

From the main entrance of Bath railway station, turn right and go through a railway arch to the rear of the station - straight ahead you will find a footbridge over the river. Cross the roads, turn left down Claverton Street towards the shops, turn right at The White Hart and walk up Prior Park Road.

Ralph Allen (1693-1764) made his first fortune reorganising the postal service in the Southwest. He was involved in making the River Avon navigable as far as Bath, and bought stone mines in Combe Down, on top of the hill above Widcombe. He promoted the stone, and his mansion at Prior Park (designed by John Wood the elder and begun c1734) was an advertisement for it.

The Bristol engineer John Padmore constructed a tramway to carry the stone from the mines to the wharves at the river in Widcombe where it was dressed into blocks and loaded onto barges. The river improvements also brought slates and Scandinavian timber to Bath more easily.

Prior Park Rd was the route of Ralph Allen's tramway. Allen's Row, on the right as you enter Prior Park Road, was designed by Wood and built for the stonemasons. The White Hart was also built around this time.

*The Abbey Cemetery was designed by J C Loudon, a famous Victorian landscape gardener, and consecrated in 1844. Loudon's ideas on cemetery design are set out in his book 'The Layout, Planting and Management of Cemeteries'. There are many important tombs here, and a **Tombstone Trail leaflet** (£1) should be available at **Prior Park Garden Centre** in Prior Park Rd and at the **NT Landscape Garden**.*

After the Garden Centre the road curves to the left, and just beyond Perrymead on the right

you will see the gates to the Abbey Cemetery. Go straight through the gates and either proceed up the wide path to the chapel, or turn immediately right to join the path along the principal axis of the cemetery. As well as providing spectacular views of the city, there are lovely views of St Thomas à Becket Church and Widcombe Manor, with Crowe Hall above.

The 'Norman' chapel was designed by G P Manners, who was Bath City Architect and who also designed St Matthew's and St Mark's in Widcombe. For reasons of security, Loudon proposed that there should be one main entrance to the cemetery. However, the recently opened footpath behind the chapel allows us to take a short cut to Blind Lane.

Take the new path immediately behind and to the right of the chapel. Turn left into Blind Lane and carry on up this steep path. You will come to an arch that supported a carriageway from which Ralph Allen once enjoyed the views. Shortly after this take the small path on the left into Priory Close.

From Priory Close turn left into Ralph Allen Drive. The National Trust Prior Park Landscape Garden entrance is a short distance downhill on the right.

There is a charge for garden entry (NT members free). Refreshments are available from the tea kiosk throughout the summer.

When you have admired the Landscape Gardens. take the Church Lane exit between the cottage and the NT yard and follow the Lane to St Thomas à Becket Church. Admire the façade of Widcombe Manor. Our mapped route returns via Widcombe Hill, but you may wish to deviate via The Tynning and Abbey View to enjoy the canal.



The Widcombe Association

A Circular Walk from Bath Railway Station to National Trust's Prior Park Landscape Gardens



via Widcombe and The Abbey Cemetery.

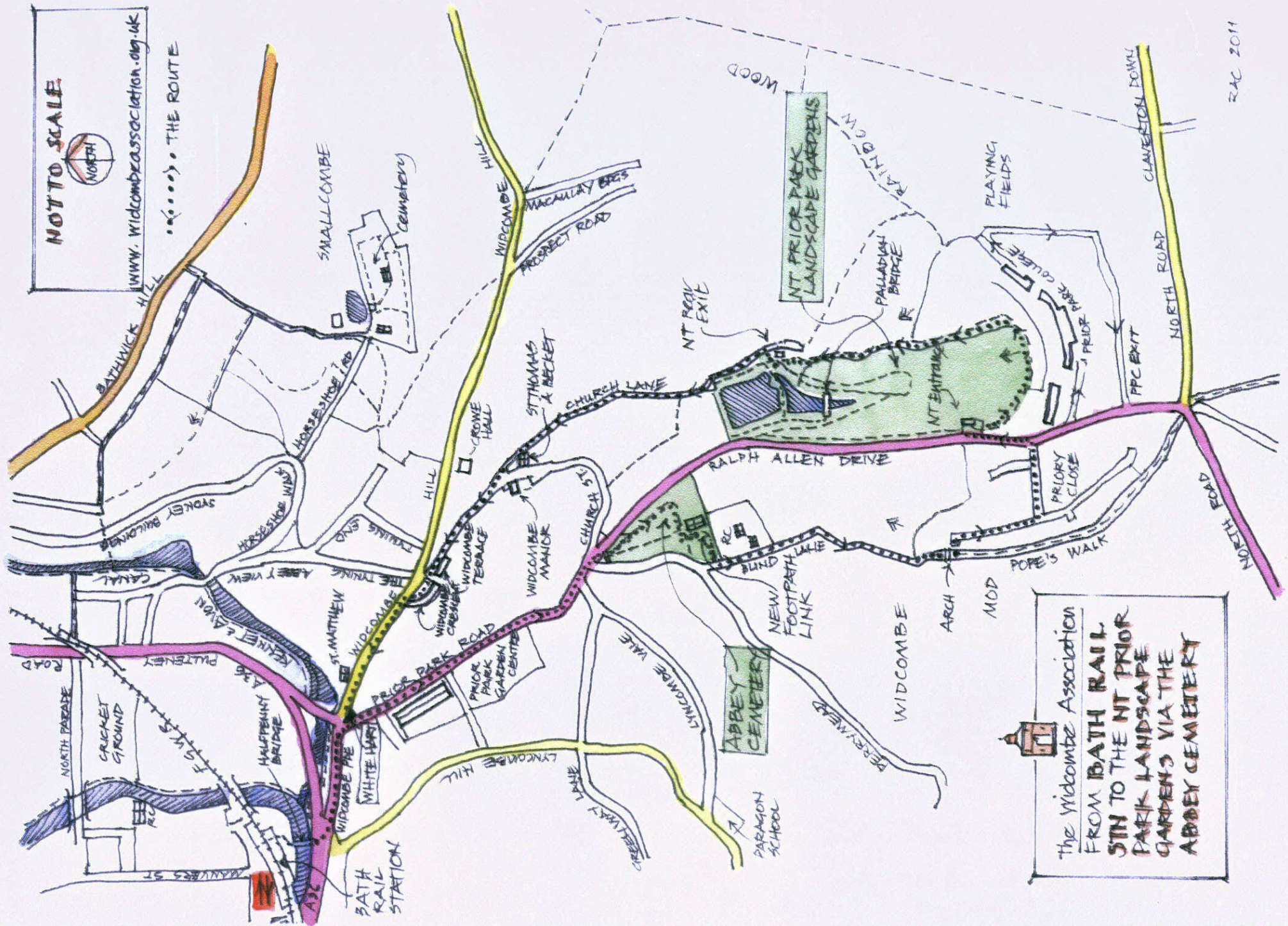
www.widcombeassociation.org.uk


NOT TO SCALE

 NORTH

www.widcombeassociation.org.uk

..... THE ROUTE



 The Widcombe Association

FROM BATH RAIL STN TO THE NT PRIOR PARK LANDSCAPE GARDENS VIA THE ABBEY CEMETERY