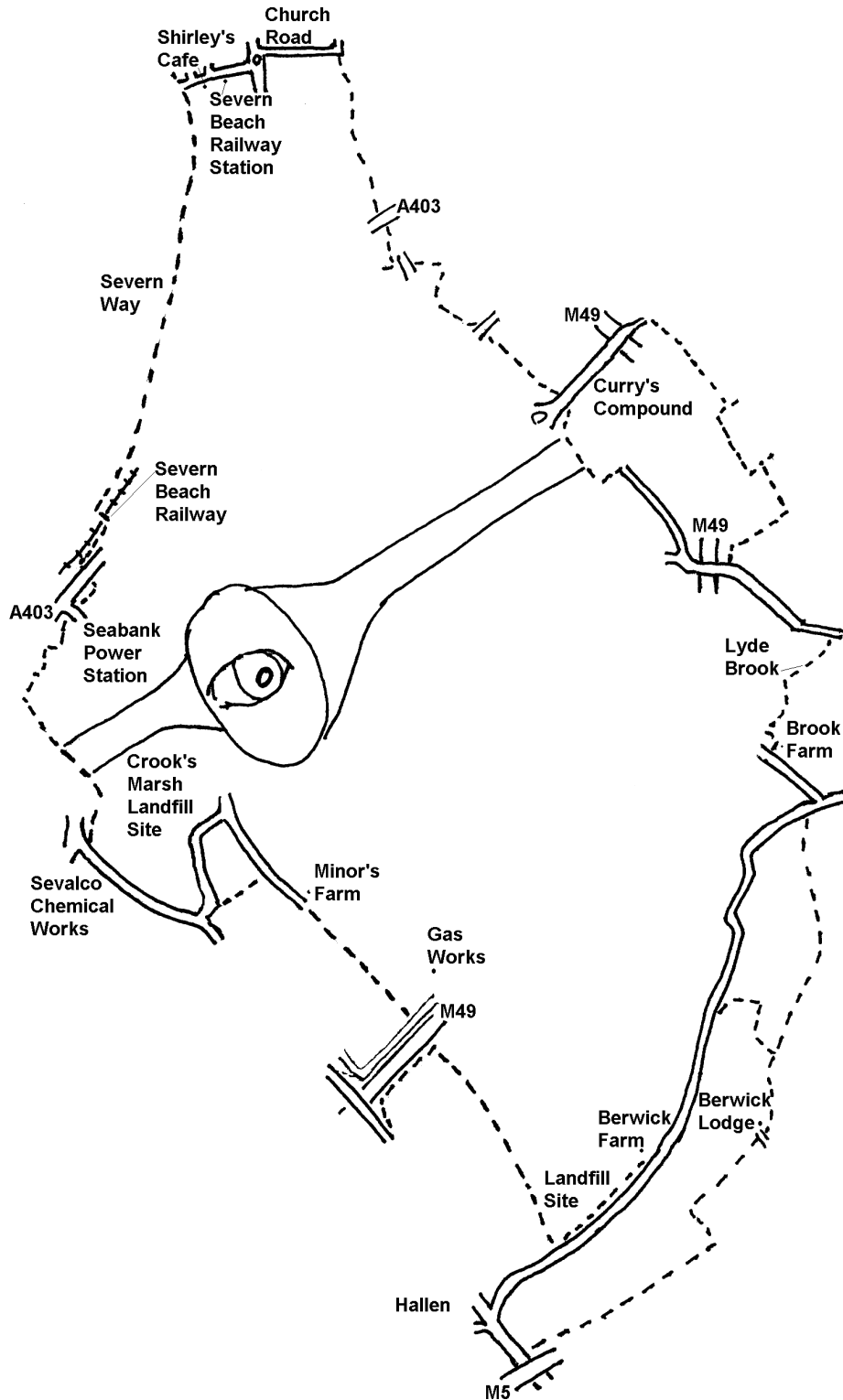


# 4B: THE END OF THE LINE

OR PRETA-GATI - THE PATH OF HUNGER AND THIRST FOR THOSE REBORN AMONG THE UNHAPPY GHOSTS



*Unless, for some reason, this is the first route you have tried in this book, you will be aware that the spirit guide to the Bardo Thodol believes you should already have achieved enlightenment by now. However, due to inattention, moral cowardice, covetousness and miserliness you have ended up*

**here on the path of the Pretas or unhappy ghosts, who are condemned to suffer the pangs of hunger and thirst forever (or almost forever<sup>1</sup>).**

**If you were open to the Wisdom of Discrimination you would not be here; but, in the unlikely event that you make the right choices now, it is possible that you might enjoy the route. However, it should be understood from the start that it is your fault that you are here; so don't come crying to me if you make the wrong route choices!**

**There is no pub in Severn Beach (although Shirley's Café is sometimes open) so don't expect a welcoming fire and a foaming pint when you return. There is a pub close to half way round the route, but it would be contrary to the spirit of the Preta World for me to tell you where it is! So you are going to have to carry everything you need with you.**

**Unless your legs are made of leather and impervious to pain, it would be a mistake to attempt this route in shorts during the nettle season. A stout stick is some comfort in these circumstances, and is also useful if inquisitive young bullocks have recently been let out into the fields.**

**There are some sections where a gas mask seems advisable, and, if the pipes at the Columbian Chemical Company's Sevalco Plant are as ropy as they look, I just hope your will is up to date!**



Properly equipped for this route?

**Much of this route is on low lying land, but the seawall looks sound at this point and is unlikely to be overtopped unless there is heavy rain, a high tide, an on-shore wind and a sudden increase in global warming.**

**There is very little traffic on the Severn Beach Railway, as you will discover when you try to get back home, but in case you are worried about crossing it – and that must be safer than trying to walk along the A403 – you may find the following telephone number useful – 08457 48 49 50. You forgot your mobile phone? – Bad choice!**

**Obviously, the Bristol – Severn Beach Railway would be the best way to access this route, but the service is subject to the vagueries of local government subsidy, so you will have to use that number to check out the current timetable.**

## **FROM SEVERN BEACH RAILWAY STATION TO CURRY'S COMPOUND**

Turn right out of the station and follow the road to a mini-roundabout.

Turn left and then first right down Church Road.

At the end of the road (where it swings left into the country) turn right down the cycle path, which is signposted To Bristol (Route 4/41).

When you reach a light controlled crossing, cross over to the bridle path on the other side.

Go straight ahead until reach a cross path, beside a (horse-) mounting block and turn left across the road on your left by another set of pedestrian lights.

<sup>1</sup> Nothing is really forever in Buddhism. You always get another chance.

Continue down the bridle path until you reach another cross-path near a gate and turn right, keeping on the bridle path.

Keep left as you approach the road, and follow the boundary fence to an access road.

Cross over the road and a concrete bridge, turn left and continue to follow the boundary fence until you reach a road crossing.

## **FROM CURRY'S COMPOUND TO BROOK FARM**

Here you have a choice.

1: If you prefer an easy life:

Go straight ahead, following the bridle path around the edge of the Curry's compound, with a large drainage ditch on your right to a dead, white tree and follow cycle route 4 around to the left and right, keeping to the narrow tarmac road until it goes over the motorway. You are unlikely to be troubled by anything more terrible than the sounds of youths enjoying themselves on their motorbikes in the surrounding fields.

2: If you are prepared to make a bit more of an effort:

Turn left and follow the road over the motorway at once. When you have got past the dumped rubbish and the motorway bridge, turn right over a set of three stiles. You may find that the section between the second and third stiles is overgrown with nettles, but they will trample down out of your way if you are wearing stout boots and thick trousers. In the next field, you will find a new plank bridge and gate and there is another more substantial bridge at the end of the next field. However, after this bridge, you will have to turn right over a stile and then left through a gate. Go straight ahead through this field to another gate, through which you must turn left over another substantial bridge. Turn right and follow the ditch side to a gate. Over this (it is tied up with twine) turn right through another gate, and follow the right hand hedge towards the sound of the motorway. Climb the stile in the corner and keep left to find some steps up the embankment to the road over the motorway and turn left.

Here the two routes recombine.

Follow the lane, which is at first disguised as a major road and look for a stile on the right after it turns back into a country lane (about 500m from the bridge).

In the field, follow the right hand ditch (called Lyde Brook) until you reach a gate. Bear left across the next field to a gate to the right of some farm buildings (marked Brook Farm on the OS map. If you have such a map, you will notice that it is not possible to follow the line of the footpath as shown on it.)

Through this gate, turn left to find another gate and then turn right to emerge on a road.

## **FROM BROOK FARM TO BERWICK FARM LANDFILL SITE**

Turn left and follow the lane to a road junction and turn right.

Here you have another choice:

1: If you are still feeling lazy:

Follow the road for about 2300m or just under a mile and a quarter, until you can turn right down a bridle path, just past the Berwick Farm Landfill Site.

2: If you are feeling adventurous:

Look for a stile on the left after about 30m.

Go nearly straight ahead to another stile

Go straight ahead to clear the end of a scrappy section of hedge and then turn right to find a stile hidden behind some brambles, just uphill of a metal gate.

Bear left up the hill to find a gate at the far top corner beside a wood.

Make your way up the steep, but substantial track, which has something to do with Scout Enterprises, until you find a kissing gate on the right at the top.

Go straight ahead keeping parallel to the right hand hedge to find a matching kissing gate into a

scrappy bit of wood.

When you emerge from the wood, you have another choice to make after about 200m.

2a: You could turn right along the tractor track through another wood.

Keep going down the track, which seems to get steeper as you go, until a steel gate blocks your path. Turn right over a stile, just before the gate. Drop down alongside the fence on the left to emerge over a stile onto Berwick Lane. After about 750m on the road, where you will view with trepidation the signs that indicate underground fuel dumps on either side, you have the option of turning into a path, which runs parallel to the road for about 500m. To use this, you go in through a kissing gate, just after Berwick Farm. There are dire warnings about the inadvisability of smoking or wandering from the path, which is liable to become overgrown, despite some enthusiastic but inexperienced attempts to keep it clear. You eventually emerge through a security gate besides a fenced building, which appears to be designed to collect gas generated by the process of decay in the landfill site. Turn immediately right into the aforementioned bridle path.

2b: Or, if you are prepared to go a bit further:

You could just keep straight on along the edge of the field for another couple of hundred metres until you find a double stile and bridge in the corner of the field.

Over the bridge, turn left through the nettles or bluebells (depending on whether or not you have used the Wisdom of Discrimination to choose the best time of year to follow this route) until you emerge on the drive to Berwick Lodge.

Cross over a lane to a stile and follow the right hand hedge to a kissing gate.

Follow the right hand hedge (**which conceals a paint-balling wood**) to the corner of the field. Turn left and follow the track to a gate. Go straight ahead over a stile (it can be boggy on the other side) and make your way down slope to the motorway fence.

Follow the motorway fence for about 600m to a stile into a field.

***The bank beside the fence is full of wildflowers in spring.***

The right of way is supposed to follow the motorway fence, but it is obstructed by brambles, so you must climb the bank on the right and continue parallel to the fence until you can approach a small stile.

Go over the stile into a paddock and look for a wooden kissing gate in the corner of the field. (If you followed the last book in the series, you may have done this bit before!)

Turn right and then right again (by the King William IV (It's a pub! Shhh... don't tell the others!))

Follow Berwick Lane until you come across a bridle path on the left, just before Berwick Farm Landfill Site.

Here the various versions of the route come back together.

## **FROM BERWICK FARM LANDFILL SITE TO THE GAS WORKS**

Carry on along the bridle path, which swings sharply to the left to avoid getting entangled with the motorway. As it swings left again, look for the path climbing up the embankment ahead.

On the road, turn right to cross the motorway and look for a matching path on the right on the far side.

This descends to a substantial road leading to the gas works. Turn right along this road, and do not be seduced by the footpath, which appears on the OS map and looks like a shortcut. There is no way out on the other side of the fields.

## **FROM THE GAS WORKS TO SEABANK POWER STATION**

Before the road reaches the entrance to the gas works, take the bridle path on the left. This looks as if the council has done some work on it, as it was easy underfoot and had been mown, when we tried it out in September 2007.

The bridle path emerges on a road beside Minor's Farm. When we were there, there was a splendid

skewbald stallion in the field on the left, which appears to have progeny in many fields round about.

200m past Minor's Farm, you are going to have to make another choice.

1: If you are idle and not too bothered about rights of way and suchlike:

Ignore the well built wooden bridge on the left and carry on up Minor's Lane until you come to a junction. Go straight on into the Crook's Marsh Landfill Site and follow the line of the pylons to the far side of the field, where you will find a stile. Over the stile, follow the path through to a tarmac cycle path and turn right.

2: If you prefer to keep to rights of way:

Go over the bridge and make your way through the nettles. (It is wise to carry a stout stick on these expeditions!) Go straight ahead until you come to a stile onto a road at the far end of a narrow field. (You can also get to this point by turning left at the junction by the Landfill Site if the nettles are really bad!)

Follow the road to a T-junction and turn right. (The going is better on the far side of the road, which carries quite heavy traffic during the week.)

Make your way to another junction between the ominously rusting pipes of the Columbian Chemical Company's Sevalco Plant.

When you come to a T-junction, turn right across the road into a cycle path between the bushes.

Here the two options come together again.

Follow the cycle path past the entrance to the Seabank Power Station and carry on until it emerges on the main road between Avonmouth and the M48.

## **FROM THE POWER STATION TO THE RAILWAY STATION**

Cross the road carefully into the Severn Way alongside the railway line opposite.

When you get to the dangerous-looking flood defences at New Pill Gout, follow the path across the railway line, paying due care and attention to the unlikely, but deadly possibility that there might be a train coming and turn right. (Remember that telephone number!)

The next section of the path was quite overgrown with nettles, the last time I tried it, but as it was September, they were moribund and had lost their bite, and the following section is shaded by trees so there were few nettles.

After a slight barrier, the path emerges into the open beside a gas pipeline, emerging from the deep.

Follow the access road straight ahead until it bends off to a tunnel under the railway, when you should transfer to the seawall.

Follow the seawall, until a barrier across it indicates that it is time to turn right towards the Railway Station.

If you are very lucky, you may be able to get a cup of instant coffee at Shirley's Café on the way.

If you are even luckier, you will have arrived in time to catch a train, or at least a bus. Otherwise, you might like to reflect on the fact that most of this route is accessible by bicycle!