

Distance:
Main Area
1½ miles
Time:
Just over
an hour

**Extended
distance:**
2 miles
Time:
About 1½ hours

The Trail aims to encourage people to appreciate the urban environment and provide some historical background to the development of St. Anne's on the Sea, the 'Garden Town'. You can shorten the Town Trail at any point by using the map.



INTRODUCTION

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, Lords of the Manor, owned all the land around. In the 1840s, under the guidance of their Land Agent James Fair, the Cliftons began their plan for a new town. In the 1850s they 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. A further road then continued to the Parish Church, built in 1872/3 with money provided by Lady Eleanor Cecily Clifton. It was this building which subsequently provided the name for the new town.

In 1874 a group of eight Lancashire business men, led by Joseph Wood Whitehead, formed the St. Anne's Land and Building Company and negotiated 999 year leases with Thomas Fair, who had succeeded his father as Land Agent to the Clifton family, to develop what became known as the Square Mile.

THE TRAIL

The Trail starts at the Pier ①. It was built in 1885; the entrance was added in 1899. In 1903 a Moorish Pavilion seating 750 was added, but it was destroyed by fire in July 1974. The Floral Hall suffered the same fate in 1982.



With your back to the pier, walk to the left into the sunken gardens, noticing the wide expanse of beach and sand dunes as you go. There you see the statue of comedian Les Dawson, erected in 2008 ②.

Return to the pier and cross the Promenade at the pedestrian crossing. Before you is the Town Hall, originally built as the Southdown Hydro Hotel ⑤. Note the decorative pebbles on the walls, a typical local feature. This is the finest of many buildings made with stone imported from East Lancashire and given the name of 'Porritt houses' after William Porritt, the man who built many of them.

Walk towards the town centre, away from the sea. The red brick flats on the opposite side of the road have replaced the magnificent Majestic Hotel. Cross the road to see the entrance gates which carry the letters IH, as Imperial Hydro was the original name of the hotel ④.

Then cross Clifton Drive to see the original tram waiting room of the Blackpool, St Anne's and Lytham Tramways Company ⑥, with a similar modern one adjoining, currently the Clock House Cafe.



Turn left here along Clifton Drive. On your right is another fine Porritt building - due to be demolished to make way for a supermarket! Past the next junction is the stone built United Reformed Church which opened in 1896 ⑥.

A little further on you come to an entrance to Ashton Gardens ⑦. Notice the crest of the former St. Anne's Urban District Council with the motto "Salus Populi Suprema Lex Est" (The welfare of the people is the highest law). Lord Ashton (a Lancaster linoleum manufacturer) gave money to allow the town to acquire these gardens, which then took his name.



Walk into the park towards the memorial.

The War Memorial ⑧, unveiled in 1924, was designed and sculpted by Sir Walter Marsden MC. It is made of white granite with bronze statuary and is one of the finest in Lancashire. Turn right and walk through another set of gates, between the two original lodges ⑨.



Before you is Garden Street. On the corner to the left you see the former Public Hall and Picture House, now a Masonic Hall, market and shops ⑩. This is one of several highly decorative town-centre buildings; they have interesting faience and terracotta detailing in the art nouveau style, designed by John Dent Harker, a local resident.

As you stand on the corner of Garden Street, look up to the building opposite to see the cream and terracotta brickwork, typical of the side elevation of the stone Porritt buildings and of many other houses in the town.

The building to your right at the other end of Garden Street on the corner with St Anne's Square, is the first block to be built in the Square, in the late 1870s ⑪.

Look towards the pier, you will notice shops offices and banks. These used to be houses with long gardens. The blue domes, decorative lighting, sculptures, new flower beds and extra car parking are all part of a town centre regeneration initiative. Turn left, away from the sea.



On your left is the ornate classical frontage of the HSBC Bank, formerly The Midland Bank. A Listed building, of 1908, its interior resembles a small classical temple ⑫.

Nearby, at roof height is an ugly gargoyle which is said to have been put there to face out a rival shopkeeper across the road. Note the fine decorative tile work on the upper floors of the Boots Building of 1906 ⑮.

Walking straight on, take the right fork over the railway bridge (the Crescent) and continue through the traffic lights and along St Anne's Road East. You will pass the Roman Catholic church of Our Lady, Star of the Sea ⑭ on your right, built in 1890, with a weather vane in the form of a yacht. On both sides of the road are houses built by wealthy industrialists.

You are now approaching the Parish Church. On the corner of St. Anne's Road East and Headroomgate Road stands a lamp by the Lych Gate which commemorates Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. St. Anne's Parish Church designed by Lancaster architects Paley and Austin ⑯, has a date stone over a small doorway recording its dedication in 1873.



The fine church interior contains a millennium tapestry illustrating the history of the town. A grave near the porch holds the bodies of five of the St. Anne's lifeboatmen lost in the Mexico Disaster in 1886.

Nearby, to the rear of the church, is Heyhouses Infants School. The original part of the building, designed by Maxwell and Tuke, the architects of Blackpool Tower in 1879, is best viewed from St. Anne's Road East.

It is only one of two surviving examples of their work in St. Anne's. In the school grounds a plaque commemorates the achievement of aviator and former pupil Captain John Alcock who, with A. W. Brown, made the first non-stop crossing of the Atlantic in 1919.

Not far away, on the other side of the cross roads, is a park where a hoard of English Civil War coins was found in 1961. Alongside is the Victoria Hotel of 1898, also designed by John Dent Harker. (The 'Vic' is currently under threat of demolition).

Retrace your steps along St. Anne's Road East to the Crescent, and back into the Square you will notice the many shop fronts which have been renovated in the traditional style. Look out for a blue plaque ⑰ honouring Frank Dickinson, optometrist and inventor of the micro lens.

Turn left into Orchard Road and notice the quality of building evident in the upper storeys; more terracotta tiling, and a date stone of 1892.

Turn right into Wood Street. At the end, on the opposite side of Clifton Drive, is one of the most iconic buildings in the town. The Public Offices ⑱ of 1900 was the first public building to be erected in St. Anne's and is a visible statement of early civic pride. (Its future is under threat from developers)



Turn left, cross the road at the zebra crossing, and continue to walk left. At the next corner is The Drive Methodist Church ⑲, 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, better known for designing Blackpool Tower.

Continue along the Drive and you will pass the District Club, on the corner of Hornby Road, built in 1875 and formerly Kilgrimol School ⑳.

Continue along Clifton Drive to St. Anne's Library ㉑, also designed by John Dent Harker. This interesting little building, opened in 1905, had the benefit of a £3,500 grant from the Carnegie Foundation.



Alongside it is the former St. Anne's Technical School ㉒, designed by County Architect Henry Littler, with a date stone of MDCCCVII (1907). The St. Anne's crest is again to be seen in stained glass above the entrance doors. This building was saved from demolition just in the nick of time after being listed by English Heritage.

On the opposite corner is St. Thomas's Church ㉓, which opened in 1900. It too was designed by Austin and Paley.

Turn right into Links Road to approach the Grand Hotel ㉔ on the Promenade. Built in 1896, it is still largely unspoilt - note the cobble boundary wall.



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Cross the road into the Edwardian promenade gardens 25 and go over the pebble-decorated bridge. There are several structures in the gardens worthy of note, including shelters, an octagonal pavilion, amphitheatre, fountain and bandstand. Turn right and you will see the pier where the walk started.



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Optional detours

There are two linked detours from your walk back to the pier which illustrate St. Anne's links with the sea and the lifeboats.

The Old Lifeboat House 25 on Eastbank Rd was the home of the 'Laura Janet' which 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.

The New Lifeboat House 26 is now on the promenade and can be reached by turning towards the sea from the gardens. It houses the present Lytham St Anne's ocean-going lifeboat and a small museum and shop. Its' interesting modern design is echoed by the café at the far side of the boating pool.

Lastly, as you approach the pier to end the trail, you will be walking the Lancashire Coastal Way. It leads you past the impressive stone memorial to the crew of the 'Laura Janet' 27, designed by Edinburgh architect W.B. Rhind.

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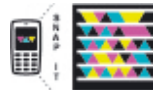
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More information about the history of St. Anne's can be found in St. Anne's on the Sea: A History by Peter Shakeshaft (2008)

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ST. ANNE'S ON THE SEA

Town Trail

