

# Bus Walks

## Walk no 1

# Midford to Bath



## Walk through the longest traffic-free tunnel in Europe!

The start point is the bus stop at the Hope & Anchor in Midford - served by the D2. On alighting the bus, cross the road and walk up through the car park at the back of the pub. Here you'll see the disused Midford platform on the old Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway (which featured in the classic 1950s film "The Titfield Thunderbolt"). The route follows the "Two Tunnels" path of the old railway line most of the way into Bath, and is initially part of National Cycle Route 24, before becoming route 244.

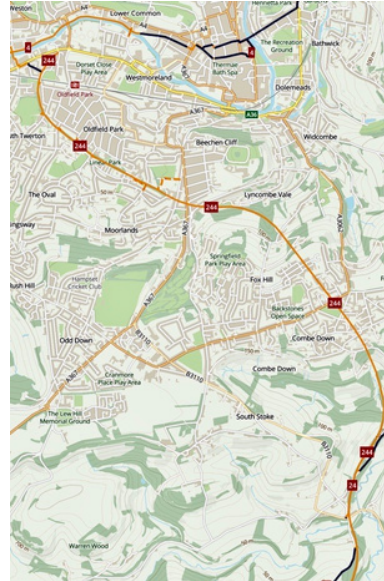
The first mile or so takes you along a wide, leafy path, with views to your left up to Midfield Castle (which used to be owned by Nicholas Cage), and across towards Monkton Combe on your right. Soon you reach the viaduct at Tucking Mill, where William Smith (the "father of geology") was born in 1769.

From here there are numerous options to explore different routes (a gate on your right, just before crossing the viaduct, leads down to the reservoir, from which there are footpaths to Monkton Combe, Combe Down, and points further north and west)...see the diagram at the foot of the next page.

"There is a bit of fantasy about the castle, but what appealed to Nicholas is the rather romantic landscape - we have a beautiful valley with its own woods. When he visited in May he walked all the way around the estate and decided that this was the place for him,"

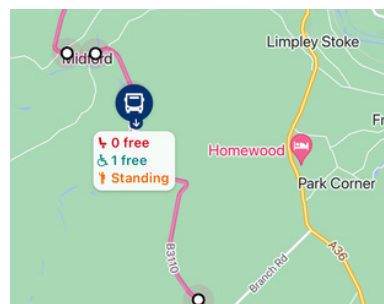


## Bus Walks



Above: Ordnance Survey map showing the route - starting in the bottom right corner, following firstly National Cycle Route 24, then National Cycle Route 244.

Below: Don't forget to use the First Bus app to track the progress of your bus!



Right: The sign at Tucking Mill showing the various alternative footpaths if you branch off down the hill to the left

Keeping on the Two Tunnels route you shortly reach Combe Down Tunnel - the first and longest of the tunnels. At 1,672 metres it is the longest traffic-free tunnel in Europe! It's reasonably well lit, but a torch can come in handy. Once you're out of the tunnel you have a couple of options - keep on the Two Tunnels track to the end (in Twerton), or take a path on your right shortly after exiting Combe Down Tunnel, and make your way to Widcombe via Lyncombe Vale Road and Lyncombe Hill.

If you stay on the track you soon enter the second, much shorter tunnel (Devonshire Tunnel - just 408 metres long). Once you emerge again, there's a great little café nearby - the Good Bear. Excellent coffee and cakes (and they serve beer, too). It's on Hayes Place, Bear Flat (just off Wells Road). Once fortified, continue on down to the River Avon and into central Bath via the riverside path.

From Bath Station there are frequent buses back to Norton, Rode and Beckington - although be aware that the new D2X doesn't serve Norton or Rode.



## Follow the route of the old Somerset & Dorset railway

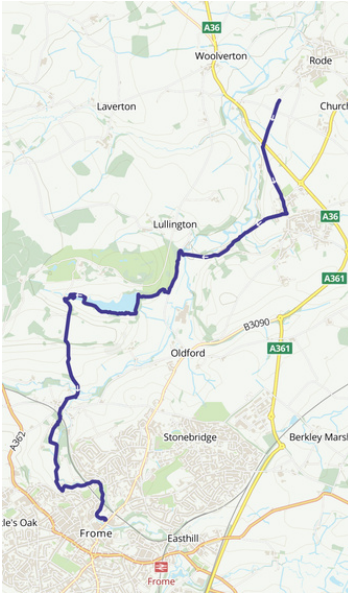
[If you follow the route through both tunnels you'll need to head in to the centre of Bath from Twerton - either on foot or by route - you can either do the public transport. The pedestrian whole route, which finishes in route is easy - following the Twerton, or opt for a slightly riverside path along the banks of shorter walk, leaving the route the Avon for a couple of kilometres, until you reach into the centre of Bath (from Churchill Bridge just before the where you can catch a bus back to bus station. Using public transport Rode). The latter option makes a you have the option of a short walk of approximately 4 miles, and train ride from Oldfield Park (two should easily be accomplished in or three trains an hour), or the around an hour and a half. bus (the no 1 or no 5).]



# Bus Walks

# Walk no 2

# Rode or Beckington to Frome



From Rode, this walk is approximately 10km (just over 6 miles), and should take around a couple of hours. It skirts the Orchardleigh Estate and is a really good mix of quiet lanes, well-maintained paths, and open-country tracks.

Starting from Rode, head out of the village along Straight Lane, cross the A36, and head into Beckington. Once you get into the heart of Beckington you can make your way down to the River Frome either via Mill Lane (the turning on the right just before Goose Street) or Stubbs Lane (the right hand turning, just before you get to the school).

## ***An ideal weekend walk, followed by brunch or a pint in Frome!***

If you head down Mill Lane, take the track to the left (after approx. 300 metres), sign-posted to the water recycling centre. Follow the track down the hill, and the path should be obvious (over a little stile). Carry on through a couple of fields - you'll see a sign for the "Beckington Loop" headed to your left, but don't take this - carry straight on across the next field, over the stile (next to the sign "Polite Notice") and through a small wooded area. You will then reach the bottom of Stubbs Lane - cross the road and head along the paved track opposite, past Dairy House Farm and then along the path down to the river where you'll reach a footbridge (see picture at the foot of the next page).



*[If you continued on to Stubbs Lane, the route is slightly easier. Approx 500 metres along Stubbs Lane, watch out for a footpath on the left, sign-posted "To Lullington" (see picture, left). Continue along the path, through a wooded area, and you'll emerge at the top of a field. Head downhill and join another path to the left of Dairy House Farm. Carry on down towards the river, where you'll find a wooden bridge (see picture below).]*

Cross the river and make your way up to Lullington Lane. You can either turn immediately left and walk along the lane, or head up the little path opposite, turning almost immediately left once in the wooded area and follow the path along the edge of the golf course.

After around 600 metres follow the path as it turns right, and head through the woods for another 500 metres until you emerge at Orchardleigh Lake. Turning left here, the path skirts the eastern and southern sides of the lake...this can get pretty muddy after rain (although in places there's some relatively new wooden walkways).

Top: The entrance to the path from Stubbs Lane towards Lullington  
Below left: A section of the "board walk" along the southern edge of Orchardleigh



At the western end of the lake the path crosses back to the opposite bank - here the path itself is in poor shape, often being under water and in February this bit definitely required wellies, or some nimble footwork!

Once on the other side, turn left and head towards the beautiful 13th century St Mary's Church (below) which sits on a small "island" at the far end of the lake. The church has no electricity, so services are held by candlelight, and the small organ is hand-pumped.

Leaving the church, head along the short track and turn left up the lane. When the lane takes a sharp right, follow the footpath straight ahead. Once over the brow of the hill you'll come to the tiny grass airstrip that serves Orchardleigh House. Signs warn you that it's an active runway!



Across the runway continue along the footpath until you reach a short section of road. Turn right at the junction, before taking the path on the left across a field (next to a small equestrian centre). Cross Coalash Lane and take the path opposite up to the railway line.

Taking care, cross the tracks and continue along the well-maintained path, skirting Whatcombe Farm and then head towards the river.

Follow the footpath along the river bank, under the railway line, past the allotments, back under the railway (!), and emerge opposite the Cheese & Grain. You are now well and truly in Frome - and ready for a well-earned coffee, brunch, or a decent pint!

There are very frequent buses from the centre of Frome back to Beckington, Rode and Norton...the D2 is supplemented by the X34 for those in Beckington and Rode, and the D2X serves Beckington.