



Royal
Geographical
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Connecting cities

A self guided walk to routeways in the Avon Valley



Discover the village of Saltford between Bath and Bristol
Explore how it has been shaped by four major routeways
Find out the physical and political stories behind their development

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the stories of our landscapes
discovered through walks





This booklet is to be used alongside the audio commentary for this walk

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Connecting cities

Explore four different routeways in the Avon Valley

Introduction

You may think of routeways just as means of getting from A to B, but on this walk in the Avon Valley you will discover that every route has its own story.

The Avon Valley links the cities of Bath and Bristol. Half way along, in Saltford village, you can find four different routeways located within a stone's throw of one another.

There is a former stagecoach road, The Great Road, now the present A4 and one of Britain's busiest A roads. There is the River Avon, which was converted into a canal in the eighteenth century, although it is used now by narrow boats for holidays rather than by barges carrying coal.



Cycle route sign
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

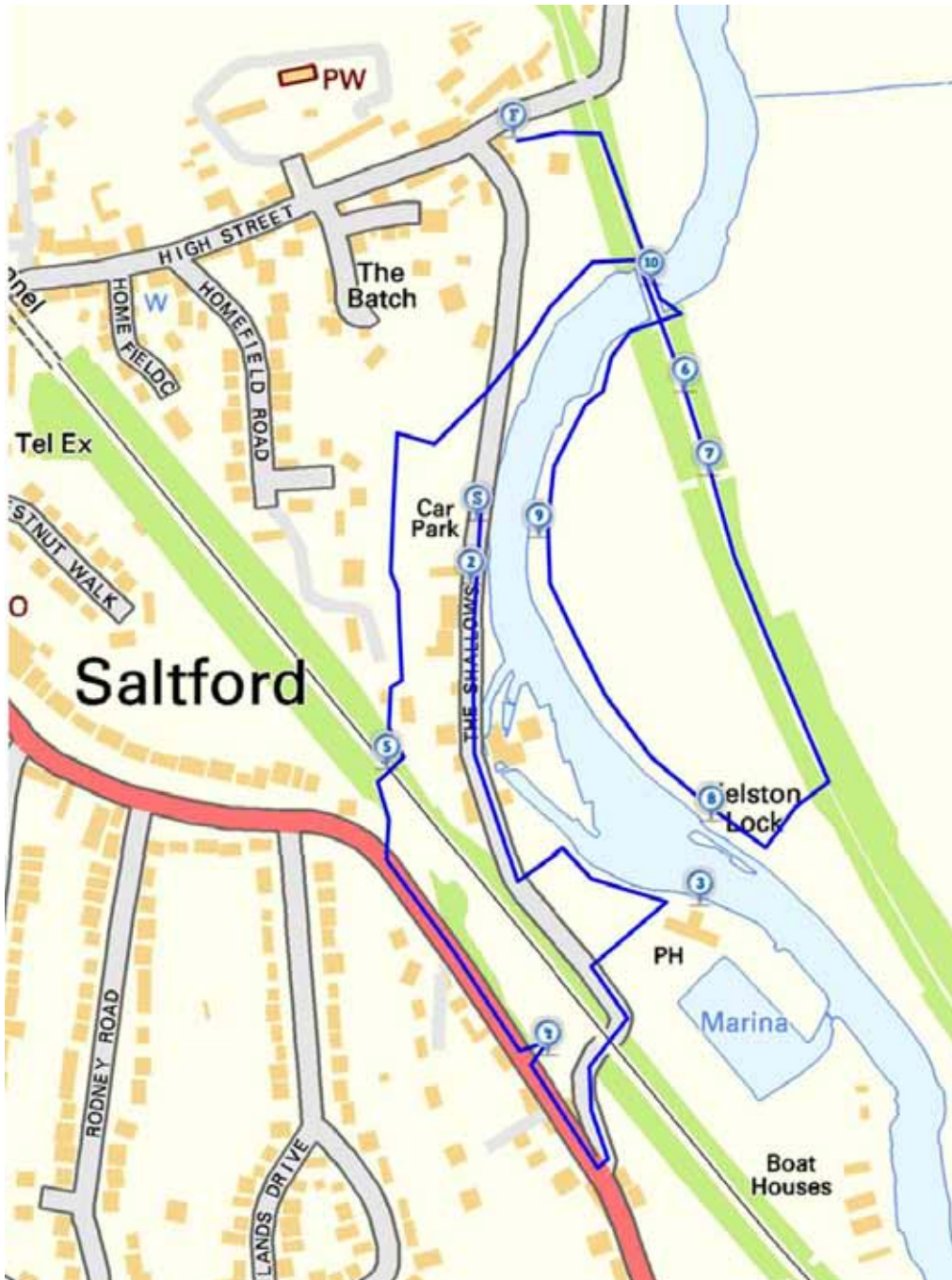


Narrow boats moored at Saltford Marina
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

And there are two railway lines – Brunel's Great Western Railway, still the main Bristol-London route, and the now-defunct Midland line, which was converted into Britain's first Sustrans cycle track in the 1980s.

On this walk you will find out how each routeway fits into the landscape, hear some of the stories about the physical and political challenges to their construction, and discover how the routeways have been variously used for industry, transportation and leisure.

Route map



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Stopping points

- 1.** The Shallows
- 2.** The Shallows
- 3.** The Riverside Inn
- 4.** A4 Bath Road
- 5.** Footbridge over the railway
- 6.** Information board, Bristol and Bath Railway Path
- 7.** Information board, Bristol and Bath Railway Path
- 8.** Beside Kelston Lock
- 9.** Riverbank footpath
- 10.** Saltford Bridge
- 11.** Bird in Hand pub

Practical information

Location	Saltford, Somerset, Southwest England
Getting there	<p>Train - the nearest railway station is Bath Spa (5 miles away). Direct services run to London Paddington twice an hour plus connections to Southwest England, the South Coast and South Wales</p> <p>Car - Saltford is on the A4 between Bristol (7 miles away) and Bath (5 miles away). The only car park in Saltford is at The Shallows. It is free of charge. There is also some street parking</p> <p>Bus - a bus service runs between Bristol and Bath, stopping outside the Co-op in Saltford. Services run every 12 minutes from 7am until 7pm each weekday and every 30 minutes at weekends.</p> <p>Bicycle - Saltford is on National Cycle Network Route 4. There is a metal bike rack in the Bird in Hand pub car park</p>
Start point	The Shallows, Saltford, BS31 3EZ
Finish point	The Shallows or the Bird in Hand pub, BS31 3EJ
Distance	1½ miles
Level	Gentle – A largely flat route with just a small ascent and descent
Conditions	The route is on a mixture of lanes, pavements and paths. It is mostly quiet bar a short section beside the A4 where you should take care due to the fast moving traffic here. Also take care of children by the Avon Canal towpath.
Suitable for	<p>Families - one short section on a busy road so take care with children</p> <p>Dogs - keep dogs on a lead by roads and on grazing land</p>

**Directions
from the A4 to
the walk start**

- On the A4 through Saltford look for a crossroads near a parade of shops (which includes a post office and car dealership).
- Turn into Beech Road (left if coming from Bristol; right if coming from Bath) which is indicated with an old fashioned signpost for Saltford Village and a modern sign for St Mary's Church and Evangelical Church.
- After about 250 metres is a T junction. Turn right into High Street and follow the sign for St Mary's Church. Take care as this road is quite narrow in parts.
- After about 300 metres turn right in front of the Bird in Hand pub and follow the narrow lane. Pass the public toilets on the right and park in the car park on the right immediately after.

Refreshments

The Shallows is an ideal place for a picnic.

There are two local pubs on the walk route which serve refreshments and food: the Riverside Inn (Stop 3) and the Bird in Hand (Stop 11).

Facilities

There are free public toilets at The Shallows (Stop 1 and 11)

Other info

Saltford Brass Mill is well worth a visit. The only working 18th century water mill in Britain, it is open on the second and fourth Saturday of the month from May to December. Group visits by prior arrangement. Contact Brian Cooper 01225 872954.

**Tourist
information**

Bath Visitor Information Centre, Abbey Chambers, Abbey Churchyard, Bath BA1 1LY (Tel: 0906 711 2000)

Bristol Visitor Information Centre, E Shed, 1 Canon's Road, Bristol, BS1 5TX (Tel: 0906 711 2191)

Directions

These directions are for use with the Avon Routeways walk audio commentary. Listen to each track then read the directions below to get to the next stop.

1. Welcome to the Avon Valley

The Shallows

Directions 1

From The Shallows car park, go to the river bank and listen to Track 2.

2. What's in a name?

The Shallows

Directions 2

Walk along The Shallows with the river on your left. Shortly after Saltford Brass Mill and a cottage is a footpath on the left hand side. Follow this footpath into the grounds of The Riverside Inn. If this path is too overgrown or waterlogged, you can continue along the lane and enter the pub grounds through the vehicle entrance and car park. Stand outside the pub overlooking the weir and listen to Track 3.

3. Improving navigation

The Riverside Inn

Directions 3

Leave the Riverside Inn through the car park. Turn left onto the lane and follow it under the railway bridge. Take care here as vehicles can come round the blind corner at speed. At the main A4 Bath Road, turn right along the pavement. After a short distance is an entrance to a railway storage yard. Stand here and listen to Track 4.

4. The Great Road

A4 Bath Road

Directions 4

Continue up the hill. Just before the top of the hill where the road bends to the left is a footpath on the right hand side. This is a good point at which to stop and look at the view of the valley including the river and railway. Follow the footpath to the bridge over the railway and listen to Track 5.

5. The Great Western Railway

Footbridge over the railway

Directions 5

Cross to the other side of the bridge and turn left with the metal fence of the railway cutting on your left. After a short distance, the path forks – take the right fork between houses. Where the path forks again with steps upwards to the left and a path straight on, go straight on. After a short way the path goes down steps to reach the Shallows car park.

Turn left onto the lane past the public toilets. On the opposite side from the toilets is a gateway leading to a permissive footpath. Follow this footpath and up the steps onto the embankment of the old railway and turn right.

Note: After wet weather this footpath path can get very muddy. For a dry alternative, continue along the lane to the Bird in Hand pub. Turn right down the lane and just below the pub car park is access up onto the embankment of the old railway. Turn right along the track.

Keep to one side as the track is often busy with speeding cyclists. Cross the bridge over the river. Stop after about 200 yards at the information board and bench and listen to Track 6.

6. An industrial line

Information board, Bristol and Bath Railway Path

Directions 6

To listen to Track 7 you can stay at the information board or continue walking along along the track.

7. Second incarnation

Bristol and Bath Railway Path

Directions 7

Continue along the track a short way until the first gap in the bushes on the right hand side where there is a wooden seat. Go through the metal gate and follow the path down the field. Go through another metal gate to the riverside. Go to the side of Kelston Lock opposite the Riverside Inn. Listen to Track 8.

8. Pleasure boating

Beside Kelston lock

Directions 8

From the lock, follow the riverside footpath with the river on your left. Pause partway along this path and listen to Track 9.

9. From towpath to trail

Riverbank footpath

Directions 9

Continue following the river bank footpath. Look out for kingfishers along this stretch of river. Go under the railway bridge then turn right to climb up the embankment. Turn right onto the cycle path and go onto the bridge. Stay on the right hand side of the bridge and look at the view. Listen to Track 10.

10. Ancient routeways

Saltford Bridge, Bristol and Bath Railway Path

Directions 10

Immediately after the bridge, you can turn left down the steps and follow the footpath the way you came back to The Shallows for Stop 11.

Alternatively, you can carry on a short way further along the track to the Bird in Hand pub on the left hand side for Stop 11. You might like to finish your walk with some refreshment. The 'bacon buttie and a cup of tea' deal is highly recommended (not available Sundays).

11. More than just getting from A to B

Bird in Hand pub or The Shallows

You have now reached the end of the walk. If you went to the Bird in Hand pub you can return to The Shallows by retracing your steps towards the bridge and using the directions for Track 10 above.

Credits

The RGS-IBG would like to thank the following people and organisations for their assistance in producing this Discovering Britain walk:

- **Dick Bateman** for creating the walk and providing photographs
- **Vivian Godfrey** at the old station master's house for sharing the fabulous view from her garden
- **Chris Warren**, Saltford Environment Group transport spokesperson, for talking about the campaign to re-open the village station
- **Jenny Lunn** for editing the walk materials
- **Rory Walsh** for taking photographs
- **Caroline Millar** for editing the audio commentary
- **Neil McKenna, Alex Ricketts, Nick Stanworth** and **Florence Lee** for additional assistance with compiling walk resources
- **Tony Coverdale** and **Akeman Press** for additional archive photographs



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