



Walk 8
from

Twenty circular walks
not far from

TIMSBURY

each featuring water

By Peter Bradshaw, Larry Cunningham and Sue Fraser

supported by a Wessex Watermark Award

THE WALK

Walk 8 is one the twenty walks set in the beautiful countryside not far from to Timsbury in a book supported by Wessex Water. There are four further books in the series:

Fourteen circular walks in and around Timsbury

supported by Timsbury Parish Council

Fourteen circular walks in and around Radstock

commissioned by Radstock Museum

Twenty circular walks close to Timsbury

supported by Timsbury Parish Council

Twenty circular walks near Timsbury

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All the books are available from **Health and More** in Timsbury, **Radstock Museum**, **Farmborough Community Shop** and **Oldfield Park Bookshop** in Bath. Each book costs £6.00 Once printing costs are recouped all proceeds go to good causes: Radstock Museum, Timsbury Parish Council, WaterAid and The Avon Wildlife Trust. To order copies for postal delivery telephone Oldfield Park Bookshop on 01225 427722.

WALK 8

Upper Swainswick

This is a longer and challenging walk of two valleys, with wonderful views. There are ponds in the nature reserve, wildfowl on the reservoir, grand houses and historic churches to enjoy.



WALK 8

	WALK 8
Distance	8.5 mile (13.6 km)
Stiles	3
Approximate Time	4 hours
Start/Finish	Tadwick Lane, Upper Swainswick
Start/Finish Grid Reference	ST 760684
Map	OS Explorer 155
Terrain	Undulating with two steep climbs, fields, quiet lanes and one very busy road to cross.

DIRECTIONS

Nearest Postcode: BA1 8BR. Map Ref: ST 760684.

Leave the A46 signposted to Upper Swainswick. As you enter the village park on the left in what is Tadwick Lane.

1 TADWICK LANE, UPPER SWAINSWICK

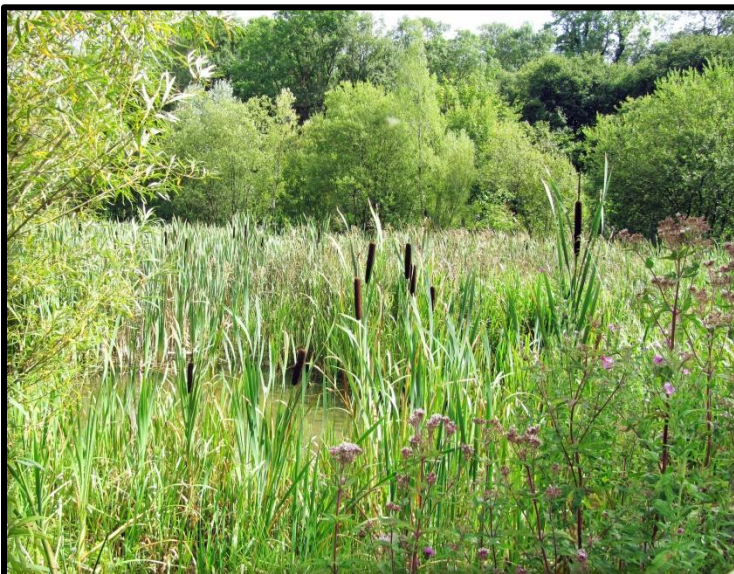
Walk back along Tadwick Lane and turn right signposted Bath. Stay on the right side of the road, then cross the road and follow the pavement left under the bridge at the sign for Bath A46. Follow the road as it bends around to the left and then just

before you meet the A46 take a right turn with the public bridleway sign to the right. Walk up the lane for 100 yards to a wooden kissing gate on your right. Go through the wooden kissing gate and walk straight ahead across the field to a metal kissing gate. Go through and go carefully down the steep



steps. There are good views of the valley of Chilcombe Bottom. Follow the well-defined path to the right of a metal/wooden post in the field and then pass through the metal field gate to the left of a gap in the hedge and a stone building in the hedge. Turn right and go through the gap between the two hedges, not up the hill and not following the fence line. Continue along the path between two hedges until you reach a metal bridle gate. Proceed in the same direction along the narrow path until you come out into the open with a house on your right, which is Waterworks House. Walk down the lane a few yards to a wooden kissing gate on your left which

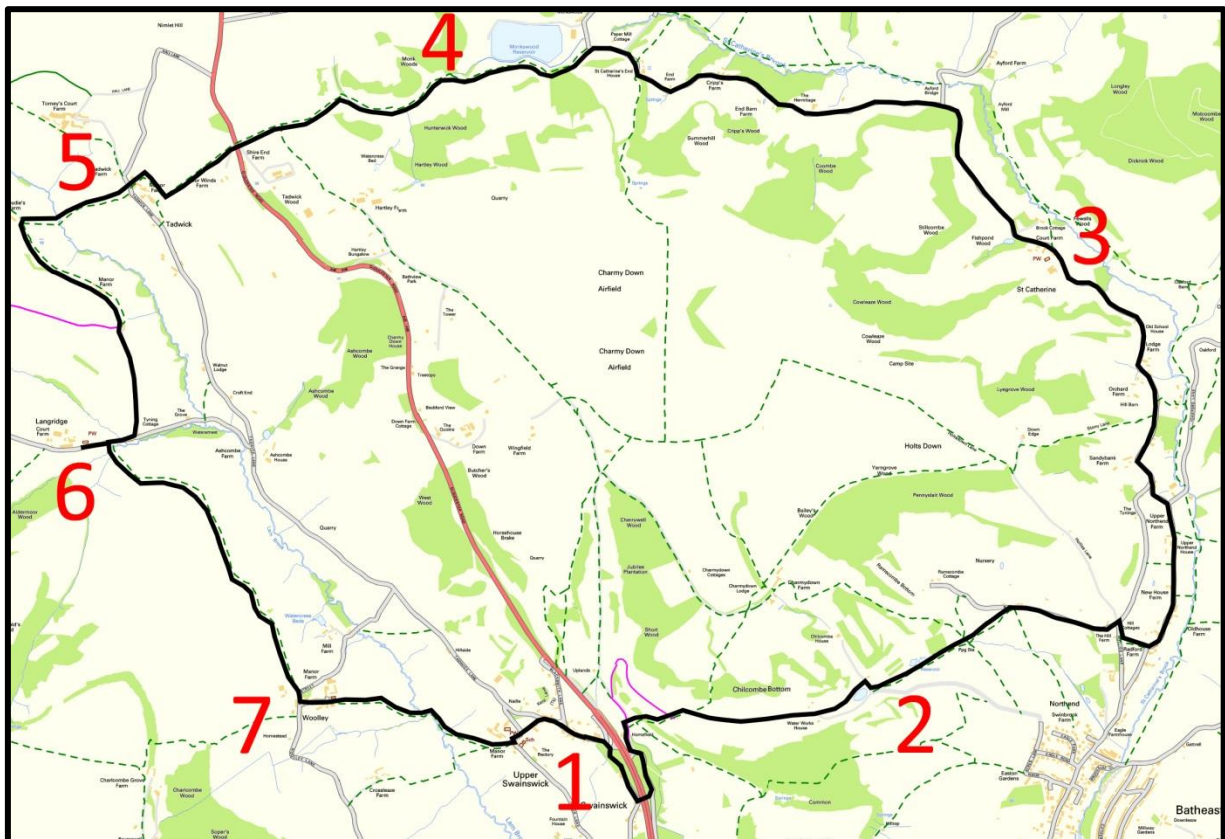
is a permissive footpath through the Wessex Water nature reserve. Take this path which is a lovely stretch with wild flowers, butterflies and hints of the former reservoir with bull rushes and reeds. Continue on the well-worn path through the nature reserve to a wooden gate beside the Strainer Well. Go through the gate and down the steps past the Valve House to join the road.



Chilcombe Bottom nature reserve was originally the site of Batheaston reservoir, which was constructed by the Bath Corporation in 1848. However, changing water quality standards and leakage through the embankment resulted in the reservoir being taken out of use in the 1980s. The restoration of the reservoir site was undertaken in 1995 using surplus material from the construction of the Batheaston bypass. Wessex Water aimed to recreate the environment of the valley before the reservoir was built whilst retaining interesting historical waterworks features associated with the reservoir, including the former Valve House and Strainer Well.



Wessex Water now manages the site and the area is a haven for wildlife with over 434 bug species, with representatives of woodlice, spiders, harvestmen, dragonflies due to its marshy vegetation and ponds.



2 CHILCOMBE BOTTOM

Directly in front of you, after passing the valve house, are a footpath marker post and a metal gate. Go through the small metal gate and continue ahead passing through a Christmas tree plantation. The beginning can be a little bit muddy, but the path soon goes on to higher ground and is drier. Go through a wooden kissing gate into a field and walk along the left hedge line. The area to the left was once a



small reservoir. The path becomes more of a woodland path with a stream to your left and a pumping station to your right. Go through two more wooden kissing gates passing another pumping station on your right. Follow the left hedge through this field past a large fallen tree to reach a

gated bridge on the left. Cross over the bridge, by the multiple footpath sign. After the bridge, ignore the footpath going straight ahead and walk diagonally right and slightly uphill to reach a metal kissing gate. Go through into the next field and carry on in the same direction to reach a metal kissing gate in the far corner of the field. Go through the kissing gate into the lane and turn right. There are good views to the right over towards Little Solsbury Hill. Walk along the lane until you reach a junction of roads. Directly opposite is a grit bin with a public footpath sign to the right of it. Follow the direction of the public footpath sign to the path behind the hedge to the right of the wooden field gate. There are lovely views of St Catherine's valley to the left. Follow the path as it turns left and drops down to a metal gate. Go through the gate and turn left walking past the entrance to Radford Farm. Continue walking along this quiet lane for 600 yards, passing interesting buildings and with further good views of St Catherine's valley, until the road forks. Take the left fork signposted to St Catherine's Church. The fork to the right leads to Wessex Water's Washpool Water Treatment Centre.

Carry on walking along the lane, ignoring a lane joining on the left. After 300 yards you pass a tall stone wall and The Mead. Immediately after is a plaque on the right which marks the site of the former Mead Tea Gardens. Continue on the lane for 950 yards to reach St Catherine's Court and Church. The church is open to the public and well worth a visit.



The springs in St Catherine's valley are important water sources, supplying up to 30% of the water required by Bath and neighbouring areas. The plant at Washpool is used for treating water and as the pumping station for water transferred from the east of Wessex Water's region into the Bath system.

*The Mead Tea Gardens was established by James and Annie Wilson in 1923, within an existing market garden, to provide refreshments for those visiting St Catherine's Court and Church. It was described by Arthur Mee in his book **Somerset** as 'incomparable, we have seen nothing in our ten thousand villages more like the spirit of Old England, tender, enduring and altogether lovely'.*



St Catherine's Court was originally a priory grange for the monks of Bath Abbey. The oldest part of the house, the north front, was built in the Elizabethan era. In 1984, actress Jane Seymour bought and lived in the house; she later rented it as a film set, recording studio and country house for corporate events and weddings. She sold it in 2007. It is a Grade I listed building.

St Catherine's Church was built in the 12th century as a chapel of ease of Bath. The interior includes a 12th century font and a 15th century pulpit. It is a Grade II listed building.

3 ST CATHERINE'S COURT

After visiting St Catherine's Church, continue walking along the quiet lane enjoying views of the valley. Go past a right turn, and then pass first The Hermitage and then

further on St Catherine's End House on your right. At the end of the wall after St Catherine's End House there is a kissing gate. Don't go through it, but stop to admire the lovely view up the valley. Then continue on the lane passing Paper Mill Cottage; then as you start to drop down there are bollards and a public footpath sign on the



left. Turn left up the footpath and through the wooden gate. Continue up the hill through another wooden gate and a metal gate to come out into a field with Monkswood Reservoir on your right. Pause for a while to enjoy the views.

The lanes in St Catherine's valley are notable features, very narrow, usually sunken and tree or hedgerow-lined with flowery hedge banks at their best in late spring. There are many glimpses of St Catherine's valley through trees along the lanes.

The Hermitage and St Catherine's End House are both detached houses built in the 17th century.

Monkwood Reservoir was opened in 1895 to provide water for Bath. It is managed by Wessex Water and is used for fishing solely. Wessex Water now collects water directly from the springs in the surrounding area.

4 MONKWOOD RESERVOIR

Continue walking along the side of the reservoir keeping it on your right. Follow the fence around to a metal kissing gate. Carry on close to the fence through the next field. Follow the path as it continues past the reservoir, keeping the trees on your right. Go through a gap in the hedge. Walk for 60 yards then turn right and walk into the trees (the path is not very obvious) to a wooden bridge with stiles at each end crossing the stream. After the bridge turn left and continue walking up the valley keeping the stream on your left and the hillside on your right. This is a delightful valley with wildflowers. As you go into some trees there is a metal kissing gate on your left. Go through this and walk up the hill on the obvious path to the next metal kissing gate at the top. Go through the metal kissing gate into the next field and walk ahead keeping the hedge on your left. Head for the wide gap in the hedge ahead, ignoring the kissing gate in the left hand corner of the field. Walk straight ahead towards a wooden kissing gate. **CAREFULLY CROSS** the very busy A46 to the wooden kissing gate directly opposite. Go down the steps and follow the white footpath arrow ahead. Beckford's Tower can be seen in the distance to the

left over the top of the house. Walk down a narrow path between a hedge on your right and a disused building on your left. There are good views to your right. Walk down to a wooden kissing gate; there further

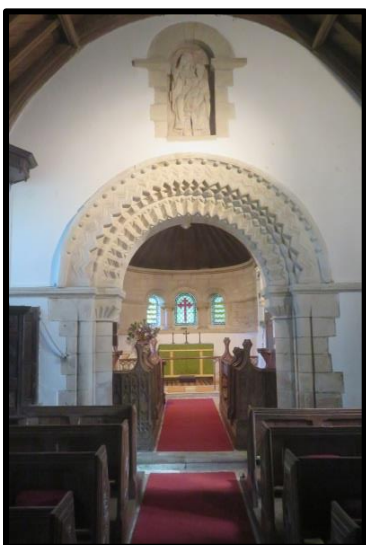


good views down the valley. Walk down keeping the hedge on your right. About half way down you can see a fenced structure in the field on your right. This marks Tadwick Reservoir. As you get closer to the buildings, ignore the metal kissing gate directly ahead, but go through the metal gate to the right of the metal field gate. Keep the hedge and buildings on your left and take the metal kissing gate in the hedge on the left. Go down the steps and then continue straight ahead down the drive to reach what is Tadwick Lane in the hamlet of Tadwick.

Tadwick reservoir is an underground storage tank which feeds the villages in Swainswick valley. Water is pumped to it from the springs at Monkwood Reservoir and Washpool Water Treatment Centre.

5 TADWICK

Turn left, then right down the side of Periwinkle Cottage and pass through the metal kissing gate into the field. Go to the right of the water trough and aim diagonally right for the farmhouse in the distance. Drop down the field keeping close to the right-hand hedge. As you near the bottom of the field, come in from the right hand hedge until you see a metal foot bridge in the trees. Cross this and head straight up the hill towards the farm which is in the top right hand corner of the field. Once you



are in line with the kissing gate on the right turn left and head for the kissing gate in the left hedge line. Go through and head straight across the field towards the Bristol Gate ahead, not the wooden field gate to the right. Continue along the top edge of the field to another Bristol Gate and go into the next field. Continue along the top edge of the field keeping the stone wall on your right. Ashcombe House can be seen in the distance to your left. Follow the hedge line round to the right and keeping the barn on your left. Go through a Bristol Gate into the lane. Turn left and walk 450 yards down to a T-junction. Turn right and pass The Cottage and then a metal kissing gate on your left. The walk continues through this kissing gate, but it is well worth

going a 100 yards up the hill to St Mary Magdalene Church in Langridge. It is a lovely little church and well worth a visit.

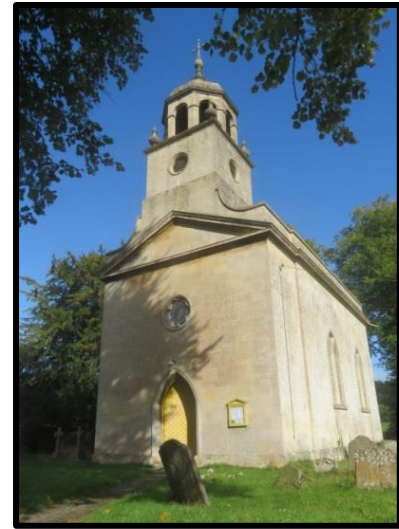
Ashcombe House dates from the early 19th century. Musician Peter Gabriel rented the property between 1978 and 1987 as his family home and converted the house's barn into his home studio, where he recorded three of his albums.

St Mary Magdalene Church dates from the 12th century and is a Grade I listed building. It was restored by James Wilson between 1857 and 1861. The church has retained many of its early architectural features including the carved zig zag design of the porch arch, the ancient font and the 11th century Mother and Child above the chancel arch.

6 LANGRIDGE

After visiting the church, walk back down the hill and go through the metal kissing gate on your right. At the footpath sign shortly after, walk over the gated bridge on your left. Turn right and walk upwards to the brow of the hill. At the brow of the hill follow a marker post towards a metal kissing gate. Go through and walk straight across the top of the field to a metal gate beside a metal field gate. Go through into the next field and follow the well-worn path sloping slightly down to the left. The

path bends around to the right. Continue along this line through the field. Go through a small metal gate into the next field. Follow the contours along until you get to another metal gate. Go into the next field keeping the hedge on your right. Pass through a metal field gate keeping the hedge on your right. Woolley Church comes into view ahead of you. Go through a metal kissing gate onto a track. Continue on then turn right when you join the lane and then left down to Woolley Church.



All Saints Church at Woolley dates from 1761 and was built by John Wood (the Younger) replacing an earlier church on the site. It is a Grade I listed building.

Woolley was the location for a gunpowder mill between 1722 and 1802. This was known for its dangers and frequent explosions. It relied on slave labour and the abolition of the slave trade is thought to have contributed to its closure. Woolley is a Thankful Village; a settlement from which all their members of the armed forces survived World War I.

7 WOOLLEY

Go over the stone stile to the right of the church and walk down the narrow path between fence and wall. Go through the metal kissing gate into the field. Keep the hedge line close on your left as you walk down the hill. Go through a metal gate beside wooden field gate. The village of Upper Swainswick is ahead of you. Walk down the field bearing right to the bottom right corner of the field. Go over the gated bridge into the field and turn right keeping the stream on your right. Go through the



metal kissing gate, cross the bridge and go through the metal gate. Follow the direction of the yellow footpath arrow up the hill. You approach a cottage with a white conservatory. The footpath goes through the garden and out into the lane. Then walk straight ahead up the lane with the church on your left. At the T-junction at the top, turn right and walk past a small green with a water trough on your left and an oak tree in the middle. Continue on to the start of the walk.

The water trough was restored as part of the diamond jubilee celebrations for Queen Elizabeth II and the oak tree was planted in 1897 to celebrate the diamond jubilee celebrations for Queen Victoria.

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