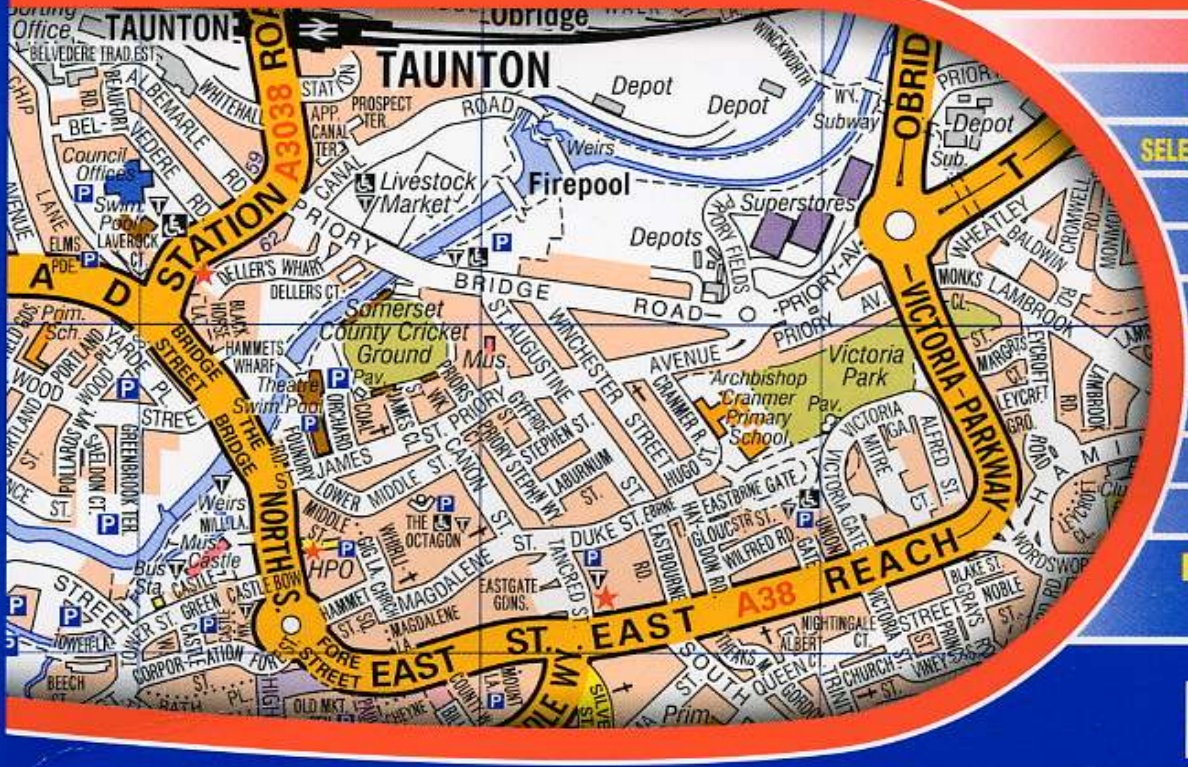
TAUNTON / BRIDGWATER / WELLINGTON

TAUNTON

BRIDGWATER WELLINGTON

Including Bishops Lydeard, Canningon, Cotford St. Luke
Creech St. Michael, North Petherton, Puriton, Westonzoyland

Street A-Z® Atlas



- SELECTED CAR PARKS
- OVER 2,200 STREETS
- SELECTED FLATS & WALKWAYS
- HOSPITALS
- INDUSTRIAL ESTATES
- PLACES OF INTEREST
- POST OFFICES
- PUBLIC BUILDINGS
- SHOPPING CENTRES
- SPORTS FACILITIES

FOR AREA COVERED SEE MAPS INSIDE

Mapping sourced from Ordnance Survey®

Taunton A – Dead Atlas

Index to Streets, Towns, Villages, Hospitals and selected Places of Interest

Key to Maps:

Ø One-way Street

Δ Restricted Access

Φ Residential Walkway

Ы Church or Chapel

Ж Hospital

ɒCemetery

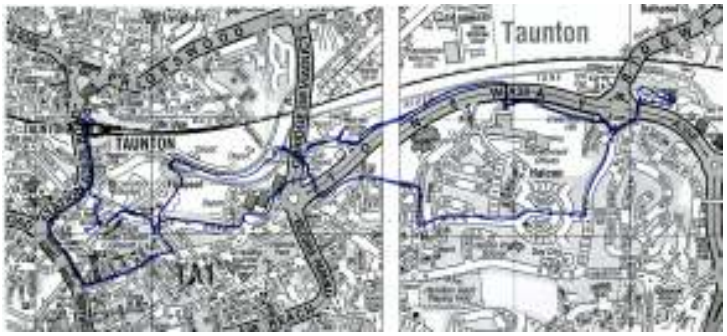
⎔ Morgue

⇮ Zombie Pen

Σ Shopping Mall

This is a guide to a small sliver of the town of Taunton. The almost untouchable grey curtain and the shifting spectral atmospheres along this particular spike will be partly generated by your own trajectory. But mostly they are objective features.

Few people visit Taunton for drifting, attracted either by the mix of larger urban and traditional features in Exeter and Plymouth, or by the quieter and more disturbing rhythms of the Haldon Hills. But the town offers quite remarkable attractions for those willing to give up.



Station Road – Priory Bridge Road

Dummies and simulacra. Headless propped figures. Displays here often have their temporariness positively advertised. Take your time along Station Road – for this is the site of Madame Tussaud's morgue. There are numerous accidental installations and museums to be enjoyed. Sensible shoes are required: there is a layer of fat coating everything. Some desk workers perform their jobs as part of the window displays and should be observed discretely for very long periods of time to be fully appreciated.

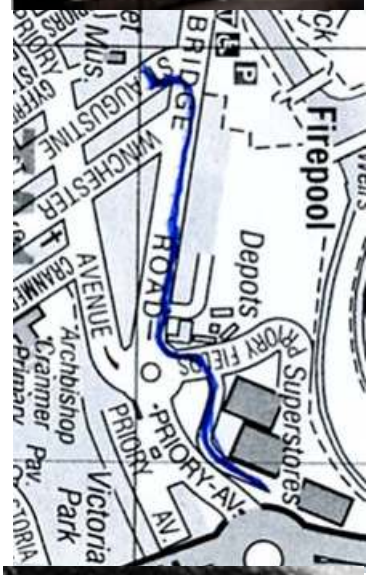
Into Priory Bridge Road: Danger of Death sub-station, half crap garage half holy of holies. The pens of the cattle market are best appreciated when empty: that moment a week before the new Motorway is opened.

Visit the human silence at the heart of the town.

Deller's Wharf to Deller's Court

Tyre weaving compound: this exceptional feature is not easily found. Behind the petrol station at Deller's Wharf. You will need to proceed with self-possession. The gates are thick and wooden. Normally to be found unlocked during business hours. Inside the compound the woven pattern of numbers and the visual impact of rubber is overwhelmingly deathly. The compound itself is reminiscent of feeding pens for the living dead. The sense of loss is a by-product of the irony of the tyre: moving, but always around the same axis; covering ground, but fearful of ever picking up anything from it.

Through the supermarket car park to the edge of the River Tone. Sit within and then contemplate from without the eight-sided bandstand. Through its struts contemplate the redundancy of the top floor of the supermarket and what sky-based rituals its architects had in mind. The octagon collapses the earth (square) with the divine (circle). When empty it is an accidental Danger of Death sub-station, a Dead Zone vision-catcher.



St Augustine Street

A few steps down this street and in a yard to the right are coffin-like boxes stored against a wall. Modest props for a forthcoming disaster. It is often forgetting the dead, a laziness about memory, which provokes sudden violent risings of the repressed, longing to return to these banal boxes, the quiet, the apparent emptiness, but only after horrors. A whole world waiting for collection. On its own this exquisitely preserved atmosphere makes a visit to the town a completely satisfying experience.

unnamed service road off Priory Fields, parallel to Priory Avenue, south of superstores

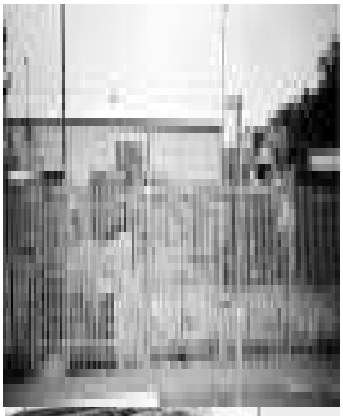
The carpet roll is displayed like an instrument of torture and humiliation. This short service road is perfect for meditation – the noises of cars on one side and the smooth planes of banal products, surfaces that reflect too much light to be read, the self-destructive process of distribution, the shop workers dressed in uniforms of loss, these create the perfect conditions for altered states of consciousness. The road is a memento mori made topographical, which ends in what some authorities describe as blocking stones, preventing the escape of dead spirits. In fact, these two large signs are transformers, distributing and inserting the geometry of planes into the shining lives of travellers and customers on the Toneway.

Winkworth Way subway

This is an urban archaeological site of unparalleled fecundity. Inside the subway the highlights include the white paint-based fossil of an unidentified carnivore, ribs and pelvis quite vividly preserved, the head-like shape is in fact a damaged fin. Also prominent is an unusual variation on the esoteric skull-and-crossed-bones with smeared knife and fork in the place of the humeri.

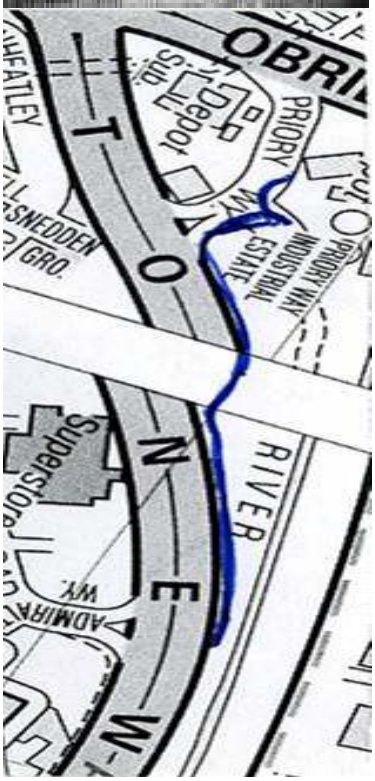
Priory Way

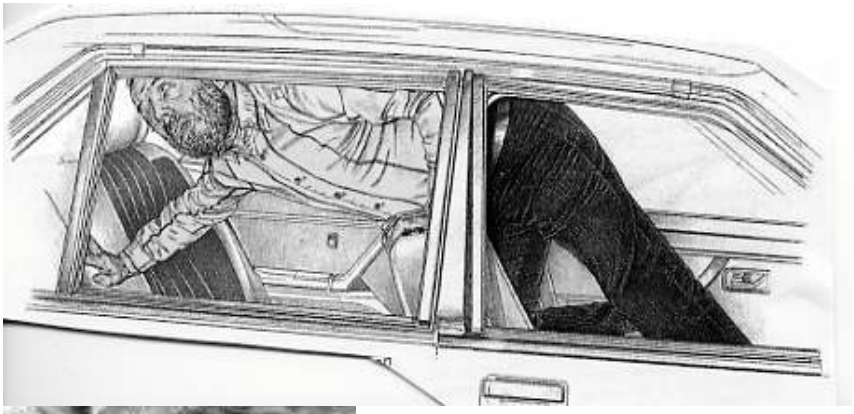
Easily accessed from the southern mouth of the Winkworth Way subway, Priory Way has two outstanding and adjacent features. On the Toneway side is a large and ferocious camp bounded by tall steel fence posts, sharpened and barbed at their upper points – nothing particularly exceptional for an industrial estate except for the enigmatic pen within this perimeter wall. An almost exact replica of the one used by the corrupt military to corral their specimen zombies in Romero's Day Of The Dead. What medium, what currency of exchange, what product, what commodity? The charm of these implications of brutality lies in their enigmatic ordinariness. Poetry across the road, within a gate of the scrap metal dealers on the river side of Prior Way. Before your eye reaches the car crushers and metal sandwiches, there is a breaking wave of steel shavings tucked inside the right hand wall. The light is almost impossible for the eye to interpret. There is also an exceptional example of a painted walking figure – this one is a multiple and there is a rare phantomic reversed walking man between the two dominant ones.

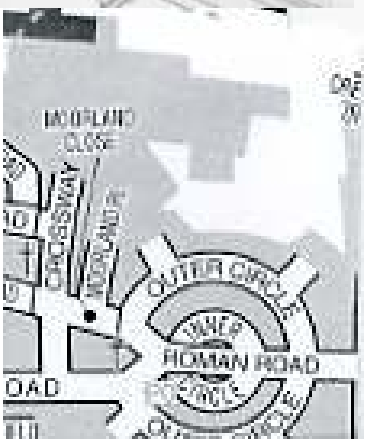


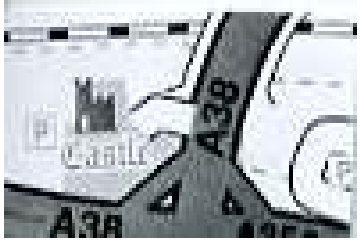
Toneway (northern perimeter)

Moving along the edge of the Toneway is difficult, but rewarding. The thorns of medium-sized trees and the snagging brushes and brambles at ground level collect many types of documentation. This is under the constant review of the winds. Walkers should be aware that finds recorded here may not be reproduced during their own visit to this sloping terrain. On a recent visit a first aid book was found, full of strange scenarios in which care was often difficult to distinguish from injury. A collection of notes, letters and cards provided a detailed narrative of the preparations for and anticipations of the arrival of a young man at a local farm. His hostess predicted a physical and psychological transformation.







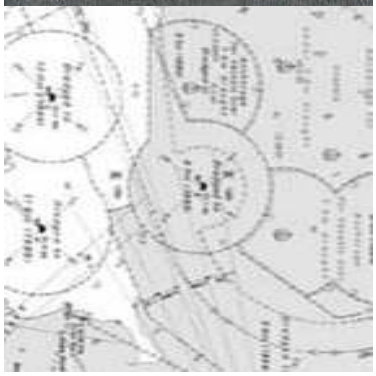


United Kingdom Hydrographic Office

On the southern side of the Toneway is a part of the Admiralty. The UKHO employs nearly 1,000 people across a range of specialisms including Chart Compilation and production, Physical Oceanography, Geodesy and Law of the Sea. Recently, a number of products have been added to its digital product portfolio: including TotalTide and the Digital List of Lights. British Hydrographic charts, known to many as Admiralty Charts, are published here. They cover the seas of the whole world and give water depths for shallow or coastal areas and are a useful source of information for small islands for which little other mapping is available. As you walk Eastwards along the perimeter footpath, through tree covered ways, visitors are encouraged to imagine that they are walking a coastal path or water's edge. The turns of the path are apparently to be re-cast as the breaking of the sea. The ground within the perimeter fence on the right rises like a freak green wave. Three anonymous structures may be exercise towers. The East India Company carried out the charting and marine surveys of the Indian Ocean, China Sea and Eastern Archipelago until the company's demise in 1858. Charts and records of these marine surveys are to be found partly in the archives of the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office.

Footbridge between Toneway (south) and Heron Gate

This footbridge – embellished by a double masonic bollard and "You're Next" - affords a view Westwards along the Toneway, bookended by a pseudo-castle and woods that soften and conceal the government buildings. The disrupted movements of the

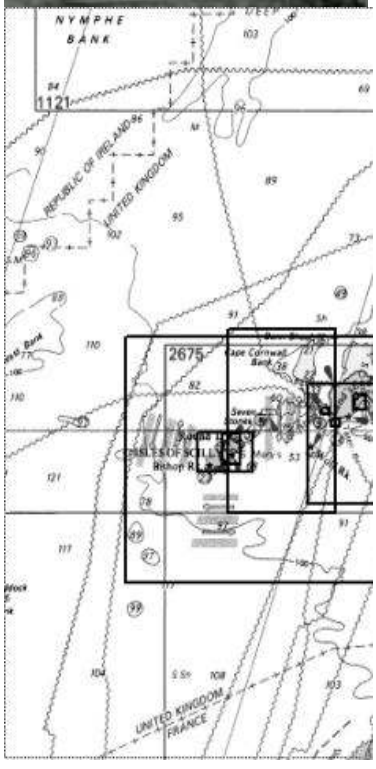


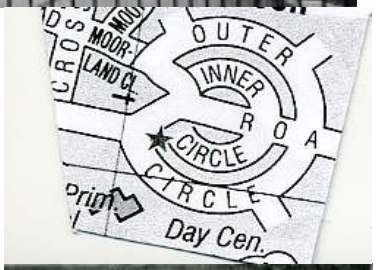
traffic, the fakery of the hotel and the concealed mapping of the ocean's depths is a hypnotic combination. You may wish to stop here for some time and contemplate the changes of flow. On the north side of the bridge is the Mandarin House serving an "eat as much as you can" buffet. Leaflets are available here for the 'Cheddar Man & The Cannibals' feature at Cheddar Gorge where you can "watch Britain's oldest skeleton come to life". The Mandarin House has spare ribs and relaxing views of a large cinema car park.

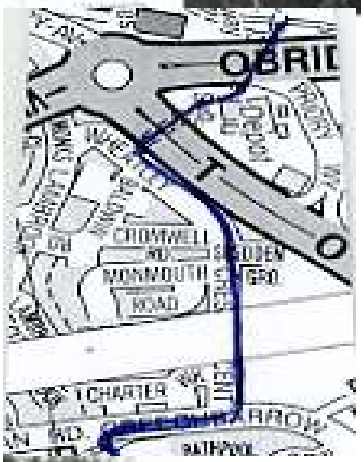
I went by train to Taunton. Met Renee on the platform at Exeter St Davids. She and Catherine had disappeared on the Newton Abbot Night Walk so suddenly we thought they had been abducted by aliens. Renee was on her way to Canada. She said someone had told her that me and the Phil Smith who wrote plays in Bristol were different people. It was in search of such non-living entities that I had come to Taunton. I'd wanted to see the fourth instalment of George Romero's zombie trilogy. For twenty years. Exeter refuted the living dead. They weren't coming to the Odeon here. Not to clone city. Neither did Whale's Frankenstein, banned by the Watch Committee in 1934. Coach parties had to go to Topsham. I had to go to Taunton.

The empty bandstand by the side of the Tone appears almost immediately in Land Of The Dead – a zombie band in the skeletal structure struggling to make a tune is one of the first signs that the dead have begun to evolve reflectiveness and conceptual consciousness. Dead zombies in boxes like those in St Augustine's Street. The living dead are called "walkers".

A large lake behind the cinema is likely to appear in local tv broadcasts about a Caiman. A humorous play on the alligator that slides from a high street shop in Day Of The Dead. On the other side the cinema is flanked by out of town mall expanses – Dawn of the Dead. Even in the toilets the disembodied soundtracks that are broadcast throughout the cinema can be heard. The key sign of the collective consciousness of the dead is when they begin to walk together. Towards the giant menhir of Denis Hopper's gated vertical community Fiddler's Green.







Bridgewater Road to Roman Road through Inner Circle

Roman Road is suspiciously straight. Always remember to look up, this is where the best architecture often is: in one window a large cardboard lion. Passing through Outer and Inner Circles is clearly intended to geo-romance the council estate residents. Here people will speak to you and ask your name. It is important that you simultaneously walk the two landscapes here – both the human courtesies and friendliness that will be offered and the planners' spectral KEY to the 'Great Work' of Taunton. Look out for what appears to be, and almost certainly is, a rare deposit of unwanted ectoplasm in a front garden.

Cheechbarrow Road, Wheatley Crescent, Toneway subway , Winkworth Way subway (return)

On emerging from the northern aperture of Winkworth Way subway the walker is greeted by the Obridge Viaduct. Sufficient patience will be rewarded by an almost perfect replication of the opening credits of 1970s tv series The Changes, based on Peter Dickinson's Changes trilogy.

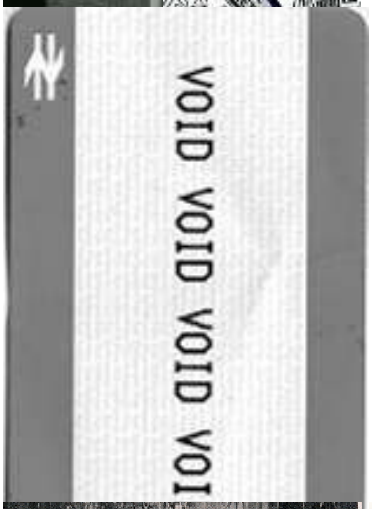
River Tone and Bridgewater and Taunton Canal

Cross the bridge over the Tone and then walk between the two waterways. Here there is a space for contemplation – on the left hand side of the path the concrete floors of a missing building. Despite easy access this seems rarely visited. There is a fixed and unused atmosphere about the place. Various jewels of the electrified wire can still be found along the periphery of the floor.

Ignore the "Please Jump" bridge and cut across the "The Sluice May Be Operated" "Do Not Operate This Sluice" weir bridge. Over the car park, this time you can follow St Augustine's Street, and the increasingly textured and aged reaches of Priory Avenue and St James Street – there are fascinating stains and an incommunicative graveyard.

Bridge Street and Station Road

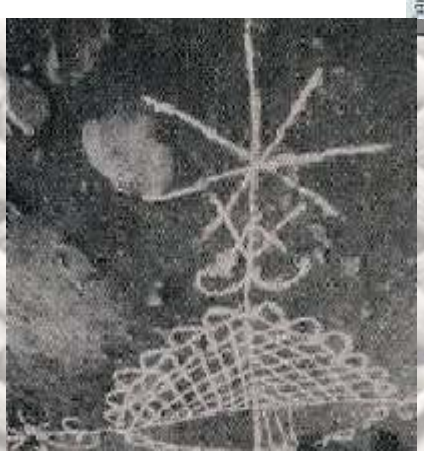
Leaving behind the Bulldog Buckle Company, turn right at the end of St James Street onto The Bridge, Bridge Street and then turn into Station Road once again – the shop windows here are once more part of the strange text of this road. Windows full of the missing.



Taunton Railway Station

Regular services run to London, to Wales, to the North and to the West. Taunton would be an excellent centre of operations in a national emergency. Hence its always welcoming and unobtrusive absence. An ideal hospitality for those in search of hidden ambiences and submarine landscapes.

Please come again. Rise to the surface.



TAUNTON

Text: Phil Smith
Design: Mari Sved
© 2006