

7/8. Walton Farm and Barn

Walton was a rural community: Walton Farm has been both an arable and dairy farm and has reared sheep and shire horses. Part of the farmhouse is very old and built of handmade bricks in the south end of an 18th Century barn. The north end was converted into stables around 1830. The farm then belonged to the Lichfield Estate and was sold to the Levetts in 1893.

Opposite the farm and barn is a high wall that surrounded Walton Bury.

Return along the public footpath and, at the end, turn immediately left. After a few yards, turn left into Brocton Lane. The house (now called Oakover Grange) is on the left, behind tall iron gates.

9. Walton Bury

Walton Bury was built in 1880 by John Twigg: the Twigg family owned land stretching from Radford to Milford. The first occupant was a JP, Edward Mayne. Later, Capt Allsopp bought it, and his daughter lived there until her death in 1974. It then became a nursing home and has now been converted into private apartments.

Retrace your steps along Brocton Lane. At the end, turn right and then first left. Almost immediately on the left you will find:

10. The Village Pump

Halfway between London and Holyhead, the village pump was used to water the mail coach horses as well as providing water for the village until mains water was introduced in the early 1900s. In 1983, when only the top of the pump was visible, residents removed tons of earth and revealed a stone trough. The site, which has been restored, provides a focal point of historical interest for the village.

Continue up the hill and you will find:

11/12/13 The Smithy, Old Post Office, Pound

The Smithy stands on the side of the old main road from London to Holyhead. The Holyhead coach first ran on August 10th 1785. Records report a smithy on this road from the early 1800s. In 1881, the smith was Thomas Fletcher: he was also the 'penner' in charge of the penfold or pound. The smithy was in use until the 1970s, when most time was spent shoeing local horses and children's riding ponies.

The Smithy is attached to the village's most notable building, still known as the Old Post Office. Grade 2 listed, the timber-framed building is of 16 or 17th Century origin and originally thatched.

Animals were held in the 'Pound', opposite the smithy, for damaging/straying onto other's property or for non-payment of rent. Following a period of use as a village rubbish tip, in 1957 it was restored and converted into a garage for a car.

Continue along this road and on the right, at the junction with Congreve Close, you will find:

14. Congreve House (17th Century)

A timber-framed brick-clad building, originally known as Manor Farm, Congreve House was named after Thomas Congreve (1714-1777). His son, Sir William Congreve, 1st Baronet, invented the Congreve Rocket. Congreve rockets, being made of iron, were stronger than others available in Europe at this time. The rockets were used effectively during the Napoleonic War and the war against the U.S. in 1814. The use of the rocket inspired the composition of 'The Star Spangled Banner', adopted as the national anthem of the USA.

A short distance further along this road, on the right you will reach Village Gardens. A little way into Village Gardens, on the left you will see:

15/16/17 The Coach House (4, Village Gardens)

The coach house, now joined to the cottage built in 1847, was once part of 1, The Village, the 36 roomed home (now demolished) of Lady Helen Salt. The cottage and coach house survived because the tenant refused to move and the developers built Village Gardens around them. Lady Salt was a benefactor for the village: look for buildings with HMS on, eg 7, The Village.

Turn left out of Village Gardens until you reach 'The Old Post Office'. Turn left into 'The Village'. On the left you will see houses with HMS on them. Turn left down Kitlings Lane. Cross the main road and the red Telephone box is on the right.

The War Memorial (not part of the trail)

The Parish War Memorial is situated at the junction of the A34/A513, at the top of Radford Bank. It is outside the village boundary but is owned and maintained by Berkswich Parish Council. From the 1920s-1950s, the garden around the memorial was maintained by residents of Radford Bank, who were paid £4 per annum.

Original illustrations by Andy Eccleshall - 1984

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WALTON-ON-THE-HILL VILLAGE

TRAIL.....



Points of interest around Walton-on-the-Hill

WALTON-ON-THE-HILL VILLAGE TRAIL

The Village Trail takes you to points of interest around Walton-on-the-Hill. It is a circular route and wherever you start, it will take you back to your starting place. The whole route is on a paved surface and is stile free. It is 1.3 miles and should take about an hour. Most of the walk is in a conservation area. We hope you enjoy our village, but please respect the privacy of the owners of the properties you see.

The parish of Berkswich includes the villages of Walton-on-the-Hill and Milford, which have a joint population of just over 2,000. Both villages enjoy a rural setting on the edge of Cannock Chase, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Red Telephone Box

The telephone box, known as K6, was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935. 60,000 were installed across the country. The Parish Council adopted the box in 2016 to use as an information centre.

The Red Telephone box is outside the Village Hall.

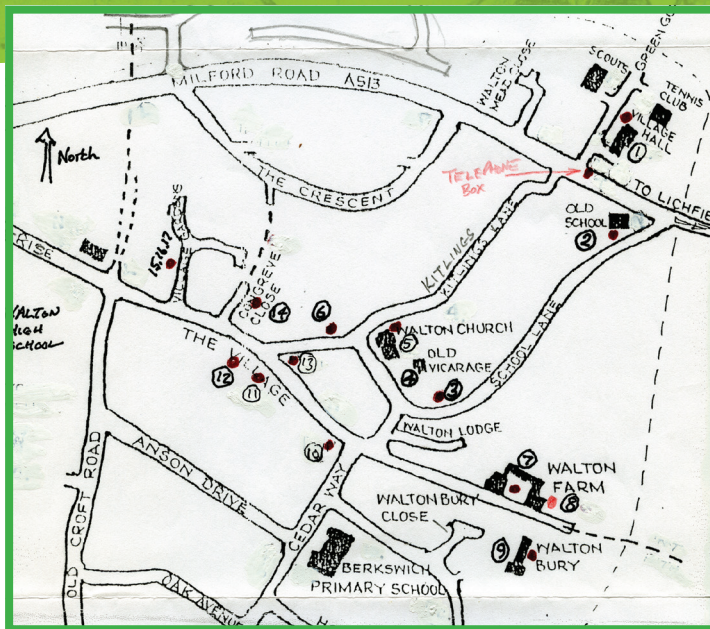
1. The Village Hall

Opened in the 1930s and funded by public subscription, the foundation stone was laid by two and a half year old Richard Michael Haszard, the grandson of WSB Levett of Milford Hall on 27th July 1931. The original wooden structure, forming the main hall, still exists covered in cement cladding. The hall is rarely empty and is used by many local organisations.

Turn left out of the village Hall towards Milford for 70 yards. Cross the road to:

2. Old Walton School

Funded by public subscription, Walton School (later Berkswich School) was opened in 1838. Reports by local school inspectors, from 1865 onwards were far from good. Little improvement followed until 1892, when William and Annie Longson arrived. The Longsons were at the school for thirty years and highly thought of. During the First World War, one report says school dinners were prepared in the school house, next to the school on the main road, by Mrs Longson and her cookery class.



The school closed in 1969 when a new school, Berkswich Primary School, was built, but re-opened shortly after as the new school was too small. It stayed in Local Authority use until 1988. It is now a private day nursery. A gate into School Lane, now unused, marks the route pupils used to access air raid shelters built on the other side of the road.

Walk up School Lane and on the bend at the top on the right, you will find:

3. Old School House (Church Room)

A school, funded by Harriet Salt, was built next to the vicarage in 1870 to provide a basic education for children under the age of 6 or 7 who were too young to attend the village school. Harriet maintained the school at her own expense until it closed in 1891 when the government accepted responsibility for the education of all children. After the school closed, it was used as a Church Room and is now a private house.

A member of a leading, local land-owning family, Harriet Salt was born on 12th May 1830., never married and lived to be 103. Her twin brother, Sir Thomas Salt, 1st Baronet, was MP for Stafford between 1859 and 1892 and died in 1904.

Harriet's uncle was William Salt (1808-1863), an antiquarian and banker. His collections formed the basis for the William Salt library in Stafford. William was the great grandson of John Stevenson, who founded the first bank in Stafford in 1737.

NOTE:

At the top of School Lane, opposite the Old School house, it is interesting to note the difference in land levels on each side of the road. The retaining wall on the east side extends upwards to form the end of an outbuilding, the only remaining structure of Walton Lodge, demolished in 1972. The church is also on land higher than its neighbour.

A private drive next to the Old School House will give you a glimpse of the:

4. Old Vicarage

The original cottage on this site was rebuilt and in 1817 deeded to the parish, for use as a vicarage, by John Collins of Milford. The Parish Church, Holy Trinity at Berkswich, was almost a mile away. The vicarage preceeded the neighbouring church by 25 years. It was sold in 1973 and is now a private house.

Following the right hand curve in the road brings you to:

5. St. Thomas' Church

St. Thomas', built on land given by the Earl of Lichfield, was designed by Thomas Trubshaw and consecrated in 1842. Three years later, the spire was struck by lightning and was largely destroyed, an event reported in the Illustrated London News. In 1903, the replacement spire was found to be unsafe and repairs were made. The heavy lead cladding was replaced with a new lighter one and a new lighter weathercock installed, as well as a lightning conductor. The total cost of repairs was £175. 13s.6d. The original weathercock can still be seen above the door at the back of the church.

From the Church, continue up the hill for 30 yards and on the right you will find:

6. The Old Bakery (17th Century No. 11, The Village)

The Old Bakery was part of a row of cottages now converted into 2 homes. It was timber-framed and is now rendered and contains two large fireplaces.

Retrace your steps in the direction of the Old Vicarage, turn right (signposted 'The Village') then turn left onto a gravelled public footpath. At the end of the path, on the left you will find:

