

Magic Roundabout (Swindon)

11 languages

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Coordinates: 51°33′46″N 1°46′17″W﻿ / ﻿

The **Magic Roundabout** in [Swindon](#), England, is a [ring junction](#) constructed in 1972^[1] consisting of five [mini-roundabouts](#) arranged in a circle. Located near the [County Ground](#), home of [Swindon Town F.C.](#), its name comes from the popular children's television series *The Magic Roundabout*. In 2009, it was voted the fourth-scariest junction in Britain.^[2]

History [[edit](#)]

Concept [[edit](#)]

Main article: [Roundabout § Magic roundabout](#)

The roundabout was constructed according to the design of [Frank Blackmore](#),^[3] of the [British Transport and Road Research Laboratory](#). Traffic flow around the inner circle is anticlockwise, and traffic flows in the usual clockwise manner around the five mini-roundabouts on the outer loop.

The roundabout [[edit](#)]

The complex junction offers multiple paths between feeder roads. The outer circle carries traffic in a clockwise direction, like a normal roundabout (in places where traffic drives on the left side of the road), and less proficient users may choose to use only the outer circle. The inner circle carries traffic in an anticlockwise direction, and more proficient users may choose to use the alternative paths.^[4]

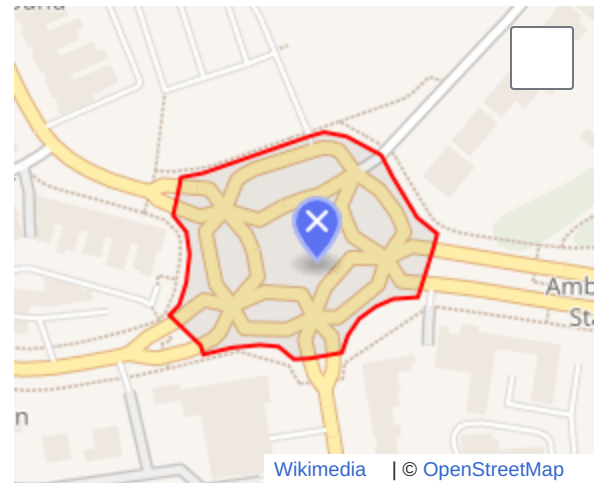
Virtually the same overall configuration has been in place for 53 years.

When the roundabout complex was first opened, the mini-roundabouts were not permanently marked out and could be

Magic Roundabout



Sign approaching the Magic Roundabout from the south on the B4289



Interactive map of Magic Roundabout

Location

[Swindon](#), England

Coordinates 51°33′46″N 1°46′17″W﻿ / ﻿

Roads at A4259 **A4259** (County Road / junction Queen's Drive)
Fleming Way
Drove Road
Shrivenham Road

Construction

Type [Roundabout](#)

Constructed 1972^[1]

reconfigured while the layout was fine-tuned. A police officer was stationed at each mini roundabout during this pilot phase to oversee how drivers coped with the unique arrangement.^[5]

The roundabout is built over a section of the old [Wilts & Berks Canal](#)—Swindon wharf. A narrow, stone bridge built c. 1810, which is a [Grade II listed building](#),^[6] carried the old [Saxon](#) way known as Drove Road over the canal half a mile (800 m) east of the town centre. Its site became covered by Drove Roundabout, which was later redeveloped as the Magic Roundabout. A wharf occupied one edge and the area was known as the Marsh. The Wilts & Berks Canal Trust are currently in negotiations with Swindon Council to include in the [New Swindon Regeneration Framework](#) plans to restore the canal through the town centre. The restoration would use the route of the North Wilts Canal and not the main West Vale route that the Magic Roundabout sits over. The North Wilts Canal was a separate branch which exited the town northwards through Moredon.

A calendar is produced each year by the UK [Roundabout Appreciation Society](#) depicting the town's finest examples. The official name of the roundabout was originally **County Islands**, but it was changed in the early 1980s to match its popular name after a campaign by Councillor David Glaholm.^[7]

In 2005, it was voted the worst roundabout in a survey of the general public by a UK insurance company.^[8] In September 2007, the Magic Roundabout was named as one of the world's worst junctions by a UK motoring magazine.^[9] In December 2007, BBC News reported a survey identifying The Magic Roundabout as one of the "10 Scariest Junctions in the United Kingdom";^[10] however, the roundabout provides a better throughput of traffic than other designs and has an excellent safety record, since traffic moves too slowly to do serious damage in the event of a collision.^[11]

The roundabout in Drove Road is not the only one in Swindon that worked on the same principle; until recently, the roundabout at Bruce Street Bridges had a similar layout, but had only four entry/exit points. It was converted into a conventional roundabout in 2016.^[12]



Swindon Magic Roundabout map with traffic direction and two routes from Fleming Way to Queen's Drive (give way at the arrowheads)



The central circle and two mini-roundabouts

See also [[edit](#)]]

- [Denham Roundabout](#)
- [Magic Roundabout \(Colchester\)](#)
- [Magic Roundabout \(Hemel Hempstead\)](#)
- [Magic Roundabout \(High Wycombe\)](#)
- [Hatton Cross Roundabout](#)

References [edit]

- ↑ ^{***a***} ^{***b***} "Swindon's 'iconic' Magic Roundabout turns 40" . BBC News. 26 September 2012. Retrieved 9 June 2014.
- ↑ "Britain's scariest roads revealed" . BBC News. 27 November 2009. Retrieved 27 November 2009.
- ↑ "Frank Blackmore: traffic engineer and inventor of the mini-roundabout" . *The Times*. London. 14 June 2008. Archived from the original on 24 May 2010. Retrieved 15 June 2008.
- ↑ "A counterflow roundabout" . *Driving in Britain*. Ontario: Rampant Lion Communications. Archived from the original on 28 February 2014. "Tourists should follow the red path; keep in the Outer Circle all the way round and leave the yellow 'Pro Driver Path' to the locals, who have roundabouts in their blood and know where they are going."
- ↑ "The Magic Roundabout in Swindon" . *The Swindon Post*. 11 March 2023.
- ↑ "Canal Bridge, 300m north-east of the County, or Magic Roundabout" . Historic England. Retrieved 27 November 2006.
- ↑ "Six of the world's most unusual roads" . *BBC Bitesize*. Retrieved 14 April 2025.
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- ↑ "London road junction 'scariest' " . BBC News. 12 December 2007. Retrieved 22 June 2018.
- ↑ "The Magic Roundabout" . *Chris's British Road Directory*. n.d. Retrieved 14 September 2016.
- ↑ "Great Western Way highway improvements" . Swindon City Council. Archived from the original on 19 August 2016.

External links [edit]

- The Magic Roundabout at *roads.org.uk*.
- BBC Wiltshire Video: 1972 Points
- Magic Roundabout Show Web Site for the TV Show *Magic Roundabout*
- BBC Wiltshire History of the Magic Roundabout
- Magic Roundabout , Swindon Web
- The Magic Roundabout at Swindon
- GPS Drawing tour around Magic Roundabout
- Google Maps satellite image view



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