Waterton Trail

FOUR EASY TO FOLLOW WALKS AROUND THE HERONRY

Public Rights of Way Section
A. WATERTON COUNTRYSIDE DISCOVERY CENTRE
This Centre was completed in 1995. Meet the ghost of Charles Waterton in the exhibitions, learn more about his conservation ideas and listen to the Tree Spirit who tells you the tales of the wood. Exhibition Free. Opening times vary. Telephone 01924 303390.

B. ANGLERS COUNTRY PARK
In 1974 this farmed landscape was dramatically changed when it became one of the deepest open cast mines in Europe. The Country Park was created after restoration, and is now a haven for wildlife, just like Waterton Hall Park was over 150 years ago.

C. THE POL AND NATURE RESERVE
Pol is an old English word for pond. The shallow water areas attract water birds like herons, also dragonflies and amphibians. Little ringed plovers and redshanks, which are unusual in this part of Yorkshire, have nested here.

D. SANTINGLEY GRANGE
Dating back to the Doomsday Book, this was once the site of a 340 acre monastic grange or farm, managed by Nostell Priory.

E. THE WALL
The stone wall stretches over 3 miles around the Waterton Hall Estate. Completed in 1824 at a cost of £9,000 to keep poachers out and wildlife in, Waterton said he funded it from "the wine I do not drink." Today it would cost £21 million pounds to build - that's a lot of wine!

F. STUBBS WOOD
You are now treading where Waterton once walked in perhaps the most favourite part of his estate. In fact, he is buried not far from this path. The lake once extended to this part of the wood, but it is now silted and a jungle of willow trees. However, in 1865 the black boat carrying his coffin floated to this quiet corner, followed, it is said, by a flock of songbirds.

G. WATERTON'S FOOTSTEPS
Waterton sometimes perched on a large oak tree near the lakeside in Stubbs Wood to watch the wild birds and read Latin text in daylight. On moonlit nights he listened to nightjars and watched foxes play like children beneath him. To encourage more biodiversity, hollow tree trunks and branches were left for nesting birds like barn owls.

H. THE LAKE AND PARK
Once just a moat around the house, the lake was enlarged by Waterton's father in 1790. In winter the ice-oved lake was covered by ducks whose "feathers concealed the ice," as this lake was a safe haven for them. Over a 30 year period Waterton recorded 119 species of bird in the park, including rarities like penelope, hobby, merlin and corncrake. Sadly, Waterton's son, Edmund, held shooting parties in the grounds to help pay off his debts and many birds must have been destroyed.

I. WATERTON PARK HOTEL
Formerly Watton Hall, built in 1767, on the site of a manorial house where the Waterton family had lived for 14 generations since 1433. Sadly, Waterton's son sold it to an old adversary of his father's, Edward "Soapy" Simpson in 1877, owner of a chemical and soap works. You can imagine Waterton looking out, scanning the lake for birds with his telescope.

J. THE GROTTO
People danced to music in a small pillared temple surrounded by trees in this natural hollow. Workers from the 'stuffy' cotton mills were invited as well as school children and asylum inmates. Unlike most other 'Country Gentlemen', Waterton allowed local people onto his estate.

K. SANDMARTIN BANK AND HOLLY
Waterton had a wall specially built around this hollow with nesting holes for sandmartins. Notice the holly by the boundary wall, providing food and shelter and an impregnable retreat where the burnings, blackbird and linnet take their natural repose. It was Waterton's favourite species of tree.

L. SIKE LANE
You're now walking adjacent to an old track known as Sike Lane, which in 1800 led to Waterton's nearest Catholic neighbours at Crofton Old Hall, The path was legally diverted in 1818, before the wall was built. Almost 200 years later it has been reinstated for us all to use.

M. THE BARKLEY CANAL
Opened in 1799 to carry coal from Barkley and grain from Wakefield, Waterton refused to allow the canal to go through the Park. Instead, large cuttings had to be hewn out of the rock on the west of the estate. Subsidence and the railway caused it to decline. It is now a Site of Scientific Interest and home to frogs, waterplants and several species of dragonfly.

N. HAW PARK WOOD
Once part of the ancient Don Forest. It was formerly owned by the Forestry Commission, who planted larch and pine for film props between 1940 and 1960. The Countryside Service now manages the woods, and is replacing some conifers with broadleaved species to attract more wildlife.

O. FOX WELL
A group of oak trees where foxes supposedly played. Up until the 1930's this well provided water for the pump house cottages near the reservoirs.

P. THE HERBONY
The heron was one of Waterton's favourite birds and he encouraged this "persecuted wader" to shelter in the Park where over 40 pairs breed annually. Just as in Waterton's time, this area is restricted to wildlife only.

Q. WINTERSETT AND COLD HENDEDLE RESERVOIRS
Built in 1854 and 1874 to feed the Barkley Canal, they became a beauty spot for Victorian travelling by train to Rhyl. Together with their neighbouring lakes at Anglers and Watton, they are very important for local birds and are designated Sites of Scientific Interest.
For Waterton Trail - 5 miles
1. From the Centre follow track towards the lake. Fork left following track to first side on left. Go over stile. After second stile turn right. Walk straight ahead to side in corner of the field.

For woodland walk - 3 miles
1a. From Centre turn right out of car park entrance. Follow lane passing gate towards wood. At Haw Park Wood go through stile following track to wall. Keep on track with wall on right. Continue following wall out of wood until reaching canal. At canal turn left follow directions 8 and 9.

For Access Trail around the lake - 2 miles
1b. From Centre follow track towards lake, keep right around lake. At wooden fence bear right and back to Centre.

2. Cross bridge and stile and walk diagonally across field to stile in far corner. Cross stile turning immediately left keeping wall on left; golf course on right. Turn right into the woodland following a parallel track with golf course on right. You are now in the old Estate Grounds of Walton Hall. At the lake follow track around to the right.

3. Come out of wood to follow path across golf course keeping Waterton Park Hotel on left. After 200 metres go up steps on right. Keep forward to marker post turning left back onto track. Walk forward turning left off main track towards Brockwood Court.

4. At metal gate turn right then immediately left. At junction of paths turn left along track going past the side of the ’Grotto’ (on right). After 30 metres turn left to the right of a holly bush then uphill towards gap in the wall.

5. Go through gap in wall. Turn left towards the road. At road turn right. Follow the tree line keeping to the golf course side of fence. At the wall turn right. After 200 metres go through gap in wall. Walk forwards to path turn left alongside disused canal to the bridge. (Look to see rope markings in the stone.)

6. Prior to next bridge turn right up slope to small woodland. At road turn left over bridge follow track to the right keeping wall to the left.

For full route of 5 miles, miss 7 and go to 8. For shorter route of 4 miles, go to 7

7. Fork left, follow the track and wall to the left into Haw Park Wood. Keep to main track and continue ahead to field gate out of wood. Leave wood. Follow track up hill to the road, keeping left back to the car park.

8. Continue straight ahead along track until reaching a fence. Bear right, follow wood edge to canal, cross over bridge and immediately turn left; follow canal to next bridge.

9. Turn left over bridge then immediately right down steps. Follow the canal. Continue forward ignoring bridge on right. At fork keep to right hand track. Keep right until you come to a field gate out of wood. Leave wood. Follow track up hill to road, keeping left back to car park.

Key
- = Waterton Trail
--- = Shorter Route
•••• = Woodlands Walk
--- = Access Trail
⊙ = Hide
P = Parking
The Waterton Collection

Waterton's travels introduced him to the exotic wildlife which he wanted to capture and bring back to Walton Hall. He became an expert taxidermist and many of his specimens can now be seen in Wakefield Museum.

Wakefield Museum
Wood Street, Wakefield.
Telephone 01924 301356
Admission Free
Opening Times
Monday - Saturday 10.30am - 4.30pm
Sunday 2.00pm - 4.30pm

Hedgehogs
Waterton paid 6 old pence (equivalent today of about £5.00) for every live hedgehog brought to him. In the late afternoon he would watch groups of around 20 of them feeding in the Park grounds.

The first little owls
Britain's first little owls were introduced from Italy in 1842 by Waterton.
Sadly, they only survived a few years and did not breed.

The world's first nest box
Waterton created the world's first artificial nest boxes for wild birds, including owls, sandmartins and starlings, in the 1830's. A first in the world for Wakefield.
The Waterton Trail

There well waymarked trails will take you to where Charles Waterton lived, walked and watched nature. There are four routes which follow public rights of way. They are waymarked as follows:

**Red**
- Waterton Trail - 5 miles
  - Follow notes 1-6, B & 9.

**Red**
- Shorter Waterton Trail - 4 miles
  - Follow notes 1-7.

**Yellow**
- Access Route - 2 miles
  - Suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs.
  - Follow note 1b.

**Green**
- Woodland Walk - 3 miles
  - Follow notes 1a, 8 & 9.

*Notes A - Q refer to sites of wildlife or historical value.*

Walking in the Countryside

Small sections of these walks cross farmland. Don't forget to wear suitable footwear in winter. The farmers are aware of the rights of way which cross their land and welcome careful walkers. In Haw Park Wood, there is open access, although it is better to keep to the woodland rides. When crossing the golf course, please beware of the golfers.

**Dogs**
- Always keep your dog on a lead or under close control.
- Even the best behaved pet can worry livestock.

Public Rights of Way Section

The Public Rights of Way Section is responsible for the maintenance and development of Wakefield District's 350 mile network of public rights of way and permissive paths.

More information can be found on the website [www.wakefield.gov.uk](http://www.wakefield.gov.uk) or alternatively telephone 01924 606421.

If you would like a copy of this leaflet in large print, Urdu or Braille, please contact the Public Rights of Way Section.

The information in this leaflet is as accurate as possible, but we welcome any comments or further information for future reference. Printed March 2005.

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How to get there

**By Car**
- There is a large car park at the Waterton Country Side Discovery Centre. From Wakefield City Centre follow signs for A638 to Doncaster. After 2½ miles turn right, signposted to Crofton. Opposite Crofton Arms public house, follow tourist signs to Wintersett village. After the Anglers Retreat public house, turn right. The Centre is ½ mile on the right.

**By Bus**
- Service 195/196/197 from Wakefield Bus Station will take you to Wintersett. Ring Metro Enquiry Bureau on Leeds 0113 245 7676.

**Countryside & Conservation Service**

The Waterton Country Side Discovery Centre
Anglers Country Park
Haw Park Lane, Wintersett
Wakefield WF4 2EB
Telephone: 01924 303980
Email: countryside_admin@wakefield.gov.uk

Please ring for opening times

**Squires Tea Room**

Opening times vary with the season
Tel: 01924 860282

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Public Rights of Way Section
P.O. Box 92, Room 66
Newton Bar, Wakefield, WF1 1XS