

## WALTON - A BRIEF HISTORY

**In the beginning...** The name "Walton" is fairly common in England -there are several villages and districts with the same name. One of the origins of the name is as a reference to a "village of the Welsh" or serfs. The Welsh being the native Britons living in what we now know as England. When the Romans left and the Romano-Britons had to fend for themselves, the Angles, Saxons and Jutes arrived from the area now known as Germany and the Netherlands to occupy large areas of the former Roman province. A settlement was already in existence when the Saxons arrived in the 7th century. The name has changed over the centuries from Weala-tun in Saxon days, through Waleton in the Domesday Book, Waton later in Norman times, settling on Walton in the Middle Ages.

**Around 620 AD**, Eadwine (or Edwin), a warlord of Norse descent invaded Deira (an area now roughly equivalent to West Yorkshire). Eadwine invaded the kingdom of Elmet (the name is still in use in places such as Sherburn-in-Elmet), and occupied the small settlement or village of Weala-tun (Walton). The Norsemen or Vikings played a significant part in the history of Yorkshire, and much of this heritage is to be seen at York.

**More on place names:** Many local place-names have interesting derivations: Haw Park Woods and Hare Park both owe their origin to the word "hay", which means a hunting ground or pale park. A "pale" is a pointed stake or fence post, it also described an enclosed area. Haw Park was part of the Walton Hall estate, but when Squire Charles Waterton built the wall around Walton Park, Haw Park remained outside. The word "hay" appears on tombstones in St. Helen's Church, Sandal Magna, the parish church for Walton. However, the word 'hay', in this context, has long been corrupted to Haw and Hare. Bergh or Berg, as in the old quarry, is probably connected with the early Lords of Walton, the de Burghs.

Walton (together with Cawthorne) remained in the possession of the De Burghs for seven generations. It then passed with the coheiress of Sir John de Burgh to Sir William Assenhull, whose heiress (Constance) conveyed it to John Waterton in **1435** when they married. Thus Charles Waterton's connection with Walton is long established. The Berg Quarry was the source of the stone used to build Walton Hall and the wall. The old quarry is to the west of Overtown Grange Farm.

**In 1333**, Thomas de Burgh received a licence to fortify his mansion at Walton, and to surround it with a stone wall built with mortar and to crenellate it. A crenel or crenelle is an indentation or gap in the parapet of a castle, wall or tower, from where the defenders could fire arrows or throw spears, etc., at unwelcome visitors. Thomas died shortly after receiving this licence, and before the work had proceeded very far.

**Circa 1411:** John de Waterton, Lord of the Manor of Corringham, married Katherine de Burgh, she was aunt to Constance Assenhull and the half-sister of Joan de Burgh. John and Katherine's son was Richard de Waterton.

**1435:** Following the marriage of Constance Assenhull (the daughter of Sir Richard Assenhull and Joan de Burgh) to Richard de Waterton. A hall was built at Walton for the couple. It was a crenellated building of considerable size and boasted an oak panelled hall of around 27 metres (90 feet) in length. The Water Gate at Walton Hall is the only part of the original building still standing. It is the oldest building in the village. Constance brought with her the Walton and Cawthorne estates, which had come down from the de Burghs through her mother Joan. The Waterton's fortunes were much improved. As the Watertons were much in the habit of naming their sons *Thomas*, *Robert* and *John*, etc. through the generations, and because other branches of the family, e.g. the Methley Branch, used the same names, there has been much confusion as to exactly which Waterton did what.

## Walton near Wakefield, West Yorkshire. A Brief History

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**1540:** Sir Robert Waterton is known to have owned the three hamlets of Middle Walton, Nether Walton and Upper Walton. 17th Century Overtown Grange Farm and Rose Farm were both built. These are the oldest surviving buildings in the village, apart from the remains of the Water Gate at Walton Hall. Priory Square -there must also have been a priory at Walton at some time, most likely during Medieval times. The house at the north west corner of Priory Square may have been part of the original malt kiln belonging to the priory. The Priory Estate was once owned by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

**The Civil War: In 1643** Parliament ordered lords and landowners to pay towards the expense of the Civil war. In 1644, Parliamentary troops enforcing this demand marched upon Walton Hall, then the home of Anne and Robert Waterton. While they waited, one soldier went to Walton village to fetch a keg of beer. When he returned, an occupant of the Hall fired a cannon ball from a small cannon or culverin at him and wounded him in the thigh. the culverin was later recovered from the lake by the Squire.

**In 1722**, Charles Waterton, the grandfather of Squire Charles Waterton, granted a lease for 199 years, at a pepper-corn rent, of two cottages in the village to be used as a school and dwelling for a schoolmaster, provided that two poor children from the village were taught free of charge. The other scholars would be taught at their parents' expense. These cottages were in Middle Walton, Shay Lane to the west of Walton House (now called Walton Manor Care Home). The houses were rebuilt in **1824** at the expense of the inhabitants of Walton.

**In 1767**, Thomas Waterton (father of the Squire), demolished the original Walton Hall and caused the present large Georgian mansion to be built in its place. It was built on an island in a lake of 30 acres. Under the porch is a life-sized otter with a pike in its mouth, the crest of the Watertons. On the front of the house is the Waterton coat of arms and an otter with a pike in its mouth. The original drawbridge approach to the house was replaced by an iron footbridge -still the only permanent link between the island and the shore. The park extends 260 acres and is surrounded by a high wall, up to 2.75 metres (about 9 ft) in height, much of which survives to this day - although largely ruined to the east of the Park. This extends the three miles round the Park and cost £10,000 - a huge sum for those days. There is one gate in the east, where a rough track headed towards Crofton, and two in the west - one for The Avenue over Walton Hall Bridge, and a smaller gateway by Lock 15 at the Barnsley Canal summit.

In more recent times, sections of the wall have been partially demolished on the boundary of the golf club by the canal; the listed building status of Walton Hall has not managed to save the wall around the estate.

**1770s or thereabouts**, Walton House, Shay Lane built for Elias Wright (it is thought). He was a local land agent and engineer. Later, the house was owned by Squire Charles Waterton for a time. The house is now called Walton Manor and is a private care home.

**3rd June 1782** - Charles Waterton (the Squire) is born at Walton Hall. Later to become a famous naturalist, a noted explorer and national, as well as local, celebrity.

**1790** Walton Lake was dredged, and the cannon ball from the 1644 siege was found and 'preserved' at the gateway. Later, the Squire marked the dents caused by cannon shot fired at the Water Gate's sturdy wooden doors.

**In 1790**, Catherine Nevile, from Chevet, bequeathed £140 to be used for the establishment of a free school in Walton or neighbouring Chevet. In addition to providing the salary of the schoolmaster, four poor boys and four poor girls of Walton, and two poor boys and two poor girls of Chevet (to the west of Walton), were to be instructed in the English language. This endowment was bestowed upon the existing school.

**27/09/1793** Work started on the Barnsley Canal at Heath.

## Walton near Wakefield, West Yorkshire. A Brief History

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**08/06/1799** The Barnsley Canal was opened from Barnsley to the River Calder at Heath, passing by Walton Park, and through Walton at Soap House and Low Town. Later the canal was extended westwards from Barnsley to Barnby Basin. Thomas Waterton was a member of the canal committee. There were 12 locks on the Walton section, with a further three at Heath. The canal summit is just north of Walton Hall Bridge at Lock 15 -the remains of which are still visible. Temporary accommodation was built at Stoneheaps Plantation for the canal navvies.

**1799** The Commons and Wastes Inclosures Act defined and recorded areas such as Walton Common, Walton Green, Greenside and Uppertown Green. Sandal Magna and Crigglestone also get a mention in this Act.

### During the 19th Century Five Schools were in use:

1. Between the War Memorial and the Methodist Chapel in Shay Lane, a building of two rooms was used. Billy Armitage taught the boys and his wife taught the girls.
2. 1837 A school was carried on by Mr Atha in detached buildings on The Balk. The ground floor was a school and the upper room a Methodist Chapel.
3. A school between Walton House and Walton Grange was kept by Tommy Lumb, a cripple who lived at Overtown Farm and came to school on a donkey cart.
4. A school was kept by Jacky Sharpe where Walton Grange outbuildings are now.
5. When the Midland Railway was being constructed, the Company had offices in buildings near Grove House in The Balk. These are also believed to have later housed a school.

### Six public houses or ale houses existed:

1. *The New Inn*, still there today.
2. *Cross Keys* This was marked on 1849-1851 Ordnance Survey Map at the corner of Shay Lane and Blind Lane (School Lane). Now replaced by houses. This was a near neighbour of Grove House.
3. *The Star*, this was on School Lane on the site of the present Junior School, which was built in 1910 and officially opened in 1911, and closed in 2007.
4. *The Rose and Crown*. This was 36 metres (about 40 yards) down Walton Station Lane (then known as Milnthorpe Lane).
5. *Boot and Shoe* This had a temporary licence during the construction of the railway. It was a half-timbered house, formerly known as Walton Old Hall, situated near the lodge house for Walton Grange.
6. There was a beer house on Greenside which was frequented by canal navvies. The house fell into disrepute by the locals, however, and it became rowdy.

In addition, there were a number of unlicensed premises, permitted by the Beerhouse Act, 1830, to sell beer.

**The population grew from 315 in 1801 to 745 in 1901.**

**1830** The age of steam - many railway lines were built. The first station was by Oakenshaw Lane, though Sandal and Walton station was soon built at Greenside. School Lane by the present post office was then called Station Road. The station was axed during the Beeching cuts of the 1960s. Back in the 19th century, many of the railway navvies lived in huts of sods on Shay Lane.

**1830** Squire Waterton's son Edmund Waterton was born. His mother, Anne, died shortly afterwards and was buried at St. Helen's, Sandal Magna. Edmund later became a collector of antiquities. He was as different to his father as chalk is to cheese. His collection of historical rings is now in the Kensington Museum. He was fond of a fine life and later became bankrupt and cost the Watertons their home in Walton.

**1830s** Grove House, The Balk built around this time, or perhaps even in the late 18th century.

**1832** Soap works were established by Hodgson and Simpson in Soap House Yard. Pollution soon threatened the surrounding countryside.

**1840** North Midland Railway opened. This is the line that runs to the west of the village, crossing School Lane and then on to Oakenshaw Junction. It was later expanded to two tracks, but is now back down to one. It is now used as a freight line and for testing, e.g. the new Virgin trains.

**1846** Charles Waterton and Sir William Pilkington both complained of fumes from the salt-cake furnace at the soap works affecting their estates (Walton and Chevet respectively). Also Lumb and Matthewman (local farmers) complained that local drinking water was unfit for cattle due to polluted drains across their lands. Many trees died in Walton Park.

**1846-9** After a series of inconclusive court cases, it was decided to move the premises of the soap works to Thornes, Wakefield. This was land owned by the Watertons. The soap works continued to pollute and provide employment in Wakefield for many years.

**1850** The buildings in Soap House Yard were sold. Now this area is a residential courtyard.

**1856** The Methodist Chapel in Shay Lane was built, with considerable encouragement from Mr Simpson of Soap House fame.

**In 1857**, Miss Mary Pilkington of Chevet Hall opened a new National School on the site of the present day Junior School.

**In 1871**, she founded her Training, Laundry and Cooking School, across the road in the two cottages, built in **1867** for this purpose, that are now known as Manor House and Bridge House. Following the establishment of the National School, the earlier schools declined and closed. Mary Pilkington was a relative of Catherine Nevile. Chevet Hall was later owned by Wakefield Council, who demolished it.

**1862** For a while, the Shay Lane school by Walton House (Walton Manor) was occupied by the schoolmaster, paying 6d (six 'old' pence, equivalent to 2.5 'new' pence) per annum to Charles Waterton (the Squire), the owner. However, the building became a ruin and it was abandoned. There being no trustees to claim an interest in the old school, Squire Waterton demolished the building and reclaimed the site.

**Walton near Wakefield, West Yorkshire. A Brief History**  
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**26/05/1865** 'Squire' Charles Waterton fell over a log of wood at the head of the Lake, resulting in him sustaining fractured ribs and an injured liver. He died the following day. His body was interred on 3rd June, his birthday, near the spot where the mishap occurred. A stone cross marks the place where he fell. The area is now overgrown and neglected, but peaceful.

**1870's** Three local coal companies were seeking to mine coal: Walton Coal Company, Chevet Company and Hare Park Coal Company. These were not successful and went into liquidation towards **1880**, never having worked coal.

**1871** Miss Mary Pilkington established a laundry next to the school in School Lane "to prepare girls for service". The building is now two semi-detached residences: Bridge House and Manor House.

**1876** Walton Hall and Park were sold by the spendthrift Edmund Waterton to 'Soapy' Edward Simpson for £114,000. Thus Walton Hall fell into the hands of the Squire's enemies, the Simpsons. The Watertons' long connection with the Walton Hall was thus severed. Edward Simpson also owned several cottages and four principal residences at that time: Walton Hall, Walton House (now Walton Manor), Grove House, Thornhill House (now demolished), and the site of a fifth, Walton Grange. The price of Walton Hall had been inflated because it was thought that workable deposits of coal could be extracted from Walton Park. Having failed to destroy the Park with their soap works, the Simpsons would now seem to be wanting to dig it up in the search for coal. This, fortunately, did not happen.

**1880** A murder was committed in the village. Tom and Hannah Beckett lived in a two-roomed house in Soap House Yard. On his return from work as a farm hand Tom found his wife about to go out with her lover, Harry Ogden from Newmillerdam. After an argument he cut her throat with a razor and then his own. They were found later by the lodger, Mr Marshall. Tom Beckett later recovered in Clayton Hospital to eventually face the consequences of his violent crime, but his wife had paid a high price for being unfaithful and was reported dead at the scene.

**1892** A water supply was laid to the village, and the wells fell into disuse.

**1896** The Methodist Chapel was enlarged.

**1903** Plans were put forward to close Miss Pilkington's laundry.

**1906** A decision was made to build a new school (the former junior school in School Lane).

**1910** Methodist Sunday School opened.

**1911** New school in School Lane opened (since closed and sold - 2007).

**1923** The railway became part of the London Midland Scottish Railway (LMS).

**1940** Walton Hall started to be used as a Maternity Hospital.

**07/12/1950** Barnsley Canal - the last boat passed Royston Bridge (south of Walton).

**1950's** Thornhill Estate built (Thornhill House having been demolished).

**10/06/1952** Barnsley Canal - the last boat used Heath Lock.

**1953** Final abandonment warrant for the Barnsley Canal issued.

## Walton near Wakefield, West Yorkshire. A Brief History (Overtown Miscellany – jss.org.uk)

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**1954** Bus shelters installed around the village, some are a mixed blessing, perhaps.

**1956** Soap House Bridge was demolished. It was something of an accident black spot.

**22/04/1959** Walton Colliery Disaster -this cost the lives of 5 men. A plaque at the Millennium Gate commemorates this tragedy.

**1964** Miners Welfare Club officially opened (now the Walton Sports and Social Club).

**1966** Church Hall in School Lane was bought for use as a Village Hall. The Library Committee later bought the Village Institute.

**1967** St Paul's Church completed at a cost of £12,000. It replaced a 'tin' structure on The Balk which had been used for the previous 60 years. Work on extending the church took place in **2001**.

**1969** A plan was put forward by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to use Walton Hall for a Natural History Museum. It was also hoped to lease part of the canal for conservation in a nature trail for children in conjunction with the project.

**1974** Applications by a developer (Walton Park Development Company) to convert the Hall, Park and Lake into a Leisure Centre and Outdoor Pursuits Centre. This was rejected because it was thought that Walton residents would not benefit from a club which would be exclusive and expensive to join. Walton Action Group pointed out that the additional weight of traffic on inadequate roads would harm trees and wildlife, destroy farmland and lead to devalued property. A familiar sounding argument to that put forward when development of houses on Grove House Farm and a golf course was proposed in the 1990s.

**1977** Walton Infant School, The Grove, opened. 1980 Walton Colliery closed. Later transformed into a nature park.

**1986 - 1989** Lakeland Way and High Meadows developments built. Lakeland Way had been used by West Yorkshire Police for training their horses.

**1990s** Grove House Farm houses built. It had been a working farm until this time. Waterton Park Golf Course opened in Walton Park, with club house on the Avenue by the canal. There is still public access to much of Walton Park.

**1999** Walton Locks houses built on site of Barnsley Canal, between the New Inn and Walton Social Club.

**2000** Two houses built on land formerly belonging to Grove House, The Balk. Medical centre adjacent to the village hall in School Lane is closed, and a private residence is built on the site. The Millennium Clock is added to the village hall. The Millennium Gate is officially opened on **24th June 2000**.

**2001** St Paul's Church, The Balk extended.

**2003** Change of landlord in the New Inn, Tommy takes over and the pub turns Turtle! At the time of writing (2007), the last gala took place in 2003.

**2007** The new junior and infants school is opened adjacent to the old infants school in The Grove. The old infants school is demolished and the old junior school was sold at auction for £625,000. The village library is relocated to the new junior school and the former library building is sold at auction in Leeds, achieving a hammer price of £194,000.

## **The Cost of Living in Walton COUNCIL TAX & THE PARISH PRECEPT**

### **COUNCIL TAX**

The valuation band for a house is based upon "the price at which it might reasonably have been sold on the open market on 01/04/1991". Band D is used as a "marker" or baseline reference point. (Range of Values £68,001 - £88,000, Band D Proportion 9/9)

Year 1995 -1996

In 1995 -1996 the Band D tax was £548.67 (excluding parish precept).

Year 2000 -2001

Band D £783.36. The council tax less parish council precept for a Band E Valuation Property (valuation range £88,001 - £120,000, Band D proportion 11/9) was £980.61 for the year 01/04/2000 to 31/03/2001, with Band A (lowest at up to £40,000, Band D proportion 6/9) being £522.24, and Band H (highest, over £320,000, Band D proportion 18/9 ) at £1,566.72 (excluding parish precept).

Year 2001 - 2002, Band D had increased to £819.46. In 1995/1996 the Band D tax was £548.67 (excluding parish precept). Year 2003 - 2004, Band D increased to £990.50 (excluding parish precept). Band E increased to £1,236.07 (including parish precept of £25.46).

### **THE PARISH PRECEPT**

Year 1995 - 1996: £21,000 (the Band D tax contribution being £18.87) Year 1999 - 2000: £21,000  
Year 2000 - 2001: £22,000 (the Band D tax contribution being £18.95) Year 2001 - 2002: £22,000 (the Band D tax contribution being £18.88) Year 2002 - 2003: £23,000  
Year 2003 - 2004: £24,000 (the Band D tax contribution being £20.83)

Sources: John Goodchild Loan Collection; Walton Chronology by Margaret Vernon (1978); Waterton's Wanderings in South America, by Charles Waterton, edited by the Rev. JG Wood (1880); A History of Walton by Peter Wright (1985); Wakefield Express; local residents and J.S. Sargent (document author); Council Tax Information Booklets, City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council.

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