

THE WAR HORSE ROUTE

This 8.5 mile route takes you from Ormskirk railway station out to Lathom Park. The walk is mostly level along quiet footpaths, country lanes and woodland tracks, however, there are some stiles and steps along the way which are marked on the map. Enjoy the tranquility of this beautiful historic area before returning to Ormskirk, a busy market town with plenty of eateries and shops for you to enjoy.

- 1 Starting at the railway station, walk through to the end of the car park. At the bottom of the hill, at the footpath cross roads, go straight ahead leaving the tarmac routes and continue ahead along the disused railway line and exit via the steps to Dark Lane. NB. This area can become boggy in wet weather so you can use the alternative route as shown on the map, this also avoids steps.
- 2 At the top of the steps go left and continue along Dark Lane and then turn right into Lathom Lane. Continue ahead as it becomes Cranes Lane, passing Ormskirk Golf Club on your right. At the end of Cranes Lane cross Hall Lane and enter Lathom Park, walk ahead and then turn left at the chapel car park to visit the historic Lathom Chapel. The grounds are open every day but you may visit the chapel on a Sunday between 2 and 4pm in the summer.
- 3 Continue on past the chapel and walk along the track until you again reach Hall Lane, cross the road to the footway on the other side and walk to your right for approximately 350 yards.
- 4 At the public footpath sign (on lamp standard) just before Watkinsons Farm, turn left along the track then, leaving the house and barn on right, follow the cross-field footpath to the footbridge and continue along footpath to right until you join a track. Turn left to walk along the track, and then path, towards the house in distance, the former Needless Inn Farm
- 5 Continue right in front of house. There is an option to take a short cut here via the alternative route as shown on the map, rejoin at Sandy Lane and pick up directions at no 11. Otherwise turn right to pass Needless Inn Barn and walk along this track until you reach Blythe Lane, cross here and walk ahead up the track, at the house go through the wooden gate on the left.
- 6 Follow footpath to the stream, cross footbridge and immediately turn left. The path now meanders through woodland at the side of the stream and, where path turns right, away from the stream, follow it up a slight hill (it can be muddy here) reaching stile on left leading onto an open field.
- 7 Cross the stile and walk across the field to the stile on the opposite side, which you cross to exit onto Mill Dam Lane. Turn left along the lane and, just after the barn building on the right, turn right along the public footpath. Cross stile into field and walk ahead to the stream.
- 8 Turn right, keeping the stream on your left, cross a footbridge and follow the path along the left edge of the field which takes you past the ruins of Burscough Priory and house on your left (which are private, do not enter)
- 9 On leaving the field through side gate, turn left along the road passing Abbey Farm Caravan Park. At the end of road, on the other side of the cottage, is the site of the ancient Priory Cross (replica on original base).
- 10 Go back and walk along the footway on Dark Lane and then turn left into Sandy Lane. After modern house on right, turn right along track to Lathom Lane. Alternatively use the route shown on the map which is along the road past the Priory Cross, over a bridge and right along the footpath by the stream. When the footpath meets the short cut turn right after the last house on the right and follow through to Sandy Lane, turn right and walk ahead across Lathom Lane onto Lady's Walk.
- 11 Follow this wide track past the old gas pumping station, cross Cross Hall Brow and carry on to Ruff Wood which you enter at the rear and on your right. Walk anti-clockwise around the wood on the surfaced path until you reach your way out onto Ruff Lane.
- 12 Turn right and walk along Ruff Lane, cross Knowsley Road and pass Victoria Park on your left. Turn right into St Helens Road and follow the signs for the railway station via the bus station to complete the route.

This leaflet hopes to encourage you to get out and about in Ormskirk and discover the area's wonderful public rights of way network.

The public regularly use all the footpaths in this leaflet without let or hindrance as public rights of way; however, please respect the privacy of landowners, tenants and farmers and the possession of this leaflet is NOT to be taken as a guarantee of any particular right of access.

WHAT TO WEAR AND BRING WITH YOU

- When walking any distance, good quality walking shoes or lightweight waterproof boots are advisable, as is a daypack to carry your maps, food and drink and extra warm clothing or waterproofs. In winter be aware of the wind chill effect in exposed areas and in winter some sections can become muddy and suitable footwear should be worn.
- In summer it would also be sensible to pack a hat, sunscreen and plenty of water.
- Why not take a camera to record your walk, we would be happy to share your experiences and receive your feedback on the route. For information on other walks in the area visit the website on www.visitseftonandwestlancs.co.uk



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VISIT- Visitors in Sustainable Integrated Transport
Funded by the Department for Transport through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund

War Horse Route



Cranes Lane



Ruff Wood

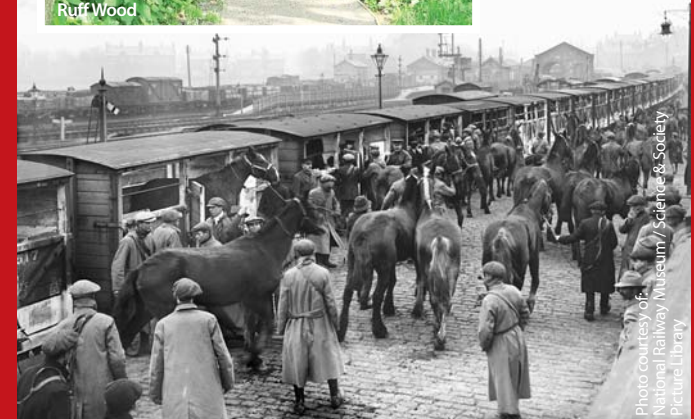










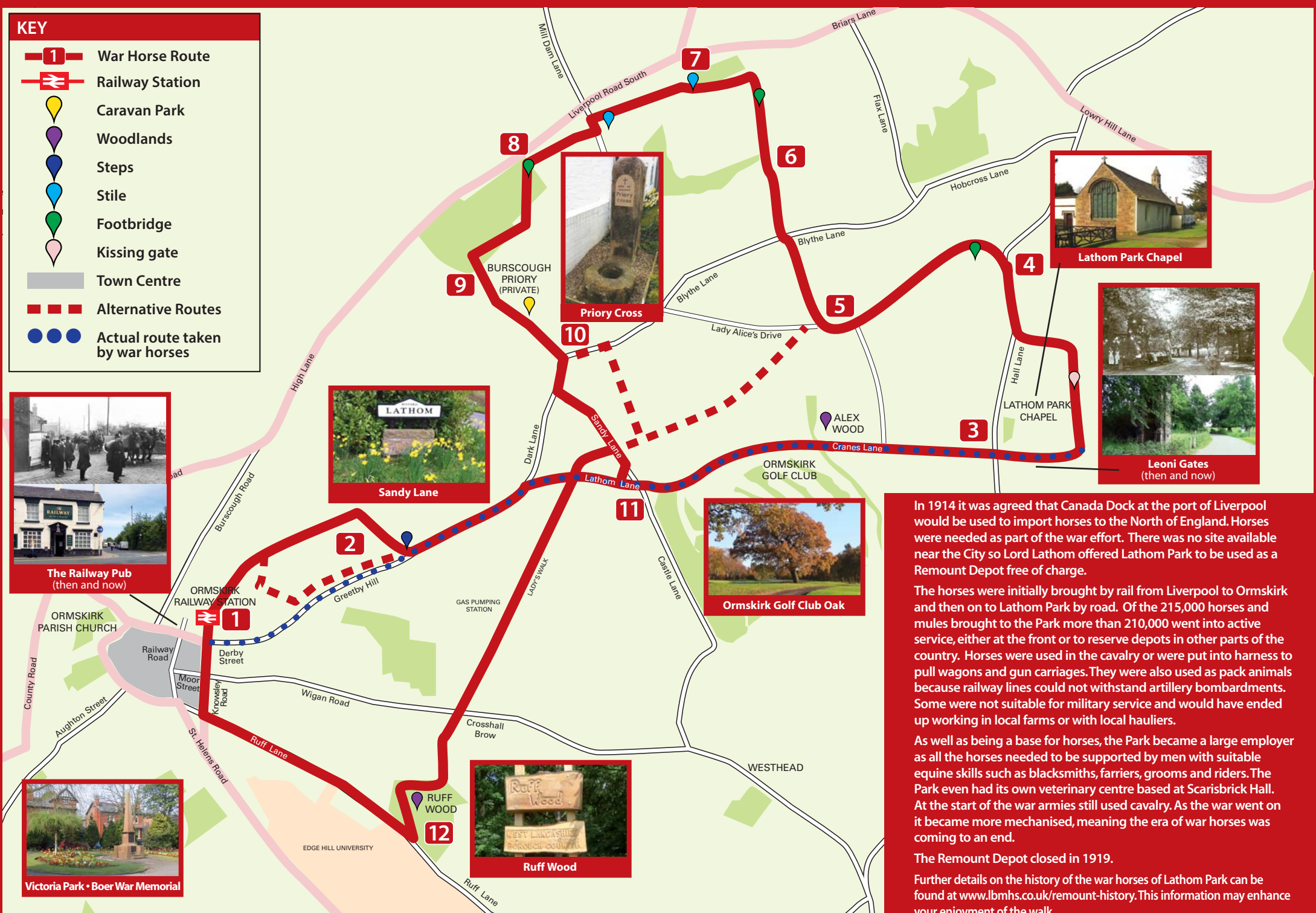
Photo courtesy of National Railway Museum / Science & Society Picture Library

- Moderate
- Town centre, quiet roads and paths
- Distance 8½ miles
- Time about 3½ hours



KEY

-  War Horse Route
-  Railway Station
-  Caravan Park
-  Woodlands
-  Steps
-  Stile
-  Footbridge
-  Kissing gate
-  Town Centre
-  Alternative Routes
-  Actual route taken by war horses



The Railway Pub
(then and now)



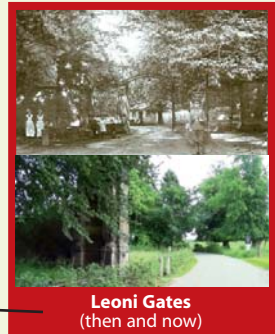
Sandy Lane



Priory Cross



Lathom Park Chapel



Leoni Gates
(then and now)



Ormskirk Golf Club Oak



Ruff Wood



Victoria Park • Boer War Memorial

In 1914 it was agreed that Canada Dock at the port of Liverpool would be used to import horses to the North of England. Horses were needed as part of the war effort. There was no site available near the City so Lord Lathom offered Lathom Park to be used as a Remount Depot free of charge.

The horses were initially brought by rail from Liverpool to Ormskirk and then on to Lathom Park by road. Of the 215,000 horses and mules brought to the Park more than 210,000 went into active service, either at the front or to reserve depots in other parts of the country. Horses were used in the cavalry or were put into harness to pull wagons and gun carriages. They were also used as pack animals because railway lines could not withstand artillery bombardments. Some were not suitable for military service and would have ended up working in local farms or with local hauliers.

As well as being a base for horses, the Park became a large employer as all the horses needed to be supported by men with suitable equine skills such as blacksmiths, farriers, grooms and riders. The Park even had its own veterinary centre based at Scarisbrick Hall. At the start of the war armies still used cavalry. As the war went on it became more mechanised, meaning the era of war horses was coming to an end.

The Remount Depot closed in 1919.

Further details on the history of the war horses of Lathom Park can be found at www.lbmhs.co.uk/remount-history. This information may enhance your enjoyment of the walk.