

Ninety two BROAD GREEN – COURT HEY PARK & WILD FLOWERS

Court Hey Park is a short walk from Broad Green Station. It is an attractive piece of well planted parkland, now the location of the National Wildflower Centre. This is a place to visit in spring and summer.

Catch a train from Eccles towards Liverpool Lime Street. Alight at Broad Green Station.

Turn left outside the station along Bowring Park Road.

At the set of traffic lights cross ahead over Thomas Lane. Then immediately cross right over the dual carriageway and turn left to walk along it (*well along the pavement*).

You walk along a tree lined road of semis. *What looks on the map like a tangle of motorway and slip roads turns out to be a pleasant suburb.*

Pass a set of shops and then a footbridge on the left. The name changes to Roby Road. A little farther on Court Hey Park is on the right.

Go through the gates and take the footpath on the left of the avenue. *Already there are drifts of wildflowers to appreciate and a cricket club on the right of the road. People of my age (just over 25, if you wondered) can remember such plants growing amongst crops and festooning roadside verges. Cornfields were once also full of red poppies!*

Next leave the main path as it curves right and walk straight ahead onto the path through the grassland and dotted trees.

As you come to a tall fence there is a children's play area on your right. Cross and just beyond it is a recreated outline of where Court Hey Hall was. *This was the home of Robert Gladstone (WG's brother) and an investor in the Liverpool & Manchester Railway - a plaque gives the history.*

Return to the path by the fence and go out through the hedge. *The fence is protecting a bowling green behind it.*

Follow the complete U turn of the tarmac path and you skirt round what was a garden terrace. *You can see there is much more park beyond this point.*

The path takes you through a circular formal garden. Cross this and go to the National Wildflower Centre building. *On the right is the pleasant and decent value cafe, with its own little garden outside.*

Enter the Wildflower Centre opposite the cafe. *The admission charge is category one (concessions). Open 10.00 – 17.00 seven days a week from April to end of September. Tel: 0151 737 1819 or www.wildflower.org.uk. Have a gentle browse around. Don't expect formal beauty here – wild flowers are, well, wild*

and untidy things. They attract many bees. There are patches of various soil types – clay, sand, stony, limestone and a pond. The buildings are in the old walled garden area of the Hall. The centre specialises in collecting and selling wild flower seeds for reseeding meadows and road islands etc.

The new building is like a bridge – go up the steps and you can survey the site from end to end. (Personally I'd use a bit of weed killer up there!)

Leave the centre past the cafe, going down the steps to the circular garden. Walk right and off the circle at two o'clock. Go under the trees and join the crazy paved path.

Where it meets another path, turn right. *There is an attractive bed of flowers along the wall on your right.*

Go left through the patch of trees opposite and leave through the gate in the rail track style fencing.

Turn right along Thornton Road. It will curve left and then join the broad Chelwood Avenue.

Go right along this to Bowring Park Road at the shops. Turn left at that point. At the traffic lights at Rocky Lane cross right over Bowring Park Road and then left across Thomas Lane.

Walk ahead and Broad Green Station is on the right. Cross to the far platform for a train back to Eccles.

[OPTION: SHOP IN HUYTON. Your ticket allows you to stop off at places on the way back. If you fancy a change, Huyton has a pleasant modern shopping centre with a Wilkinson and a large ASDA at the far end. Leave the platform down the slope and go left. Make your way back to the same platform to come home.]

CATEGORY: MEDIUM VERY EASY.

PARKLAND, WILDFLOWERS, CAFE, SHOP,
LOCAL HISTORY.

RAIL FARE: category three.

MAP OS 1:50 000 sheet 108 Liverpool A-Z
Philip's Street Atlas Liverpool & Merseyside