

# The Armoury Shrewsbury Trail, Shropshire



Moderate Terrain

4.5 miles  
Circular  
2 to 2.5  
hours

210114



## Access Notes



1. The route follows pavements and tarmac paths in the main, but the first section through Poplar Island follows a grass path and this can get quite muddy in winter and after rain.
2. If you don't have suitable footwear, this muddy section can be excluded and the walk shortened to 3 miles (simply follow the notes within the route description).
3. The walk has a few gentle slopes throughout and includes a number of gates/kissing gates and some flights of steps, but no stiles.

The Armoury sits in a magnificent brick building overlooking the River Severn and has an eclectic history of use including being (unsurprisingly!) an armoury, a convalescence home, a bakery and now a great town pub.

A 4.5 mile circular pub walk from the Armoury in Shrewsbury, Shropshire. The walking route explores some of the highlights within the historic market town of Shrewsbury, with something for everyone. You will be able to enjoy long stretches of the banks of the River Severn, the formal avenues within Quarry Park, the c 1070 red sandstone Shrewsbury Castle, the central shopping area and several beautiful historic buildings.

## Getting there

Shrewsbury is the county town of Shropshire and is located about 9 miles east of the Welsh border and about 14 miles west of Telford. The walk starts and finishes from the Armoury pub on Victoria Avenue, Victoria Quay. The pub does not have a car park so, to give you time for your meal and the walk, you will need to park in one of the town's long stay public car parks. One of the nearest can be found on Raven Meadows. Make your way to the pub on Victoria Avenue to begin your walk.

Approximate post code **SY1 1HH**.

## Walk Sections



Start to Poplar Island Gate



Standing on Victoria Avenue, facing the Armoury, turn left along the pavement with the river to the left. After just a few yards you'll reach the junction with a road bridge over the river. Cross the pedestrian crossing ahead and then turn immediately left to follow the pavement across

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bridge. Immediately before you reach the first building on the right, turn sharp right down a short slope (and a couple of steps) to reach a T-junction with a paved riverside path.

(Note: If you want to follow the shorter 3 mile walk which avoids the muddy paths, turn right under the bridge arch and then pick up the instructions from the point marked within the section 'Hunter Street to Footbridge').

Turn left along the paved path with the river to your right and you will pass the town's theatre on the left. You will reach a small boat yard ahead, join the paved slope which runs to the left of this to continue on the riverside path. Pass under a footbridge and keep ahead on the narrower stone path which leads you into a park area.

Keep straight ahead following the right-hand edge of the large grass cricket field. A little way in you can join a dirt path, with a fence running to the left, which continues around the edge of the field swinging left to follow the natural curve of the river.

The field is now Shrewsbury County Ground but was formally known as Gooseland – the old English word Gos referring to Geese and Swans, suggesting that the land was often flooded by the river. There are several slopes down to the river on the right, some of which lead to shallower parts of the river edge and a great place for a doggy paddle!

Keep ahead through a kissing gate and you will enter the Poplar Island Countryside Site. (Note: Occasionally cattle are used for conservation grazing here so take care with dogs).



fork left down the slope that you took earlier to reach the riverside path. This time turn right passing under the arch of the road bridge overhead.

(Note: if you are following the 3 mile version of the walk, continue with the directions from this point.)

Follow the paved path with the river now on your left. You will be able to see the Armoury on the opposite bank. You may see river cruise boats on this section of the water, they leave from directly outside the Armoury. Before you reach the steel footbridge visible ahead, the path swings away from the river and leads you along Water Street to a T-junction with another road. Turn left and pass the timber-framed boathouse to reach the end of the 1922 footbridge to the left.

## 1 → 2 Poplar Island Gate to Hunter Street



Keep ahead to join the obvious path which runs on the grass embankment alongside the river.

The River Severn is Britain's longest river and today is a haven for wildlife, with strong populations of trout, salmon and otters testifying to its cleanliness.

Further along you will come to a fork, keep right on the path closest to the river which climbs over a small hill. Pass through a metal kissing gate to join a hedge-lined path. Shortly, the path swings left up a flight of stone steps. At the top, keep ahead up a few paved steps and you will emerge out at the top of Hunter Street.

## 2 → 3 Hunter Street to Footbridge

Keep ahead passing the beautiful Old Coach House on the left. Half way along the road you'll see an old black water hydrant with a gold lion's mouth acting as the water spout. At the end of Hunter Street turn right and, at the T-junction a few yards later, turn left.

Join the right-hand pavement of Mount Street where this begins and follow this down to the road junction at the bottom. Turn right and a few yards later you'll reach a junction with traffic lights. Cross left over the pedestrian crossing and keep ahead towards the bridge over the river. (This area should look familiar as you passed this way on your outward leg). Before you cross the river,

## 3 → 4 Footbridge to Monument Fork



Do NOT cross the footbridge, instead go ahead through the metal kissing gate to join the tarmac path still with the river on the left. When you reach a fork, keep left on the path nearest the water. You will reach the buildings of Pengwern Boat Club ahead. Keep ahead through the gate (or squeeze gap) to pass immediately in front of the boat house.

The picturesque stretch of the River Severn makes this a popular area for rowing. Every May the Pengwern Boat Club organises the annual Shrewsbury Regatta, one of the oldest amateur rowing events in England. The club was founded in 1871 and the current club house was built in 1881.

The next gate leads you onto the continuation of the riverside path. Up on the hill to the right you'll see a large red brick building with a green copper clock tower. This was originally a workhouse, but became the main building for Shrewsbury School in 1882. Shrewsbury School is an independent co-educational school and was one of the nine original Clarendon public schools (along with Eton, Harrow and Westminster). The school has a long list of famous former pupils, or Old Salopians, including the naturalist Charles Darwin, comedian and broadcaster Michael Palin and the politician Michael Heseltine.

Another gate leads you in front of the Yale Boat Club. Immediately before you pass under the blue steel road bridge, turn right up a flight of concrete steps and then turn left to cross the bridge. Kingsland Bridge is a privately owned toll bridge and the fee for cars to cross is 20p.

Keep ahead past the vehicle toll barrier (luckily, the crossing is free for pedestrians!) and at the end of the road, turn very sharp right (almost back on yourself) down a tarmac slope between walls. At the bottom of the slope you'll come to the river ahead, turn left along the wide tarmac walkway which is lined with lime trees (known as Victoria Avenue).

A little way along on the opposite bank you'll see an old warehouse now converted into private flats, a reminder of the industrial heritage of the town. Throughout the medieval period, Shrewsbury was a centre for the wool trade, using its position on the river to transport goods to the canal system for distribution around England.

You will come to a fork in the path with a monument visible just to the left. This is a memorial to William James Clement, an accomplished surgeon who went on to become the Mayor of Shrewsbury.

## 4 → 5 Monument Fork to Castle



Keep right at this fork, still on the path closest to the river. Follow the wide tarmac path under the beautiful old stone arch bridge known as English Bridge. The original bridge was completed in 1774, but the present structure was rebuilt in 1925, using the original masonry.

Ignore the turning off to the left (St Mary's Water Lane) signed to the town centre, instead keep straight ahead towards the large rail bridge. Pass under this and just a few yards later, turn left up a long flight of steps between railings. At the top of the steps keep straight ahead passing the prison on the right. Immediately afterwards turn left over the railway footbridge signed towards the station. (You will see the platforms of the station to your left which sit over the river – quite an engineering feat).

At the far side of the bridge, keep left on the wide tarmac path which swings left. On the left you'll see the red sandstone walls and turrets of Shrewsbury Castle. Originally a timber Anglo-Saxon fortification stood here which protected the land entrance into the town (the rest of the town boundary being protected by the natural curve of the river). The Norman red sandstone castle seen today dates from 1070, soon after the Norman conquest. Today, the castle houses the Shropshire Regimental Museum.

At the end of the path, come down the steps to reach a T-junction with Castle Street. Opposite is the ornate town library, which is housed in the original Shrewsbury School building dating from the 1600s. Above the main entrance are two statues bearing the inscriptions Philomathes and Polymathes. These portray the virtues 'Lover of learning' and 'Much learning' to convey the lesson that it is good to gain knowledge through a love of learning.

Turn left following the road up hill and you will reach the entrance to the castle and museum on your left, should you wish to visit.

## 5 → 6 Castle to Quarry Park



Continue along Castle Street, passing between a range of shops. Where the road bends hard left, cross over to keep straight ahead along the pedestrian precinct, Pride Hill. At the far end of the pedestrian stretch, keep straight ahead on the main shopping street (passing to the left of Market Hall).

Where the road swings hard right, cross over to keep straight ahead into St John's Hill, signed to Kingsland Bridge and River. You will reach a minor T-junction, keep right here and then, at the next T-junction turn right again. After just a few paces use the bollards to cross to the left-hand side of the road.

Ignore the first gate into the park on the left. On the right you will pass St Chad's Church. The current church building was built in 1792 and is Grade I listed. With its distinctive round shape and tall tower it is a well-known landmark within the town. As you draw level with the end of the church, turn left through a large set of blue gates to enter Quarry Park.

## 6 → 7 Quarry Park to End



On the right is the part-timbered Quarry Lodge. This was home to Percy Thrower from 1946 to 1974 whilst he was the Park Superintendent for Shrewsbury Borough Council. Percy Thrower was best known as a presenter on BBC Gardeners World and for being the gardener on Blue Peter. This 29 acre riverside park was created in 1719.

Go straight ahead passing a circular canopied war memorial. The bronze statue inside this depicts St Michael. Continue along the avenue of trees. (Off to the left you'll see the entrance to The Dingle, a former quarry which is now a sunken garden, should you wish to visit this).

At the bottom of the avenue you'll reach a statue of Hercules, with the river behind. Turn right along the wide tarmac avenue with the river running on the left. You'll pass the end of the green footbridge to your left. Do NOT cross this, just keep ahead on the tarmac avenue running closest to the river. Continue out of the park to join the pavement alongside Victoria Avenue. A little way

along you'll come to the Armoury on the right for some well-earned hospitality.

#### Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

#### Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.

