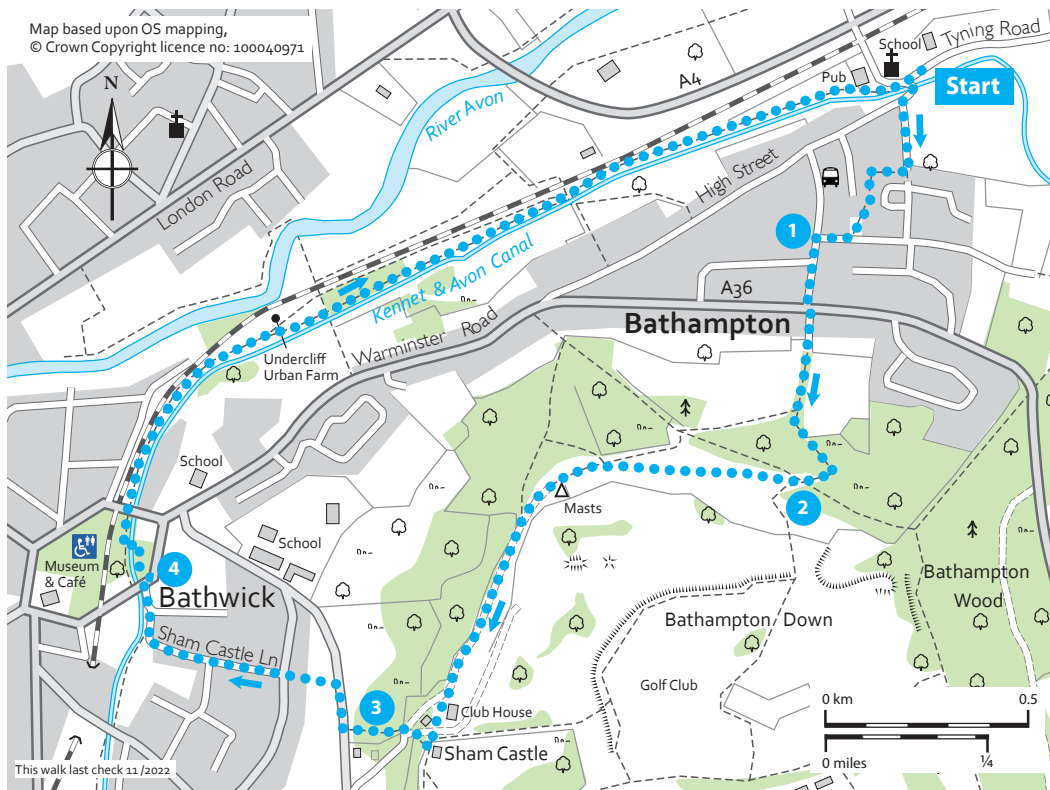


# Walk 16 Bathampton Down Loop

Starting with a long steady climb to fantastic views from the top of Bathampton Down this circular walk then returns with an easy amble along the picturesque Kennet & Avon canal.

# Route



**Start & Finish:** Outside Bathampton Primary School, Tying Road BA2 6TQ

\*W3W -film.chains.chose

**Distance:** 3.9 miles / 6.3 km with an up and down of 663 ft / 202 m

**Slopes:** One long steep climb and one long steep descent

**Steps & stiles:** Several sets of steps coming downhill. No stiles

**Terrain:** Paved and unpaved paths, pavements, small amount of lane walking.

**Transport:** Visit [travelinesw.com](http://travelinesw.com). Nearest bus stop on Down Lane where you can easily start the walk at point 1 on the map. Limited 4-hour parking outside Bathampton Primary School. Plenty of parking in nearby residential streets. Please park considerably.

**Public toilets:** Sydney Gardens (20p)

**Refreshments:** The Holburne Museum café, The George Inn, Bathampton

**Rest points:** Bench on the top of Bathampton Down. Benches near Sham Castle. Informal rest points on lock gates along the canal, benches along the canal and in Sydney Gardens

**Dogs welcome:** Yes, though some urban walking and some fields have livestock in, so please be prepared to put them on a lead.

**Wheel friendly:** No

**Features on the route:** Bathampton playground, Sham Castle, Kennet & Avon Canal, Sydney Gardens and playground, Undercliff Urban Farm, shop (seasonal opening times).

With your back to the school, turn right to walk to the end of Tying Road. At the end turn left onto High Street and use the pavement to cross the bridge over the canal. Follow the curve of the road round, passing the entrance to King Edward's School playing fields. Immediately after this, turn left up Dark Lane.

Continue up Dark Lane, until you meet a crossroad of paths just before a metal barrier. Turn right to take the secluded path that runs along the back of gardens until you pop out at a grassy patch, just after a short row of garages.

Turn left to cross a concrete path, then continue up the wide grassy path which ends at Bathampton Parish playing field. Cross the field diagonally, up to the top right-hand corner. The playground will be on your left.

Exit the field and turn right onto the pavement. Walk along the pavement to the end of Holcombe Lane 1. Turn left and head uphill on the pavement of Down Lane.

At the T-junction, turn left then almost immediately right to cross the busy A36 (Warminster Road) using the crossing point. Once safely across turn right and then opposite Down Lane turn left up a quiet lane, with the Scout Hut on your right.

*Continued on next page.*

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Follow the lane uphill and when it veers round to the right, continue straight up on to the tree lined path. To distract from the steep climb ahead you can practice your tree identification skills! *On this short stretch you should be able to find sycamore, blackthorn, dog wood, hawthorn, crab apple, field maple, hazel, beech and ash.* Pass through a metal field gate and continue up the path, passing a magnificent oak tree on your left.

When you see a waymark post pointing to the right, ignore this, and continue on the main path as it bears left uphill. Continue the climb and as the path starts to level slightly, follow the curve round to the right, ignoring the grassy left fork, which leads into the undergrowth.

Soon up ahead you will see a waymark post with a blue bridleway waymarker. To the left is a metal gate signposted 'skyline'. Ignore this and continue up, where the top, Bathampton Down, is in sight! *Bathampton Down is a limestone plateau formed of oolitic limestone. Evidence of human activity dates back to the Mesolithic period with flints being found here and the remains of a stone circle. There are also four Bronze Age tumuli though they cannot be easily seen on the ground, and evidence of either an Iron Age hill fort or stock enclosure on the other side of the Down, the area is therefore a Scheduled Ancient Monument.*

Follow the path as it widens into a grassy track in a slight hollow. Don't stay in the hollow, instead stand atop the right-hand edge and look towards the masts. Take the right-hand fork onto a grassy path heading towards the masts **2**. Cattle often graze here, so please be prepared to put dogs on leads. Enjoy the views as they open up on your right over Batheaston.

At the next fork in the grassy paths, take the left, wider path, continuing towards the masts. The masts are actually telecommunications towers. As you continue towards them, soon you will see the golf course on your left behind a barbed wire fence.

Once you reach the masts, the path bears left to pass behind them and then meets a stone track (Golf Course Road). Follow the track as you start a gentle descent. First you will see the golf course on your left, and then woods on your right. Follow the track all the way to the end. Then go through a metal gate and into the car park of Bath Golf Club.

Carefully cross the car park, and follow the tarmac drive to the right of the golf club buildings and into another car park. Pass through this second car park to the 'public footpath' finger post beyond. From here continue straight ahead to Sham Castle.

*Sham Castle, is actually just a folly, built in 1762 for Ralph Allen by Richard James. The sole purpose is believed to be "to improve the prospect" from the Allen home in Bath.*

After exploring the folly and enjoying the views down to Bath Abbey from here, find the path to the right of the bench and follow it down to a tarmac drive. Cross over to another bench next to a National Trust sign. Turn left to follow the fence line into the corner by the stone wall to a metal gate. Pass through the gate and follow the steep path down, being careful on the stepped section in particular that can be muddy after wet weather **3**.

At the bottom, go through the metal gate and carefully cross the road to the pavement on the other side. Turn right and walk down the pavement passing two huge beech trees which are worth admiring! Soon after you will see a footpath on your left down a short flight of steps. Take this path and follow it all the way down to the road. Cross the road onto the pavement of Sham Castle Lane. Walk all the way down the length of the road. Towards the end, where the pavement stops, carefully continue until you reach a T-junction with a wall ahead and a private road going left. Turn right to stay on Sham Castle Lane. As you walk look over the wall on your left, and you should see the canal below you.

Follow Sham Castle Road down to the main road. Turn right and before the entrance to Bath Spa Hotel, carefully cross the road into Sydney Gardens **4**. Where the path forks, take the left fork and follow it along to the second, larger white bridge. Cross the canal over this bridge, built in 1800, into the main part of Sydney Gardens, which are well worth exploring a little. You can also reach the Holburne Museum easily from here.

Once over the bridge, turn immediately left, then left again through white metal gates on to the tow path. Turn left to walk under the bridge you just walked over.

Pass through a tunnel and continue along the tow path with the railway down below you on your left and the canal on your right. Pass a wooden pedestrian bridge on your right then pass under stone bridge 184. Continue along the tow path, enjoying the views and glimpses into canal life.

You can tell you are nearing the end of this walk when houses start to appear on the right. Pass in front of a row of attractive stone cottages on your left. Just beyond these, before the next bridge, there is a short flight of steps down to the George Inn.

To find the start, continue on the tow path under the stone bridge ahead of you. Once on the other side you will be back outside the school.

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In addition to the Circuit of Bath, the Bathscape scheme promotes a range of shorter local walks, runs the annual Bathscape Walking Festival each September and a series of weekly walks throughout the year.

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\*W3W stands for What3Words, which is an alternative way of specifying precise locations. You can use the W3W app or website for free to see these locations on a map.