

45 Bristol Bridges by Bicycle

Crossing each bridge only once

These instructions are to guide you from bridge to bridge, and they begin where it seems most appropriate to start the walk — at Bristol's first bridge. They are not intended to be a guided tour of the whole city, but some items of significant interest that you pass along the way are pointed out. The walk is circular, so you could choose your own preferred starting (and finishing) point if this would be more convenient.

If you want to complete the route with the same objective as the walking route -i.e. not to cross the same bridge twice, it is not possible to avoid carrying your cycle up and down some steps. However, this route has been carefully devised so that this happens in only two places (see instructions 7 and 19). For this reason also, bridge no.3 in the walking route is here crossed in between bridges 45 and 1.

There is an accompanying gpx file and map of this route that you can download. The map can be "zoomed" for fine detail if viewed digitally.

If you take the riverside option through Pill (para 31b) please be aware that some of this path in the vicinity of Pill (exact location not yet ascertained) is flooded at high tides. Further information will be provided here in due course, but for the time being, you are advised to avoid this option within 2 hours of high tide and if flood warnings have been issued. You can check tide information and flood warnings [here](#).

[Bristol Tide Times](#)

[Govmt Flood Warning Service](#)

[FloodAssist](#)

With grateful thanks to Jane Shackleton who devised this route and wrote the instructions

The route begins at Castle Green. Before you start, take a look at the ruined St Peters Church. Note how (in the absence of other buildings) it gives an excellent all round view of the environs. It is likely that the Saxons made a settlement here and thus began Bristol. Now make your way down to the southwest corner of the park, to Bridge Street.

1. Start by crossing **Bristol Bridge (1)** & go down Victoria St to lights at Counterslip.

2. Turn left & cross **St Phillips Bridge (2)**
Note: Bridge 3 is crossed at end of the ride
As you cross the bridge you see Temple Bridge upstream on your right, and behind it, Valentine's Bridge.

3. Continue on Passage St into Narrow Plain, bear left after Church of Sts Philip and Jacob & take signed bike route through underpass under Temple Way.

Parts of Church of Sts Philip and Jacob ("Pip n'Jay") date from around 1200 but it was very altered in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Cross straight over Broad Plain & descend ramp to join Temple Way bike lane at junction with Avon St. Cross **Temple Bridge (4)**

St Philip's bridge is downstream, and Valentine's Bridge can be seen upstream.

4. Take first left at Temple Quay 3 into Temple Back East, bear left at Harratz Place & cross **Valentines Bridge (5)** and turn right.

You will pass a pair of tall grey funnel shaped objects next to the water — this is an artwork called "The Freetank" by Roger Hiorns and refers to the glassmaking history of this area.

After 100m turn right over **Meads Reach Bridge (6)**

5. Keep straight on Friary, go straight over mini roundabout & at Temple Gate turn left. Follow bike route passing across Station Approach.

It is worth a short detour into the station approach. The glass canopies of the main building station front Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt's 1870's building in reddish stonework. Brunel's original station building, in light grey stonework, is on your left, and begins at the opening with the "Passenger Shed" sign above it. Just beyond the right hand side of the approach is the handsome Jacobean-style former headquarters of the Bristol and Exeter Railway (1852–4) designed by S C Fripp.

Pass across the end of Cattle Market Rd to cross **Bath Bridge East (7)**

From the bridge, looking east, you can see Temple Meads station and the major railway bridge that carries the platforms.

6. Continue around Fowlers roundabout using bike route & pelican crossings (or road) to cross back over **Bath Bridge West (8)** & then to cross A4 back to Cattle Market Rd. Take signed bike route under Temple Meads railway station. Cross road near first bend as you exit the tunnel.

You pass a channel cut into the riverbank on your right, blocked with debris. This was Totterdown Lock, which was the entrance from the river into the far eastern end of the Floating Harbour. There was a bridge over the entrance channel called Feeder Road Bridge. The channel was blocked in World War II to prevent the Floating Harbour being drained of water in the event of a bomb hitting the lock gates.

A few metres further on turn right to cross **Brocks Bridge (9)**

At the time of going to press, both Brock's Bridge and the next, St Philip's footbridge, are not open to the public, pending further development on Temple Island. For the time being take riverside path path/bike route to left of Brocks Bridge to Temple Meads Relief Line Bridge, para 7 below.

if you have been able to cross Brock's bridge, turn left & cross back over **St Phillips Footbridge (10)**

7. Turn right on riverside path to **Temple Meads Relief Line Bridge (11)**. Carry bike up 16, then 17 steps to cross bridge, then head left uphill on bike track to meet Bath Rd (A4).

8. Turn left on bike route into Bath Road.

*Note the fine early 19th century signpost called the Three Lamps)
After about 200m, on the right you pass the Thunderbolt Pub with the spiky barge boards, a Grade 11 Listed Victorian pub formerly called the Turnpike, named after the Totterdown Turnpike gate (long demolished), located near where travellers entering the city along this road had to pay a fee. A few metres further on that side is Summer Street, which gives an interesting view up to Holy Nativity Church (1883, rebuilt 1958) with its distinctive green copper spire. On the left you pass Totterdown Bridge which you cross later. 50m further on, opposite the bus stop, is a fine Victorian Italianate tenement building, and following that is a long handsome Victorian terrace row with attractive stone decoration on the triple height bay windows.*

When you reach the "Paintworks" development head down the entrance slope into it & turn left at end to pick up route towards River Avon leading to **Sparke Evans Park Bridge (12)**

9. Cross bridge & descend ramp into Sparke Evans Park.

A short detour in the park of 100m downstream (going west) will bring you to a copse, on the east side of which is a (very dilapidated) Edwardian bandstand, with some fine decorative cast iron columns and corbels.

From the bottom of the bridge ramp face east (upstream) and take bike route passing under **St Phillips Causeway Bridges East (13) & West (14)**

10. Just after these bridges, follow track sharply left up ramp to reach street level. Turn left, to cross 1st bridge then follow roundabout to come back over second bridge.

Turn right at second roundabout into Avon Meads Retail Park. Pass shops & head down slope to left of cinema.

Pass under railway bridge & turn right on Cole Rd to reach Feeder Rd.

Turn right passing under another railway bridge & follow canal upstream for 500m.

11. Turn left over **Barton Hill Bridge (15)**. Cross road, turn right into Netham Park & follow bike route to Lock.

12. Cross over 2 roads & turn right over **Netham Lock Bridge East (16)**

13. Immediately turn left & cross **New Brislington Bridge (17)**
From the bridge you have a good view of Netham Wier, downstream.

14. Take signed bike track on left towards River Avon & head upstream to **St Anne's Footbridge (18)**

15. Use ramps to cross bridge, turn left & take bike track back to Lock.

Cross first road & push along short stretch of footpath on left over **Netham Lock Bridge West (19)**, then use pelican to cross over Feeder Rd & turn right.

In about 200m on the right next to the river you will pass a freight container in camouflage colours with a "green" roof. This houses the Feeder Canal Sand Martin Colony and is also a work of art.

16. Continue along Feeder Rd for 1km.

Carry on past Barton Hill Bridge, which you crossed earlier, underneath a railway bridge and the second St. Philips Causeway Bridge. As you pass under the latter, you can enjoy it's crisp, chunky concrete support columns and the undulating lines of the deck support girders. Next come some pipe

and conveyor bridges wrapped in beige corrugated sheeting. (None of these are usable by the public and are excluded from the route).

Use ramp to cross **Feeder Road Footbridge (20)**. Descend ramp & follow path to meet Silverthorne Lane at the end.

17. Turn left into Silverthorne Lane.

Immediately on your left is an impressive stone built Victorian Factory/Warehouse. Follow Silverthorne Lane left around the corner, where it intersects with Gas Lane and Kingsland Road. On the corner are the very fine former offices of the John Lysaght Galvanising Works, faced in beige coloured smooth sandstone (1891–3). A few metres further on are wonderful Victorian Disneyesque main gates. The architecture is termed "Rundbogenstil", to be precise).

Carry on along Silverthorne Lane and at the T-junction turn left.

Straight in front of you at the T-junction is the huge stone-built former Avon Street Gas Works Retort House (1850s), now a nightclub.

Turn sharp left at Gas Lane junction to meet Avon St. Turn left & cross over **Marsh Bridge (21)**

18. Head straight over crossroads, following Albert Rd past dogs home, around sharp left bend & turn right over **Totterdown Bridge (22)**

19. Turn right into Bath Rd (A4) & continue through "Three Lamps" junction to Fowlers roundabout. Take first exit left onto York Rd & cross over road at first opportunity.

Carry bike down 10 then 6 steps or use bike channels on left beside steps & cross **Langton Street (Banana) Bridge (23)**

20. Turn left into Clarence Rd & follow river to roundabout. Proceed clockwise to cross **Bedminster Bridges East (24) & West (25)**

At the western bridge, if you face south, across Coronation Road behind some trees, is the handsome former Zion Congregational Chapel, (1830). A few metres to the east of the bridge on the north bank is a Victorian drinking fountain, a listed structure, dated 1861, pre-dating this bridge by 20 years. It has a cast iron shell-shaped bowl and a marble splashback.

21. Take fifth exit up Redcliffe Hill & turn left into Guinea St. Proceed down hill & cross **Bathurst Basin Footbridge (26)**

22. Turn left on quay side bike route to roundabout then left over **Bathurst Basin Road Bridge East (27)**

Cross road at first opportunity & head back over **Bathurst Basin Road Bridge West (28)**

23. At roundabout, turn left into Cumberland Rd.

At the start of Cumberland Road on the north side is a high stone wall. This is the remains of the outer wall of the city's "New Gaol", completed 1820, destroyed in the Bristol Reform Bill Riots of 1831, then rebuilt. A few metres down the road is the old gateway with an arch and two flanking towers. Public hangings took place on the walkway between the towers, sometimes in front of a crowd of thousands.

Continue down Cumberland Road and after 100m cross **Gaol Ferry Bridge (29)**

If you turn left, in about 40m there is a gap in the railings where a track leads you down in a zig-zag 6 or 7m below the bridge. Stop before the path becomes muddy and slippery or you may end up in the water! From here you will get a great view down the river, with the bridge now high over your head.

24. After crossing Gaol Ferry bridge turn right at Coronation Rd & take bike path west for 1km. Cross **Vauxhall Bridge (30)** plus its extension.

25. Head west on Cumberland Rd, then turn right into Avon Crescent taking bike track on left to Metrobus route - cross over this & continue over **Ashton Avenue Bridge (31)** The three huge redbrick Tobacco Bond warehouses (early 1900s) are prominent features here.

26. Turn immediately right through gateway into Ashton Park & follow path by river to pass under wide road bridge, then bear left & use ramp to climb & cross **Avon Bridge (32)**

Take 1st exit ramp down Brunel Lock Rd.

27. At bottom of ramp turn left to cross **South Entrance Lock Bridge (33)**

28. Pass through yellow metal railings & turn right in front of Brunel's swivel bridge parked on the quayside. Go anticlockwise around central pivot of Plimsoll Bridge & then cross **South Entrance Lock Walkway (34)**

Note: there are one way roads, car parks & obstacles here – so we recommend the following route:

29. Pass two giant anchors to reach Nova Scotia Pub at the end. Turn right towards Avon Crescent.

Almost immediately turn right up McAdam Way, then bear left onto Ashton Ave – a red brick terrace with parking spaces facing it - to meet Cumberland Rd at the top. Cross over, turn right then immediately bear left

down Smeaton Rd keeping "Create Centre" on left. Veer right under McAdam Way flyover back to Brunel Lock Rd & then bear left up road ramp. Turn left at top to cross **Plimsoll Bridge (35)**

30. Take first exit ramp & at bottom, head back on yourself along Cumberland Basin Rd. Immediately turn left into Cumberland Piazza Skate Park & pass under two flyovers - first with red pillars, second with green pillars.

Take pelican across Hotwell Rd (A4), go around the corner & turn first left into Joy Hill.

Take third right turn up Granby Hill. Carry on when it becomes York Gardens bearing left around a steep bend.

Royal York Crescent which dominates the skyline here dates from 1791–1820 and comprises 46 houses, possibly designed by William Paty.

Carry on into Wellington Terrace, then Sion Hill. Pass Avon Gorge Hotel & Clifton Rocks Railway.

Clifton Rocks Railway was a funicular railway that ran from here down to the Portway. It ran from 1893–1934, and during WWII it was a secret transmission base for the BBC.

Turn left at top to cross **Clifton Suspension Bridge (36)**

Just over the bridge is the Burwalls mansion on the left and the Bridge Visitor Centre on the right. Burwalls was built in 1872 for local newspaper proprietor Joseph Leech, designed by local architects Foster and Wood. In 1897, it became the family home of George Wills, tobacco baron. In 1946, it was bought by Bristol University. In 2016, it was converted into luxury apartments. The excellent Bridge Visitor Centre is open every day, with free entry. And, oh look, it sells the official handbook for the bridges walk/cycle route:

"From Brycgstow to Bristol in 45 Bridges"!

[31 \(a\) Route suitable for road bikes through Abbots Leigh, Lower Failand & Portbury](#)

After crossing Clifton Suspension Bridge, keep straight & turn right at lights in front of Ashton Court entrance onto A369.

Follow signposted Bike Route 334 towards Abbots Leigh for approx. 2km.

Turn left on Manor Rd in front of The George Pub & after sharp bends, turn right along dirt track signed Abbots Pool - **this track is in good condition & easily possible on a road bike**

At Sandy Lane turn left towards Lower Failand & continue for 2km. Pass St Bartholomew's Church & after 100m, turn right on Failand Lane. Continue for 2km.

At bottom of long hill turn right on Mill Lane into Portbury, then bear sharp right on High St to reach A369 at Easton in Gordano.

Use pelican to cross over & follow Bike Route 410, bearing left after 100m to Pill. Follow signs to **Avonmouth Bridge (37)**

31 (b) Route suitable for off-road bikes/chunky tyres using un-tarred path alongside River Avon

Note - this track is often muddy/wet in winter or following rain and around Pill may be subject to tidal flooding, so avoid times of high tides. Bike Route 41 can also be accessed through Leigh Woods via North Road -first turning after Clifton Suspension Bridge, but the route is tricky to find, it has a steep off-road descent & is often muddy/wet

After crossing Clifton Suspension Bridge, bear left down Burwalls Rd, turn left on Rowham Hill & take first left turn through a gate leading to Bike Route 41. Turn left & continue alongside River Avon.

After 2 km, you will eventually have a view of the Sea Mills railway bridge. Immediately behind it, across the tributary of the Trym, are the ruined walls of a wet dock dating from 1712.

Immediately behind that you have a fine view of the Portway Viaduct (1926) which you will cross later. To the left of the Portway, in the middle distance, is the tower of St Ediths (1924). Further on you pass the low cliffs of the Avon's Horseshoe Bend on the opposite bank. The cliffs are a protected site of Special Scientific Interest because of the vegetation. Horseshoe Bend was a notoriously tricky spot for large ships to steer round. In 1874, the SS Kron Prinz, containing 200 tons of grain, grounded on the outer bank. The ship settled onto the steep mud bank and then tipped over. The cargo of grain was lost but the ship was refloated and taken to Bristol for expensive repairs.

Follow signs through Pill.

Pill (meaning inlet or harbour) was traditionally the residence of pilots who would guide boats up the Avon Gorge, between the Bristol Channel and the Port of Bristol.

32. Cross **Avonmouth Bridge (37)** & descend ramp, then turn right into Lower High St on B4054 & continue uphill into Shirehampton.

As shops end, turn right into Park Rd & at the end turn left to follow A4 bike lane. (alternatively, cross over A4, then turn left to join Portway Cycle Path - shared with pedestrians on pavement)

33. Continue to Sea Mills crossing over **Portway Viaduct (38)**

This viaduct is one of Bristol's loveliest bridges but cannot be appreciated unless you make a short diversion down to the grassy park on the north side. If you cycle a hundred metres north and look back you get a splendid view of the viaduct. Between the viaduct and the river Avon are the remains of a wet dock built in 1712 by Joshua Franklyn, a Bristol merchant, to eliminate the need for large sailing ships to navigate the tricky route of the River Avon any further upstream. However, it never thrived due to poor transport links and was in disrepair by the end of the 18th century.

34 (a) Route with steep ascent into Clifton Village

After 50m, turn left into Roman Way (from cycle path, use Pelican to cross A4)

Where Roman Way joins the Portway are the remains of a Roman villa probably dating from the third century, which was part of the Roman settlement of Portus Abonae.

At the end of Roman Way, turn right into Avon Way. At bottom of hill, take second right into Old Sneed Rd & at the end turn right again, heading up Stoke Hill to the crossroads/traffic lights.

For a fine view of the Avon Gorge, turn right into Saville Rd, continue on Downleaze, then Rockleaze to join Circular Rd & follow this all the way around to join Ladies Mile – otherwise:

Carry on through the lights & this becomes Stoke Rd. Turn right into Ladies Mile. Continue to meet A4176 & cross over, keeping right on Clifton Down, heading uphill. At the top turn right into Observatory Rd.

Cross over into Sion Hill & follow road down hill past "Old Clifton Rocks Railway".

Turn right at the end into Granby Hill & halfway down turn left into Hope Chapel Hill. Join Hotwell Rd (A4) at bottom & continue to Mardyke Pub.

34 (b) Route avoiding steep ascent into Clifton Village

Continue on bike path all the way to Hotwells passing under Clifton Suspension Bridge.

At the Entrance Lock just before Plimsoll Bridge, on Cumberland Basin Rd, cross into Cumberland Piazza Skate Park & pass under 2 flyovers - first with red pillars, second with green pillars.

Turn right at pelican to join Hotwell Rd (A4) and continue around right hand bend towards city centre as far as Mardyke Pub.

35. Just after Pub, cross over to harbourside & turn right. Continue over **Poole's Wharf Bridge (39)**

In 50 m you pass a wide gap in the harbour wall which was the former entrance to the huge Merchants/Champion's Wet Dock (1773) which survived until 1967.

Carry straight on past Pump House Pub & turn left out of car park.

36. Cross **New Junction Lock Bridge (40)** & continue over **Old Junction Lock Bridge (41)**

The shiny curved corrugated metal cabins that flank the bridge house the control rooms and pumps that open the lock gates and the bridge.

37. Continue straight ahead into Avon Crescent & after 50m turn left down an alley, then right at the water & push your bike through the Underfall Yard.

On your right in Underfall Yard, after the workshops, is a redbrick building that houses the control systems for the sluice gates (underground beneath you) that control the level of the water in the Floating Harbour.

38. Continue along harbourside bike route. At Bristol Marina, turn right into Hannover Place & after 100m turn left past former Albion Dock.

Albion Dock (1820) was the largest dry dock in Bristol, created by Charles Hill and James Hilhouse, who built many ships on the site until 1977. Abels Shipbuilders occupied it 1980–2016.

At Gas Ferry Rd turn left.

The head office of Aardman Animations, birthplace of Wallace and Gromit, is straight ahead before you make the turn. Wallace and Gromit now live in a large mansion in Beverly Hills USA.

Turn right along harbourside following bike route behind M-Shed.**39.** Turn left into Wapping Rd & take bike lane over **Prince Street Bridge (42)**

40. Continue over traffic lights to Pelican, then turn left towards St Augustine's Reach. Cross **Pero's Bridge (43)**

St Augustine's Reach was constructed in the 13th century to divert the river Frome. It was a gigantic work of civil engineering for the time. It used to be one kilometre long, 40m wide and 6 m deep. It became the heart of the Port of Bristol — crowded with tall-masted ocean-going ships. Much of it

was covered over in the 1930s to create "The Centre".

41. Turn right behind first building to Canon's Rd & continue to the end to join bike route, bearing right across The Centre, keeping Broad Quay House on your right.

Use pelican to cross Prince St & head diagonally across Queen Square on bike track.

Queen Square is one of the finest Georgian squares in the country, named after Queen Anne, who visited the city in 1702. It was extensively damaged by fire in the Bristol Corn Law riots of 1831. The equestrian statue of William III, in the centre of the square, is by John Michael Rysbrack, cast in 1733, and is one of the best of its kind in Europe.

At roundabout, carry straight on bike route over **Redcliffe Bridge (44)**

As you approach Redcliffe Bridge the cathedral-sized St Mary Redcliffe Church (mostly 13th and 14th century) is behind it in the middle distance

42. Continue on bike route crossing Redcliff St. & continue along Portwall Lane.

Part of Bristol's Mediaeval city walls ran along here.

Bear left into Victoria St at the end.

Turn right at the lights into Counterslip, then left at Premier Inn & continue straight on down an alley to cross **Castle Bridge (45)**

43. Turn right on bike route in Castle Park & cross **Castle Ditch Bridge (3)** - now the final bridge on the ride.

44. Turn left & follow the path to Queen St. Turn left & at the first bend to head back into Castle Park.

You've done it! Well done. Now you can get the badge! See the *Bristol Bridges Walk Challenge* Facebook Group "Files" tab for info.