

# Walking Bristol

Routes in North and East Bristol  
Walk 1 - Gas Lamps and Cut Throats



## 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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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.

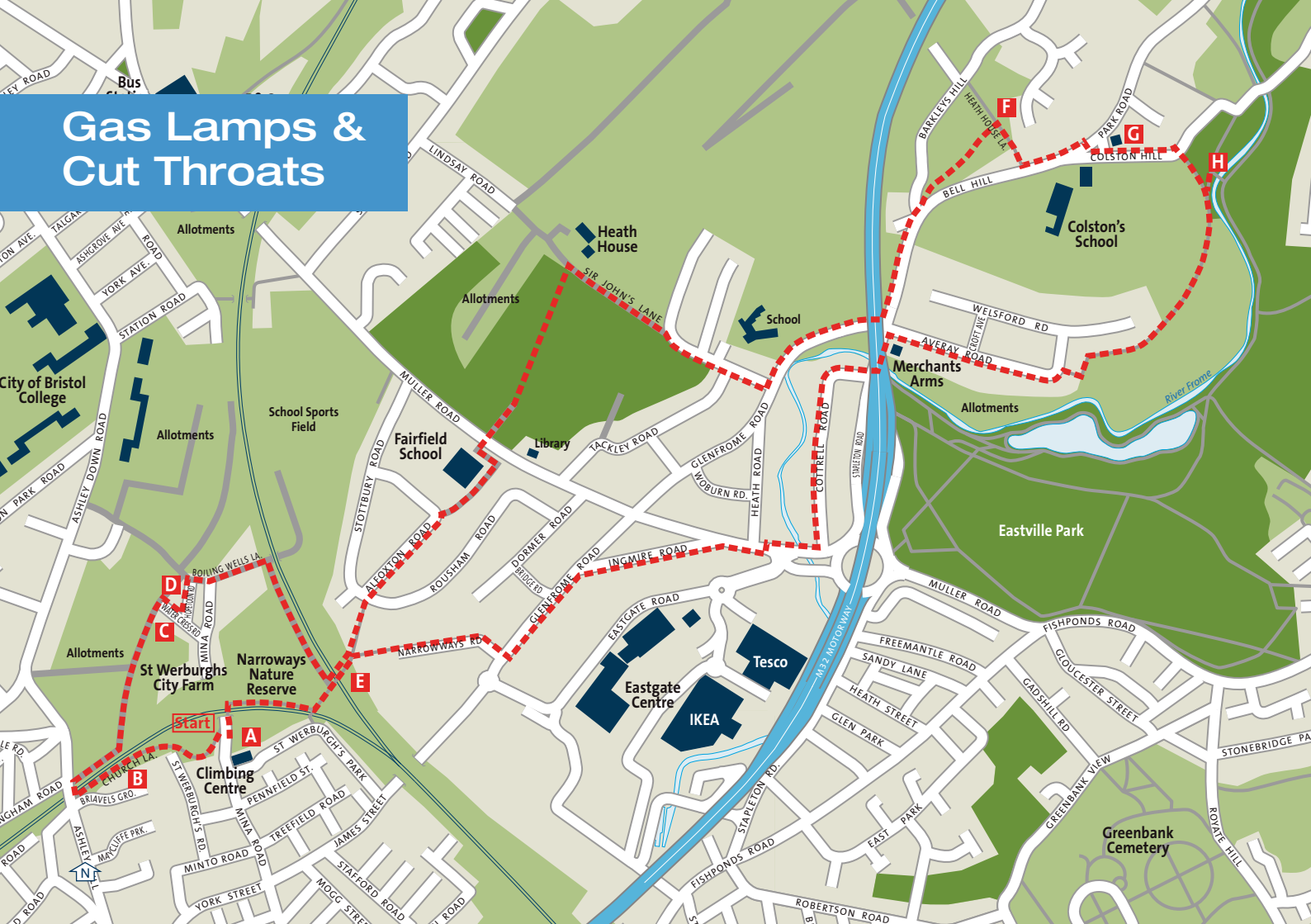
The book was intended to be sold, as it had been lovingly produced to a high quality. Unfortunately, this meant that when stocks began to run low, the cost of re-production proved to be prohibitive.

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.

# Gas Lamps & Cut Throats



Allotments

Allotments

School Sports Field

Allotments

Fairfield School

Library

Heath House

School

Merchants Arms

Welford Rd

Allotments

Eastville Park

Allotments

St Werburghs City Farm

Narrows Nature Reserve

Start

Climbing Centre

Eastgate Centre

Tesco

IKEA

Greenbank Cemetery

# Gas Lamps & Cut Throats - *walk 1*

**Description:** A circular walk from St Werburgh's to Stapleton and back, taking in some of the areas past and living history. Complimented by Narrowways Nature Reserve, Purdown Panoramic views, with some gaslight thrown on the darker side of St Werburgh's and Stapleton's murky past.

**Length:** 5 miles. ( 2-2.5 hours )

**Refreshments:** Pubs: The Farm, St Werburgh's; The Bell, Bell Hill; Merchants Arms, Stapleton Road; Miners' Arms, Mina Road. Cafés: St Werburgh City Farm Café, Tesco Eastgate.

**Transport:** Bus numbers 5 or 25 from Centre, alight St James Street and head for church. Montpellier railway station on Severn Beach Line. Please do not park in front of the church.

*Begin at St Werburgh's Church, cross Mina Road turn right and follow a footpath, just before the railway bridge. Past allotments and rising to Ashley Hill with the high*

*railway embankment on your right.*

St Werburgh's Church **A** is now a climbing centre. Decommissioned for use as church in the 1980s, one proposed use was as a carpet warehouse. St Werburgh's church

originally stood in Corn Street in the city centre until 1878 when it was demolished and the tower and some other sections were removed to the area now known as St Werburgh's. The reason for demolition was that it was blocking the increasingly busy thoroughfare of Corn Street where it stood on the corner with



Small Street. It was already in a state of disrepair and was little used. There had been earlier attempts to demolish the church for these reasons. On one occasion none other than Colston saved it from demolition. St Werburgh herself was a Saxon saint and is buried in Chester cathedral. She was the daughter of the king of Mercia and a lot of the surrounding street names reflect her life and times.

If walking past the Miners' Arms on Mina Road en route to the church note the flood sign (one of several in St Werburgh's) commemorating one of the floods in the area in past centuries. After several hundred yards you will come to a gas-lamp (still alight) **B**. Suggs and Co. of London made this in the early nineteenth century. The company still exists and is making the reproduction models as found in Clifton. Originally several lamps were in this lane; only one survives (one of 21 working gas-lamps in

Bristol). The lane was known locally as Church Lane as it leads to the rectory in Ashley Hill, now known as the Ship Aground Pub. It was deemed unfit for a man of the cloth to live in too close proximity to his parishioners. Follow the path up across a small bridge; this spans Horfield Brook one of the local streams partly responsible for the floods. The tall embankment on the right covers the remains of what was once a local Manor House - Lower Ashley Manor, circa 1750-1824. There are very few details known about this but there is a fine drawing of it, showing a man fishing in the brook, in the City Museum (Braikenridge Collection).

*When the path comes out on Ashley Hill, turn right, crossing the railway, then turn immediately right again following the clearly marked footpath down the opposite side of the*

*railway. (Where paths divide do not take path through kissing gate but continue to left.) This will take you, through a large collection of allotments, to the City Farm. Turn right then left at Hopetoun Road, past the Farm Pub.*

Originally the pub was the South Wales



Railway Tavern although always known locally as The Farm **C**. There were always watercress beds here and it was a popular walk in Victorian days.

*At the end of the short Hopetoun Road, turn sharp right down a track and into Boiling Wells Lane.*

On your left is the oldest building in the area, Hooks Mills, circa 1668-1911 **D**. Boiling Wells is so called because a bubbling, not 'boiling-hot' spring emanates from the ground there.

*Go past a very exotic house belonging to two local wood-workers. Just before the railway bridge turn right into Narrowways Nature Reserve. Continue until you reach the summit, having crossed a disused*

*railway bed. From here there are magnificent views of the city. Follow the path down to the kissing gate where the two railway lines merge.*

On the footbridge to the right **E** is the spot where a grisly murder took place on January 27th 1913. A Ted Palmer (a man of dubious morals and a heavy drinker) was so enraged when his fiancée, Ada James, broke off their engagement that he slit her throat. She managed to stumble down the lane to St Werburgh's church where, before she died, she managed to scribble Ted Palmer's name and cry 'My fiancé did it!' Ted Palmer was caught and hanged within two months. The lane became known as Cut-throat (other names included Goosey Gander Lane and Three Bridges Lane).

*Turn left and cross over the second main-line railway bridge and go left up to the houses, pausing to look back on another panoramic view, which includes former Muller orphanage. There is a cut-through between the houses. Cross directly over to Allfoxtan Road. At the end of the road a surfaced path parallel to a small lane leads around the perimeter of Fairfield School. You will come to some concrete steps; go down these and cross with great care over Muller Road (named after Muller of orphanage fame). Directly opposite is another set of steps.*

Go up these and follow the path (this is sometimes overgrown and muddy); you come out on a clear hill, the beginning of Purdown. Soon the former Heath House Clinic, a cottage, should be directly in front. Once again take in views. Just before Heath House is a marked lane - Sir John's Lane. Follow this down ignoring roads on left; it will come out on Glenfrome Road. Turn left and follow road under the M32. Continue up Bell Hill. Just past the bus stop there is a new housing development - Barkleys Hill. Take the right-hand side pavement. Turn right onto the tarmac path (Raja Ram Mohan Roy Walk) as it

leads away from the road.

In 1831 Ram Mohan Roy travelled to the United Kingdom as an ambassador of the Mughal Empire. He died at Stapleton, then a village on the 27th September 1833, of meningitis and is buried in Arnos Vale Cemetery in southern Bristol. 'Raja Ram Mohan Roy Way' has recently been named in memory of him.

You then come to a junction of paths; opposite is a flight of steps. Turn right into the lane (Heath House Lane).

This is the second Cut-throat Lane of our walk **F**. This time the murder was in 1836. A Charles Bartlett killed his mother-in-law, Mary Lewes. The remaining dowry of his wife Sarah was to be paid on the death of Sarah's mother. It appears

Charles Bartlett, a travelling actor, could not wait. He was caught, convicted and sentenced to death. The weapon on this occasion was a pistol. However I'm not fully certain this is the right lane - but never let truth get in the way of a good story!

Turn left at the end of this lane and cross over the main road to Stapleton church.





John Nelson, a renowned Bristol builder, built this church **G** in 1857. Outside the front gate there is one old gas-lamp holder, not working. However, follow round to Colston Hill to the right of the church. At the rear of the church there is a working gas-lamp but not an original. It has been restored by Suggs and Co., the original makers. This lamp is worked by light sensor so if you have a small person in your party send him up the lamppost to cover the lamp and it will ignite. There is a second working lamp in Fry's Close (a private road to the right of the church).

*Continue down into Colston Hill; turn right into a marked footpath at the first bend. (A short detour to the bottom of Colston Hill and right up Wickham Hill brings you to Wickham Court, the Parliamentary HQ during the siege of Bristol.)*

*Follow this track round (it can be muddy) till you see a set of steps doubling back downwards to the River Frome. Go twenty yards down the steps and you come to the ice-cave **H**. This belonged to Stapleton Manor House (now Colston School) and was an effective early form of refrigeration.*

*Climb back up to the original path and continue down the slope until you are out of the woods. The path now runs between the playing fields and back gardens of Colston School. Eventually the path comes out at some garages at the rear of houses. Continue until*

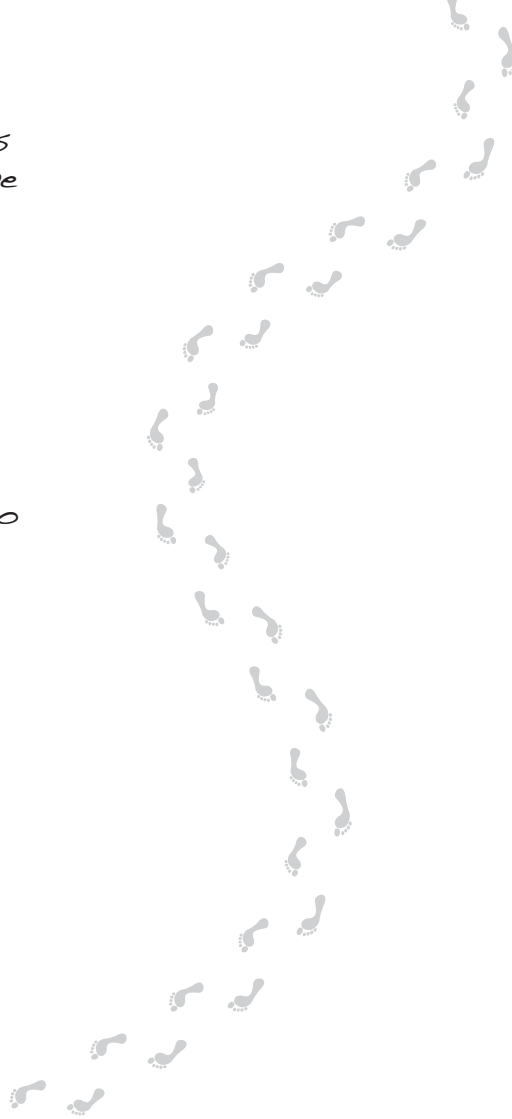
*the path goes to the left then sharp right. You will come out into a roadway. Turn left into Averay Road and continue towards the Merchants Arms and the M32.*

On your left are some recently renovated prefabs. Behind some of them are what I believe to be World War Two Anderson shelters. Cottrell Road, Rousham Road and roads named after Oxfordshire villages commemorate the Cottrell-Dormers of Rousham, connected by marriage with the Smyths.

*At the junction, cross over the road which goes under the M32. Turn left, then right into Cottrell Road. Follow round to the bottom of Muller Road. Go over the crossing, turn right then*

*left into Ingmire Road  
then left along  
Glenfrome Road towards  
the roundabout. Take the  
right turning up  
Narrowways Road, a cul-  
de-sac. Follow the  
stepped footpath at the  
end up towards  
Narrowways Hill again.  
Cross over the two  
railway bridges, back  
down Cut-throat Lane to  
St Werburgh's Church*

**Walk devised by Cathal Brennan,  
Bristol Ramblers**



**G** Stapleton Church



**St Werburgh's Nature Garden**





City Farm



Nature Reserve



The Farm, Public House



Ramblers on route



View on route