

A short history of Marple Memorial Park

Charles Walmsley of Stockport purchased this site as farmland in 1825. He demolished the original farm buildings and built Hollins House, now used as council offices. Close by he built Hollins Mill which was served by a canal link to the Marple locks. The mill dominated Marple's skyline and provided work for local residents for the next 120 years. The mill site is now a supermarket.

In 1859 the estate was bought by the Carver and Hodgkinson families. The Carvers came to live in Hollins House using the canal to bring the family and their belongings right into the mill yard! The Carvers became great benefactors and built the Union Rooms (now the Regent cinema) at the entrance to the park. These rooms provided an alternative to the public houses and included a coffee tavern, reading rooms and chapel.

During the First World War the Carvers and their close relatives the Barlow family were to lose four of their children. When hostilities had ceased they gifted the park in memory of these and the other 137 men of Marple who fell in the Great War 1914-18. It was dedicated as a War Memorial Park on 22nd July 1922 and 10,000 people attended the ceremony.

Following the Second World War the Memorial was enlarged to incorporate the names of the 50 Marple men who fell in that conflict.



General Information

Marple Memorial Park is close to the heart of the small town of Marple.

Travelling from Stockport, it is reached via the A626 Marple Road, then Stockport Road, the main street of the town. Pedestrian access from Stockport Road, Station Road and from the Marple Locks.



Pay & Display Parking is available in the park close to the library and other civic buildings and is accessed from Stockport Road.



Bus routes 358, 359, 363, 383, and 384 from Stockport run close to the park. For up to date public transport information, please call **0161 228 7811**



Most parts of the park are wheelchair accessible (some paths are sloping).



Toilets (not disabled at present) are available during park opening hours. Baby changing facilities are available.



Please clean up after your dog – scoop bins are provided. Dog restrictions exist in some areas of the park.

To check the availability of facilities, please call **0161 217 6111**

Facilities & Features

Today the park is at the heart of the local community. It provides a wide range of outdoor leisure facilities for all ages, but is also an oasis of calm for those who wish to relax. The park has been awarded the prestigious Green Flag Award for several years demonstrating that it reaches the high standards required by the Civic Trust.

A wide variety of shrubs and trees have been used to stock the park over the years, providing horticultural interest throughout the seasons. Superb floral bedding displays are planted in beds between Hollins House and the War Memorial itself, providing a dazzling display during the summer months.

A 'Wildlife Area' extends along the edge of the park next to its boundary with the canal. In this area mowing and tidying has been reduced, so that native wildflowers, insects and small mammals are able to thrive in the park.

The park is an excellent starting point for local walks or for exploring local history. On a clear day there are stunning views of the Peak District hills.



Attractions at the park include:

- Skatepark
- Under 7's Play Area
- Junior Play Area
- Bowling Green
- Bowling pavilion
- Basketball area
- Football kick-around area
- Teen shelter

Events take place in the park throughout the year. Past events include Marple Carnival, Marple Locks Festival and the annual Remembrance Day Ceremony.

Marple Memorial Park - History, Heritage & Horticulture

Heritage features

The park has become home to several heritage features which represent important aspects of local history.



- The Sun Dial - originally located at Marple Hall, home to the Bradshaw family during the 1600's. The family's famous son Judge John Bradshaw, in his role as Lord President of the High Court of Justice, condemned King Charles I to death in 1649.

- The Stocks - recently refurbished, the stocks were moved into the park in 1959 from their previous location near the Ring o' Bells Inn on Church Lane.

- The 'Headstone' or 'Shuttlestone' - a decoration that was mounted on the front façade of the Bottoms Cotton Mill which was built by Samuel Oldknow in 1790. The mill burned down in 1892.

- Commemorative Trees - including an oak tree which was planted in 1953 to commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The Friends of Marple Memorial Park commissioned an ornamental bench around the tree in 2006.



The Marple Locks

The Locks were built to link the upper and lower sections of the Peak Forest canal which were completed in 1800. Financial problems meant the locks could not be completed until 1804. During the intervening years a tramway transferred goods between the upper and lower sections. Samuel Oldknow (1756-1828) was chairman of the committee which built the Peak Forest Canal.

- This flight of canal locks consists of 16 separate locks which raise the water level in the canal a total of 209 feet (62.7m) over a distance of 1 mile.
- Each lock has a set of double gates at the bottom and a single gate at the top and raises the water level by 13 feet (3.9m).
- These are some of the deepest locks in the country and they use 44,000 gallons of water to lift a boat through one lock.



Top Lock House



Marple Memorial Park

Tow Path Walks

Northward

Turn left from the park onto the towpath if you wish to walk northwards towards Ashton. This will take you down the flight of locks and across the Marple Aqueduct which was built in 1800 to carry the canal across the River Goyt.

Southward

Turn right onto the towpath if you wish to walk southwards towards Whaley Bridge or Macclesfield. Follow the flight of locks up to Top Lock and either continue out into the rolling countryside of Derbyshire, or follow instead the towpath of the Macclesfield Canal which has its start at this Top Lock junction with the Peak Forest Canal.



View from Lock 15
Locktail Bridge



Samuel Oldknow