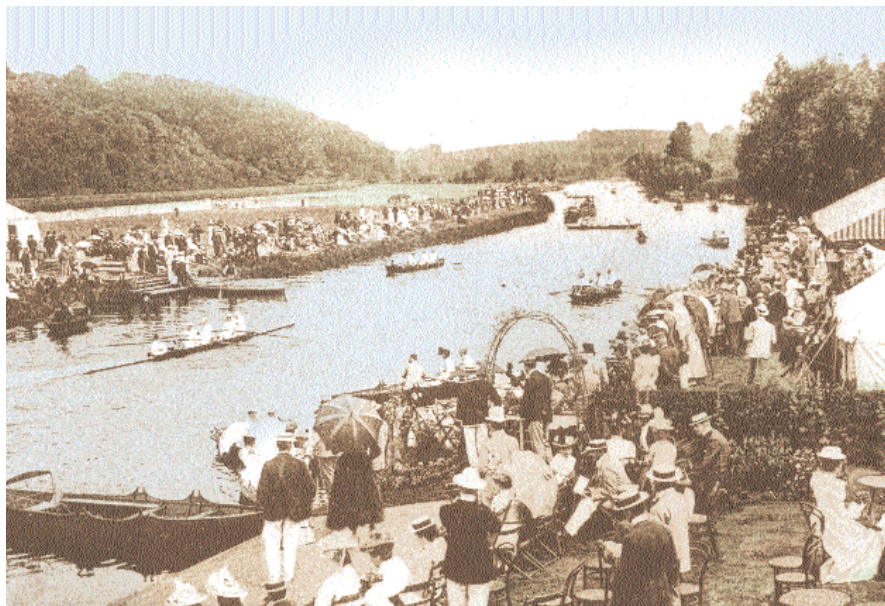


# River Avon Trail

## Interpretation Project Bulletin



above: Salford Regatta, turn of the 20th century photo: Memories Corn Exchange, Bristol

### Stories of the River Avon

We are now compiling material for a new guide book and 15 interpretation boards that will display local information as well as tell some of the stories of the River Avon. The boards will be installed at fairly regular intervals along the River Avon Trail which follows the River from the harbour at Pill, close to the River's mouth, to Pulteney Bridge in Bath.

*We would like your help* to uncover those stories or point out local information that would help others appreciate and enjoy this fascinating river and its landscapes. In March and April we will be making presentations in Pill and Salford respectively and you are welcome to attend and contribute to these meetings (see event listings). If you would like us to come and talk to your local group please contact us - *see next column*.



#### **What's in a name? Why the 'salt' in Salford?**

*Before weirs or locks were constructed on the river in the early 19th century, the tide swept up to Bath, so the water was not 'fresh' but salty at Salford; in contrast to Freshford, upstream from Bath, where it was fresh.*

*A lovely explanation, but not necessarily a true one.*

*According to Salford historian Percy Sims the name 'Salt' is more likely to derive from 'Saehl' - the Old English word for 'salix' or 'willow' - so 'Saehl-ford' is 'fording place by the willows'.*

*But in the Domesday Book of 1086 the village of Salford is named 'Sanford' - sand or gravel - ford. So who knows? Place names have a life of their own.*

*If you have a place name story, please let us know.*

illustration: Linda Clark

**The Avon Valley Partnership** was established in 1993 to address various issues relating to the management of open space, recreation and sustainable transport in the vicinity of the River Avon between Pill, near the mouth, and Bath. This broad partnership comprises local authority officers, environmental organisations and local interest groups.

*The partners* - Avon Gorge & Downs Project ● Avon Valley Railway ● Bath & North East Somerset Council ● Bristol City Council ● BTCV ● Countryside Agency ● Easton Community Centre ● Environment Agency ● EnVolve ● Forest of Avon ● National Trust ● North Somerset Council ● Salford Reach Environment Group ● South Gloucestershire Council ● Sustrans

#### **The bulletin**

There will be four more bulletins, published at two-monthly intervals until the end of the project in November 2004. They will keep you up to date on progress, feature some of the stories that have been contributed and contain a diary of walks and talks.

**The deadline for the next bulletin will be Friday 23rd April.**

Bulletins are available by post, email and via the website. Please state your preference when you contact us.

#### **The archive**

*Have you got a story?* Besides the 15 interpretation boards and the new guide book there will also be an archive of all the information contributed by the community, a bibliography of books found in local libraries and signposts to other resources. The archive will be accessed via the website.

Contact us -

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[www.riveravontrail.org.uk](http://www.riveravontrail.org.uk)

*A path along the river through Bristol and Bath*

**AVON VALLEY**  
PARTNERSHIP

left: View from the bridge - the crossing we might have lost, see below



photo: Paul Stephens

### **Saltford residents saved the day**

Frank Vine of Saltford was very active in Saltford Residents' Association in the 1960s. The Residents' campaigned to prevent the demolition of the Old Midland Railway river bridge at Saltford in 1964. Their efforts secured the crossing of the Avon between Bath and Keynsham that now carries the River Avon Trail, the Bristol & Bath Railway Path and has made it possible for the Avon Valley Railway to extend their track. "If we had not acted, the Bridge would have been speedily demolished as soon as the Midland Railway line was Beeching-ised! – and there would, I guess, be no River Avon Trail in this area," says Mr Vine.

If you have a story to tell about the river, please let us have it. We would like to collect as many stories as we can for inclusion into the The River Avon Trail Archive but they might also be featured on one of the interpretation boards or in the new River Avon Trail Guide.

## **WALKS, TALKS & EVENTS**

You can use the bulletin and the website to publicise events in your area, such as walks or talks related to the River Avon landscape.

### **City Centre Health Walks - Bristol** *Weekly Wednesday Walk*

20 or 30 minute walks around Bristol's attractive harbour and green spaces. Meet at the Water Cascade Steps, on the city centre promenade at 12.30 pm.

### **Tuesday 2nd March - Bristol**

*Walking the way to Health - Pill Path & Nightingale Valley*  
Part of the River Avon Trail (mainly flat but a steep uneven incline). A 4 mile walk on various surfaces with some slopes and obstacles (e.g. steps, stiles etc.) Free but bring money for refreshments. Meet at the Southville Centre 10:00am tel: 0117 377 3458.

### **Mon 8th March - Bristol**

*Walking the way to Health - Bristol Cumberland Basin Alternative*  
Meet at Southville Centre, 10:00 am or Vauxhall Bridge at 10.15 am. Visit a wonderful park and find out what goes on at the Create Centre Please make sure you book onto each walk. Phone Sian Davies on 0117 377 3460 for more information.

### **Wednesday 10th March - Saltford**

*River Avon Trail Presentation & Talk*  
7:00pm Saltford Brass Mill Preservation Group, 27 Grange Road (1st right turn in Saltford from Bristol direction). The River Avon Trail Interpretation Project organisers will give a picture show and would like to discuss ideas for the information panel and an event with community groups in the Saltford area. Please bring any books, photos, items of interest.

### **Weds 17th March - Bristol**

*Walking the way to Health Bristol Cumberland Basin Alternative*  
Meet at Southville Centre, 10:00 am or Vauxhall Bridge at 10.15 am Explore the Basin as never seen before! Please book onto each walk. Phone Sian Davies on 0117 377 3460 for more information.

### **Sunday 14th March - Bristol**

*Avon Gorge & Downs Wildlife Project - Ranger's Ramble.* 2:00pm Join the Downs Ranger on a fascinating 2.5 hour circular walk to discover how people have shaped the landscape and environment of Clifton and Durdham Downs through time. Mostly on flat terrain with some slight inclines. No gates or stiles. For booking and meeting point details please call Mandy Leivers on 0117 903 0609. Charge £2.50

### **Wednesday 31st March - Bristol**

*Tree Gazing in Ashton Court - Redwoods, Ancient Oaks & Chestnuts* 2:00pm Charge £3.  
A 2 mile walk to look at the magnificent Redwoods, the famous Domesday Oak and some enormous pollarded Spanish Chestnuts. Some hills and often over rough terrain. Dogs welcome. Meet in the courtyard outside the cafe at the rear of the mansion, tel: 01275 848629.

### **Friday 2nd April - Bristol**

*Tree Gazing in Leigh Woods - Ancient Woodlands and Yew trees* 2:00pm  
A 2.5 hour walk which explores deep into the woodland to discover old Hornbeams, Rowans and Wild Service trees. On the way we see Broad and Small Leaved Lime plus a few rare Whitebeams. Rough paths and uneven surfaces. Meet at the National Trust entrance in North Rd, tel: 01275 848629. Charge £3.

### **Friday 2nd April - Warmley**

*Dramway Walk* 2:30pm A 2 hour walk along this old railway to Warmley and Willsbridge Mill and returning via Siston Brook. A flat walk with few stiles or gates. Meet at North Common Village Hall, Millers Drive, tel: 0117 932 3302.

### **Thursday 8th April - Pill**

*River Avon Trail Presentation & Talk.*  
Project organisers will give a picture show and would like to discuss ideas for an information panel and an event with community groups in the Pill area. 7:30pm. Baptist Chapel, Pill (find the Coop, Station Bridge - park around here - the chapel is in the lane to the right, facing the Coop). Please bring photos and items of interest. Crockern Pill & District History Society, non - members please call 01275 372540.

### **Sunday 25 April - Saltford**

*Avon Wildlife Trust - Dawn Chorus Walk*  
David Sage, Biology teacher from Wellswey School is leading the walk. Meet at the Shallows, 4:30 am. Details from Barbara Price, tel: 0117 986 5261

### **Sunday 2nd May - Bristol**

*Avon Gorge & Downs Wildlife Project - Early Birds & Bacon Butties (with a veggie option!!)*  
6:00am International Dawn Chorus Day. Learn how to identify birdcalls with local bird expert Richard Bland, return to Bristol Zoo Gardens for breakfast. Wear warm clothes and bring binoculars. Approx. 2 hours + breakfast. Book and meeting point details call Mandy Leivers on 0117 9030609. Charge: £7.50 inc. breakfast.



illustrations: Linda Clark



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