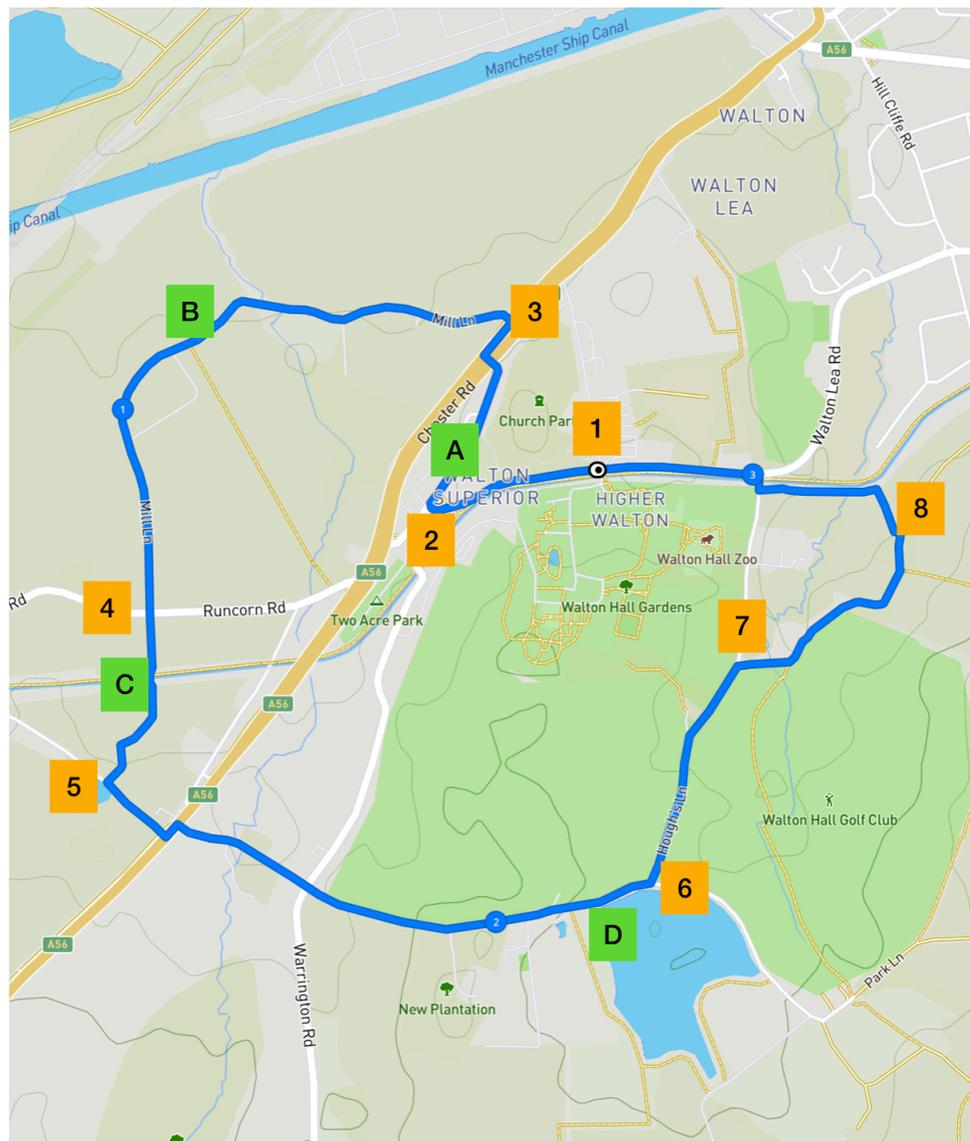


# Walks Around Walton

## WALK 1: Country lanes around the Parish



### Route description

*This walk is just over 3 miles and covers most of Higher Walton. The route is mostly along accessible footpaths and country lanes and includes a section of canal tow path. The walk starts and finishes at the carpark at Walton gardens.*

### Route markers

1. Leave the car park and turn right along Walton Lea Road to the point where it joins with Old Chester Road, opposite the Walton Arms pub.
2. Turn right along Old Chester Road, through the old village of Higher Walton
3. Cross the main Chester Road at the safe crossing point marked for pedestrians. Having crossed, turn right and then left along Mill Lane. Continue along Mill Lane, past the old mill to the point where the lane joins Runcorn Road
4. Cross Runcorn Road and follow the track immediately opposite. This narrow track way crosses the Bridgewater Canal at Thomason's Bridge. Continue past three cottages on the right, to the junction with Holly Hedge Lane
5. At Holly Hedge Lane, turn left and then cross the main Chester Road outside the gate to Bennett's Farm. Continue along Park Lane alongside the ford, cross over Warrington Road and continue up Park Lane to the reservoir.
6. Turn left down Hough's Lane, passing the back entrance to Walton Gardens on the left and the golf course crossing points to the left and right.
7. Turn right along the tarmac track that provides access to Hillfoot Farm (now barn conversions) Cross through the cobbled courtyard.
8. 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. 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. The old village of Higher Walton

The present village is largely the creation of the Greenall family, owners of the Walton Estate. The village is now bypassed by the main Chester Road but was once on the main turnpike route between Warrington and Frodsham. Walking through the village you will see the rows of terraced cottages built by the Greenalls in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Some of the buildings show evidence of past uses. Look out for the old post office and the wheelwright's work shop. The original plan had been to build more houses for estate workers but the outbreak of WWI halted this. Further through the village you will see St John's Church which was also built by the Greenall family. The church was consecrated in 1885 and cost £17,500 to build. At today's prices this is around £2.5 million. If time permits, visit the small pox grave at the rear of this church. This is the resting place of 35 people who died during the Smallpox epidemic in 1892. High Walton was designated a conservation area in 1977 due to the unique period architecture.

## B. The old mill at Acton Grange

This is now a private residence. The mill is in what was formerly Acton Grange, a small hamlet of 3 cottages, the mill and what was Grange Green Farm, which is now an area of private residences. Early maps show the existence of the mill in the 1700s. The mill pond that once existed adjacent to the mill is a now a field around which the stream flows. Stand still a moment and you can hear the rush of water at the rear of the old mill where there is a change in the gradient of the steam channel. The walk passes through the former cobbled courtyard at the front of the mill and next to one of the buildings you can see the remains of broken mill stones.

## C. Thomason's Bridge

This canal bridge is one of five in the parish of Walton that cross the Bridgewater Canal and all of them are Grade II listed. This is the only bridge that has no vehicle access as it was primarily intended for farm access. From here you can look down onto the canal and note how a raised bank was created to provide a route for the canal above lower ground. Beyond you can see the spire of the St John's Church in Higher Walton. Walk down to the Canal town path and you can see the rope marks etched into the sides of the bridge. These deep grooves were caused by many years of horse drawn canal boat traffic. Finally, on the top of the bridge wall you can pick out an inscription, carved into the sandstone blocks which reads 'Acton Grange Parish'. Prior to 1936, Acton Grange was a separate civil parish.

## D. Appleton Reservoir

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 bring 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. There is a lovely walk around the perimeter of the reservoir with a number of access points to the edge of the water. The reservoir is now a haven for bird life. The walk along Park Lane follows the wall of the dam and water runoff culverts can be seen on both sides.