

Discover The Southern Washlands Nature Corridor

Four Easy Walks



Getting there

On Foot

The area is well linked to a number of public footpaths. The Trans Pennine Trail runs along the canal towpath south from Ferry Lane, then between the Ashfields and Half Moon towards Heath. The area is covered by OS Explorer Map No. 289.

By Bus

- Starting point at southern end: Arriva Service No. 188 (Wakefield–Castleford–Knottingley) stops in Heath village. Get off at the Kirkthorpe Lane / Heath Hall stop.
- Starting point at northern end: Arriva Service No. 147 (Wakefield–Normanton–Pontefract) stops on Ferry Lane, Stanley. From Ferry Lane, walk to Balk Lane and then Stanley Ferry Flash.

To plan your route, call 0113 245 7676 or check: www.wymetro.com

By Car

Car parking is available at the following locations:

- Public car park on Heath Common, off Kirkthorpe Lane.
- On Balk Avenue, off Balk Lane, near Stanley Ferry Flash.
- Small lay-by on Kirkthorpe Lane, where the Trans Pennine Trail emerges from the Ashfields.

By Rail

The Southern Washlands Nature Reserve is a 2-km walk from Kirkgate Railway Station in Wakefield, along Brunswick Street and Park Lodge Lane.

Refreshments

Food is served at pubs at both ends of the Southern Washlands Nature Corridor.

At the southern end is the Kings Arms on Heath Common, where food is served daily (Mon–Sat: midday to 2pm. Sun: midday to 5pm). Tel: 01924 377527

At the northern end is the Stanley Ferry, off Ferry Lane, Stanley, where food is served daily (midday to 10pm). Tel: 01924 290596

Please only park in the pub car park if you are also having a meal there.

Trans Pennine Trail

The Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) is a long distance multi-user route that stretches across the UK from Southport in the west to Horsea in the east (215 miles, 344 km). There is also a north-south route between Leeds and Chesterfield, passing through Wakefield District.

The TPT passes through the area shown on this leaflet, linking the Southern Washlands Nature Corridor to the wider network of public rights of way as well as other countryside sites in Wakefield.

For more information on the TPT, contact Wakefield Public Rights of Way Section on 01924 306010 or visit www.transpenninetrail.org.uk



Kirkthorpe Weir

This impressive weir regulates the water level for Aire and Calder Navigation. There is a viewpoint over the weir from the Southern Washlands Nature Reserve.



Kirkthorpe Stocks

The stocks are located on the north side of Kirkthorpe Lane. The date of the present set is unknown, but stocks were a common sight in the Middle Ages when minor offences would have been punished within the grasp of the offenders.



Distances

- 1.6 km (1 mile) Stanley Ferry Flash
 - 2.9 km (1.7 miles) Parkhill and Ferryboat Fields
 - 1.9 km (1.2 miles) Southern Washlands
 - Local Nature Reserve
 - 3 km (1.9 miles) Airedale and Hair Moon
- Trans Pennine Trail
 Railway Line
 Parking
 Public House
 Bus Stop
 Sand Martin symbol
- The routes are all waymarked with the Sand Martin symbol
- Some sections have wet, muddy or uneven ground

Aire and Calder Navigation

The Aire and Calder Navigation was constructed in the early 1700s. The section in the Calder Valley, stretching from Brearfishch Flood Lock to Woodcock Lock, was built in the 1830s to provide a shorter and easier water route than that provided by the meandering and often shallow courses of the River Calder.

The famous Stanley Ferry Aqueduct (now disused) opened in 1839, and is now scheduled as an ancient monument. William Barlow, the chief engineer on the Aire and Calder Navigation between 1853 and 1885, developed 'Tom Puddings' – compartment boats that were joined together and pushed along the canal by a tug. They transported coal from the Yorkshire colliers to Goole and later to power stations. Tom Puddings can still be seen on the canal today, which is still used by commercial traffic carrying cargo.



Stanley Ferry Flash is an interesting mixture of open water, swamp, marshland and grassland, with areas of willow carr. Look out for a variety of wildflowers, birds, butterflies and dragonflies. It is a Site of Scientific Interest


Most of this area was originally agricultural land that became unusable because of flooding following mining subsidence.

The site can be accessed from Ferry Lane and Balk Lane, and there are also two access points on the Aire & Calder Navigation towpath.

Stanley Ferry Flash



1.6 km (1 mile) Stanley Ferry Flash



Southern Washlands Nature Reserve

The Southern Washlands is a nature reserve, comprising woodland, grassland and wetlands. There are two lakes: one is used for fishing by the local angling club and the other is left undisturbed for wildlife. The site is a designated Local Nature Reserve and Site of Scientific Interest.

This area was worked for sand and gravel from the early 1950s until 1976. In 1987, reclamation work was started by the local authority.


The Southern Washlands Nature Reserve is also a controlled flood storage basin for the River Calder, helping to protect the local community from the dangers of flooding.



1.9 km (1.2 miles) Southern Washlands NR

The farmland and open grassland to the west of the canal is on the site of Parkhill Colliery, which opened in 1877 and closed in 1983. Reclamation of the site began in 1985 by Wakefield Council. The tracks through this area are the original routes through the colliery buildings.

Ferryboat Fields was once agricultural land before becoming part of the Welbeck reclamation and landfill scheme. As phases of the Welbeck scheme are completed, areas are restored and reopened to the public. Ferryboat Fields is mainly grassland, rich in wildflowers during late spring and summer. It also has several ponds, and is a great spot for seeing dragonflies.



Parkhill and Ferryboat Fields



2.8 km (1.7 miles) Parkhill and Ferryboat Fields

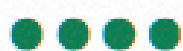


The Ashfields and Half Moon

Half Moon Pond is a cut-off section of the River Calder. The meander in the river was cut off to form a pond in 1838 when the Leeds–Manchester railway was constructed. There was once a medieval fishery here, where salmon were caught in 1492.

The Ashfields was formerly a lagoon into which pulverised fuel ash was piped from Wakefield Power Station. The area has now recolonised, giving us species-rich areas of open grassland and willow, birch and oak scrub. Look out for common spotted orchids and the occasional bee orchid, which grow well in the ashy soil.

The two areas together form a Site of Scientific Interest.



3 km (1.9 miles) Ash Fields and Half Moon

Southern Washlands Nature Corridor

The Southern Washlands Nature Corridor comprises a series of countryside sites less than a mile from Wakefield City Centre. The individual areas stretch from Stanley Ferry Flash in the north, through Parkhill and the Southern Washlands Nature Reserve, to Half Moon and the Ashfields in the south.

While the individual areas have separate names, and slightly different histories, they are linked together by the River Calder. Water is important to all the sites, whether it be the River Calder, Aire & Calder Navigation, or the various ponds and lakes found in each site. They are also linked by footpaths, making them easily accessible to everyone in the Wakefield District.

This leaflet gives an overview of the Southern Washlands Nature Corridor. Two accompanying leaflets give more detail of the four walks. Each route can be walked separately or you can spend a whole day doing all four walks. The routes are all waymarked – follow the sand martin symbol.



River Calder Biodiversity Project

This leaflet has been funded with a **Your Heritage** grant from the **Heritage Lottery Fund** as part of the River Calder Biodiversity Project. More information on the Project, and updates on the progress of work, can be found at: www.ywt.org.uk

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is the only conservation organisation working exclusively throughout Yorkshire. The Trust works to maximise Yorkshire's modern landscape by protecting wildlife and wild places, and educating, influencing and empowering people. We manage over 80 of the best sites and help others to manage theirs.

For more information about our work or how to join us contact:

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, 1 St. Georges Place, York YO24 1GN
Tel: 01904 659570 Email: info@ywt.org.uk Web: www.ywt.org.uk

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is registered in England no. 409650 and is a registered charity no. 210807

Wakefield Council's Natural Environment section manages country parks, nature reserves and woodlands throughout the Wakefield District for wildlife conservation and for people to enjoy. They also organise a regular programme of countryside events and offer an environmental education service to schools.

For more information, contact:

Wakefield's Natural Environment section,
Anglers Country Park, Haw Park Lane, Winterset, Wakefield WF4 2EB
Tel: 01924 303980 Email: countryside_admin@wakefield.gov.uk
Web: www.wakefield.gov.uk

