

OVER THE MARSHES

Distance: 5kms/3 miles (allow about 1hr 15 mins)

Start: Car park at the top of Station Avenue

Summary: This walk takes you into flat fields which until the building of the Manchester Ship Canal in the 1880's were subject to flooding at high tide. It is an area where you will come across much interesting bird life such as larks and oystercatchers. Apart from the encounter with traffic noise when crossing the M56, it is almost another world.

Turn left into Chester Road. Walk past the Railway Inn and Bank House Lane. Turn left down Smithy Lane (He3), opposite St Paul's Church, cross the railway bridge and continue to a stile at the bottom. Cross this and make your way to the footbridge over the M56 motorway. Turn right over the stile at the far side onto He4. Walk alongside the motorway fence until you come to a footbridge. Cross this watching for the waymarks. Cross the field beyond to another footbridge in the left corner.

After crossing this footbridge, make for the left hand of two further footbridges over the field. Cross this and then the next one. Cross the next field, heading slightly to the left of the large slurry tank at the top of the field. Just beyond this tank cross yet another footbridge into Frodsham Parish (the path becomes FR94). Head straight across this field before crossing two stiles into Lordship Lane. At this point we are going to turn left but for the moment you might like to go up the path which zig-zags up the bank in front (Fr103).

At the top you can look over the lagoons used for taking the dredgings from the Ship Canal. The one on the left has been long established but the one on the right is recent and you can probably still see the old field boundaries.

Back down to Lordship Lane (Fr97) go past the stile where you came from Helsby walking in the direction of the fertiliser factory. After about 50m turn left along a gated rough track (Elton Lordship Lane, FR104). The original hedge on the left hand side has been removed and the end of the lane is now marked only by a gate post on the right. At this point the number changes to Fr95. Head towards a stile in the corner of the field next to the gate in front. (A short cut can be made back to the start by taking the footbridge over the M56). Otherwise continue along Fr95. Keep the dyke on your left and you will come to a stile at the far side of the field. Turn left into Lower Rake Lane (He5). After 600m turn right at a T-junction onto He23. After about 250m turn left and after passing over the M56 and the railway you come back to Chester Road, Helsby. Turn right and right again for Station Avenue.