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](http://www.lbmhs.co.uk/remount-history). This information may enhance your enjoyment of the walk.
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 tranquillity of this beautiful historic area before returning to Ormskirk, marked on the map.

Tracks, however, there are some stiles and steps along the way which are marked on the map. Enjoy the tranquillity of this beautiful historic area before returning to Ormskirk, marked on the map.

1. Starting at the railway station, walk through to the end of the car park. At the bottom of the hill, at the footpath crossroads, go straight ahead leaving the farmar routes and continue ahead along the disused railway line and exit via the steps to Dark Lane. Hill. 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 turn right onto 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 2pm & 4pm in the summer.

3. Continue on past the chapel and walk along the track until you reach Hall Lane, cross the road to the foot-way on the other side and walk to your right 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 the right until you join a track. Turn left to walk along the track and then path towards the house in the distance, the former Needlesea 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, rejoins St Helen’s Road and then turn right, following the footpath through the fields on to the track at Mill Dam Lane. At the end of road on the other side of cottages can be muddy here) reaching stile on left leading onto an open field.

6. Follow the footpath to the stream, cross footbridge and immediately turn left. The path now weaves through woodland at the side of the stream and where the path turns left, 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, just after the barn building on the right, continue 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 saves you past the ruins of Burscough Priory and house on you left (which are private do not enter).

9. On leaving the field through the side gate, turn along the road passing Abbey Farm Caravan Park. At the end of road on the other side of cottages is the site of the ancient Priory Cross (replica on original base).

10. Go back and walk along the foot-way 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 the bridge and right along the footpath by the stream. When the footpath meets the short cut, turn right after the last house on the left 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 Hall Brow and carry on to Ruff Lane 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 onto Ruff Lane.

12. Turn right and walk along Ruff Lane, cross Knowesley Road and pass Victoria Park on your left. Turn right into St Helen’s Road and follow the signs for the railway station via the bus station to complete the route.

Congratulations on completing the War Horse Route. Before heading home why not venture into Ormskirk Town Centre.

The War Horse Route

This area can become boggy in wet weather so you can use the alternative route as shown on the map, this also avoids steps.

**What to wear and bring with you...**

- When walking any distance, good quality walking shoes or lightweight waterproof boots are advisable, as is a day-pack to carry your maps, food / 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, sun screen 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 further information about what’s on in West Lancashire and to find out more about other walks in the area visit:

Discover Ormskirk

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

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 guarantee of any particular right of access.

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