



Tunstall Reservoir

A beautiful walk through Tunstall Valley following in the steps of the Prince Bishops.



This leaflet was prepared by the Wolsingham Wayfarers, an independent voluntary group, dedicated to monitoring, looking after and promoting the 140 miles of designated footpaths in the Wolsingham Parish.

WWW wolsinghamwayfarers.co.uk

f [WolsinghamWayfarers](https://www.facebook.com/WolsinghamWayfarers)

t [@WolsWay](https://twitter.com/WolsWay)



Walk information

DISTANCE - 7.5 miles (12 km).

MINIMUM TIME - 3 hours.

ELEVATION GAIN - 254m (833ft).

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY - Moderate.

PATHS - Farmland field paths, forest tracks, one steep climb and one short section of quiet road along the reservoir.

STILES - 3 stiles and 1 ladder stile.

PARKING - Demesne Mill Picnic Area.
Nearest postcode DL13 3DB.

PUBLIC TOILETS - At the junction of Market Place and Angate Street.



Please follow the Countryside Code

Prepared on behalf of the people of Wolsingham by the Wolsingham Wayfarers.

PRINT EDITION 6
PRINTED MAR 2023



7.5
miles
DISTANCE

●●○
DIFFICULTY

3
hours
MIN. TIME

FREE

About the walk Tunstall Reservoir

The walk from Wolsingham to the Tunstall Reservoir has long been a favourite of locals and visitors alike. The walk offers plenty of variety and interest, plus a few short cuts for those that might prefer them.

The ascent up to the ruin of Park Wall Farm is handsomely rewarded with a stunning view back towards Wolsingham and the viewpoint after the steep climb up Blackstone Bank will take your breath away. The reservoir offers a wonderful setting for a break to enjoy refreshments at the half way point.



Welcome to wonderful Wolsingham



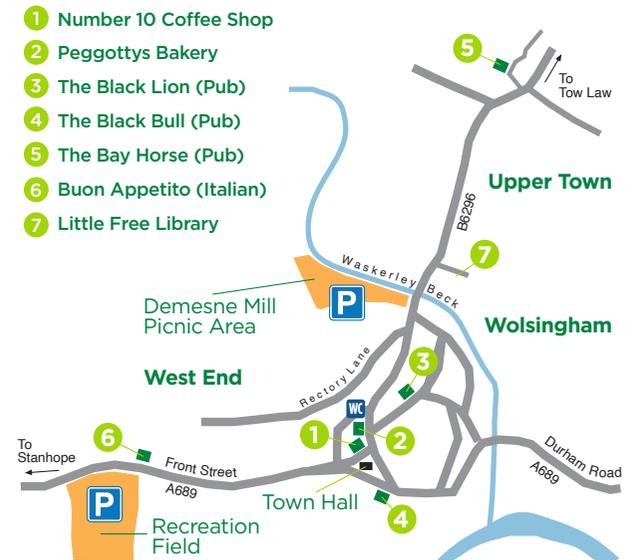
This is one of a series of walk leaflets produced by the Wolsingham Wayfarers, created to showcase Wolsingham's extensive public footpath network. With more than 140 miles of designated footpaths, most of them interlinked, there are plenty of opportunities for creating your own circular walks. A map showing all the footpaths in Wolsingham Parish can be found on the wall of the Town Hall in Wolsingham Market Place. Walks from Wolsingham are covered by OS Explorer maps 307 and OL31.

Ample parking for walkers is provided at Demesne Mill Picnic Site (off the B6296 Tow Law road) and at the Recreation Field (off the A689 Stanhope road). Visitors are asked to keep the market place in Wolsingham clear for local shoppers and library users. The amount of time you can park in the market place is also restricted. For information on public transport ring Traveline on 0871 200 22 33.

Several tea shops, cafes and pubs are shown on the map below. They offer good food and a very welcome drink at the end of a long walk. A few also offer accommodation.

The Wolsingham Wayfarers run regular free guided walks, a great way to discover new paths and routes. Check out our website and social media pages for up-to-date information on walks and activities (information on back page).

Wolsingham's parking and facilities



A The walk sets off from the picnic area at Demesne Mill off the B6296 (Wolsingham to Tow Law road). From the car parking area of the picnic site take the path to the right and walk adjacent to the beck ignoring the fork path to the left.

The walk continues alongside the Waskerley Beck, whose waters run all the way from our destination, Tunstall Reservoir, and beyond. A couple of small waterfalls, the Wolsingham Sills, are found alongside the first short section.

B Follow the path around the trees (or cut diagonally across the grass) to a kissing gate. Through the gate, the path runs broadly across the first meadow, parallel with the beck on your right-hand side. At the head of this field, it crosses the old mill race (now disused). Turn right through the kissing gate to a larger footbridge, known locally as Jack Walker Bridge, which crosses Thornhope Beck.

C Turn right off the bridge and follow the path to another kissing gate. Through the gate turn left into the Long Dyke.

Stay on the left through two fields until you reach a kissing gate taking you on to the Tunstall Road. Cross the road and head up the picturesque curving drive to Fawnlees Hall, ignoring the footpath, and the kissing gate on the right.

Alternative route. If walked in its entirety, the Long Dyke leads directly to the ruin of Park Wall Farm. After crossing the road, take the footpath on the right into the field for a long, straight pull up the hill.

D Continue on the track past Fawnlees Hall, through Low Fawnlees and on to Middle Fawnlees. At the top of the track continue straight on through the gate, ignoring the more established track which forks left up the hill to the house at High Fawnlees.

E Go through the next gate and continue upwards to another gate which takes you out of the Park Wall Plantation (mature trees felled in 2023).

F Through the gate turn sharply right, keeping the wall to your right, taking care along the usually boggy pathway. Follow the wall around to the ruins of Park Wall Farm. Turn left around the site of the ruined barn, and go over a ladder stile, then turn right and go straight on through the gate.

G Continue down the hill, with the wall to your right, where the Tunstall Reservoir, in its beautiful setting, comes into view for the first time.

H At the bottom of the path turn right at the gate and continue keeping the wall to your left. Turn left through the gate and continue straight on through another gate at Jofless Cottage.

I Follow the track and go through the gate that takes you into the yard of High Jofless Farm. Keep to the track which swings right and out of the farm. At the exit gate turn left over a culvert and along the field edge path.

J As you go through the next gate, head right diagonally across the field to a stone stile that takes you over the wall. Continue diagonally right across the next field to the far corner. Take the gate on the left and continue over the beck. At the next gate, bear right diagonally across the field that takes you out on to Tunstall Road. Turn left and head towards the dam. At the dam, the spectacular view of Tunstall Reservoir (built in 1879 by the Weardale and Shildon Water Company) opens out before us.

Alternative route. It is possible to make a short cut here across the dam and begin the journey back to Wolsingham from stage **M** of this guide.

K Follow the road north from the dam and continue past the picnic area. As you cross over a bridge you will see a five-bar gate and stile on your right. Go over the stile and follow the path near to the fence. This path takes you to the head of the reservoir. At the kissing gate turn right onto the track. At the head of the reservoir is a wetlands reserve maintained and protected by Northumbrian Water.

L Continue along the track and, when you reach a five-bar gate, turn right through a kissing gate onto a delightful 'permissive' track which takes you the length of the reservoir through Backstone Bank Wood, an Area of Special Scientific Interest, which is also part of the ancient medieval estate of the Bishops of Durham.

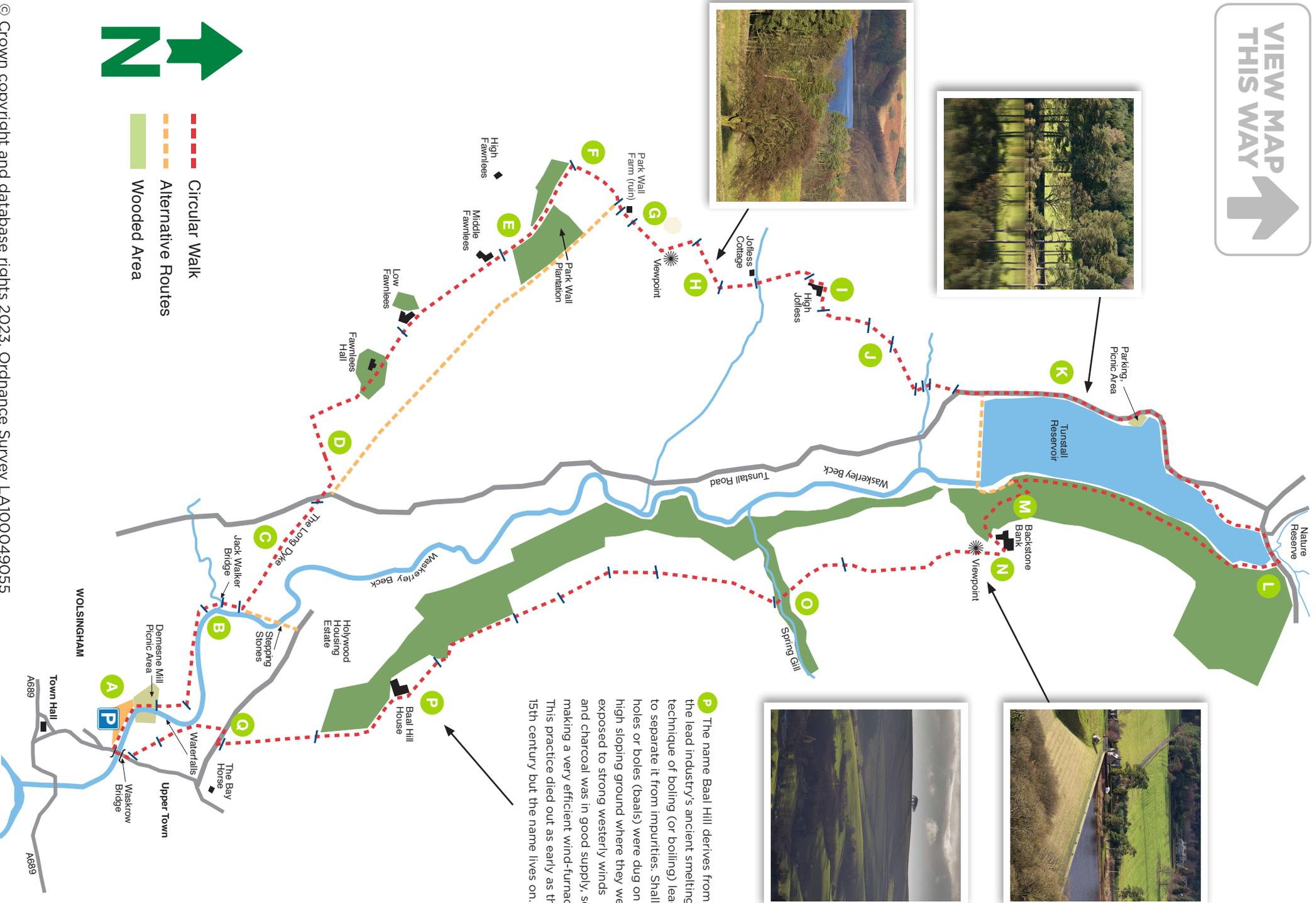
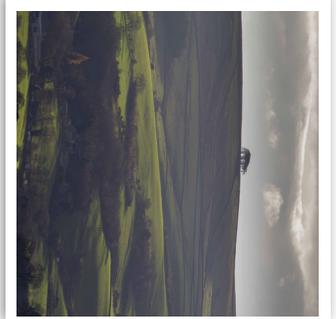
M At the end of the path, at the eastern end of the dam, turn left onto the tarmac road for the last real uphill section to Backstone Bank Farm.

N Once at the farm, turn sharply right along the track (not through the gate) and head due south. Keep the wall to your left, and follow it along the edge of the hill, with magnificent views into the valley below. When the forestry plantation is reached keep right next to the fence and go straight on after the gate. Keep to the path and head towards the corner of the field towards the tree line (ignore the path heading uphill to the left).

O Cross the Spring Gill and go through two gates into a field. Go straight across the centre of the field to a gate. Again, go across the centre of the next field to another gate. The path of the third field follows the fence. Continue straight on through another gate into the next field along the edge of a woodland. The next gate takes you into Baal Hill Farm.

P Walk towards the left side of the farm building and join the main farm track. Go through the gate but ignore the main track as it turns left, instead heading diagonally left across the grass, and down the hill back down towards Wolsingham. The path emerges through a fine stand of ancient trees and follows the edge of the field through two kissing gates down to Holywood Lane.

Q Turn right onto Holywood Lane and walk for 100 yards before turning left through a large kissing gate. Follow this path through two kissing gates onto the main road. Turn right and the entrance to the Demesne Mill Picnic area, and the end of our walk, is 100 yards down the road on the right.



P The name Baal Hill derives from the lead industry's ancient smelting technique of boiling (or boiling) lead to separate it from impurities. Shallow holes or holes (baals) were dug on high sloping ground where they were exposed to strong westerly winds and charcoal was in good supply, so making a very efficient wind-furnace. This practice died out as early as the 15th century but the name lives on.



- - - Circular Walk
- - - Alternative Routes
- Wooded Area