

# Walks Around Walton

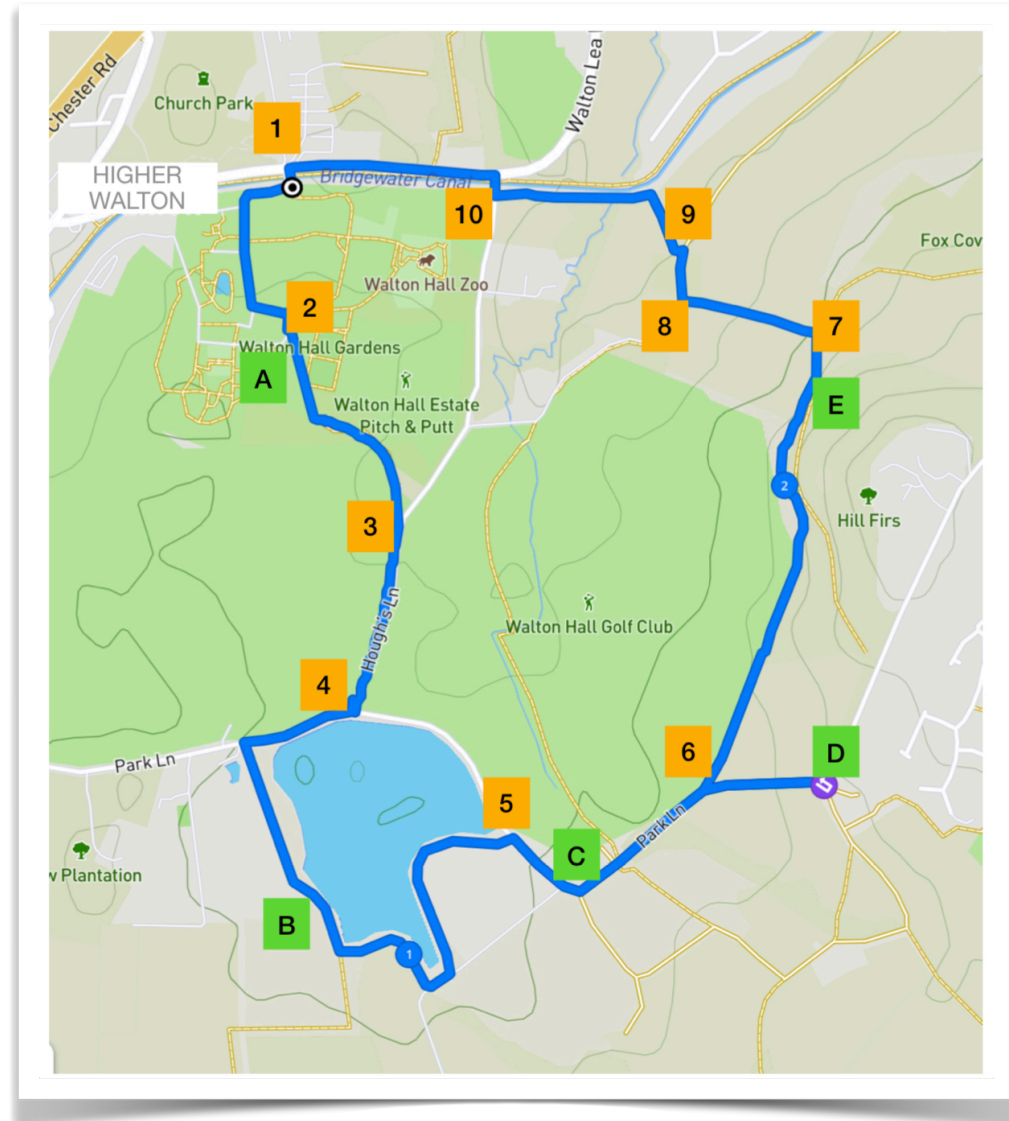
## WALK 2: Walton Gardens to Hill Cliffe

### Route description

A 2.75 mile walk through Walton Gardens, around the reservoir and on to Hill Cliffe. The walk starts and ends at the carpark for Walton Gardens. The walk is on a mixture of tarmac paths and lanes and un-made bridleways. Note that the path around the reservoir can be very muddy in the winter months.

### Route markers

1. Leave the car park and enter Walton Gardens via the pedestrian bridge over the canal. Turn immediately right, past the toilets on the left and then bear left up towards Walton Hall.
2. At the top of the drive, turn left, past the front entrance to the Hall and then immediately right around the side of the Hall. At this point, head straight up across the terraced lawn towards the trees behind the bowling green. Go through the pinch-gap in the top left corner of the lawns and follow the path (golf course on your right) until you reach the lane.
3. At the lane (Hough Lane), turn right and follow up hill to the reservoir.
4. Turn right along Park Lane and then up the steps on the left and onto the path around the reservoir. Follow this path all the way round the reservoir and back onto Park Lane.
5. Turn right along Park Lane which bends to the left around Daintith Farm, into a dip and then uphill. Continue until you reach a T junction with a sandstone pillar at the centre. This is Point of Interest D.
6. From the sandstone pillar re-trace your steps back down for 150m and take the path on the right. This path curves around Hill Cliffe with woodland on the right and the golf course on the left.
7. Beyond the woodland, take the path to the left down hill between open fields.
8. At the end of the path turn right through Hill Foot Farm cobbled courtyard
9. Turn immediately left once through the courtyard and follow the path down towards the Bridgewater Canal. Follow the canal-side path to the left alongside the line of tall poplar trees.
10. Rejoin Hough Lane and cross the canal bridge and then turn left along Walton Lea Road and back to the carpark.



# Points of Interest

## A. Walton Hall & Gardens

Walton Hall was built in the mid 1830s by the Greenall family and later extended in the 1870s when larger stables, greenhouses and extensions to the Hall were added. By the early 1900s it had become a model farming estate. The gardens around the hall were developed by Lady Greenall and managed by a team of 25 gardeners. The gardens were planted with rare and exotic trees and plants. Following the death of Lord Greenall in 1938, the estate was put up for sale and bought by Warrington Borough Council in 1941 for £19,000 and the grounds were opened to the public in 1945. Parts of the original hall had to be demolished. The green houses stood empty and were left to decay until a Heritage Lottery Grant in 2017 allowed for their reconstruction.

## B. Appleton Reservoir

The walk around perimeter of the reservoir has a number of access points to the edge of the water. The reservoir is a haven for bird life with over 40 species having been recorded. Up until the mid 1800's, water supply in Warrington was provided from wells and streams. By the 1840s, this water was becoming polluted and alternatives had to be found. In 1846, Warrington Waterworks Company started work on bringing piped water to the town and this involved the construction of this 540 acre reservoir, holding 50 million gallons of water. In the early 1900s the reservoir was extended to meet growing demand. Today, the source of Warrington's domestic water is from reservoirs in Wales and the Lake District.

## C. Daintith Farm & Barn

Few historic farm buildings still remain in this area and this one dates back to the 17th century and has a Grade II listing. The farm is situated on the bend on Park Lane just beyond the reservoir. The farm and adjacent barn are private residences. The farm has been modified over the years and is constructed in sandstone with a timber framed gable and brick extensions. The sandstone mullioned windows are visible from the road. Attached to the farmhouse is a former dairy wing constructed on a stone plinth.

## D. Sandstone Pillar

There are a number of legends relating to the sandstone pillar situated on the grass triangle at the junction of Park Lane and Firs Lane. One relates to it being the burial side of Cromwell's horse which was shot from beneath him and was then buried on the grass triangle where the pillar now stands. There is evidence for Civil War battles having been fought in this area as unfired civil war musket balls have been found in adjacent fields. Another version is that it was a farmer's horse that was shot during one of the battles and buried here. No one knows for sure the true purpose of the pillar, although it has been said that on a bright moon-lit nights the ghost of a white horse still haunts this spot!

## E. Hill Cliffe

On a clear day it is worth pausing to take in the view from Hill Cliffe as extends across most of Lancashire. The panorama to the north includes the whole of Warrington, with the Parish Church spire clearly visible. Parbold Hill is visible to the north and over to the west, Winter Hill with its radio and TV can be seen.