

Frome Valley Walkway - Hambrook to City

Distance: 6¹/₂ miles
Walking Time: 3 hours
GRADE : Easy 2

14

The Frome Valley Walkway is an 18 mile (29km) long path that follows the River Frome from the Cotswolds Hills near Old Sodbury to the centre of Bristol where it joins the River Avon. This walk explores the section from Hambrook to the city centre as the path passes through the pretty village of Frenchay and landscaped parks in Bristol including Oldbury Court Estate, originally an old hunting lodge within the Royal Forest of Kingswood. The route mostly follows off-road tarmac paths close to the river or pavements for short sections in the city. Between Hambrook and Frenchay the path wanders through riverside woodlands and runs over both surfaced and unsurfaced paths.

Maps:

Explorer 155

Bristol & Bath
1:25 000 scale

Explorer 167

Thornbury, Dursley,
& Yate
1:25 000 scale

Landranger 172

Bristol & Bath
1:50,000 scale

Grid Ref: (start of walk) 664 707



PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

Bus

Services 328 and X30 from Bristol to Yate via Hambrook both operate hourly Monday to Saturday.

Service 329 operates to Yate every two hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

We recommend you check your journey times by logging on to www.firstgroup.com or by calling the Traveline number below.

PUBLIC HOUSES/CAFES EN ROUTE

Crown Inn, Hambrook 0117 956 6701

The White Horse, Hambrook 0117 956 6902

The Hambrook, Hambrook 0117 957 1510

The Masons Arms 0117 939 3919

The White Lion, Frenchay 0117 956 8787

Merchant Arms, Eastville Park 0117 951 8771

The Old Fox Inn 0117 952 2674

Numerous pubs and cafes, Bristol City Centre

PUBLIC TOILETS EN ROUTE

Oldbury Court Estate

Snuff Mill

Eastville Park

Castle Park

FURTHER INFORMATION

Information for this walk has been taken from the Frome Valley Walkway leaflet, this describes the route from the centre of Bristol to the Cotswolds Hills. The leaflet is available from Tourist Information Centres, Forest of Avon Team and local authorities. Contact numbers are FOA (0117 953 2141), Bristol City Council (0117 922 3719) and South Gloucestershire Council (01454 863 646).



traveline
public transport info
0871 200 22 33

PLACES AND FEATURES OF INTEREST

History of the River Frome

The name Frome is derived from Anglo-Saxon *Frum* meaning *rapid* or *vigorous*. The social and economic history of the local area is well documented along the path, which passes a number of medieval churches, old quarries, mines and mills. *Bristol*, meaning *Bridge Town*, was an important trading centre by 1000AD and during the Middle Ages became prosperous in imports and exports. The marshes along the Frome and Avon were drained and reclaimed as the City grew, and industries expanded to supply goods to the colonial and slave trades. The ships grew larger and required deeper waters leading to a decline on the waters of the Frome. Upstream a number of mill-operated industries existed and leisure activities such as boating and fishing were popular. Originally there were 13 one-arch bridges along the city section of the Frome, but these were all destroyed by the gradual covering over of the river in the 18th and 19th centuries and by the M32 motorway construction.



Woodland Path

Frenchay

Frenchay is a corruption of *Fameshaw* meaning *small wood by the Frome*. The settlement was originally a community of millers and quarrymen. Serious flooding has occurred along the Frenchay stretch of the Frome in the past, leading to the construction of a stormwater channel with concrete sides to act as a measuring weir so that the flow can be controlled.

Snuff Mills

The picturesque cottages facing the river at Snuff Mills were originally quarrymen's cottages. Old quarry workings can be found along the valley, particularly around Snuff Mills Park. The remaining mill is one of several that used to work that section of the river. The waterwheel seen turning was the last one to be used on the site.



Snuff Mills area on route

Oldbury Court Estate

The River Frome borders the 18th century landscaped gardens of Oldbury Court Estate. The Court started out as a forester's lodge in the Middle Ages. It was added to in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries until a large mansion house and grounds became the Oldbury Court House and Estate. The mansion was pulled down in the 1960s when it had become vandalised and derelict. Humphrey Repton, a great landscape architect of the late 18th and early 19th century, developed the landscape of the Estate. He enhanced paths, created views to the river and made good use of the naturally formed rocky outcrops.

Eastville Park and Lake

The park was created in 1899 as part of the Victorian movement for recreation and health. Boating and fishing took place on the lake which is also a gathering-point for many wild birds, including coot, mallard, moorhen, heron and the graceful mute swan. Tree-covered islands at the centre of the lake provide a safe haven for nest building and night-time roosts.



Eastville Park

Get off the bus at the Crown and walk down Bristol Road passing under the motorway bridge. Turn right down the lane between the White Horse and Hambrook pubs. You will join the Frome Valley Walkway at the point where the bridge crosses Bradley Brook, shortly before its confluence with the Frome. Follow the Frome Valley Walkway into the city centre.

Adjacent to Cleeve Road, on the opposite side of the river lies Cleeve Mill, one of the best preserved mills along the river, with some stone work dating back to the 17th century. Originally a corn mill, it was adapted to make agricultural tools in 1798 before operations ceased in 1885. Cleeve Bridge hides an earlier arch, possibly medieval, which can be seen underneath. During the 18th century money taken at the tollgate was used to upkeep the roads. A post marked 'Turnpike Trust 1823' can still be seen today.

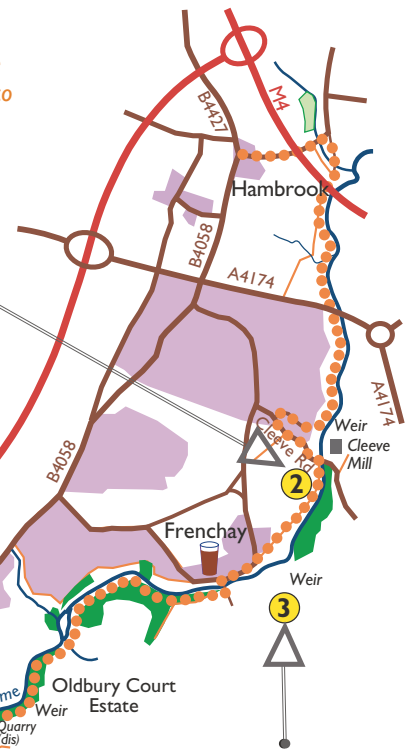
Wickham Court can be seen above the river north of Wickham Bridge. The 17th century farmhouse was reported to have been the meeting place of Cromwell and Fairfax in 1645 before the attack on Bristol in the Civil War.

The now busy St. Paul's roundabout used to be the site of Bristol's first successful commercial brass factory, established by Quakers in 1702. Slag from the industry was used in building blocks and can be seen in a number of structures, including the walls along the river.

The River Frome once flowed past the Old Fox Inn and is worth a visit for its display of photographs depicting Victorian Easton and local coal miners. The pub was the first to be bought by CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) and it was a haunt of the world famous cricketer, W. G. Grace, who was a local doctor.

The River Frome runs down the centre of River Street under what is now the car park. This long wide road used to be a ropewalk where long ropes were spun. The Quaker Meeting House and New Street Flats stand on the site of what was possibly Britain's first workhouse, established by Bristol Quakers in 1698.

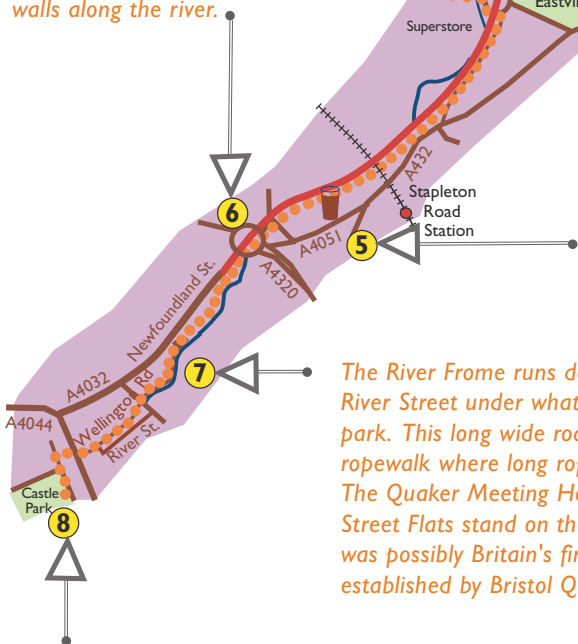
Bristol Castle, around which the City grew, originally stood on what is now Castle Park. The Castle was surrounded by a moat created by the Avon and the Frome.





The Grove at the bottom of Frenchay Hill is associated with Edward Higgins, a notorious highwayman who arrived from America in 1763. His ill-gotten gains allowed him to become established in Bristol's high society before he was executed in 1767 despite attempts to forge a reprieve.



The Weir on River Frome



Key

-  public house
-  walk route
-  other paths
-  field boundary
-  urban area
-  woodland
-  open area
-  motorway
-  roads

0m  500m 1km

© Crown copyright. All rights reserved.
Bristol City Council. 100023406. 2007