED WALK

19 After a short walk along the promenade you gain Lowther Gardens through the wrought iron 'overthrows' at the entrance. *Note the date!*



Lowther Gardens is the oldest park in Lytham St Anne's and is popular with visitors and residents alike.

The site comprises of mature gardens and contains a range of passive and active leisure facilities for all age ranges. The Gardens are an example of horticultural excellence and are maintained to an incredibly high standard.

The gardens cover an area of 5.65 hectares and were provided by Squire J Talbot Clifton in 1872 in honour of his wife, Eleanor Cecily Clifton (of the Lowther family in



20

20 Keep to the right of the pavilion and make your way to the lily pond. *Note the fine bronze sculpture of a traditional River Ribble shrimper created by Colin Spofforth. Dressed in late 19th century clothing and with shrimping basket and net the statue was unveiled in November 2003. Seek out the interpretation board mounted on a brick structure to the right of the pond.*

Cumbria) and in memory of her father, who died in 1868. They were designed and laid out under the supervision of Mr Tomlinson who worked on the Clifton Estate, for the benefit of the inhabitants and visitors to Lytham, on what was previously poor grazing land known as Hungry Moor.

Most of the original design has been retained with the addition of the first pavilion in 1922, new entrances and car park in 1936 and construction of the aviary dating back to 1934.

21 Walk a little way on to find the cobble clock designed by Maggy Howarth and unveiled in 2006 to mark the 100th anniversary of the public status of the gardens.



21

After viewing the fine herbaceous borders and imaginative planting leave the gardens by the gate in the top left hand corner of the park.



22 Cross the road, heading left towards St. Cuthbert's Church. *A driveway opens out complete with a gatehouse which was one of the original routes in and out of the grounds of Lytham Hall. The area is surrounded by the traditional cobbled walls with the gateways being cut into them.*

23 *St. Cuthbert's Church of England Parish Church on Church Road is the third of this name to be built on the site since the founding of the parish during the 12th century. It was built in 1834 at a cost of £1,600.*



24 Retrace your steps and head back towards the town centre. On your left you will come to some railings and a stone.

The site is reputed to have been where St. Cuthbert's body (relics) rested briefly in 882 AD. The monks of Lindisfarne were worried that attacking tribes might steal their relics so the relics travelled around the country and the relics may have rested here!
<http://bit.do/c4tpV> for more details.

As you continue towards Lytham note the fine houses on both sides of the road – the gabled roofs, the turrets



on corners, the cobbled walls and the well maintained gardens. Look out for Lowther Lodge and Lowther Grange.

At the County Hotel look for the sculpture above the door that celebrates 100 years of service.

Continue on passing Hastings Place towards Stringers and turn left into Park Street noting the finely detailed barge boards and stonework of the buildings opposite. *Originally private houses these are all now businesses but have retained their cobbled walls.*

On your left is the Methodist Chapel, which was built in 1868 to replace the much smaller chapel in Bath Street.

Continue on to regain the railway station.

Further Information

Maps of the Area

- OS Explorer 286 Blackpool & Preston
- OS Landranger 102 Preston & Blackpool
- www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk

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

Web: www.northernrailway.co.uk

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

www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/lines/south-fylde-line

Tel: **01253 725610**



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www.communityraillancashire.co.uk