

Walk 4 – Historic Widcombe

Please read the general introductory notes before walking.

Total distance – 5.4kms. 3.4 miles. Duration – approx. 2 ½ hours at a moderate pace.

Starting from the rear of Bath Spa railway station cross the River Avon by the footbridge.

Halfpenny Bridge was originally built in 1863 as a toll bridge. In 1877 it collapsed as hundreds of people were crossing the river to attend the 100th anniversary of the Bath and West of England Agricultural Society Show at Beechen Cliff. Sadly, eight people lost their lives. Shortly afterwards the current bridge was built and was strengthened in 1992. The toll house became a newspaper kiosk for a short time but is now a private house.

At the end of the footbridge cross the dual carriageway at the traffic lights, then turn R and take the first L up Lyncombe Hill. Walk up the hill to where it bends R and turn L down Rosemount Lane. At the bottom of Rosemount Lane turn L into Lyncombe Vale then R into Prior Park Road. Cross Perrymead and go through the gates ahead into Abbey Cemetery.

Abbey Cemetery is one of the first in England to be listed as being of historic importance. Many Victorian notables are buried here. It is well worth wandering around to explore this delightful oasis. Note the Crimean war memorial, in itself a rarity and also unusual as it lists “other ranks” as well as officers.

Once in the cemetery head towards the chapel at the top. By the side of the chapel take the dirt track through the woods and continue to a KG. Turn L into the lane (Blind Lane) and walk past the Catholic Cemetery (worth a visit) and approx 100 metres further on follow the road round to the R – it becomes Pope’s Walk and passes under a stone bridge.

At the top by a road junction cross diagonally over and follow the alleyway almost opposite (between North Road and The Avenue). These narrow alleyways are known locally as *drungways*

At the junction note the road immediately on the L – this is Ralph Allen Drive and was built by Ralph Allen as a railway in 1726 to transport stone blocks from his quarries to the centre of the city. Ralph Allen Drive becomes Prior Park Road which is at the end of this walk.

At the end of the footpath turn L into Church Road and continue to the end. Turn R and immediately L into the grounds of Monkton Combe School and follow the driveway to North Road.

Turn R and after about 100 metres, just after the junction with Shaft Road on the R, go over the zebra crossing and go straight ahead on the cycle/footpath. Note that to the R is an area of old quarry workings and woodland known as Fairy Woods.

After about 100 metres there is a path on the L, ignore this and continue for approx 10 metres then turn L after a metal gate onto a footpath that runs around the edge of Monument Field (school sports field). This is part of the National Trust Skyline Walk.

Note that the path to the right is part of the National Trust Family Discovery Trail. This runs through woodland to the Long Wood Elf and Fairy Foray, adding about 1.5km to the total distance.

Follow the footpath along two sides of the sports field. Then at a junction follow the path down (to the L of a stone wall). At the bottom of the slope go through a KG and bear half-left to a path that goes downhill to a viewing panel. Turn R and follow the stepped path to a KG on the R. Turn R at the KG, follow the track across the field, through the squeeze stile and continue downhill.

At the end of the path, bear R along the lane Church Lane).

At the junction with Church Street turn R and continue for approx 250 metres, almost to the junction with Widcombe Hill.

Turn L down a steep flight of steps at the end of Widcombe Terrace and go straight ahead into Clarendon Road (with Widcombe Crescent on the R) and follow the road round to the R. About 70 metres after the bend, turn L down a footpath (Widcombe Rise).

At the end of the footpath turn R into Prior Park Road.

Cross over and turn R then immediately L up a small slope to follow a footpath at the front of Prior Park Buildings with the mill stream on the R. At the end of Prior Park Buildings there are two options:

A) cross straight over into Millbrook Lane and follow this along to the end and down a short flight of steps leading to the end of Widcombe Parade. Turn L and at the traffic lights cross the dual carriageway and the footbridge to return to the back of the railway station.

B) turn R and then L to continue along Prior Park Road. At the end turn L into Widcombe Parade where there is a good selection of shops and places to eat and drink. Continue straight to the traffic lights and cross the dual carriageway and the footbridge to return to the back of the railway station.

Map of the walk

