

Routes in Central and South Bristol
Walk 4 - Clifton Squares

Walking Bristol



Bristol Group Ramblers

As members of the Ramblers we promote walking, protect the rights of way, campaign for access to open country and the coastline and defend the beauty of the countryside.

We have regular walks of varying distance and difficulty on Saturday mornings, Sundays and Wednesdays. In the Spring and Summer we have shorter walks on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Our walks on Wednesdays and Tuesday evenings are usually accessible by public transport.

Non-members are most welcome. After a few walks they will be invited to join the Bristol Ramblers Group. We have a membership of almost 1000 walkers in Bristol and over 2000 in the West of England area.

For details of membership and our walks programme visit **www.bristolramblers.org.uk**. Then just choose a walk to suit your ability and contact the walk leader to introduce yourself and obtain further details.

Even though these walks are within the city, suitable footwear and a waterproof are still advised. All of the walks are accessible by public transport. The times for buses and trains can be

checked at **www.travelinesw.com**. We have done our best to provide accurate and up to date information, but services are liable to alteration at short notice.

Whilst every effort has been made to check the routes in this book, mistakes do happen and the city is subject to changes, so neither Bristol City Council or the Ramblers can accept responsibility for any inconvenience this may cause. To advise of mistakes or recommend new walks for future editions contact Bristol City Council at **transport.plan@bristol.gov.uk** or **0117 9036701**.

Neither Bristol City Council or the Ramblers necessarily endorse the opinions expressed by the authors of the walks.

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Introduction

Walking is the simplest and cheapest form of travel and also one of the best forms of exercise. It helps you to feel good, reduces stress, increases your energy levels, reduces blood pressure and helps you to sleep better at night. It is a very good way to help you to lose weight.

Walking also helps you to appreciate the city that you live in. Other forms of transport race you past those lovely views or small points of historic interest. They make it more difficult to pop in to that small shop or stop off for a drink and a bite to eat. Walking lets you appreciate all of these at a leisurely pace.

In 2002 Bristol City Council and Bristol Group Ramblers collaborated to produce a delightful publication called 'Bristol Backs – Discovering Bristol on Foot'. This book contained 27 walks around the city, all over varying length and all taking in various features of this great city.

The book was intended to be sold, as it had been lovingly produced to a high quality. Unfortunately, this meant that when stocks began to run low, the cost of re-production proved to be prohibitive.

It seemed a real shame that access to these walks could be denied to so many people, so it was decided to re-produce a selection of these in a smaller format. The beauty of this new publication is that it will be free for all to enjoy.

Trying to decide which walks to exclude was very difficult and this led us to producing two booklets, one for the north and east of the city and the other for the south and central. You may wish to pick up the one that is local to you or both of them to explore other parts of the city. Although a number of walks are in or close to the city centre a conscious effort has been made to take these walks to the majority of the population out in the suburbs. There are some little gems in the most unexpected of places.

So please, go out and walk around your city and enjoy its little hidden pleasures and explore those alleys and lanes that you might not have known existed and if it means that you occasionally leave the car at home, it will have all been worth it.

Clifton Squares - Walk 4

- Description:** This walk covers the squares of Hotwells, Clifton and Central Bristol referring to the major and minor celebrities who have lived in them.
- Length:** 3-4 miles.(1.5 to 2 hours)
- Refreshments:** Many pubs and cafés en route.
- Transport:** The 500 bus links the beginning and end of the linear walk or walk along the Brunel' Mile and Harbourside to complete a circular tour of some 5 -6 miles (2.5 to 3 hours) To cut it short, take 8/9 from Clifton or one of the many services up Park Street.

On alighting from the bus on Merchants Road, Hotwells (N.B. there is another road of the same name in Clifton) turn left towards the church, cross the road and go left to Dowry Square. Walk round the square noting the plague in the top left hand corner.

Dowry Square **A** probably has the strangest associations of any street in Bristol, deserving a place in the affections of literary types, drinkers, dentists and drug addicts. Here, early in 1812, the economic migrant Jacob Schweppe opened his fizz factory. Here Dr Thomas Beddoes ran his clinic, attempting to cure consumption by introducing cows into the patients' bedrooms. He and his assistant Humphrey Davy did much for the gaiety of nations by producing nitrous oxide, popular amongst the intelligentsia as a

recreational drug. Another assistant, Peter Roget, compiled the Thesaurus.

Beddoes' son, Thomas Lovell, is Bristol's greatest poet and certainly one of the most distinctive poets in literature, albeit distinctively morbid and macabre. Like his father, whom the local library barred as 'not Blue enough', he was a political radical which got him into trouble in Switzerland and caused him to be expelled by 'the ingenious jackanapes of Bavaria'. He made several attempts at

suicide, losing a leg in the process, and finally succeeded in 1849, using curare. There is no kudos in self slaughter at the age of forty-five so he never achieved the stereotypical fame of Chatterton. His best remembered poem is the anthologised Dream Pedlary: 'If there were dreams to sell, what would you buy? Some cost a passing bell; some a light sigh'. His gothic gifts are displayed in his plays, notably Death's Jest Book. Compare this with the gimcrack archaism of Chatterton:

'Squats on a toad-stool under a tree

A bodiless child full of life in the gloom

Crying with frog voice

What shall I be?

What shall I be? Shall I creep to the egg?

That's cracking asunder yonder by Nile, And with eighteen toes,

And a snuff taking nose

Make an Egyptian crocodile?'

A lighter poet of the gruesome and grotesque, the Revd Richard Harris Barham of the Ingoldsby Legends stayed in the square seeking and failing to find health. His last work was written here.

Leave the Square and turn right up Hope Chapel Hill, right into North Green Street and either make a detour left along the footpath beside the Polygon Gardens leading to Hope Chapel and turn right up the Hill to Hope Square or go straight on up the path to Cornwallis Crescent, turn right to Goldney Avenue and left on the footpath to Regent Street.

Many developments in Clifton bankrupted the speculator. Hope Square **B**, named for a Lady, not a virtue, is one example. Up the hill (a later development, as

Hotwells was fashionable before Clifton), Cornwallis Crescent **C** took so long to complete that the path you use was established across its line. This delay had far-reaching effects. The architect, Francis Greenway, whose firm bought the unfinished buildings as a speculation, was driven to forgery. His death sentence was commuted to transportation and he became the Father of Australian Architecture.



Note: the plaque at No 30 Cornwallis Crescent to the Winkworth sisters, translators of German poetry who were concerned with female education and decent housing for the poor.

Cross Regent Street and walk round Saville Place. (The alley at the top right hand corner provides a short cut to Victoria Square should you wish to shorten the walk.)

In Saville Place **D** lived E.H. Young, novelist of the shabby genteel; she has been rediscovered and reprinted by Virago.

*Turn right along Regent Street and Clifton Down Road, cross over at zebra crossing and continue right to Rodney Place **E** on your left.*

Admiral Rodney was especially popular in the city because he secured British control of Jamaica, where many Bristolians had investments. Here there is yet another plaque to Dr Beddoes and one to his pupil Radical Jack Lambton, Earl of Durham. '£40,000 a year' he said was 'a moderate income such a one as a man might jog on with.' Despite this, he was a fervent supporter of the Reform Bill. Recalled from the Governorship of Canada for exceeding his constitutional powers in settling a rebellion - his nickname was 'the Dictator' - he wrote, or at least signed the Durham Report which staved off a Canadian Revolution on the American model and set the liberal pattern for the white dominions of the British Empire.

Return to Clifton Down Road, cross over mini-roundabout in front of Christ Church and head for the cottages beyond the Church.

Briefly, Walter Savage Landor lived at Penrose Cottage **F** where Southey visited him. His outrageous temper made residence in England difficult. On one occasion, he threw his cook out of the window breaking his arm.

Landor regretted the action when he remembered the violets were underneath that window.


Follow Canynge Road to Canynge Square. Return to Canynge Road and follow to Percival Road right.

Clifton College **G** was the first public school of the modern foundations, training the children of the middle classes to bear the lucrative burden of Empire. John Percival, after whom the road was named, was its first headmaster. Clifton College Close, before you, has its place in the dubious statistical annals of cricket: A.J. Collins, 628 not out in a very

protracted house match. It is also the setting of Newbolt's *Vita Lampada: The Torch of Life*, the place where there was a breathless hush, a bumping pitch and a blinding light. Other men of letters associated with Clifton College are Quiller-Couch and T.E. Brown, the Manx poet ('a garden is a lovesome thing, God wot'), a retired housemaster who died on a visit to the school and was buried at Redland Chapel. Douglas Haig has a statue overlooking the Close. A more useful old boy was Leslie Hore-Belisha who brought an ungrateful nation such unglamorous innovations as the driving test, the Highway Code and the eponymous beacon. He also sought to reform and democratise the Army.

At 8 College Road, then 34 Worcester Lawn, Dr George Spear Thompson organised the first Bristol demonstration of the telephone at a scientific soirée on 4th October 1877.

Alexander Graham Bell came from London at short notice to explain the gadget and its potential uses. To demonstrate, someone sang a line of 'God save the Queen' at the Mayoress. A young man who helped at the demonstration, in 1922, as Lord Mayor himself, took part in a test wireless transmission between Marconi House in London and Bristol.

Turn right along College Road, follow Worcester Crescent round and continue along College Road. Cross Clifton Park into Lansdown Road, noting Worcester Terrace and Vyryan Terrace on the way to Victoria Square . Walk anti-clockwise round the square.

There is a plaque to John Addington Symonds, critic, poet and (monumental) art historian.

The real hero of Victoria Square, however, has no plaque, though he does have a place in legal textbooks. *R v Matthias* is still cited when the 'usual accompaniment of a foot passenger' is under consideration. William Matthias was nicknamed 'General' because of his long drawn campaigns against the Corporation and the Merchant Venturers Society. One of these concerned Boyce's Avenue, through the arch in the corner of the Square. Matthias said it was a public footpath; the Merchant Venturers, the developers, said it was a public carriageway. The disagreement lasted a quarter of a century and the developers hired navvies to break down Matthias's barricades.

In 1861 when he turned back a woman with a perambulator by pushing her on the shoulder, the Corporation encouraged a prosecution for assault. The vehicle stopped by Mr Matthias being a perambulator - then a novel invention -

no precedents could be adduced, and there was much legal contention as to the right of such a carriage to pass along footpaths.

The absurd female fashion of wearing crinoline, an article which had just swollen to extreme monstrosity, was also amusingly introduced. Mr Matthias's counsel asked if a lady whose dress spread the entire width of the path was to be turned back by a perambulator, upon which Mr Justice Byles thought that a baby's carriage would not be half so formidable an obstruction as the meeting of one lady with another. Eventually the jury disagreed and was discharged but it had been decided that legally a pram is not a carriage. In the end Matthias won and a supporter wrote an acrostic.

William the Conqueror! Art thou righted now?

In spite of Civic spite or Civic row:

Leonidas of Clifton's Pass of Boyce!

Let Clifton in such British pluck rejoice.

In many a gallant fight, 'tis thine to boast

A host against thee - but thyself a host;

Majestic still, thou stoodst guarding thy rightful Post;

Might versus Right, good General! Was't not so?

And thou seemd'st 'chosen' first to bear the blow.

Tongues rave against thee, as a perfect bore;

The Scribbling tribe abused thee more and more;

Horsemen oft trespassed on thy Right of Way; In Law Courts too they sued, costs made thee pay;

And Nursemaids charged thee with uncourteous hustle; Still hast thou vanquish'd all, spite of this boisterous bustle.

Matthias's campaigning came to a formal end in 1873 when at the age of 92, he was imprisoned for six months for disobeying a court order to restore a road he had dug up. On his release, his daughter still took him down the Magistrates' Court to heckle.

In Boyce's Avenue itself worked Edwin Bailey, a cobbler. In 1871, he raped a maid sent to collect a pair of boots. When the girl gave birth, he arranged to have her child dosed with Steadman's Settling Powders, laced with strychnine rat poison.

The house next to the arch in Victoria Square has a plaque to W.G. Grace, the snobbish, unsporting but phenomenal cricketer.

From the archway, take the path across the Square, cross Merchants Road. Avoid the temptations of the Fosseway and Church Walk and follow Clifton

Road. Turn left along York Place to Park Place. Leave by Pro Cathedral Lane on the right. Cross to look at Upper Berkeley Place, Turn right up Triangle South, right up steps to Berkeley Crescent and follow round to Berkeley Square. Go clockwise round the square.

At No 23 **I**, lived John McAdam, surveyor to the Bristol Turnpike Trust, who shaped the modern world by inventing a cheap way to make light roads.

Note: the remains of Bristol's replica High Cross in the garden of the square.

The original was removed as a traffic obstruction in the eighteenth century and sold as a garden ornament. The replica stood on College Green. Amateurs of street names should collect There and Back Again Lane. Except for the name it is of no interest whatsoever.

(To cut the walk short leave by bottom left hand corner. Bus stops for the Centre are on the left.) Leave Berkeley Square by the top left hand corner and turn into Brandon Hill, take path down to bottom, turn right and left down Brandon steps, cross the car park right up College Street, to College Green **J**

The Cathedral was converted from a Norman abbey by Henry VIII. The building was not finished until the nineteenth century. Next to it stood the Bishop's Palace until it was burnt down in the riots of 1831.

On College Green, note the Art Deco House. Relish the delightful lack of traffic in front of the Cathedral. A few years ago an enterprising Council closed the road.

Through the Norman arch beyond the Library, go round College Square, formerly Lower College Green to the pedestrian crossing, then left to Millennium Square **K**. Cross Anchor Square and leave by bottom left hand corner for the horned Pero's bridge to Queen Square.

Queen Square **L**, was a fashionable development in the early eighteenth century. Much of it was burnt down in 1831 during the famous 'Reform' riot. A few drunken rioters were enveloped in boiling lead. 130 people were killed or wounded as the cavalry restored order.

During the nineteenth century a railway embankment and a central station were proposed. In 1939 the Corporation did actually build a dual carriageway across

the middle which has now been closed and dug up by a more enlightened administration. Richard Bright, best known for the kidney disease named after him, is commemorated by a plaque. He also wrote a book of Hungarian travels, informative about gypsies.

Thaddeus Kosciuszko, the Polish Patriot, passed through Bristol in 1797 on his way to the United States after defeat by the Russian Empire. Earlier in his career, he had fought in the American War of Independence on the side of the colonists, helping win the battle of Saratoga. He was granted land in Ohio which he left in his will for the education of black Americans. A national park and the highest peak in Australia are named after him, and, for good measure, the birthplace of Oprah Winfrey.

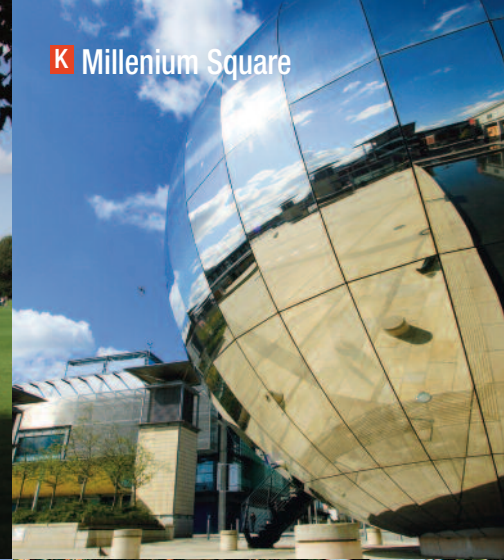
**Walk devised by Peter Gould,
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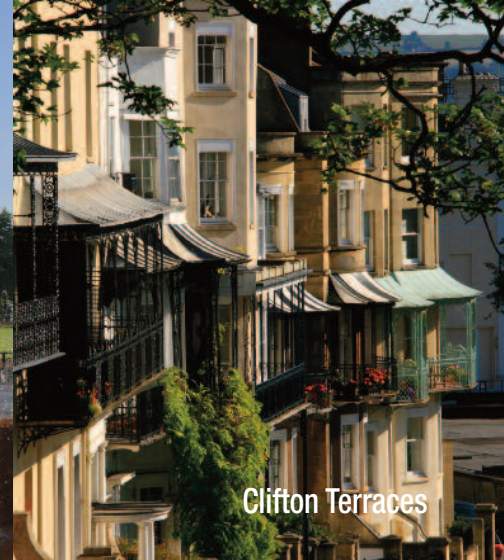
G Clifton College



J College Green



K Millenium Square



Clifton Terraces