



Opencast Workings

J

K

5

4

3

2

L

I

6

H

E

D

B

ANGLERS  
COUNTRY PARK

Winterset

7

M

G

F

8

P

C

A

I

Ia

Ib

P

N

9

O

Q

WINTERSETT  
RESERVOIR

Q

COLD HIENDLEY  
RESERVOIR

Cold Hiendley  
Base Park

## FOUR EASY TO FOLLOW WALKS FROM THE WATERTON COUNTRYSIDE DISCOVERY CENTRE

Start Point: Waterton Countryside Discovery Centre

Grid Reference: 4375 4154

For more information please contact Public Rights of Way on 01924 306049 or the Wakefield Countryside and Conservation Service on 01924 303980

These 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 and are waymarked as follows:

### **Red**

Waterton Trail – 5 miles  
(Shorter route – 4 miles)

### **Yellow**

Access route – 2 miles  
(Suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs)

### **Green**

Woodland Walk – 3 miles

### **By Car**

There is a large car park at the Waterton Countryside Discovery Centre. From Wakefield City Centre follow signs A638 to Doncaster. After 2½ miles turn right, signposted Crofton (opposite Crofton Arms public house). Follow tourist signs to Winterset 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 Winterset. Ring Metroline 0113 245 7676.

### **Can I Take My Dog?**

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

### **Walk Information**

#### **Waterton Trail – 5 miles**

##### **(1)**

From the Centre follow track towards the lake. Fork left following track to first stile on left. Go over stiles, after second stile turn right. Walk straight ahead to stile on corner of field.

#### **Woodland Walk – 3 miles**

From Centre turn right out of car park entrance. Follow lane passing gate towards 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 following directions 8 & 9.

#### **Access Trail around the lake – 2 miles**

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 wall.

**(5)**

Go through gap in wall. Turn left towards 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 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.

## Points of Interest

### **(A) Waterton Countryside Discovery Centre**

This Centre was completed in 1995. Meet the ghost of Charles Waterton in the exhibition, 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 303980.**

### **(B) Anglers Country Park**

In 1974 this farmed landscape was dramatically changed when it became one of the deepest opencast mines in Europe, The Country Park was created after restoration, and is now a haven for wildlife, just like Walton 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 Domesday 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 Walton Hall Estate. Completed in 1824 at a cost of £9000 to keep poachers out and wildlife in, Waterton said he funded it from "the wine I do not drink". Today it would cost £2½ million 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 kittens beneath him. To encourage more birdlife, 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 iced-over 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 peregrine, hobby, merlins and cormorants. 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 Walton Hall, built in 1767, on the site of a manorial house where the Waterton family had lived for 14 generations since 1453. Sadly, Waterton's son sold it to an old adversary of his father, Edward "Soapy" Simpson in 1877, owner of a chemical soap works. You can imagine Waterton looking out, scanning the lake for birdlife 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) Sand Martin Bank and Holly**

Waterton had a wall specially built around this hollow with nesting holes for sand martins. Notice the holly by the boundary wall, providing food and shelter and 'an impenetrable retreat where the buntings, blackbirds and linnets 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 Barnsley Canal**

Opened in 1799 to carry coal from Barnsley 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 to the west of the estate. Subsidence and the railway era caused its decline. It is now a Site of Scientific Interest and home to frogs, water plants 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 pit props between 1940 and 1960. The Countryside and Conservation Service now manages the wood, 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 1950's this well provided water for the pump house cottages, near the reservoirs.

#### **(P) The Heronry**

The heron was one of Waterton's favourite birds and he encouraged this 'persecuted wader' to shelter in the Park where over 40 pairs bred annually. You can visit the restored Watch Tower by taking a short detour along the path to your left.

#### **(Q) Winterset and Cold Hiendley Reservoirs**

Built in 1854 and 1874 to feed the Barnsley Canal, they became a beauty spot for Victorians travelling by train to Ryhill. Together with their neighbouring lakes at Anglers and Walton, they are very important for local birds and are designated Sites of Scientific Interest.