



Swindon Railway Village Trail

This map has been produced with funding from GWR in partnership with Swindon Travel Choices and Wiltshire & Swindon Sport to encourage residents and visitors to enjoy the heritage of Swindon's Railway Village.

Health Benefits of Walking

- **Helps with weight and body fat loss.**
- **Increases lung capacity:** just 30 minutes walking outdoors in fresh air also improves mental well-being.
- **Improves heart health and circulation.**
- **Improves mood:** lowers feeling of stress and depression.
- **Prevents disability in old age.**
- **Delays ageing:** keeps muscles functioning, which in turn keeps you younger and increases your lifespan.
- **Boost immunity:** 30–45 minutes a day boosts immune cells to protect against colds and flu season.
- **Reduces the risk of stroke and chronic diseases** such as diabetes, obesity, and breast and colon cancers.
- **Reduces dementia risk:** walking a few times a week will help reduce the risk of age-related memory loss and help improve cognitive function.
- **Burns calories:** 30 minutes slow walking pace burns approximately 150kcal.

Beginners' Walking Tips

- Try brisk walking for at least 30 minutes every day. This can be broken up into three 10-minute efforts if you need a rest.
- Start slowly to warm up your muscles, then gradually increase your speed to a moderate walk.
- Use a pedometer or phone app to measure the steps you take. How many steps can you do in a week? Can you beat it the following week?
- Wear comfortable loose clothing and shoes with good heel and arch support.
- Try walking after lunch or after dinner.
- Walk to work or to the shops if close by.
- Get off the bus a stop earlier than normal.
- Try using the stairs rather than lifts or escalators.
- Walk with your friends, family or dog to socialise and connect with people.
- Choose new and challenging routes to make walking more interesting.
- Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after your walk.
- Choose your walking exercise to suit your level of fitness and age.
- **Most of all have fun and enjoy your walk – and feel great afterwards!**

Explore Swindon's Heritage

Learn about the people who lived and worked in the Railway Village, and their contributions to the development of Swindon and the railway industry. This is an inclusive walk, suitable for all levels of fitness and ability, with opportunities to stop and rest. It is also accessible via bus and just a short walk from Swindon Town Centre.

1 CARRIAGE WORKS

Built in 1876, this building was the largest technologically advanced carriage works in the country. Now, Brunel's legacy is being transformed into a place where heritage meets digital and creative, the home for Workshed, the RAU Cultural Heritage Institute, Create Studios and iCast.

2 MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

Paid for by the GWR workers, the Mechanics' Institute was built in 1855 to serve the social and educational needs of workers and their families. Extended over the years, it has housed a library, theatre, bars, a market, lecture rooms, coffee and dining rooms, and cold water baths.

3 THE TUNNEL

The tunnel connecting the workers' accommodation with their workplace wasn't built until 1871 so, until this time, the men had to cross the main railway line. This was as perilous as it sounds, so the 115 metre tunnel (380 feet) was constructed.

4 ENGINE HOUSE

The Engine House dates from the 1840s when it was built as the Great Western Railway Chief Mechanical Engineers' Drawing Office. Daniel Gooch (aka Sir Daniel – pubs have been named after him) used to work and sleep in this building when he was the locomotive superintendent. Now it is home to the Historic England Archive.

5 THE BAKERS

The Bakers is a community café at the heart of Swindon's historic Railway Village. Formerly the Baker's Arms pub which closed in 2013, the building has been restored and opened by the Mechanics' Institution Trust.

6 ST. MARK'S CHURCH

The Anglican Church of St Mark's was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, who later designed the Foreign Office and the St. Pancras Station façade. The oldest church in Swindon, it was consecrated in 1845 to serve the people of the newly established GWR railway. Visit the website at: www.swindonnewtown.co.uk/our-churches.

7 GWR PARK

The site of the GWR Park was purchased in 1844 for use as a cricket pitch, hence it was originally known as The Cricket Field. In addition to cricket, the GWR Park also hosted athletics and cycling events, playing a big part in the social life of the Railway Villagers and now occupies a special place in the history of Swindon.

In 2023, a number of improvements have been made in the park, including formal flowerbeds, a blossom circle and new seating.

8 HEALTH HYDRO

This iconic building has met the health and leisure needs of Swindonians since the 1890s. It included a suite of doctors' and dental surgeries, a dispensary, and a small and large swimming pool (the large pool was reserved for men only) opening in 1892; followed in 1899 with Turkish, Russian and washing baths. The washing baths were relied on by people who did not have washing facilities at home.

9 THE GLUE POT

The Glue Pot is the last remaining public house in the Railway Village, named after the woodworkers from the carriage shops who kept their glue brushes soft in glue pots before returning to work. It was a three storey house until the 1850s when it became a wool and linen drapery, before converting to a public house, The London Stout House.

10 WORKERS' COTTAGES

Isambard Kingdom Brunel planned the village with 300 terraced cottages, many built with just two rooms, outdoor privies and washhouses in the back yards. Kitchens were added later. Living conditions were not ideal: there was no clean water supply and little access to fresh food. It was not unusual for ten to twelve people to live in a single cottage. No. 34 Faringdon Road has been preserved as a 'living museum' open to the public. For opening hours see: www.mechanics-trust.org.uk

? Did you know?

Steam created in the Works was piped under Faringdon Road to heat the water in the Health Hydro. The large pool in the Health Hydro would be closed during winter, boarded over and used for concerts, political rallies, dances and roller skating. During the wars it was used as a hospital ward for injured soldiers.



Great Western Railway



Bus information

There are frequent buses that pass through the Railway Village. Bus stops are listed below

Dean Street / Emlyn Square

- West Swindon → 1 1A 1B 10 55
Royal Wootton Bassett → 55
North Swindon → 5 → Park North
Barnfield Bridgemoor → 22 → Okus

Faringdon Road bus stops

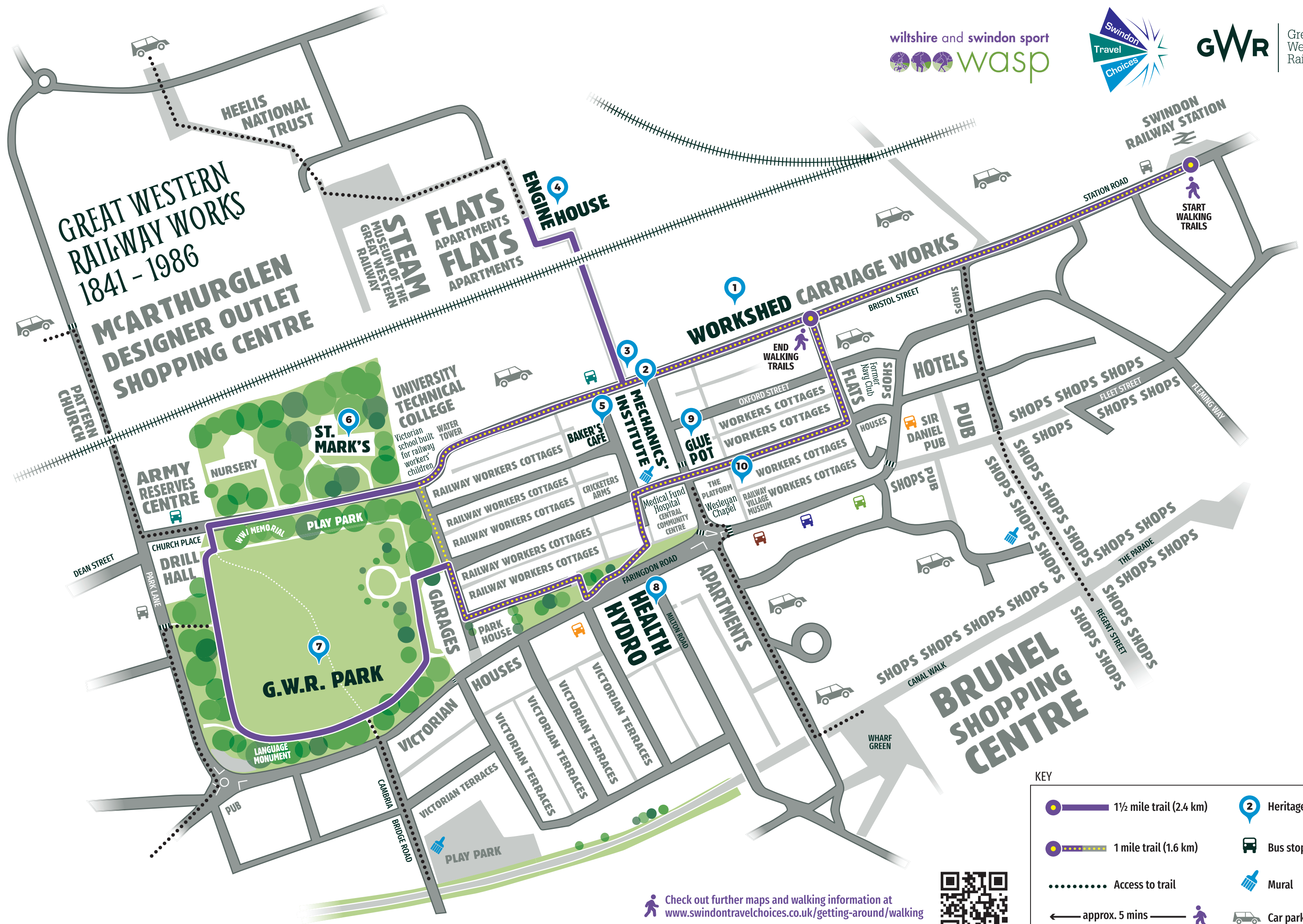
- Queen's Drive GWH → 1 1A 1B → West Swindon
Park North → 5 → North Swindon
Okus → 22 → Barnfield / Bridgemoor

Catherine Street / Health Hydro

- 55 → West Swindon / Royal Wootton Bassett
10 → West Swindon
4 → North Swindon

For bus times, use the journey planner at www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk





Check out further maps and walking information at
www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk/getting-around/walking



	1 1/2 mile trail (2.4 km)		Heritage site
	1 mile trail (1.6 km)		Bus stop
	Access to trail		Mural
	approx. 5 mins		Car park