

Stanley Park Easy Walk (2.84miles) Circuit of the lake and gardens of Stanley Park in Blackpool

Stanley Park is Blackpool's primary park and covers an area of approximately 104 hectares (260 acres). The park was designed to include significant sporting provisions, along with formal gardens, a boating lake and woodland area. It was designed and built in the 1920s, under the eye of Thomas Mawson. It is Grade II* listed and is on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England. Starting from the Art Deco Café, walk towards the lake, and keeping the lake on your right, continue to East Park Drive. The lake covers around 22 acres and was created using a natural depression and imported rock to prevent erosion. There is a central island in the lake which can be accessed by two stone bridges. Exit the Park and walk down East Park Drive, keeping the lake on your right. Re-enter the park at the gate just beyond the model village, and continue on the path to the right. Follow this path around and up to the Italian Gardens and Fountain. The Italian Garden in the centre of the park has many flower beds and a central fountain¹ made from Italian marble. The fountain and the four surrounding sea horses, were donated by Magee Marshall & Co in 1926. At the steps leading to the cafe from the Italian Gardens, there are two Medici lions statues which were produced, by Rupert Harris Conservation, using casts from the former sculptures which were returned, on loan, to Stowe House in 2013. The original lions, and shepherds and shepherdesses (probably from the Grecian valley, after 1749), were donated by John Magee in 1926 after being purchased during the sale of Stowe House in 1921. Turn left then left again and walk down to the Cocker Clock Tower. Mawson proposed a war memorial for the park, which led to a competition by the Blackpool Corporation offering a prize of 100 guineas. The winning design was from Lionel Budden of a 26-metre (85 ft) tall clock tower. The name was given as dedication to the first mayor of Blackpool, Dr William Cocker. Built in ashlar, each side faces almost exactly north, east, south and west with the door on the northern side. The clock tower encompasses two bronze lion head drinking fountains and a medallion above an inscription. It used to be possible for visitors to climb the tower for the view' until the mid-1970s. Left again here then follow the path keeping right between the cycle-cross track area and the skateboard area. Keep right back to the Cocker Walk and turn right here and walk back to the Clock Tower. Turn left here and walk to the Park exit, keeping the children's play-area on your left and the sports block and athletics track on your right. Turn right onto West Park Drive, and then turn right opposite Woodland Grove back into the park. Follow this path back to the Italian Gardens. Walk around the Fountain and enjoy the Gardens, then exit towards the car park, but do not go into the car park, keep left and walk through the gardens with Mawson Drive on your left and the bowling greens on the right. Continue to the Rose Gardens. Walk around the Rose Gardens and back through the Bowling Greens to the Café. Initial designs, for the art deco cafe, outlined a four-storey social centre which was designed to look like a country mansion. Due to financial strains this was re-designed, as it now stands, as a cafe in an art deco style which was designed to appear larger than it was. The cafe is constructed from brick with sandstone features and has mahogany doors and steel framed windows. Enjoy lunch sat outside the lovely Art Deco Café with views of the Italian Gardens.

