

Walk 6: Bridgwater Docks and Town Circular



Length: 2 miles – 3.3km

Good for: All walkers

Theme: History, Architecture

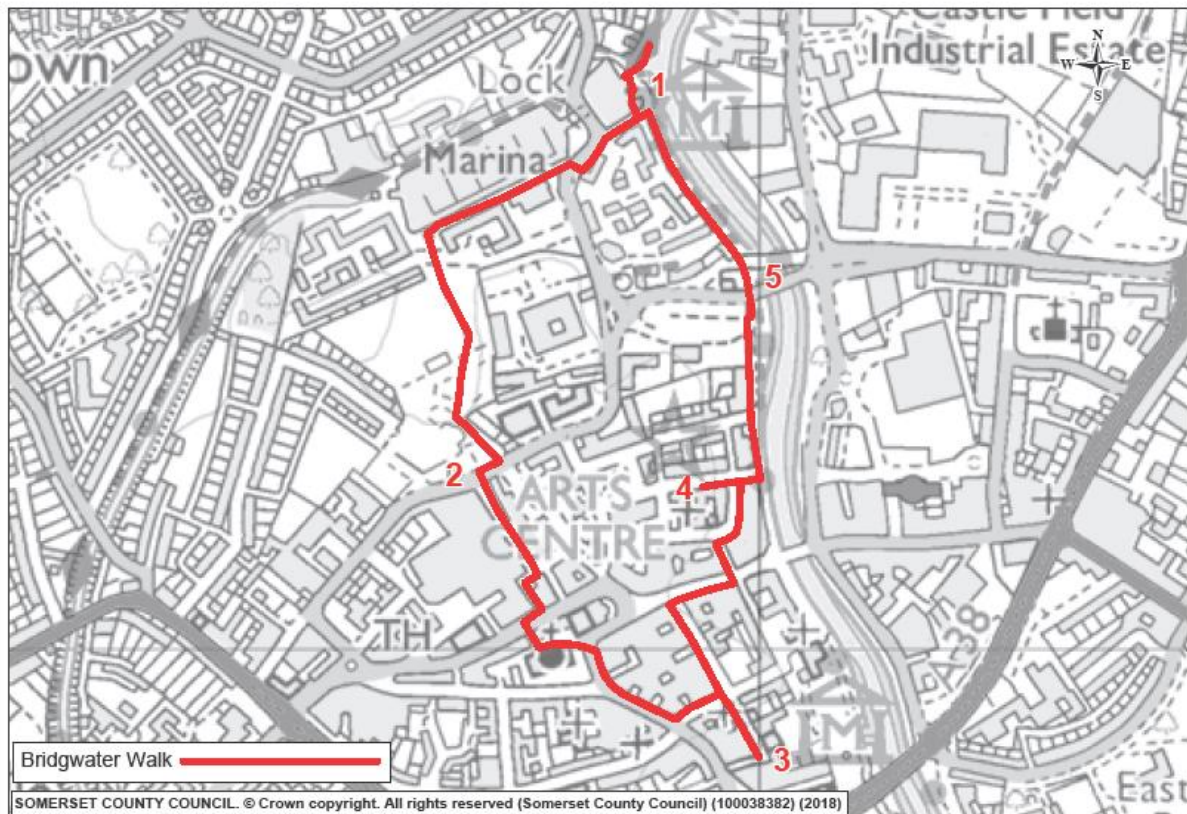
Duration: 1 – 1.5 hours

Notes: *This is an easy flat walk that reveals the history of Bridgwater as a once flourishing port with a castle. Wine, paper and glass were among the imports while pottery leather and wool were exported. Later the town became famous for its bricks and tiles.*

Points of interest:

- The bascule bridge
- Ware's Warehouse (now a pub)
- Navigation Buoy
- Castle Street
- Brick kiln

Map:



Directions: The walk begins at Bridgwater Docks (1) which can be approached from the England Coast Path in either direction as it takes walkers along the banks of the Rover Parrett. Alternatively, you can use one of a number of public car parks which have maps of the town.

Head for the recently restored red, white and black buoy. Continue straight on with Bridgwater Docks, which is now a marina, on your right. Once you go under the building on columns, noting the brick sofa that celebrates Bridgwater's Brick and Tile Industries, turn left onto the footpath. Cross the road, with care, and follow the path straight ahead with the recreation ground on your right.

Cross again, with care, at the striped designated crossing point and continue on this path until you reach the pedestrian crossing on Mount Street (2). Just before you get to the crossing there is an interpretation board on your right providing information about the history of Bridgwater.

Go straight on through Angel Crescent turning left then immediately right into The Avenue Arcade until you reach the road. On reaching the High Street, cross the road and enter a small alley that leads to St. Mary' Church, with its magnificent lofty spire. Outside there is an interpretation panel of the bloody Monmouth Rebellion. Turn left to reach St. Mary Street, where you carefully cross the road and bear right.

Follow this street until you reach a cross roads where you turn left. Passing the elegant Unitarian Chapel turn right into Blake Street to visit the Blake Museum (3). Bridgwater's rich commercial and mercantile history and often bloody political history is celebrated in the Blake Museum, birthplace of one of England's greatest naval heroes Admiral Robert Blake, of whom Nelson said "I am not the equal...."

On leaving the Museum, retrace your footsteps and carry straight on towards Fore Street and the town centre. On reaching Fore Street, turn right and then after a very short while right and head toward an impressive white building that used to be the Town Court. Bear to the right past Castle House (nothing to do with the Castle but an 1851 exponent of concrete building) and on into Castle Street.

The architectural historian, Sir Nicholas Pevsner, called this "the best Georgian Street in Somerset." It is home to Bridgwater Arts Centre, the oldest in England funded by the Arts Council and on the site of the medieval castle (4). Turn right towards the River Parrett and this will bring you onto West Quay where you turn left to follow the river past the last remaining stretch of castle wall and a magnificent Baroque Mansion, the Lions.

From West Quay follow the pavement with the River on your right until you reach the road. You will be going straight ahead on the path on the other side of the road but need to cross the road the traffic lights on your right with extreme caution as it is a busy road.

Continue on the path through the staggered barrier with the River on your right. At this point you will see the Black (or Telescopic) Bridge, (5), designed by I. K. Brunel to move aside to accommodate sailing ships wishing to berth further upstream. At the end of the path turn left then immediately right and you are back in the Dock area. Retrace your steps back to (1) keeping the river on your right.

Facilities: Toilets in Angel Place Shopping Arcade, the Cornhill and cultural facilities.

Cafes/ restaurants with wide ethnic diversity and pubs and accommodation in abundance from bijoux hotels to comfortable B&B's.

England's oldest Art Centre and historic Blake Museum.

All information correct at the time of publication.