

Walking Bristol

Routes in North and East Bristol
Walk 5 - Penpole



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.

Penpole



Penpole - *walk 5*

- Description:** The walk follows a series of footpaths along the River Trym and through the delightful Penpole Wood, Kings Weston Down and Blaise Castle Estate with superb views over Bristol and Shirehampton. For convenience, the walk is presumed to start at Blaise Castle House.
- Length:** 7-8 miles. (3.5 - 4 hours)
- Refreshments:** There are toilets, parking and a cafe at Blaise Castle. Kings Weston House has a café. The Millhouse. Blaise Inn.
- Transport:** This walk can start either from Blaise Castle Estate on bus 40 or from The Mill House public house in Shirehampton Road below Trymwood Parade on bus 40 or from Sea Mills Station on the Severn Beach Line.

Blaise Castle House **A** was designed by William Paty for John Harford in the 1790s and Humphrey Repton was commissioned to landscape the park. The estate is named after St Blaise, a Bishop of Sebaste in Armenia and patron saint of wool-combers who was persecuted for his Christian beliefs. A thirteenth century chapel which stood on the site now

occupied by the castle was dedicated to him. In its turn the chapel was built over what was possibly a Roman temple. The present castle **B** was erected by Thomas Farr in 1766 and originally had lavishly furnished rooms. This strategic hilltop has a long history of settlement by man, being formerly an Iron Age hill fort covering some 7 acres although the banks and ditches are now obscured by

trees. Later it was occupied by the Romans. The castle is intended to be open from April to September on Sundays from 2.00-4.00pm. It is manned by the Friends of Blaise Castle. The house is now a museum of household life in times past and is open from April to October, Sat.-Wed., 10.00am-5.00pm. The estate is now owned by Bristol City Council.

Walk up from the house past the toilets, children's playground and the cafe to the car park. Turn left at the metal dog statue towards the wooded hill, near the wood edge. Turn right past the sculptures and follow the path which runs inside the edge of the woods.

The path bends round to the left where it meets another path crossing right to left. Turn to the left, where three paths lead off. Take the middle one leading upwards and to the right up to the castle. The other two paths follow the ditches between the ramparts of the hill fort and lead round the hill.

With the castle door behind you, walk half-right towards to a gap in the trees which open up to give a fine panoramic view over the river valley, known as Lovers' Leap. Turn left and follow the main route downhill, ignoring subsequent paths off to the left. Turn right on meeting a tarmac path.




At the bottom you pass by Stratford Mill, beside the Hazel Brook, a tributary of the River Trym. Above Blaise Castle Estate the brook is renamed the Henbury Trym.

Stratford Mill **C** was an eighteenth century corn mill rescued from the hamlet of Moreton, near West Harptree, when Chew Valley reservoir was created, and re-erected beside Hazel Brook. Unfortunately, the stream is not capable of turning the wheel.

Cross over the brook and turn right keeping to the main tarmac path. Follow the brook down the valley, ignoring the footbridges and crossing points over the brook. The tarmac path soon rises gently and bends to

the left but still follows the brook in the valley below. Continue on the tarmac path as it turns down towards the brook again and crosses it, leading past a few seats. The path then curves to the right and rises gently while the Hazel Brook turns to the left to join the River Trym some distance way.

Follow the path alongside a low stone wall which curves round to the right. After the end of the wall, the path opens out to become a small car park with the River Trym now flowing to the left. Continue on through the car park, cross over The Dingle minor road and pick up

the path again in the woods opposite. This path shortly passes under Dingle Road and continues along a broad grassy area until it crosses a footbridge over the Trym and comes out behind the car park of The Mill House  public house and ends up in Bell Barn Road. Turn right.

Take care crossing the busy Shirehampton Road and go down the footpath by the side of the bridge over the River Trym. Continue alongside the river as far as the Trym Cross Road, cross over the Trym bridge and walk diagonally up to the right towards the corner of the field near the A4 Portway.

You could start the walk from nearby Sea Mills Station and continue clockwise from here.

Go through the bushes up the waymarked footpath leading into Clapton Walk. Turn right at the top and follow Riverleaze round to the left and up to St Edyth's church.

St Edyth's, 1931, was designed by George Oatley. In one detail, it was never completed. The gargoyles on the tower are still plain blocks of stone.

Turn left down Avonleaze and then right into the waymarked footpath which leads on to Sylvan Way. Cross over this busy road with care. Go through the kissing gate into Shirehampton Golf course,



Pause to enjoy the stunning views of Horseshoe Bend **E** in the River Avon and beyond. Horseshoe Bend was famous as a navigational hazard, a major cause of the City Dock's decline.

Continue down to the bottom end of the golf course and then take the path up to the right alongside a stone wall until it comes out by the clubhouse car park. Leave the golf course and cross over Shirehampton Road/Park Hill and go up the steps into Shirehampton Cricket Club field. Keep to the left-hand fence and cross Penpole Lane at the far end. Turn left. Cross road at the entrance to the Oasis Academy. Go diagonally right on a wide grassy

following the waymark to the left. Keep to the perimeter fence of the golf course which runs alongside and above the A4 Portway. Take care not to disturb golfers on the way.

footpath to the ridge. Continue along the path on the ridge up to a small memorial stone with a seat running round it. Carry on a little further to Penpole Point where the path begins to descend steeply.

Penpole Point **F** is where the eighteenth century merchants of Bristol used to watch for the arrival of their ships. When the new turnpike road made the journey



easy, excursions to Penpole Hill became fashionable. A Breakfast Room was built and its customers were permitted to ramble in the shrubberies of Kings Weston House. A few fragments of the structure remain. Nowadays, the famous view has suffered from development and is largely obscured by trees. In Napoleonic times a beacon was placed here to be lit in case of invasion.

Return along the same path and just before the School Drop Off Point, turn half left into the woods. There is a choice of three paths at this point, so take care to choose the right hand path which will shortly follow the edge of another cricket field. Continue along this path through attractive woodland until you come to a clearing where two

paths converge by two large boulders to your left. Follow the first path, past the boulders and go along the path leading down to the recently restored Kingsweston House. A Basement Café is to the left of the main entrance.

Kingsweston House **G** was designed for Sir Edward Southwell by Sir John Vanbrugh and dates back to 1720, replacing an earlier Tudor house. Mention of Kings Weston Estate and the Blaise folly can be found in Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey. The house became a hospital in World War I. Requisitioned in World War II, the empty house was purchased by Bristol Corporation in 1948 and became a school. A college of architecture and sociology, and then a police training centre followed. The house

is now privately occupied and used for functions.

Pass round to the right of the house and go up the drive leading to the gazebo at the top. This would have been covered with stucco. Note the amusing faces on the stone vases. Walk round the gazebo to the right, go down some steps and across the iron bridge over Kings Weston Road. Follow the footpath to the right of the large house and by the kissing gate into Kings Weston Down Nature Reserve.

Note the single ditch and rampart formerly part of an Iron Age camp at the far end **H**.

Leave Kings Weston Down by the kissing gate in the

left hand hedge and go down a series of steps. Bear right near the bottom and then left into the clearing to Echo Gate **1**. If the walk started at Blaise Castle House, pass to the left of Castle Hill ahead and walk down towards the car park near the road and then on to the house. If, however, the walk started at The Mill House, continue past the signpost pointing to Blaise Castle at the other side of Echo Gate clearing. Then take the footpath up to Castle Hill as described at the beginning.

Walk devised by Alan Burton Bristol
Ramblers

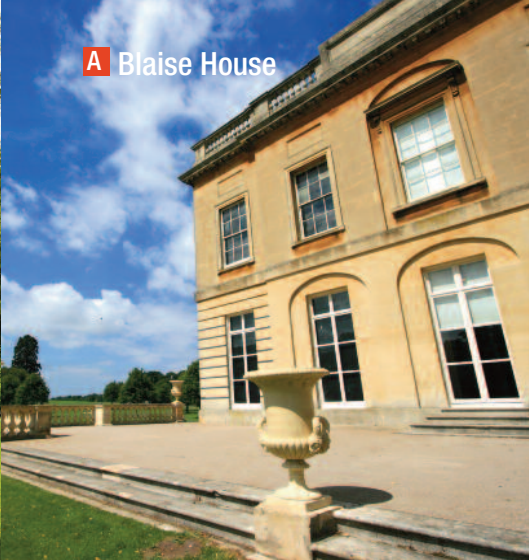


Enjoying a walk

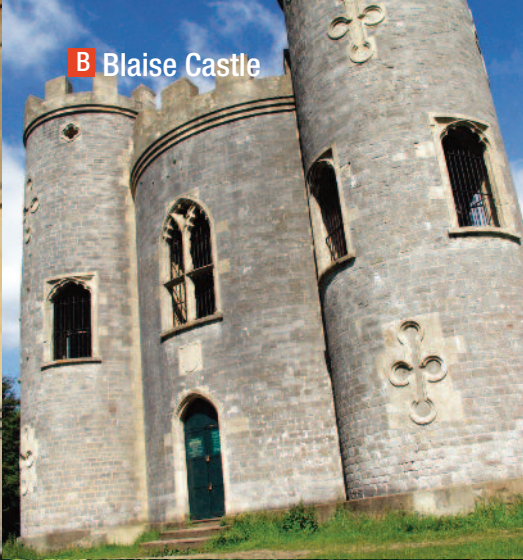


Wildlife

A Blaise House



B Blaise Castle



F Penpole Point



Blaise Woods



Folly at Kingsweston House



G Kingsweston House

