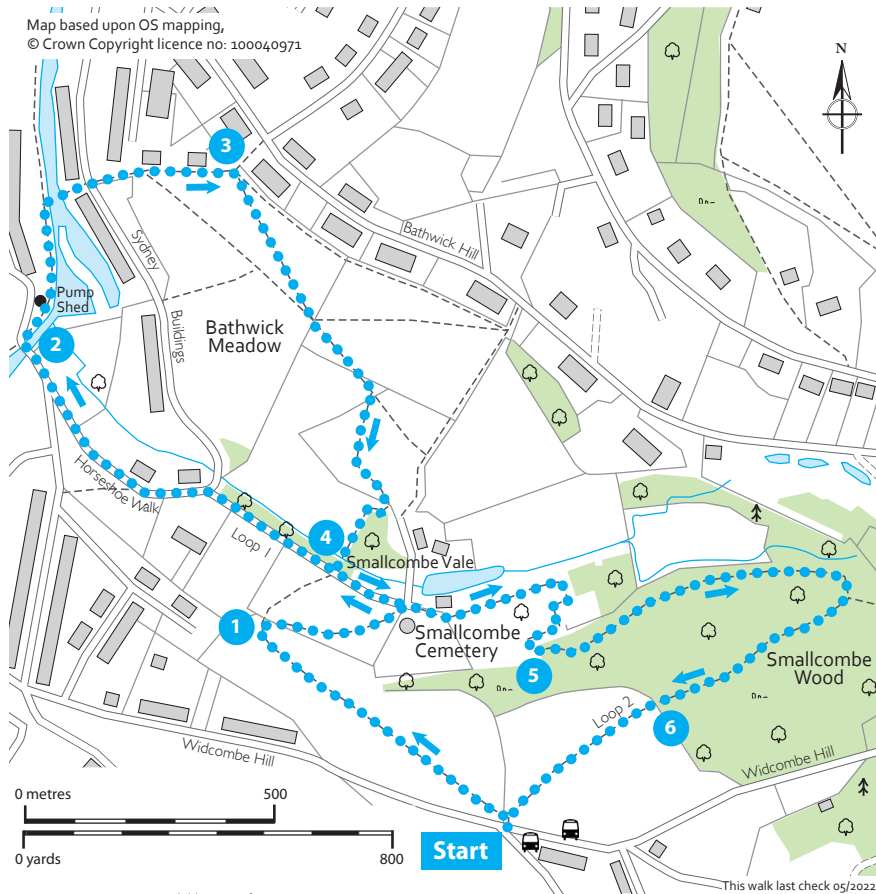


Walk 10 Sensory Smallcombe

A figure of eight walk which can easily be split into two circulars. A varied route exploring this hidden corner of Bath and encouraging you to tune into all of your senses. A picturesque cemetery, wildflower meadows, fantastic views over Bath, a calming canal side & beautiful woodland.

Route



This walk, is a figure of eight which means it can also be walked as two shorter loops. In both loops we encourage you to explore your senses with suggestions along the route.

Loop 1 – Canal Side and Bathwick Meadows Viewpoint

From Widcombe Hill pass through the metal gate into the National Trust's Smallcombe Vale. Turn left and pass through another gate. The view here suddenly opens up in front of you. First the meadow and then the City of Bath beyond. *Take a moment to be still and notice the contrasts in shapes and colours between the natural and built landscapes.*

Take the most worn route ahead down the hill, staying on the right when the path splits. The slope at first is gentle then becomes steeper. *Where the gradient changes, on this exposed spot, see if you can use your body to detect the direction the wind is coming from. Closing your eyes might help.* At the bottom you will pass a stone cattle trough and then see a metal gate **1**, go through and turn

Start & Finish: Widcombe Hill, opposite Prospect Place/Macaulay Buildings

*W3W - chimp.mint.desk Can also be accessed easily from canal (point 2 on the map) if coming from Bath City Centre.

Distance: 2.1 miles / 3.4 km with an up and down of 454 ft / 138 m

Slopes: Long and steady descent down from the start, steady ascent in the woods and to return to the start.

Steps & stiles: No stiles, but a tree step over. Set of steps in the woodland (loop 2), and up from the canal (loop 1). A step free route can be taken around the cemetery.

Terrain: Unpaved paths, paved tow path and pavement. Woodland can be muddy in the winter

Transport: Visit travelinesw.com. Macaulay Buildings bus stop at the start on Widcombe Hill. Loop 1 can also be easily reached from Pulteney Road (A36)

Free parking available near the start on Widcombe Hill. Very few 2hr limited parking bays available where Pulteney Gardens meets Horseshoe Walk.

Public toilets: No public toilets

Refreshments: The Pump Shed kiosk is open seasonally

Rest points: Benches in Smallcombe Cemetery, two benches on Bathwick Meadow, logs in Smallcombe Wood, arms of lock gates along the canal.

Dogs welcome: Yes, though be aware of grazing livestock intermittently throughout the year

Wheel friendly: No, though parts of the cemetery are

Features on the route: Kennet & Avon Canal, Bathwick Meadow Viewpoint, Richens Orchard, Smallcombe Cemetery & Smallcombe Woods.

right along a path that runs along the edge of the field and slightly downhill. *As you walk keep an ear out for birds singing, how many different calls can you detect?*

At the bottom of the field pass through another metal gate. If you are continuing with Loop 1, turn left after the gate and walk along the lane, pausing to look right to see the entrance to the cemetery which is explored in Loop 2. If you are following Loop 2, turn right after the gate and pick up the directions after Point 4 on the reverse of this sheet.

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At the end of the drive, you will come to a road (Horseshoe Walk). Cross over to the pavement on the other side and turn left. Follow the pavement all the way along until you reach a bridge over the canal. *Stop on the bridge and listen to the water running through the locks* 2.

Continue over the bridge and then turn right as soon as you reach the other side to pass through a gap and onto the tow path. The canal should be on your right. Walk along the tow path until you see a small white railed bridge up ahead (just before lock 13). Use the bridge to cross the canal.

The path heads uphill soon emerging onto a road. Cross the road and walk up two shallow flights of steps until you reach a metal gate on your right into the National Trust's Bathwick Meadows 3. *Before continuing, take a moment to feel your heart beat. Is it beating a little faster after the climb? Can you feel it starting to steady as you rest?*

When you are ready, go through the gate and continue on the most worn path across the middle of the field, enjoying the views as they open up on your right. At the other end of the field there is a bench, go through the gateway to the right of this and take the right-hand path along the field edge to another metal gate. Go through the gate into Richens Orchard. There is another bench slightly down the hill if you wish to divert to sit awhile.

To continue, follow the path to another metal gate which exits the orchard into another meadow. Bear right towards a way mark post you should just be able to see the top of. Beyond the post you will see the main path as it sweeps downhill. The path narrows before reaching a metal gate. Go through the gate and then on to pass through a wooden gate (which may be propped open), before descending a short flight of steps to a fenced in path which runs all the way down to another wooden gate before meeting the drive up to Smallcombe Cemetery 4.

Loop 2 – Smallcombe Cemetery and Smallcombe Wood

Turn left up to the ornate metal gates beside a cottage. The gates can be stiff, but the left-hand gate will open. Pass through, there is an information board about the cemetery on a rock to your right which you may like to read before continuing. *For further details about the cemetery and some of the people buried here go to www.smallcombegardencemetery.org* Return to the gate.

From the gate take the mown grass path to the left, alongside the cottage shed. *Stop a little way down the path to pick out the different shaped headstones. Do you have a favourite?*

Continue along the path, ignoring other paths to the right. *Notice how some of the older gravestones are covered in moss and lichens. Feel the moss with your fingertips – how does it feel? How does it contrast with the bare stone it grows on?*

At the end, the path turns to the right and slightly up hill. *On the corner here Garlic Mustard grows in the spring and early summer. It is an edible plant – which people tend to love or hate.*



Garlic Mustard

© Andrew Curtis

At the T-junction turn right to walk through the middle of the cemetery. *Trees, grass, flowers are all ahead, can you pick out as many different shades of green as you can along this path?*

Soon you will see, on your left, a pair of dark green yew trees standing sentry on a path up to a bench beneath a wall. Head up to the bench. *On your way, have a feel of the yew leaves as you pass. Did you expect them to feel this way?*

Take a seat on the bench and close your eyes for a moment, what can you hear?

When you are ready to continue, go back down to the original path and turn left just before the yew trees. *As you pass from the open cemetery into the more wooded part of the site can you feel any difference in temperature on your skin? Is it a pleasant or unwelcome change?*

Take the paved path left 5, uphill and as it curves to the right take a sharp left to take a short flight of steps up into the woods. If you want to head back, without entering the woods, you can at this point by continuing along the stone path which will bring you back around to the entrance of the cemetery.

Go through the gap in the stone wall and turn left to follow a woodland path. In the spring and early summer, the woodland is covered in wild garlic. *All parts of this plant give off a strong garlic smell if crushed. The whole plant is also edible and can be eaten raw.*

Stay on this path as it continues uphill through the wood. *As you pass the trees, close to the path, brush your hands along the bark to see how different each tree feels from the next.*

Eventually you will see a field on your left. *Listen carefully and you might start to pick up the sound of water. Can you hear it before you see it? Using your hearing alone, can you find the source of the sound?*

The path then turns to the right, parallel to the stream, and heading up hill. *Take a moment to look into the water, can you see anything reflecting in it? If you are able to, scoop some water into your hand, how does it feel?*

Further up the slope, staying close to the stream, climb over a fallen tree to stay on the path, then go up three flights of steps and then follow the path as it eventually bears right at the junction. *Look in the mud of the path for prints, can you work out who has been here before you...people, dogs, a deer?*



Deer tracks.

Follow the path and it soon widens. *If it is a sunny day, can you spot dappled light dancing on the path in front of you?*

The path eventually meets a field gate with a pedestrian gate next to it (known as a Bristol Gate) 6. Go through the gate into the meadow beyond. Take the path straight ahead which will lead you back to the start.

*W3W stands for What3Words, which is an alternative way of specifying precise locations. You can use the W3W app or website for free to see these locations on a map.