

# Severn Beach Circular via Aust and Northwick

**Distance:** 7 miles  
**Walking Time :** 3 hours  
**GRADE:** Easy/Moderate 3

# 16

This walk offers magnificent views of the exhilarating and often windswept Severn Estuary, with its two imposing bridges. From Severn Beach Railway Station, the walk follows the Severn Way along the bank of the estuary, an important habitat that has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. It then follows the river from New Passage to Aust. It returns across farmland to Northwick, where there is a short detour to the White Horse. The route then rejoins the Severn Way back to Severn Beach. The Severn Way is the longest riverside walk in Britain at 210 miles (337km). The long distance trail links England and Wales and passes through many historic towns and other attractions.

## Maps:

**Explorer 167** Thornbury, Dursley & Yate  
1:25 000 scale

**Landranger 172** Bristol & Bath  
1:50 000 scale

**Grid Ref:** ST 541 848



## PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

### Train

#### Bristol City Centre to Severn Beach and back

A regular train service on the Severn Beach Line operates approximately every hour from Temple Meads to Severn Beach. There is no Sunday service.

Please check timetables by phoning Traveline on 0870 608 2608 or National Rail enquiries on 08457 484950.

## PUBLIC HOUSES/CAFES EN ROUTE

Boars Head, Aust Tel. 01454 632278

White Horse, Northwick Tel. 01454 632349

Cafes - Severn Beach

## PUBLIC TOILETS

Severn Beach - Beach Road, left out of station and first right.

## CREDITS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Sevenside Ramblers have provided information for this walk card. The Severn Way Official Walkers Guide is available from bookshops. This was produced by a partnership of six local authorities and the Environment Agency. It describes the entire 210 mile route in detail.



## PLACES AND FEATURES OF INTEREST

### Severn Estuary

The Severn has the second highest tidal range in the world, as well as the famous tidal wave known as the Severn Bore. This is formed by the force of the incoming tide, which is funnelled along an ever-narrowing channel. The largest bores are created by high tides, particularly in the spring and autumn. On its final approach to the sea the Severn carries enormous quantities of sediment eroded from its upper reaches, most of which goes to build up mudflats and sandbanks. These have developed over thousands of years and provide a feeding ground of international importance for waders and wildfowl.

### Severn Beach

Severn Beach developed around its railway station and enjoyed a period of success as a holiday resort in the middle of the last century. It once possessed its own funfair and open air swimming pool and was a popular location for day trips from Bristol during the 1920's and again during the 50's and 60's.

Occasionally the path along the sea wall may be closed when the firing range is in operation. At such time red flags are shown along with notices displaying an alternative route.

The ferry at New Passage, the story goes, was suppressed by Oliver Cromwell after Royalist ferrymen marooned Parliamentary soldiers to drown on the English Stones. It was revived in time for John Wesley to use it when he took Methodism to Wales. Before the construction of the Severn Tunnel it was served by a railway and a hotel for passengers which lasted as a pleasure spot until the 1960's.

Just before the bridge, note one of the pumping stations for the Severn Railway Tunnel. Traces of the railway system that served New Passage Ferry are still apparent; this brought coal to the pumping station and linked Avonmouth to the London to Wales line.

### Aust

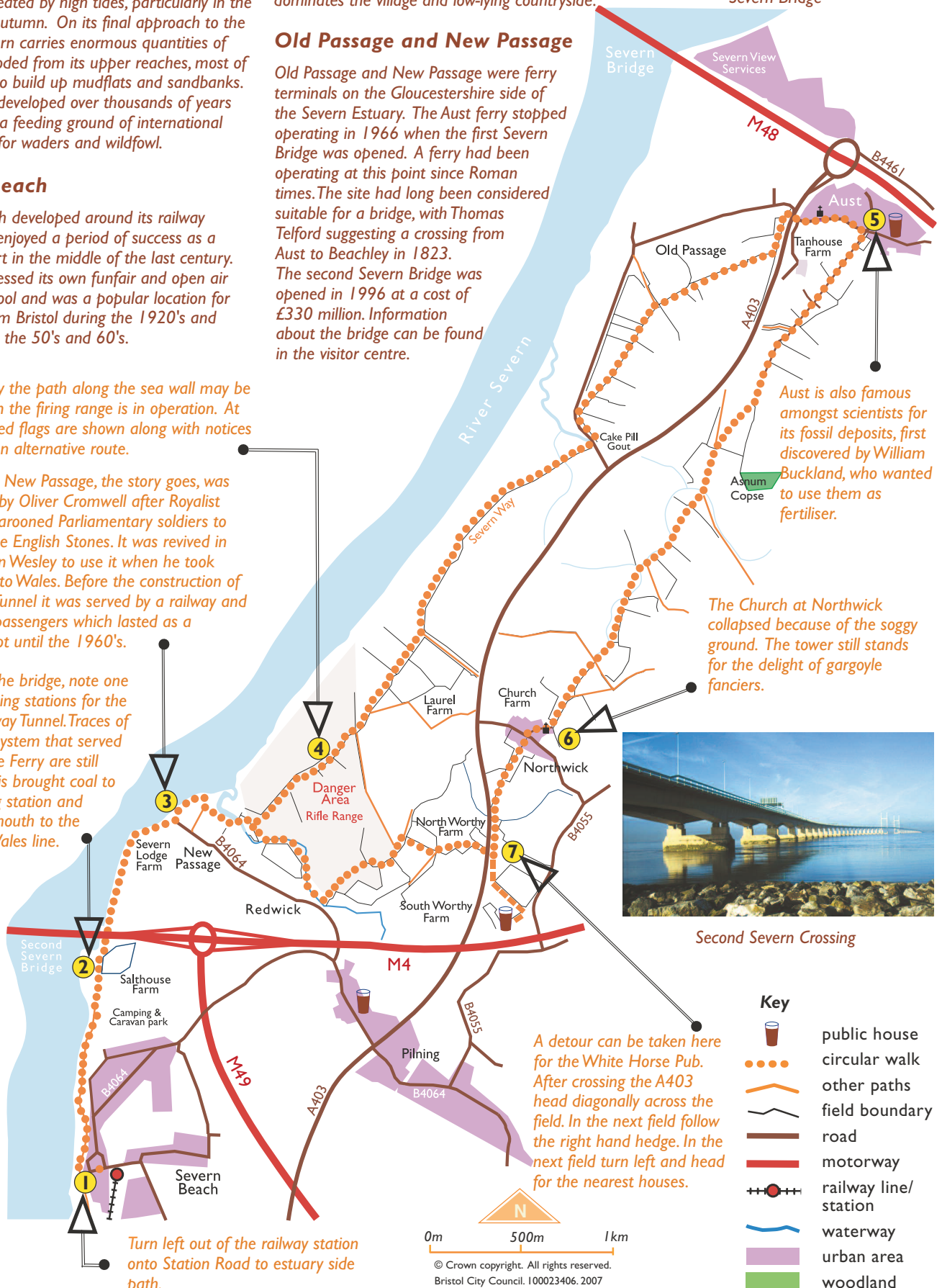
The name Aust is thought to derive either from 'trajectus augusti', a Roman route that crossed the Severn, or from St Augustine, who may have met Bishops from Wales here to quarrel about the date of Easter. Appropriately, the church dominates the village and low-lying countryside.

### Old Passage and New Passage

Old Passage and New Passage were ferry terminals on the Gloucestershire side of the Severn Estuary. The Aust ferry stopped operating in 1966 when the first Severn Bridge was opened. A ferry had been operating at this point since Roman times. The site had long been considered suitable for a bridge, with Thomas Telford suggesting a crossing from Aust to Beachley in 1823. The second Severn Bridge was opened in 1996 at a cost of £330 million. Information about the bridge can be found in the visitor centre.

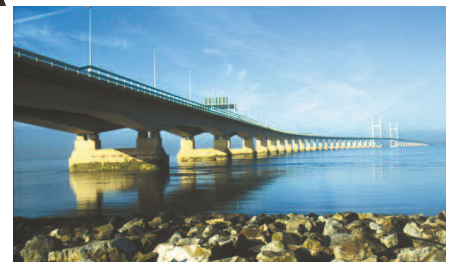


Severn Bridge



Aust is also famous amongst scientists for its fossil deposits, first discovered by William Buckland, who wanted to use them as fertiliser.

The Church at Northwick collapsed because of the soggy ground. The tower still stands for the delight of gargoyle fanciers.



Second Severn Crossing