

This walk along the sides of the By Brook & Avon valleys has spectacular views, and by using surface evidence, allows you to glimpse into the past world that lies beneath your feet.

**Distance:** 8km/5 miles with an up and down of 200m/650ft.

**Time:** 2.5 to 3.5 hours

**Start:** Dovers Park bus stop. There is road parking nearby. ST7916685 W3W: dangerously.reader.social

### Access & difficulty.

You will need a reasonable level of fitness to cope with some steep slopes. There are several stiles/gates and one narrow footbridge.

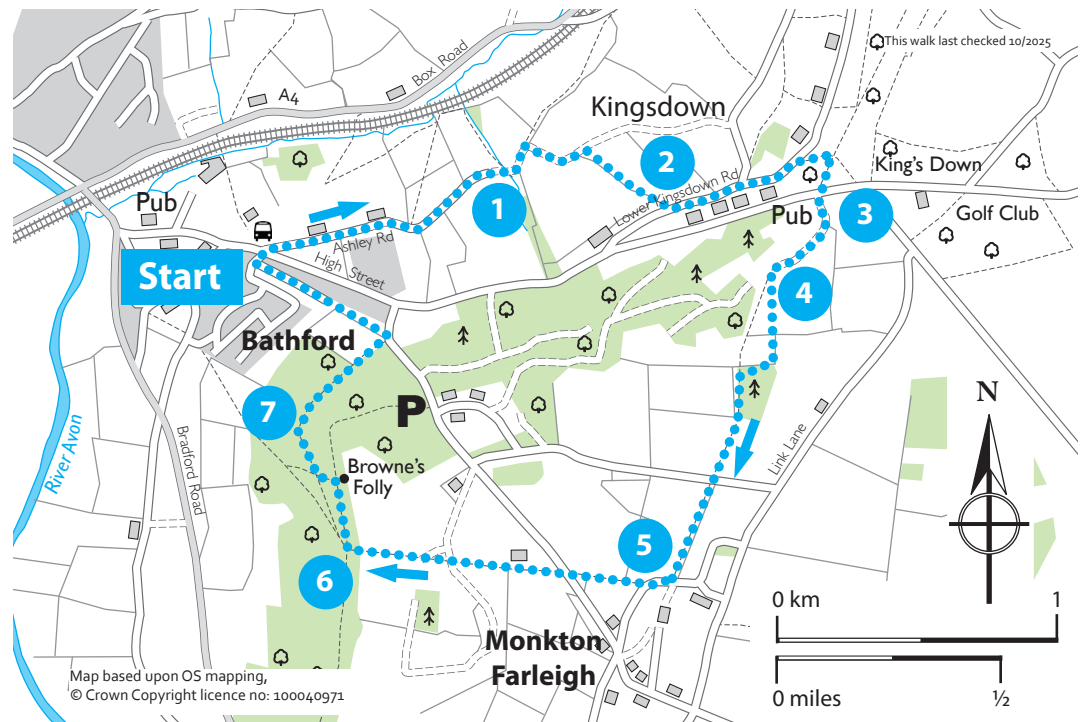


By Brook Valley

### Route:

From the bus stop, cross the High Street on the pedestrian crossing and bear right into Ashley Road. Follow this road, which becomes a track, out of Bathford. Pause by a bend about 170m beyond the line of the pylons. Note some large blocks of stone on the side of the track.

A couple of metres below you is the 1.4 km long cut-and-cover Farleigh Down tunnel that, during WW2, was designed to transport 1,000 tons of ammunition each day between the railway on the valley floor and the munitions depot in the quarries on the hill above, which we pass later in the walk.



Farleigh Down munitions tunnel

Carry on downhill to cross a footbridge over a small intermittent stream. Twenty metres beyond look for the stone cobbles on the ground.

This marks part of the route of a tramway used to bring quarried stone from Monkton Farleigh Quarry to the railway sidings.

**1** Continue along the track for 150m to a bend with a kissing gate on the left.

From the kissing gate, you

can see a pillbox and, beyond that, partly hidden by the trees, are the rusting skeletal remains of the railway loading bay of the WW2 tunnel.

The much older tramway crossed near the pillbox to the far right-hand corner of the field.

Return to the main track/bridleway and follow this uphill in a sunken lane until you reach a gate on your right.

The track you are following was once a coaching road between Bath and London until 1757. Imagine being a passenger in the stagecoach.

Go through the gate and continue uphill. Take a rest at

a gate on your right halfway up and take in the view.

The hump of the cut-and-cover tunnel can just be seen in front of the houses in Bathford.

**2** Close to the top of the climb, go through the gate and follow the gravel drive to Lower Kingsdown Road. Take care of traffic. Turn left and continue past Wormcliffe Lane, where the old coach road emerged.

The road rises steeply to a T-junction. Follow the path straight ahead, which also continues uphill. Be aware of and respect golfers. At the golf course, take the cinder path to the right and then right again at the top.

Look for the markers and directional signs (southwest) for the Palladian Way. Go to the left of the bell and head diagonally to a gap in the trees and proceed down the steps to cross the busy road.

**3** The path continues across the road as a track. After 30m, bear left and follow the edge of the fields. Stop at the gate and stile. Look for depressions in the



field. Underneath these depressions are passages where rock was taken out from a Victorian underground quarry now called Swan Mine.

**4** Instead of going through the gate, take the diversionary path marked to your left. To the left and in the distance, is Roundhill near Devizes. Continue to a gate beyond the pylons, where you cross the Roman military road between Bath and Marlborough. Turn right beyond the gate and after 180m rejoin the Palladian Way and turn left along the edge of a wood.

After 15m, in a gap on the right, you can glimpse a small Bronze Age tumulus.

Emerge onto an open field with a view, in good weather, across to the Westbury White

Horse. The path eventually crosses a road and continues in a straight line to another road at the perimeter of Monkton Farleigh Manor House. Turn right along the road and at the bend, bear right past a house and on through a gate.

**5** Follow the track ahead and pause after approximately 100m.

To the right across the field is a raised platform of rock covered in soil. This was a dump for the waste from converting the underground quarries to the ammunition depot.

Now look diagonally left to the Monks Conduit building, which supplied water to the nearby priory.

Continue to cross another road and onto the path that leads, after about 200m, to a boiler house on the right. This supplied power to the wartime depot below. Forty metres beyond, the path passes through a gate and after 220m, to cross a road.

From the road, you can view, to the left, one of the four military slope shafts going deep underground. At the end of the abandoned building, take a small detour to the left for a few metres to listen for the noise from the top of a round shaft.

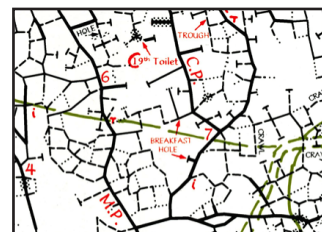
This shaft provides air circulation for the Restore company, which now uses the old munitions store for commercial document

storage.

Retrace your steps back to the path and turn left, and then left again at the tarmac track. Underneath you now are parts of the 50 km of passageways of Monkton Farleigh Quarry. Continue along the edge of fields to the woodland and onto the edge of the scarp, noting, on the way, the Restore slope shaft on your right.



Map showing part of Monkton Farleigh



**6** Go straight on down the scarp slope.

Stop at the 15th step and look to your right for one of the old entrances into the quarry that was not converted to a munitions store during the war.

Retrace your route back up the steps and turn left at the top by the wall that marks a county boundary.

After 250m, and being careful when passing the landslips, you reach Browne's Folly and a splendid view of the Avon Valley and Bath. Turn left,

through the kissing gate at the folly and move carefully down the steps to reach a gate on the left. Ignore this and instead follow the path to the right down through another gate. This soon reaches a junction. Turn right here and follow the path until you see an enormous slab of rock on your right with glimpses of a cliff face



beyond.

**7** From here, bear down the small path which eventually emerges onto a road junction. Turn left at the house to reach an obvious path after 35m. This becomes a road after about 300m before reaching the small park, near the Bathford Community Shop and back to the start.

It is possible that this stretch was part of the military Roman road you crossed earlier in the walk.

For further information, including old photographs search online for the following...Swan Mine, Monkton Farleigh quarries, Farleigh Down tunnel.