

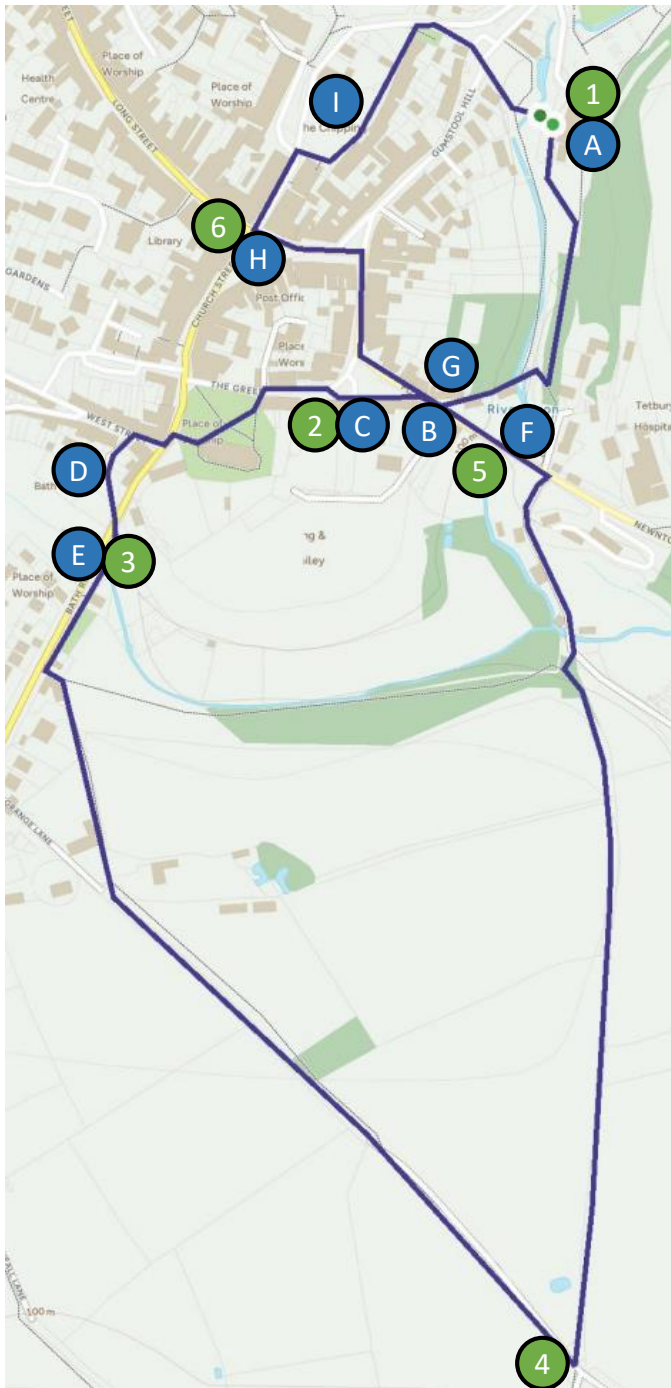
Tetbury's Genesis

A short walk into the countryside and around the town centre, keeping St Mary's church in view.

Distance 3.2 km (2.0 miles), Walking Time approx 1.25 hours (Grade A on scale A = easy to D = hard)

Starts & finishes at the Goods Shed, adjacent to the free long stay car park; point 1 on map

Refreshments: choice in Tetbury, none on route



A Goods Shed Arts Centre: this building is all that remains of Tetbury railway station, the terminus of the branch from Kemble. The railway opened in 1889 with but was one of the first to be closed in the Beeching cuts in 1964. It is now the arts and entertainment facility for the town.

B The Green: once the centre of the Anglo Saxon village, overlooked by houses mainly dating from the 16th and 17th centuries, exceptions being Barton Abbots (18th century) and the Catholic church of St Michael (19th century).

C St Mary's Church: the parish church of Tetbury (full name St Mary the Virgin and St Mary Magdalen), this magnificent Georgian Gothic revival building, on of the earliest and best examples of its kind, was opened in 1781, replacing an earlier medieval church on the same site, where previously stood an Iron Age hill fort. It is noted for the high box pews, the height of the nave, the size of the windows, and the carillon which rings out four times daily.

D Blackhorse Hill: named after the pub which once stood at the top, where spare horses were kept to assist coaches coming from the south up this steep incline into the town.

E Bath Bridge: built in 1775 by a local mason, Thomas Webb, to ease the incline of the Bath to Cirencester road, it became the principal entry to the south of the town. It replaced the old packhorse bridge and is said to be the "most outstanding example of an arched dry stone road bridge in the country". Built of coarse rubble with arches of differing sizes for reasons unknown. Granted Grade 2 Listed Building status in 1985.

F Wiltshire Bridge: strictly a causeway as it was built to ease the steep incline into town. The stream running beneath marked the Gloucestershire/Wiltshire border until 1935 when the border was moved further out of town to where the old Roman road (Fosseway) crosses the Tetbury – Malmesbury road.

G Old Fox Inn: a former 16th century coaching inn, part of the infamous 'Tetbury Sensation' case of 1924. William Bignell was drinking in the pub with Margaret Legg prior to cutting her throat in a nearby field. He wanted to be arrested to have a bed for the night. Hes was tried and hanged at Shepton Mallett gaol.

H **Market Hall:** the grade I listed Market Hall is an attractively restored pillared building which dates to 1655. Originally three stories high, it was rebuilt and reduced to the present two stories in 1817. Over the years it has seen service as a market place, fire station, and gaol. The cupola on top was added to mark Queen Victoria's Jubilee.

I **The Chipping:** in medieval times, a market and gathering place for 'Mop Fairs', where locals would hope to find employment. At the far side, the Chipping Steps descend a narrow cobbled lane lined with old weavers' cottages.



Description

- 1** Facing away from the Goods Shed main entrance, turn left passing the café and playground. After 90m turn right down some steps then sharp left. Fork right to climb the short hill to the main road. Turn right and after 20m cross the road, up some steps and follow the path in front of some houses until turning left into St Mary's churchyard. Follow the path diagonally to the front of the church, then down some steps through an arched gateway, crossing the road into West Street.
- 2** After a few metres, turn left down Blackhorse Hill. This lane descends fairly steeply to pass under Bath Bridge. Cross the stream, which may be dry, by the old packhorse bridge, and walk up the lane, noting the plaque on the left that gives a very short history of the town.
- 3** Shortly after the plaque, a kissing gate gives access to a field planted with trees. Keep right alongside a typical Cotswold dry stone wall until you reach a tarmaced drive leading to a house on the left. Ignore the signed footpath and stile straight ahead (probably overgrown) and instead take the wide parallel path 5m to the right. Continue along this path until reaching a wooden gate. Go through this gate and continue between two lines of trees until you come to a large wooden gate.
- 4** Go through the gate and turn sharp left, following the path between the field boundary on the right and a wooden fence on the left. Cross a stone stile, noting the slender spire of St Mary's away to your left. Continue straight ahead on a path with a hedge to the right and a fence to the left. Go through a gap in the hedge (glimpses of sewage works in valley to right). Very soon the path drops away quite steeply through small woods until reaching a kissing gate. Go through the gate and bear left. This is now the minor road that leads up to the main road and Wiltshire Bridge.
- 5** With care cross the road and turn left across Wiltshire Bridge, passing Old Fox House, and continue up Silver Street. At the top of the hill the road bends right and then left into Market Place, reaching the Market Hall on the left.
- 6** Turn right along Chipping Street adjacent to the Snooty Fox hotel, and continue across the Chipping car park, heading for the far right hand corner. Descend the Chipping Steps. At the bottom ascend a few steps, and immediately bear right down a path to pass Millennium Green, over the bridge and back to the Goods Shed.

