

**Audi**  **Tours**

# **Waterton Podcast Trail**



[www.wakefield.gov.uk/podcasts](http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/podcasts)

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# Waterton Podcast Trail



## Join us on a guided tour around one of the finest and historically most important areas in the district.

Your host Dave Mee and his walking companion Diane provide an entertaining accompaniment to your trip, where you'll hear how David Attenborough's hero Charles Waterton established the world's first ever nature reserve here.

As you walk you'll follow Podcast markers to keep you on track on your discovery trail of wildlife, bare-foot tree climbing, poachers, anaesthetics and cobblers!

You can find the podcast series on iTunes:



<http://bit.ly/anglerspodcast>

or individual podcasts at

<http://wakefield.gov.uk/podcasts>

## Waterton Podcast Trail - 4 miles

- 1 The country park's lake in front of you was created in the early 1980s as a result of open cast coal mining. The mine closed in 1982 and restoration works were completed by 1984. The lake is polythene lined and the path around is 2 miles in length. Today it is a very important inland site for over wintering wildfowl.
- 2 If you look to the horizon on the left you can see the edge of Haw Park Wood and to the front down the slope, Walton

golf course, both once owned by the Waterton family of Walton Hall and both once part of what is believed to be the world's first nature reserve.

- 3 The wall we can see in front was built by Charles Waterton, the creator of the world's first nature reserve, as a barrier to poachers and protection for animals on his estate. Built of stone, it is 3 miles long, on average 9 foot high and cost £9,000 (around £3 million today).
- 4 In Charles Waterton's day the whole area around this point would have been part of the lake. Across the stream, now on private property, sits the grave of Charles Waterton in a spot he chose himself. He died aged 82 and was buried on his 83rd birthday. His funeral procession crossed the lake on black barges.
- 5 Looking forward you'll see one of the best views in the district of Wakefield. Walton Hall, now known as the Waterton Park Hotel, sits majestically on an island, the only access being the iron bridge to the right of the island. This bridge pre-dates the iron bridge in Shropshire by 20 years.
- 6 We can now see clearly the Iron Bridge and Walton Hall. Looking at the front doors of the hall we can see two brass door knockers, only one working. The faces on the door knockers give us a clue as to which one works. One face smiling, the other frowning. Charles was once asked which one worked, his reply was, if I was to hit you on the head would you be smiling? You can break up this walk with refreshments by walking around

to the left of the hall, where tea, coffee or alcoholic drinks are served.

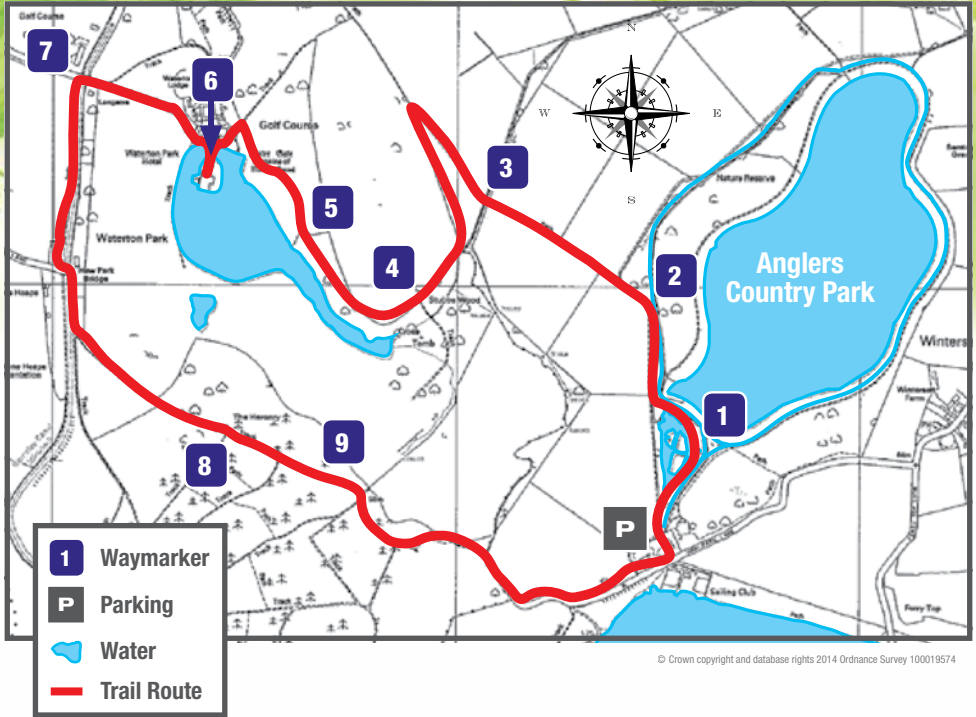
- 7 We have just walked over the Barnsley Canal, the golf club house to our right and to our left the canal towpath, now part of the national Trans Pennine Trail. Charles Waterton refused permission for the canal to go through his estate. It was constructed to carry coal from Barnsley and grain and soap from Wakefield. The canal was abandoned in the 1950s.
- 8 If we look at this repaired section of the wall we can see at its base a terracotta pipe, this was put in by the council's Countryside section when the wall was re-built, to allow badgers from their sett one side of the wall to access their latrine on the other. If you look at the older sections of the wall you will notice changes in build quality and style. Charles had the wall built in stages. He said he paid for its construction by the wine he did not drink.
- 9 We are looking at one of possibly 5 watch towers dotted around the estate. Today we call them hides and they could be the first of their kind in the world. This is the only one left and, with the help of the Rotary Club of Wakefield, is now restored. Charles Waterton had them constructed to enable him to view wildlife on his estate. This one sits in the middle of his heronry which once supported 40 pairs of breeding Herons, sadly gone today.

## Do's and Don'ts:

Don't forget to wear suitable footwear and clothing, it's advisable to wear insect repellent during the summer and autumn months. The farmers and other land owners are aware of rights of way that cross their land and welcome careful walkers. Please take your litter home with you.

Take only photos and memories, leave only footprints.





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**Start point:** Waterton Discovery Centre, Anglers Country Park.

**Grid Reference:** 4375 4154

The waymarked trail will take you to where Charles Waterton lived, walked and watched nature.

**How to get there by car:** There is a large car park at Anglers Country Park. 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.

**How to get there by bus:** Service 194/195/196 from Wakefield Bus Station will take you to Winterset. Ring Metroline 0113 245 7676 or visit [www.wymetro.com](http://www.wymetro.com)

**Can I take my dog?** Please keep your dog under control at all times to avoid conflict with wildlife or livestock. Dogs are not allowed onto the island at Waterton Park Hotel.

### Waterton Countryside Discovery Centre

**Opening times:**

1 April - 31 October 11am - 4pm

1 November - 31 March 10.30am - 3.30pm

Closed Monday (except Bank Holidays)

**For more information please contact:**

Anglers Country Park, Haw Park Lane, Winterset WF4 2EB

Tel: 01924 303980

Web: [www.wakefield.gov.uk](http://www.wakefield.gov.uk)