

**SUGGESTED START:** Docks Control Centre (pyramid-shaped building), Navigation Way, Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston PR2 2YJ.

**DISTANCE:** 3.6 km / 2.2 miles


**TIME:** 1 hour (plus sight-seeing and wildlife watching)

**TERRAIN:** Mostly concrete paths, largely flat.


**DIFFICULTY:** Gentle

**OS MAP REFERENCE:** It is advisable to use OS Landranger Map 102 with this guide.

 89, 75, 75A, 80

 Car parks on Navigation Way, Mariners Way, Port Way, Maritime Way and Lockside Road

 Available in various shops and restaurants, such as Morrisons, McDonald's, Ribble Pilot, Odeon Cinema and Baffito's

 Preston Marina, Homebase, Morrisons, SCS, Early Learning Centre, Mothercare, DFS, Pets at Home, Argos

 Ribble Pilot, Baffito's

 Preston Marina Boathouse Coffee Shop

 **WILDLIFE:** The dock is home to many different bird species, with coots, swans and cormorants frequent visitors. In the last few years, a colony of terns has nested on the wave breakers (5).

Fish found in the waters of the River Ribble, neighbouring the dock, include eels and flounders, as well as a range of freshwater species, such as roach and chub. Sea trout and salmon pass by this way on their migration out to the Irish Sea and back to their spawning grounds further up the catchment.

**WHAT TO EXPECT:**

Preston Riversway Docklands offers stunning views, gentle terrain and convenient parking and shopping facilities. From a starting point near the Dock Control Centre, the route leads for a short distance along the banks of the River Ribble before taking the walkway leading counter-clockwise around the dockside. From here, the route reaches the Bullnose, with stunning views out to the estuary. Indications of the dock's industrial past run throughout the route.

 **Common terns**



 **Bee orchid**

 **LOOK OUT FOR:**

1. Although records demonstrate that the area was used as a dock in the 1300s, the **Preston Docks** in their current form first opened in 1892 to aid transportation of cotton and other goods. At this time, it was the largest single dock in England. Until the 1970s, this was a popular ferry port. The inlet by the Mariners' Way car park was the site of the first roll-on-roll-off ferry service. In its hey-day, 45,000 vehicles were transported here by ferry per year.

 **100 tonne crane**



 **River Ribble**

2. A **100 tonne crane**, still visible today, was built to lift the 90 tonne lock gates.

It closed in 1981 as commercial demand and industry in the area declined. Road names hint at the old path of the River Ribble's channel, which was diverted to make way for the docks.

3. The **Bullnose** is a fantastic vantage point. From here, you can see boats following the Ribble Link crossing the Ribble's channel. The river had previously been dredged regularly and straightened to aid navigation for the 400ft-long vessels entering and leaving the dock.

4. Large shed **warehouses** stored china clay and wood pulp, lifted from vessels by hydraulic cranes.

5. Following a pair of common terns successfully nesting on the Preston Dock in 2009, Fylde Bird Club began installing shelters for the migratory visitors filled with gravel on the floating pontoon **wave breakers**. The breeding population has increased steadily since. Arctic terns have also recently taken an interest in the nesting site.

 **Wave breakers**



6. There are two buoys placed at the road junctions entering the docklands and further buoys on the side of the dock. These **Nelson Buoys** were once moored 8 miles off the coast of Lytham and were used to mark the safe approach into the dock.

 **Nelson Buoys**



7. When the area was redeveloped, a **swing bridge** was opened in 1991 connecting both sides of the Ribble. This, along with the lock gates, are operated from the pyramid-shaped **control centre**, opened in 1983.

 **Swing bridge**



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**The Ribble Catchment**

   
   
**Follow us:**



**Thank you!**  
To National Lottery Players for funding the project and Preston City Council, Environment Agency, Scouts, Fylde Bird Club, Andrew Newsham, and Lorraine Richen-Stones for support in developing and trialling the route. Photography: D. Higgins and E. Bateman.



This walk has been created by Ribble Rivers Trust as part of a series of circular routes for the Ribble Life Together project. Scan the QR code to find out more or visit [www.ribblelifetogether.org](http://www.ribblelifetogether.org). Download the **Ribble Life** app, to accompany this route on Android and iPhone.

- Follow the Countryside Code: consider wildlife and other users
- Carry spare food and drinks
- Take a charged mobile phone, first aid kit, map and compass
- Wear sturdy boots and clothing suitable for forecast conditions
- Ribble Trust River Walks: Rivers and Bridges; Ribble Estuary
- Preston City Council's Riversway Trail Guide
- Ribble Way
- Preston Guild Wheel
- Ribble Trust River Walks: Rivers and Bridges; Ribble Estuary

**Nearby trails**  
based on science, we aim to leave a positive legacy for the future, inspire and educate. Through practical environmental action, the heritage of the rivers, improving access and using the river to system by 2020 for people and wildlife. The project celebrates **Ribble Life Together** is working to create a healthier river

**River Walks Riversway Docklands**



This short stroll takes in both the Preston Riversway Docklands and the River Ribble, which was diverted to create the docks. This route is rich in cultural heritage, with many features showing the modern-day and historic use of these waterways.

**Distance: 3.6 km / 2.2 miles**  
**Difficulty: Gentle**



## ROUTE DIRECTIONS

### A. To the Bullnose

Take a moment from your starting point, to view the Preston Docks (1) and the 100 tonne crane (2).

From the car park across the road from the pyramid-shaped Docks Control Centre, and positioning the Control Centre on your right-hand-side, follow the railings until you reach the dock-side. (Do not pass through the red gate to the swing bridge.) Follow the side of the dock entrance to the Bullnose (3).

*Enjoy fantastic views of the River Ribble and dock's entrance from this point (as pictured on the cover).*



Control Centre

### B. By the river

Walk back along the other side of the Bullnose, by the River Ribble. When you meet the cycleway, continue on this tarmacked track, following the River Ribble upstream. Continue along the obvious path.

### C. To the dock

When the cycleway bears slightly left away from the river's side, take the path on your left, which curves down to the crossing point of the railway, defined by a pair of wooden gates.



Railway crossing

### Take care as you cross the tracks and Navigation Way.

Once across Navigation Way, follow Britannia Drive until it sweeps around to the right. At this point, take the track between the buildings towards the dock.

### D. Albert Edward Dock

\* A short detour from this point takes you to the 1905 warehouse shed no. 3 (4). To reach this, turn left along the dock-side path until you meet a building, on your left, with large, red pillars. Along here, you can also reach the wave breakers (5), where terns nest. Retrace your steps to the point where you reached the dock from Britannia Drive.

On reaching the dock-side path, turn right and follow this path anti-clockwise around the dock. Shortly after the path first bears left, you will pass a red-brick building.



Lock gates

### D. Albert Edward Dock (continued)

Bear left again at the Ribble Pilot pub.

Just before you reach the boat moorings, you will pass more wave breakers (5) and a pair of the Nelson Buoys (6).



Boat Moorings

Continue past the Preston Marina shop and Boathouse café until you reach Navigation Way. To your left is the swing bridge (7).

### E. Navigation Way

Turn right to follow the pedestrian pavement by Navigation Way. Shortly after the road bears right, the metal railings end. Cross over at this point and turn left to follow the footpath, with the railings now on your left.

### Take care as you cross the train line and swing bridge.

If you are lucky, you may see the swing bridge open. Gates will lock before this.



Preston Marina

### Do not cross barriers when they are locked.

The pedestrian gates will close when the swing bridge is opening. The swing bridge leads across to where the route began.

**THE RIVERS:** The River Ribble flows through north Yorkshire and Lancashire. At one end, the River Ribble's source begins near to the Ribblehead Viaduct. On this route, we are very close to the estuary at Lytham where the river flows into the Irish Sea.



River Ribble

The road names, 'Channel Way' and 'Riversway', hint at the river's historic route. Previously, the channel of the River Ribble took the path of a section of what is now the A583 to the north of the dock. The River Ribble was relocated to make way for the building of the dock. It is now located to the south of the dock. A channel connects the dock to the river for access in and out of the dock. Now, only small vessels are able to navigate this stretch up the river to the dock.

From the Bullnose, you can see boats navigating the Ribble Link between Savick Brook and the River Douglas.

The water quality of the docks suffers from blooms of toxic blue-green algae. This has improved in recent years.

### Ribble Rivers Trust projects

This point is very close to the Ribble's estuary, which is a key habitat for shellfish and roosting migratory birds. The **Tidal Ribble Project** is monitoring and working to improve the quality of the water in this area by tackling one of its key threats, faecal matter. Local land-owners are supporting us by making improvements to land management. The wider community are also engaging with the concern through arts projects, including theatre and a schools programme.

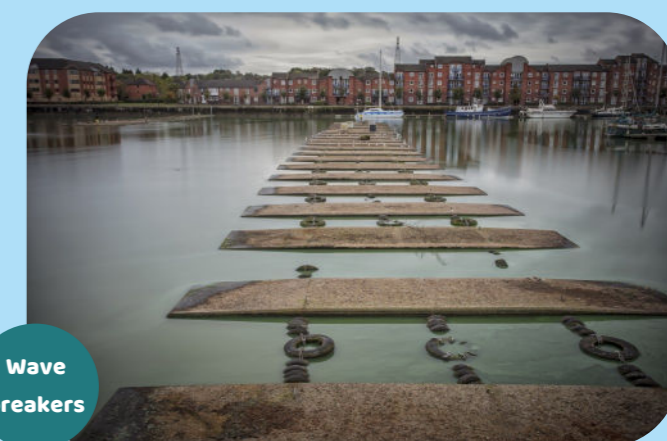


Arts project



Clean-up

The project is also raising awareness of problems associated with litter in rivers and seas. This litter mostly comes from the land. Volunteers, including local Scout groups, have been helping to tackle litter before it gets into the water. Our every day actions can make a huge difference to how clean our water is. To find out more about the project and other ways that you can improve the health of our rivers, visit <http://ribbletrust.org.uk/projects/tidal-ribble/> and download our Water Friendly Homes Guide.



Wave breakers

