

Ninety one MARPLE – COMPSTALL (Waterways Stroll.)

This stroll is very easy! It leads you through attractive countryside and a lovely waterscape populated by wild fowl. You can spot signs of the old industry. There are many potential picnic spots, but if you prefer there is choice of a good pub or a lakeside cafe just past half way.

Take the train to Manchester Victoria and from there a tram to Manchester Piccadilly Station. From here catch a train to Marple (NOT Rose Hill). *Option: - turn right as you get off the tram and on Fairfield Street use the lift on the left to the link bridge lounge.*

Alight at Marple Station. Go down the short approach road and turn left towards Marple Bridge. *You will see Brabyn's Park and a pond to your left.* Take the first road left into the park (signed).

Fork right past a single large stone gate post, and as you come to face a gateway, bear right to walk between two stone walls.

Where there is a concrete weir below, fork right to follow the path by the river. *Eventually you are down beside the River Goyt and pass a curved stone weir.* Follow along with a wooden railing to your left. *Here the river has cut into the shale cliffs and meanders in the shade or the trees.*

Continue to a bridge and gatehouse. *See the plaque by the river. This is an attractive early iron bridge (1813) made at the Salford Iron Works of Bateman and Sherratt. It has a 'W' motif.*

Go right to cross the bridge, then follow the path straight ahead (Rollin's Lane). *There are meadows with sheep through the hedge.*

At the main road turn right and walk to The George which is a Robinson's pub with real ales, food and a bowling green behind it. *(Do you remember local pubs with bowling greens? We call them 'car parks' now.)*

Cross the road and continue in the same direction, crossing the bridge over the River Etherow. *Compstall Mills are on the right.*

Pass the mill and its yard and you come on to Market Place.

Turn right along the path roughly opposite No 248 Compstall Road.

Go through the car park towards the right. *Here are the mill ponds that used to power the water wheels (later turbines).*

The cotton spinning mill is in front of you - *it had 2000 employees in the 1860's, including young children too. (They Victorians were quite sensible people). All of Victoria Mill remains with two stories of Albert Mill on the left and one storey of Scotland Mill to the right. Northern Mill is gone.*

Walk past the sailing club then between the mill and the large pond. *The ponds attract a lot of wild fowl, and fishermen. Canada geese and Mallards abound in*

season. There are also moorhens, coots, and I saw a crested grebe, a 'punk' duck and a 'samurai' pair as well (I apologise for using such ornithological terms).

Follow this path ahead past a sluice where another path trails in from the left. *You are now on dyke between the River Etherow and a canal feeding the ponds. There are remains of an old water pipe in the dyke. In the early year the birdsong is lovely.*

Stop at a viewing platform. *Across the river is a stone buttress. This was for a tramway bringing coal down from wood opposite (Ernocroft Wood) to the canal. It was then taken by barge to the mill. This lovely walk is here as a result of 19th century industry!*

Continue and cross a sluice on a walkway, then fork right towards the main dam and weir. Turn right to the bridge to see it. *This diverted much of the river flow into the ponds to provide power for Nathaniel Wright's cotton mill. Remember the 'W' motif?*

Turn back and go along the main track past an old sluice house (still used-peek through tiny window panes).

Follow the track as it curves to the left to take you back along the other side of the canal. *Notice the shale bank. This is typical of where coal measures come to the surface, although I could find no coal in it.*

Continue along this lane and it comes out into the open.

Pass Warren's Lodge and you come into Compstall village along Montague Street. *The terraced stone cottages have lovely floral displays outside. Some are protected by knitting needles or wooden kebab skewers-there is a vandal in the village. Is it a marauding cat?*

[OPTION: **The Andrew Arms.** At the junction with George Street turn right up to the Andrew Arms. *Although artex is definitely not to my taste the pub has small rooms, a dining room and a lovely beer garden through a tunnel at the back. It sells Frederic Robinson real ales and does some very good food. Next to the pub is an 1887 Wesleyan Chapel now a dwelling.*

Outside the pub turn right back down George Street.]

[OPTION: **The Lakeside Cafe.** Go straight ahead along George Street and turn left into the car park entrance just before Market Place. The lakeside cafe is on your left with a terrace outside.

On leaving the cafe go left on George Street.]

Walk along George Street (*passing the sculpted owl on right*) Go through Market Place.

Turn left along the main road (Compstall road). *On the right is an old shop now closed – Noridel Zeus, furniture seller or maker (look carefully).*

Pass the entrance to Compstall Mill then over the bridge.
Cross the road towards The George.

Go left and fork right immediately after a bungalow onto Rollin's Lane again, to go to Brabyns Park. *Open valley again.*

Cross the river bridge and pass the gate house into Brabyns Park.
Go straight ahead then follow this broad track through.

It joins a narrow tarmac road alongside the park.

Follow this through the car park and go along the path opposite.
You emerge at the main road.

Turn right uphill. Just after the lych-gate fork right across the station car park to Marple station.
Enter the station and cross the footbridge to catch a train back to Manchester Piccadilly.

CLASSIFICATION: MEDIUM LENGTH, VERY EASY.

COUNTRYSIDE, RIVER, PUBS, CAFE, FOOD,
LAKES, CANAL, WILDLIFE, & INDUSTRIAL
ARCHAEOLOGY.

RAIL FARE: category one

MAP OS 1:50 000 sheet 109

Philip's Street Atlas Greater
Manchester.