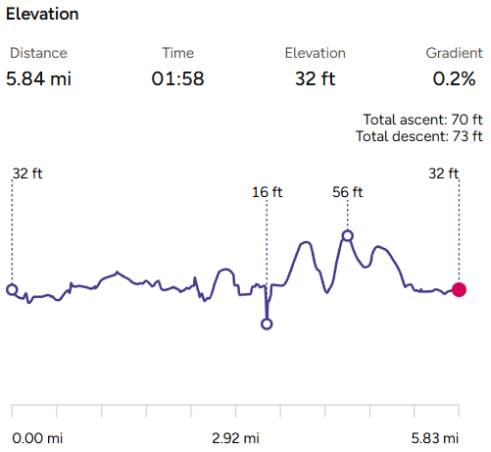
PUBS WORTH THE WALK

The Ship Inn Walk

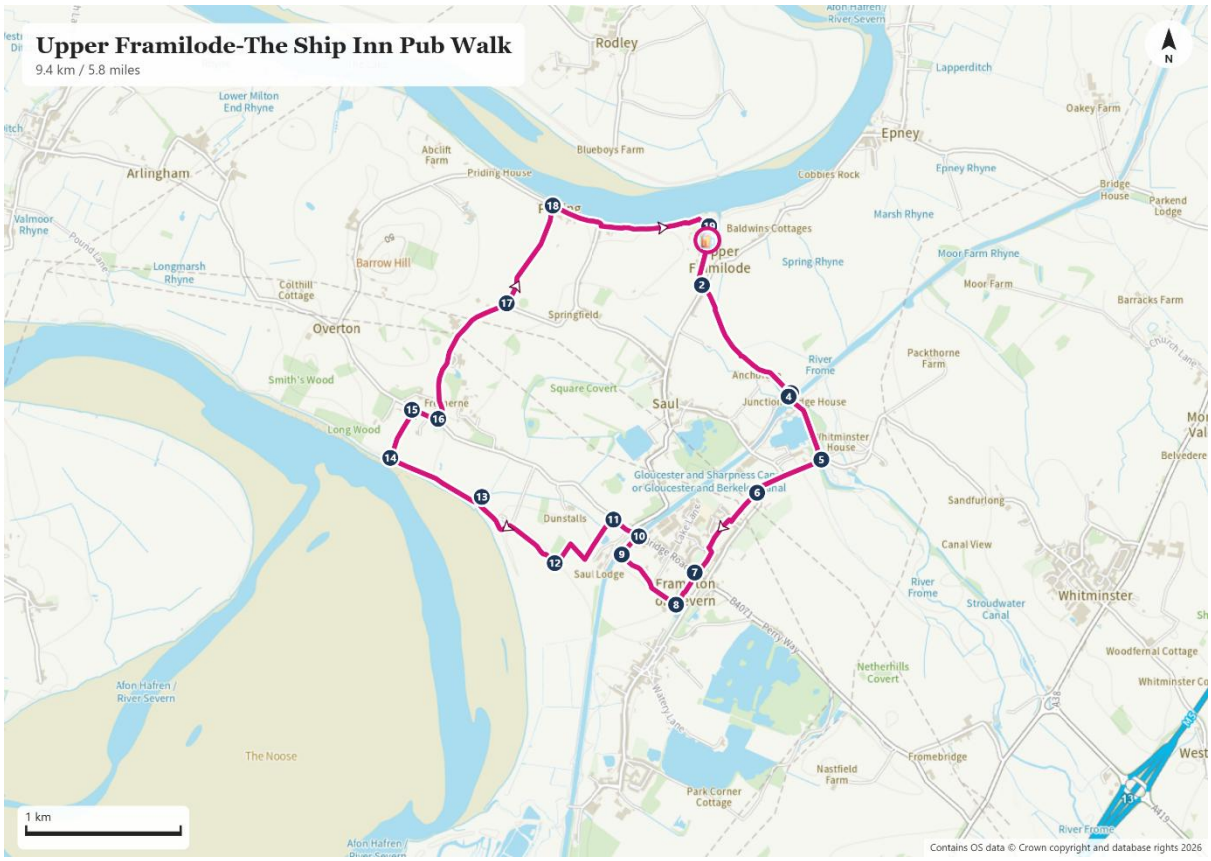
Canal Walk around Saul & Frampton on Severn

OVERVIEW

This is a quiet and ancient part of the world. The walk explores part of the Arlingham 'peninsula' that forms a horseshoe bend in the River Severn, opposite Newnham on the other bank.
It has a medieval sense to it, with some buildings as much as 800 years old.
The river would have provided plenty of fish. Wool was the other 'export', sent to markets in Gloucester and Stroud via the canals that intersect at Saul. They provide the backdrop to this level walk.



Start/Finish	**The Ship, Moor Street, Upper Framilode, Saul, GL2 7LH**
Parking	Large car park at the pub.
Grid Reference	SO 751 100
What3Words	///guilty.pupils.skis
Distance	6 miles / 9.6 km **Time** 2 hours **Ascent** 70 ft / 22 m
Paths/Terrain	Field paths, towpaths, quiet country lanes, some urban footpaths, woodland, and muddy banks of the Severn. Lots of gates & stiles. Some traffic to negotiate.
Difficulty	Easy, level walk. Short section on Severn Way is a bit muddy.
Public Transport	Buses: from Stroud, the 242 or 65; from Gloucester, the 113; from Dursley, the X4.
Toilets	The Ship Inn; at Saul Junction; The Bell & on the green in Frampton on Severn.
Other Pubs Nearby	On Frampton on Severn village green, **The Bell** is a landmark you'll likely pass. At the other end of the green is **The Three Horseshoes**, worth a visit. **The Red Lion** in Arlingham is run by villagers.



DIRECTIONS

1. The tow path of the old Stroudwater canal is the start point, going left as you pass through a gate onto it from the pub car park. Follow this path for the first section of the walk, first crossing the quiet lane back to Saul, and continuing all the way to a 'crossroads' in the canal network, at Saul Junction.
2. This is the only crossroads of two independent canals in the country, with the old Stroudwater canal intersecting the Sharpness & Gloucester Ship Canal. It gave local farmers and traders access to markets in Gloucester, as well as Stroud.
3. At the junction, continue straight ahead over a footbridge past Junction Bridge House in front of you to follow the Stroudwater Canal for the next short section, to Walk Bridge. Note the volume of narrowboats in the marina to your right as you progress.
4. Turn right at the Bridge to join a lane in the direction of Frampton. These lanes were quiet when I visited, but not entirely traffic free, so take care.
5. As the road bends around to the left, a footpath sign on your right takes you into a field and guides you to the other side to a gate between the houses of Frampton.
6. Emerge from the field, and cross the road in the housing estate, slightly right, to follow Ann Wicks Road. On the left-hand pavement, carry on until number 47!

There's a lane to the side just past it, into a parking area, and then to the right a footpath gate takes you into Frampton United FC's ground.

7. Ahead of you is the longest village green in England, with The Bell pub/hotel on the right. Continue past The Bell, the cricket pitch, village shop, past Top Shop House, and on until a footpath to the right-hand side of Manor Farm (note the magnificently restored 15th Century wool storage barn in the farmyward).
8. This path leads over a short bridge before the path opens out. Your target is the field diagonally over to the right. The path through the field, shared with some disinterested horses, follows the brook until emerging onto the towpath of the Sharpness & Gloucester Canal.
9. Turn right towards the bridge. Cross over the bridge and stay left on the Arlingham/Fretherne Road. Just past a cottage a footpath signpost takes you left up a stony drive. This is the Severn Way.
10. You're heading towards the River Severn now. I found this section to be characterised by poorly maintained stiles, and some route diversions, so take care. It's a bit boggy under foot too, I imagine following particularly high tides on the Severn.
11. Emerge from a short section of woodland over the worst of the stiles to follow a fence/hedge line. There's a sewerage works on the other side. I left the Severn Way to rise up to the river embankment on the left, a much better route to the boggy ground I was on. The online version of the OS Map suggests a deviation too.
12. Eventually coming to a drain, Hock Ditch, drop down to the right, before rejoining the embankment on the other side of the Ditch. Continue on the embankment until, after passing through a hedge, you turn immediately right along a field boundary; to emerge back onto Arlingham Road (we're now further along the road from where we started, after the bridge. You could skip that River Severn section if I haven't sold it to you in #10, #11 & #12!).
13. At the road, turn right until St Mary the Virgin Church. Cross over to follow the lane past the hamlet of Fretherne. Continue to pass houses and farms, passing what looks like an old schoolhouse, and as the road bends to the right, just past a tumbledown cottage hidden in the overgrown hedge, take the footpath into the field.
14. You're heading in more or less a straight line from here back to the banks of the River Severn again. Follow the path through the first field to a gate into the next field. You'll see a wooden fence and kiss gate on the other side of this second field, that's your target.
15. The footpath shares access with some cottages here. Walk through their wonderful willow arch to emerge onto the lane in front of the Severn.
16. The route follows this lane to the right, and soon bends to the right, with a left-hand turn running off it. Take the left-hand turn.

17. This lane passes houses either side and eventually leads up to a driveway into a lovely looking old house. The footpath is to the left of the gate, through a beech hedge. Once through this, you'll soon be presented with multiple path options, at a stile/gate combination. Go left through the gate.
18. Nearly there now. Back along the banks of the River Severn, follow until you pass St Peter's Church. Continue to follow the lane past Forest View Cottage where it bears right onto Canal Row. Look for the canal towpath on the right-hand side.
19. The Stroudwater Canal is overgrown here and blocked off now from the River Severn. Follow the towpath back to The Ship. I heard Willow Warblers, Cetti's Warblers and Greenfinches here.