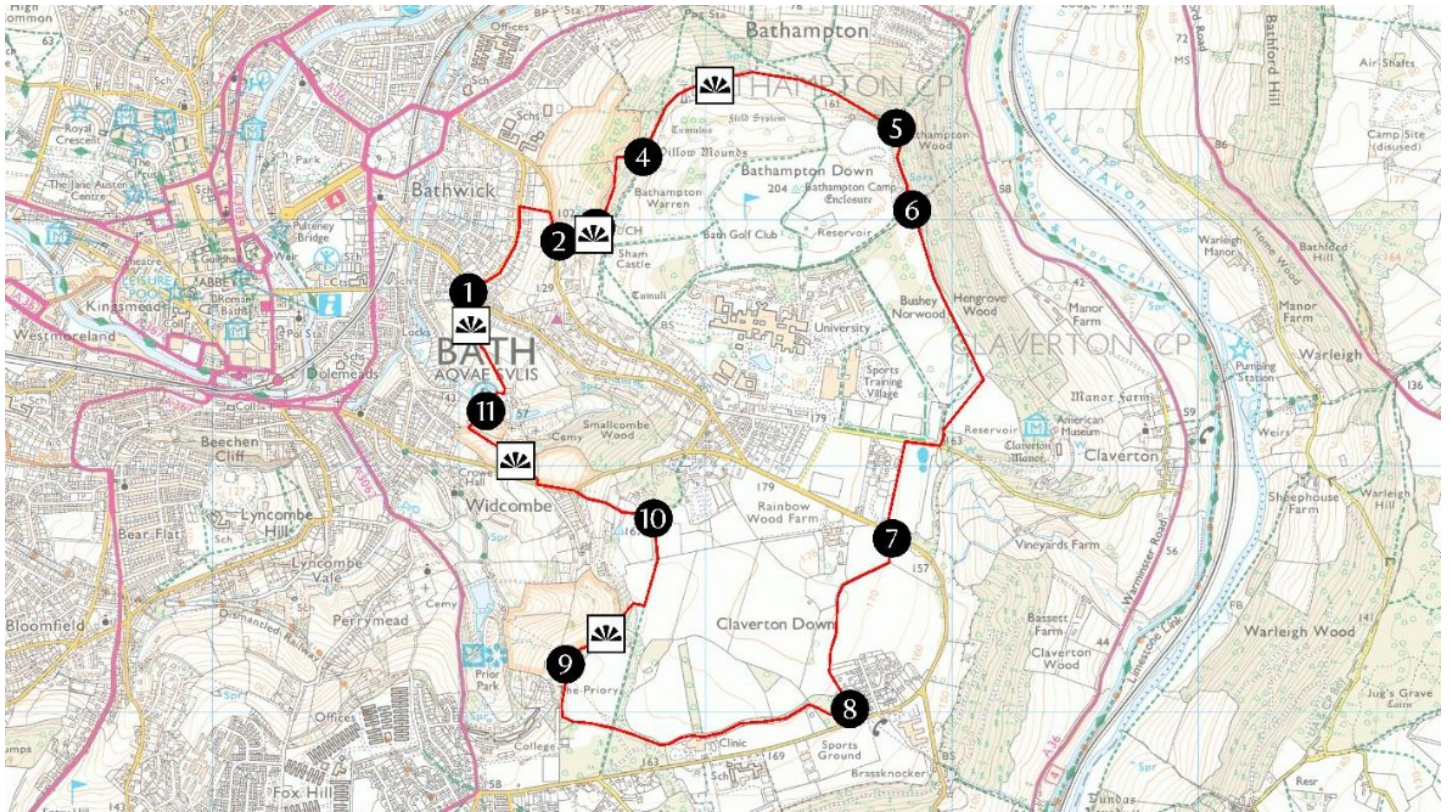




Bath Skyline walk

Walking trail

Only a short stroll from the city centre, enter another world, onto the skyline hills above Bath and beyond, through 6 miles of meadows and ancient woodlands to secluded valleys.

In partnership with



Bathwick Hill at Cleveland Walk, Bath, Somerset

Moderate

3 hours 30 mins - 4 hours

6 miles (9.6 km)

Start: Bathwick Hill at Cleveland Walk, ST76046 64704

- 1 Cleveland Walk and North Road: Standing on Bathwick Hill at entrance to National Trust Bathwick Fields, cross road to Cleveland Walk opposite and continue for 400m until narrow footpath on R opposite Sham Castle Lane. Follow path to meet North Road. Turn R and continue to kissing gate (KG) on opposite side of road. Cross road, and through KG.
- 2 Sham Castle Down: Continue up steep steps and path through field. At top go through KG onto small road with bench on L. Detour to Sham Castle (200 m). Cross over road and follow path up past small stone building, then bear R to reach Sham Castle. Retrace steps to bench.

Sham Castle

Sham Castle (not National Trust property) was built in 1762 for Ralph Allen, one of the key figures responsible for Bath's Georgian revival. Was it built to improve the view from his home in the city (near to the Abbey) or to show off the quality of the stone from his quarries in Combe Down? No one knows for sure.

OS Explorer 155

Dog friendly



The Bath Skyline in spring | National Trust Images/Chris Lacey

- 3 Bathwick Wood: From bench, keep views to your L. Take path down steps into woodland. Follow path. Ignore metal KG on L, and follow path R and R again, steeply uphill to KG at the top.

Water and quarrying

The stone markers and trough that you pass mark some of the natural springs that provided clean drinking water to the city in Georgian times. In Bathwick and Bathampton Woods, the unnaturally deep undulations are clear reminders of prolific limestone quarrying that supplied building stone to the city since Roman times.

- 4 Bathampton Down: Turn L onto track, keeping woods to your L. Continue past KG on L. Leave wider track on approach to radio masts and take smaller grassy path to L. Continue across two fields keeping level ground. Walk down a short slope which bears L, turn R into wood over stile.
- 5 Bathampton Wood: Follow winding path through woods until reaching junction of steep cross path. Go straight across past large rocks on both sides and up short slope between two trees where path splits. Take wider path in middle, past large rocky cliff on R. Keep to the higher path, ignoring any others. Path ascends gently to large Y junction, here bear L and continue to metal KG.

Georgian tramway

Rows of stones running up and down the slope are the remnants of a tramway built in the 1700s to transport stone from the quarries in these woods to the canal, for distribution to Bath and beyond.

- 6 Bushey Norwood: Go through KG into open field. Continue ahead with fence on L. At end of field, go through gate in wall and bear R. Cross field keeping wall on R until reaching gate. Go through gate, turn L along track. Turn R before metal gates and go through wooden gate (University land). Go over stone stile in wall on L and turn R along road for 100m. Turn L onto public footpath at gap in wall just before Cats and Dogs Home. Follow path, it narrows at end then reaches Claverton Down Road. Go L for 40m then cross road to small layby.

Archaeology

Note the grassy banks running diagonally across the field – these are the remnants of an Iron Age field system. During the 18th century there was a two-mile race course with marker stones running across Claverton Down and parts of Bushey Norwood providing popular entertainment for Georgian society.

- 7 Claverton Down: Go through gate to L of layby. Follow fenced path for 800 m, through several wooden gates until you reach woodland on R.
- 8 Woodland Path: Turn R into woodland, and follow woodland path for 1 km, until you reach wooden gate in stone wall. Go through gate and straight over cycle track. Continue, with playing field on R. Bear L down rocky slope, ignoring wooden stile straight ahead.

Monument Field

The sports field is also known as Monument Field after a memorial tower built in honour of Ralph Allen by his nephew in-law, Bishop Wharburton. It was demolished in the 1950's after falling into disrepair.

- 9 The Balcony and Rainbow Wood Fields: Turn R, through stone pillars. Continue along path with views down the valley on L. Detour to Prior Park (300m one way), after pond, through KG on L, follow grass path down through 2 fields. Go past pond on L then bear R up steps. Continue straight ahead through trees until you re-join cycle track. Turn L onto cycle path and follow for 150m until you reach metal KG on L.

City views

Bath can be glimpsed nestling among the hills at the foot of the picturesque Lyncombe Vale. At the head of this vale is Prior Park. In the foreground, the humps and bumps in the field are created by the yellow meadow ant. Green woodpeckers, jays and buzzard are common sights here.

- 10 Widcombe Hill and Smallcombe Vale: Go through KG and follow path down to main road at bottom. Cross road, and continue down road with field and views to R. Turn R into field through KG, then immediate L through second KG. Walk downhill across field keeping views ahead. Bear R to reach KG next to water trough. Go through KG and follow path down steps keeping fence to L. Detour to Smallcombe Garden Cemetery – a tranquil haven with abundant wildlife and a number of notable historic graves – turn R up lane for 140 m.

Smallcombe Wood

Smallcombe Woods (to your right as you leave the road) are the most ancient woods in Bath. A great variety of native tree and shrub species provide a home for abundant bird life including nuthatch, wrens and blackcap.

- 11** Bathwick Fields: Go through KG at bottom of hill, cross lane, and through gate opposite. Continue up steep path and steps, bearing R and bending L. Go through KG into field. Continue up slope until Bath is in view. Bear R then keep L as path forks and continue to KG into Richens Orchard. Cross top of orchard to another KG. Bear L and head for KG. Go through KG and take path to R. Continue 200 m across field to pedestrian gate next to larger gate. Exit field and go straight on to reach National Trust Bus Stop where walk started.

End: Bathwick Hill, grid ref: ST76046 64704

