

Staying at Swainswick Church

St Mary's Swainswick is part of the British Pilgrimage Trust's Sanctuary Network - churches and halls that all over the country that provide basic, low-cost accommodation to pilgrims.

If you would like to stay the night, you can find information on the [British Pilgrimage Trust](http://www.britishpilgrimage.org.uk) website or email swainswickchurch@gmail.com.



Longer Pilgrimage Routes

If you are interested in other pilgrimage routes, the British Pilgrimage Trust website is full of information. They list three routes going through Bath, all of which could include an overnight stay at Swainswick.

Aquae Sulis Way – Frome to Bath (2 days, 37km/ 23 miles)

A pilgrimage from Frome, a town built round a Holy Well to the hot springs of Bath (Aquae Sulis), sacred to the Celts, the Romans, the Georgians – and everyone in between.

Glastonbury Water Way – Bath, Frome, Wells & Glastonbury – (6 days, 88km/ 55 miles)

A longer route linking the ancient springs of Bath, via rivers and streams, to the mineral outflows at the foot of Glastonbury Tor, a place of pilgrimage for more than 10,000 years.

St Aldhelm's Way (7 days, 119km/ 74 miles)

Aldhelm was Bishop of Sherborne and founded a monastery in Malmesbury, another at Frome, and another at Bradford-on-Avon. Aldhelm spoke Latin and Greek fluently and was well-known for using music to draw crowds to listen to him preach. He died on May 25th 709 AD in Doultong near Shepton Mallett.

St Aldhelm's Way starts at Doultong and passes through Frome, Westbury, Bradford-on Avon, Bath, Colerne, Littleton Drew, ending at Malmesbury Abbey.



BRADFORD-ON-AVON TO BATH ABBEY

Ancient churches, river and canal paths, an iron age fort and a holy well

Day 1: Bradford on Avon to Swainswick (18 km/ 11 miles)

Day 2: Swainswick to Bath Abbey (9 km/ 5.5 miles)

Optional overnight stay at Swainwick Church, part of the British Pilgrimage Trust Sanctuary network

Terrain: canal path, lanes footpaths with some steep sections

"Solvitur ambulando"
~ It is solved by walking

St Augustine



Getting there

Start: The Anglo Saxon church of St Laurence in Bradford on Avon, a short walk from the railway station. Turn left out of the station car park down St Margaret's Street. Before the Bridge, turn left through a car park passing the front of St Margaret's Hall. Cross the footbridge and St Laurence's is to your left behind Holy Trinity Church.

Day 1 begins at the atmospheric Anglo-Saxon church of St Laurence in Bradford on Avon. From there it's a long-ish but easy walk along the River Avon and the Kennett and Avon Canal, over the beautiful aqueducts at Avoncliffe and Dundas. The route leaves the canal path at Bathampton and takes you across the meadows and up and over Little Solsbury Hill (the site of an iron age fort) to reach the 12th century Swainswick Church, where you can spend the night.

The principal architects of Georgian Bath, John Wood and his son John Wood the Younger (who designed All Saints Woolley) are buried in a family vault at Swainswick and there are intriguing links with the mythical King Bladud and stories about the origins of Bath.

Day 2 is shorter but hillier. The route takes you across the Lam Valley to the tiny 18th century church of All Saints Woolley and then along the lane to Bath's oldest church, St Mary's Charlcombe with its holy well. From Charlcombe, you climb up and over Lansdown, past Beckford's tower with spectacular views and into Bath along the Cotswolds Way, passing both the Royal Crescent and the Circus before reaching Bath Abbey.



All Trails map

*For information & ideas about pilgrimage visit:
www.britishpilgrimage.org*

*Downloads of this route available from:
www.swainswickchurch.org.uk*

Follow the road round to the left and take the path to the right next to some allotments.

Walk downhill across High Common keeping to the path along the fence until you reach Weston Lane. Cross the road and continue straight ahead into Royal Victoria Park. Walk down to a T-junction and turn left, past Victoria Column.

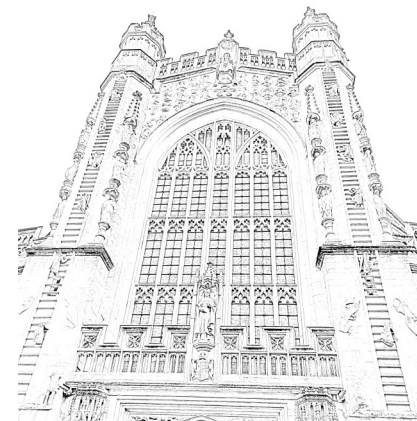
Turn left up Marlborough Buildings and in 100m cross over to walk in front of the Royal Crescent and along Brock Street to reach the Circus. From the Circus it's a short walk down Gay Street to Queen Square.



Royal Crescent

At the bottom corner of Queen Square turn left along Wood Street and Quiet Street.

When you get to the main shopping street, turn right and you will shortly find the Roman Baths and **Bath Abbey** on your left.



Bath Abbey

Cross over and follow the lane straight ahead which shortly joins Charlcombe Lane. Just past a driveway marked Pennsylvania, take an enclosed path on your right leading through a gate to **St Mary's Charlcombe** with its peaceful garden and **holy well**.

After visiting the church and garden, retrace your steps through the gate and head up the steep steps to your left.

At the top, turn left on a permissive path alongside some trees. At the end of the field, cross the stile and turn right uphill towards some houses.



St Mary's Charlcombe



Beckford's Tower

Cross a stone stile at the top and turn right along a footpath to the lane. Turn left and follow the lane round to the left between houses. When you reach a T junction, cross the road and continue straight ahead past the entrance to **Beckford's Tower**. The path goes slightly to the right through a wooded patch and into a field with spectacular views across to Kelston Roundhill with its topknot of trees - and behind you to Beckford's Tower.

Once through the kissing gate, turn left and follow the path along the top of the field, which soon starts to head downhill to cross a metalled driveway by a cattle grid. Continue on the clear path downhill through fields.

Keep straight ahead through Primrose Community Woodland and a number of gates until you reach a T junction. Turn left on the track to reach a gate. Once through the gate, continue straight ahead (now waymarked Cotswolds Way) ignoring paths off to the right, to reach a walled path.

Continue along the walled path, crossing a road (Primrose Hill) and, when the wall ends, go straight ahead along the road following the Cotswolds Way. After about 200m, turn right down Sion Hill.

Day 1: Bradford on Avon to Swainswick

Coming out of St Laurence's church turn left and cross the bridge over the river into the car park. Walk round two sides of St Margaret's Hall to find a footpath along the river just to the right of the entrance to Timbrells Yard.

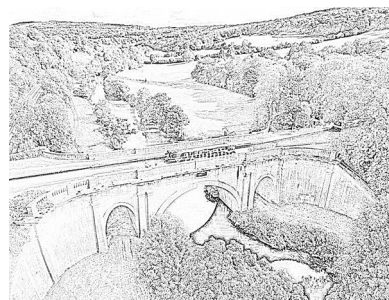
Where the path divides, keep right under a metal bridge and then straight ahead along a tarmac pathway. When the path meets a metalled track turn right along the river. If it's not too soon to stop, you could visit the 14th century **Tithe Barn** on your left.



Bradford on Avon Tithe Barn

After about 500m, fork right on a gravel path and continue along the river and into a field. Keep following the river for around 1km. When you reach a weir, follow the path to the left as it zigzags up to the canal.

Turn right on the canal path which curves round to the right past some cottages to reach the **Avoncliffe aqueduct**. Don't cross the aqueduct here. Instead turn right (signed Dundas) and loop back sharp left at Cross Guns to go under it. Then walk up some steps on your left and turn left at the top to walk over the aqueduct with the canal now on your right.



Dundas Aqueduct

From this point, it's a straight-forward 10km stroll along the canal path to Bathampton, through Conkwell Wood, over **Dundas Aqueduct** and past Warleigh Weir.

When you reach the **George Inn** in Bathampton, leave the canal path down some steps and go straight ahead along the road to visit **St Nicholas Church**.

Coming out of the church, continue along the road away from the canal crossing first the railway line and then the bypass. After about 100m, take a path on the right signed to Batheaston.

Follow the gravel track through **Bathampton Meadows**, eventually crossing the River Avon. Go through the car park to Batheaston High Street and turn left.

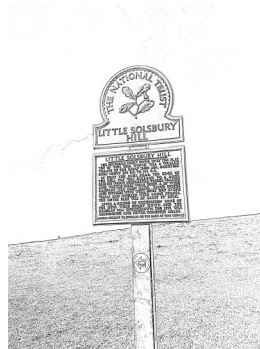
Walk past Brook Lodge and the old Congregational Chapel and in another 20m, go up stone steps on your right and along an enclosed path to a road. Turn right and walk through Batheaston village.

Just before **St John's Church**, go up some steps on the left to an enclosed path signed Bailbrook. Follow the path across a field with the hedge on your left, over a brook and uphill to reach a lane.

Turn right and after 25m, go up steps on the left on a footpath signed Solsbury Hill. At the top of the steps, follow the right hand path through some trees and uphill to a gate to reach the lane again.

Through the gate, continue up the lane and in about 50m, turn right up a steep lane to Solsbury Hill. At the top of the lane, go straight ahead through a gate and to the top of the hill.

At the National Trust sign turn left and follow the path around the perimeter of the hill, past the trig point with views over Bath and the Lam Valley. When you have reached the opposite side of the hill, look out for a path on your left which goes down hill towards footpath signs and a gate. [To the left of the path is a small Labyrinth, built by protesters occupying the space when the bypass was built.]



Little Solsbury Hill

Go through the gate go straight ahead through the field and into a patch of trees. Once through the trees, continue straight ahead, keeping to the left hand path to reach a gate on to a lane.

Turn left to reach the road and cross it very carefully. Turn left and walk down the pavement following the road as it loops round under the bypass and meets a road.

Cross the road and turn right on the pavement up the hill. Just before the road meets the bypass again, turn left into Upper Swainswick. Follow the lane through the village and just past a small village green, turn left down a steep hill. At the bottom of the hill turn right to reach St Mary's Church.



St Mary's Swainswick

Day 2: Swainswick to Bath Abbey

[For an alternative route retracing your steps to the canal, see the 2-day pilgrim path from Keynsham to Bath Abbey.]

Walk out of **Swainswick churchyard** and follow the footpath sign diagonally to your left which goes through the garden of Woodbine Cottage. Follow the path to bottom right hand corner of the field below.



All Saints Woolley

Continue along the bottom of the field with the Lam Brook on your left. When you reach a footbridge, cross the Lam and follow the path uphill as it curves round to the right. At a finger post, walk uphill along the right hand field boundary to a kissing gate. An enclosed path leads into the 'Doubly Thankful' village of Woolley. **All Saints Church** is on your right.

After visiting the church, walk up Church Street with the memorial garden on your right. At the top turn left to walk along the lane. After about 1 km, look out for a footpath sign on your right and follow it up to another lane.