

Bath (Sham Castle) Circular

Distance: 5 miles

Walking Time: 2¹/₂- 3 hours

GRADE: Easy/Moderate 3

10

This walk explores the beautiful and historic City of Bath, following the River Avon and Kennet and Avon Canal before ascending Bathampton Down, from where breathtaking views of the elegant Georgian city and its surrounding countryside are possible. The walk, which starts and finishes at Bath Railway Station, visits the famous attractions of Pulteney Bridge and Sham Castle and enables the walker to appreciate the magnificent Georgian architecture and parks and gardens of the city.

Maps:

Explorer 155

Bristol & Bath
1:25 000 scale

Landranger 172

Bristol & Bath
1:50 000 scale

Grid Ref.

ST 753 643



PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

Train

First Great Western run regular train services to/from Bath. We recommend you check your journey times by calling National Rail Enquiries 08457 484950 or visit www.nationalrail.co.uk.

Bus

Bath Bus Station is located next to the railway station. To get to Bath Bus Station take the X39/339 (via Salford) or 332/632 (via Bitton) service from Bristol City Centre. The X39 service runs every 12 minutes Monday to Saturday and the 339 every 30 minutes on Sundays and Bank Holidays. The 332 service runs every hour Monday to Saturday and the 632 every two hours Sundays and Bank Holidays.

We recommend you check your journey times by logging on to www.firstgroup.com or by calling the Traveline number below.

PUBLIC HOUSES/CAFES EN ROUTE

There are numerous public houses and cafes along the route and in Bath City Centre.

CREDITS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

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PLACES AND FEATURES OF INTEREST

Halfpenny Bridge

A wooden bridge was built in 1863 and a fee of one half penny was charged to cross the bridge. The toll was collected on the south end. In 1877 between two and three hundred people crowded on to the bridge on their way to visit the annual Bath and West Show. The bridge collapsed under the weight and eight people were killed. A replacement iron bridge was erected in 1878; this still stands.

Weir

The original weir was in place when there were several mills in the area to provide water power for the cloth trade, which was Bath's chief industry. The present weir of 1971 was designed purely for artistic affect. The flood barrier was built in the 1970's.



The Weir at Pulteney Bridge

Walk to far right hand corner of the park and exit into Sutton Street. Walk along the street (towards Holbourne Museum) and turn left at the main road. After 110m take the entrance to Sydney Park Gardens, on the right by the mini-roundabout.

As you approach Pulteney Bridge keep alongside the black railings by the river and take the steps in the corner leading up to the bridge. At the top turn right towards the fountain in Laura Place. At the fountain turn left along Henrietta Street and walk along for 120m to Henrietta Park on the right.

- Key**
- circular walk
 - other paths
 - roads
 - urban area
 - woodland
 - open area

Facing the main entrance to the railway station take the archway on the left, walk through the tunnel, cross Halfpenny Bridge, turn left into Claverton Street. After a short distance join the River Avon path on the left between the river and lock gates of the Kennet and Avon Canal. Follow the path to Pulteney Bridge.

Pulteney Bridge

This was built in the 1770's as part of the development of Bathwick to provide more houses. It has been much mutilated. The portico at the ends was removed and in 1908 the west end was shortened to enable a widening of Grand Parade. This can be seen if you look at the façade from the river, which is not symmetrical.

Henrietta Park

It was originally intended to build a square (to be called Francis Square) with surrounding streets on the land that now accommodates the park. However, the Napoleonic Wars created a building slump and inflation so the plans never came to fruition.

At the stone bridge (No 184) you will see a stone stile on the left. Cross the stile and walk a few steps to the track and turn right. Continue up the track and turn right at the T-junction to reach the A36 road. Cross the road and take the track opposite, climbing to the brow of the hill.

Take the main path through Sydney Gardens and cross the bridge over the railway track. Go a little further along the path and just before the next bridge, turn right along a path leading to a wrought iron gate. Go through the gate on to the canal towpath, turn left and walk on for about 1.5km.

Bathwick Wood

Disturbed and uneven ground in the woodland provides evidence of former quarrying. In spring bluebells and wild garlic are in flower. The fields below show traces of medieval field systems with terraces and embankments. The mosaic of grassland and scrub habitats is ideal for butterflies and other insects.

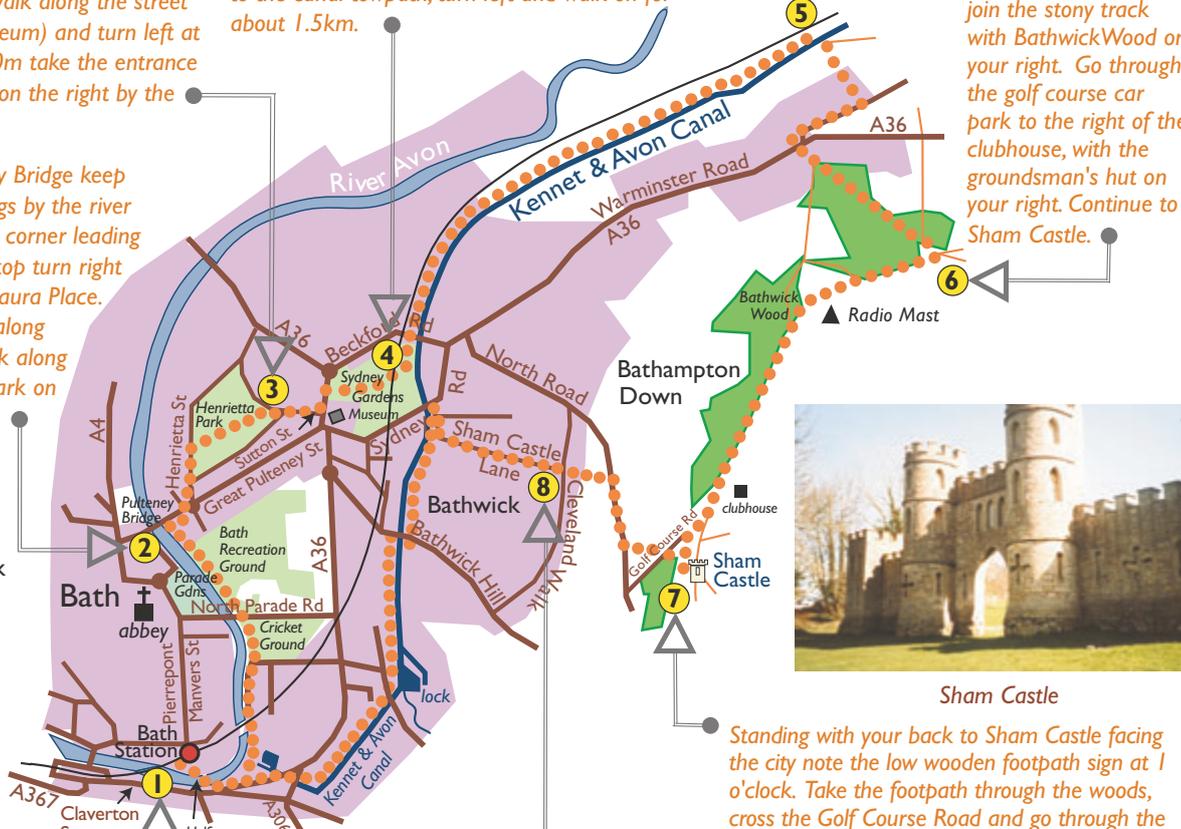
Sham Castle

Ralph Allen commissioned this folly to provide employment for local stonemasons and improve the view from his home in Lilliput Alley.



Stone Bridge over Kennet & Avon Canal

On reaching the wooden post with footpath signs, follow the path round to the right. After passing the radio mast on your left join the stony track with Bathwick Wood on your right. Go through the golf course car park to the right of the clubhouse, with the groundsman's hut on your right. Continue to Sham Castle.



Continue ahead to walk along Sham Castle Lane. At the T-junction turn right and walk along to a further T-junction where you should turn immediately left into a lane leading to the left side of the Kennet and Avon Canal. Follow the canal back to its junction with the River Avon, crossing to the right hand side of the canal at the Bathwick Hill Bridge. Walk back to Halfpenny Bridge to reach the railway station.



Sham Castle

Standing with your back to Sham Castle facing the city note the low wooden footpath sign at 1 o'clock. Take the footpath through the woods, cross the Golf Course Road and go through the kissing gate. Follow the path to the bottom left-hand corner of the field and turn right on to North Road. After 110 metres turn left through an opening and down the steps.