

*Following the
River Frome
from the
centre of
Bristol to the
Cotswold Hills*



The Frome Valley

Introduction

The **Frome Valley Walkway** is a 30km long path that follows the River Frome upstream from its junction with the River Avon in the centre of Bristol, to the Cotswold Hills in South Gloucestershire.



It is a lovely walk along the river valley, passing through a variety of attractive landscapes. There are historic city parks, a secluded, romantic gorge as well as open countryside with riverside meadows, wooded valleys and the Cotswold Hills. Along the way there are appealing villages and towns such as Frenchay, Frampton Cotterell and Chipping Sodbury as well as medieval churches, nature reserves and a spectacular viaduct.



At the Bristol end the route follows surfaced paths and pavements, and sections of the River Frome are culverted and enclosed.

The Frome Valley Walkway links with the River Avon Trail in Bristol, the Cotswold Way National Trail further north, and other recreational routes including the Jubilee Way, the Monarch's Way and the Community Forest Path.

Five short loop walks offering the opportunity to explore interesting areas around the Frome valley are included in this booklet.

History of the River Frome



Old Mill, Stapleton, Bristol

The River Frome probably gets its name from the Anglo Saxon word 'frum', which means rapid and vigorous, and that describes it well, because the Frome is a fast-

flowing river, rushing down from the Cotswold Hills, dropping 160m in around 30 kilometres. The river has played an important role in the development of Bristol, both as part of the original harbour and as a major source of water power for mills along the valley. Quarrying and mining were also important industries in the Frome valley, with local Pennant Sandstone and coal being extracted and transported along the valley to Bristol.



Frome flowing into historic Bristol barbour

Bristol grew prosperous over the centuries, thriving as a trading centre for imports and exports. Ships became larger, needing deeper mooring, and gradually the wharves along the Frome declined as the Avon became the more important transport route. The low-lying marshes along the River Frome were drained for housing and industry as the city expanded. In the city centre, the lower reaches of the Frome have gradually been enclosed during the last 200 years to control flooding and make space for buildings and roads.

Serious floods



Weir at Snuff Mills

The River Frome has a long history of flooding. Its large catchment area and the journey through the 5km narrow gorge between Frenchay and Eastville mean that water levels can rise dramatically and rapidly after heavy rain. Down the

centuries many of the towns and villages along the river have been periodically flooded by the Frome, and the centre of Bristol has been wrecked several times, with over 3m of floodwater. In the 1930s there was widespread flood damage across Bristol and in 1968 five million gallons of floodwater had to be pumped out of the old Bristol Rovers football ground!

People have tried to control the flooding for centuries, by reinforcing the river banks and straightening the course of the river. In the 1960s the Frome's flood defences were dramatically improved when the Northern Storm Water Interceptor was built near Eastville. It takes flood water from the Frome at a weir in Eastville and diverts it along an underground pipe to drain into the River Avon just under Seawalls in the Avon Gorge.

Wildlife of the River Frome



Dipper

The River Frome is home to lots of wildlife, both in the river and along its banks. Its fast flow means that water quality is good, as any pollution is rapidly diluted and flushed out of the system. The river is

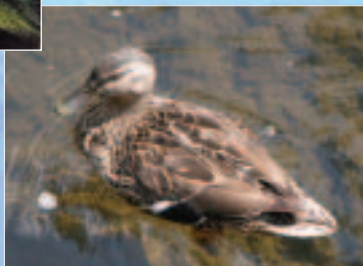
home to fish such as roach, gudgeon and eels as well as the native white-clawed crayfish.

Kingfishers and dippers are often seen along the river, hunting in the river for food. If you're very lucky you might see water voles or otters - these elusive animals have been seen on the Frome and its tributary streams.

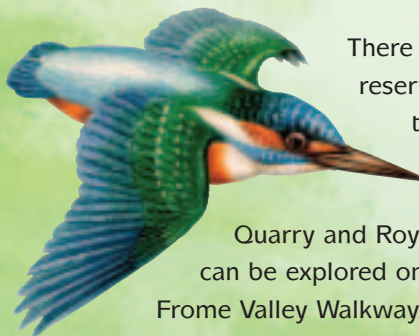
Moorhens and coots are found along most of the river, feeding on plants and insects. They build their nests among dense vegetation but prefer to feed in the more open water. Plantlife in the river is limited, due to the rapid water flow and the frequency of flooding, which make it difficult for plants to flourish. However some plants thrive in more sheltered sections, including water lilies and white-flowered water crowfoot.



White-clawed Crayfish

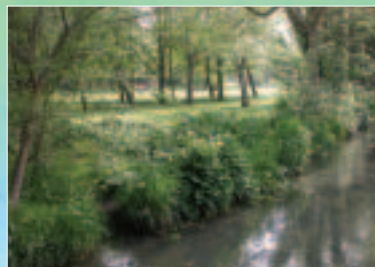


Female Mallard duck



There are several nature reserves and key wildlife sites to visit along the route including Ridge Wood, Bury Hill, Huckford

Quarry and Royate Hill, most of which can be explored on short detours from the Frome Valley Walkway. Bury Hill has splendid ancient oak trees on the ramparts of the Iron Age hill fort (see page 14 for details). Huckford Quarry is an abandoned quarry with a wonderful range of habitats such as damp, rocky outcrops and birch and oak woodland. It is a Local Nature Reserve, owned by South Gloucestershire Council and managed in partnership with the Winterborne Countryside Group. Royate Hill Local Nature Reserve runs along an old railway embankment and provides superb views of Bristol.



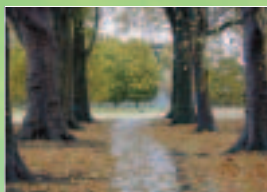
River Frome at Jubilee Gardens, Chipping Sodbury

Frome Walkway Loop Walks

Five short 'loop' walks will take you to interesting sites near the Frome Valley Walkway. These have been created in partnership with the Walking the way to Health Initiatives organised by South Gloucestershire Council and Bristol City Council, and the Friends of the River Frome.

Loop Walk 1

Eastville Park - page 9 *A green lung for the city*

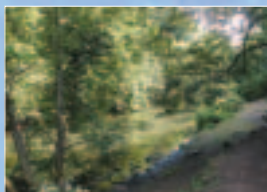


An easy, short walk around Eastville Park, a spacious, open Victorian park. The walk rises gently up from the River Frome, following surfaced

paths along avenues of mature trees to the splendid iron entrance gates before returning down to the Frome. The walls on either side of the gates are made of local Pennant Sandstone from the nearby quarries. The park has tennis courts, a bowling green, a play area and toilets as well as a wildflower meadow. An open air swimming pool was built in the early 1900s, now transformed into a community garden with a wildlife area and a delightful sunken community garden.

Loop Walk 2

Oldbury Court - page 12-13 *A Repton landscape*



This 1km circular walk around Oldbury Court explores attractive parkland originally designed by Humphrey

Repton, the influential eighteenth century landscape architect. The route follows winding paths and drives which rise gently up the east side of the valley. It goes past magnificent trees and ornamental gardens to a childrens' play area, picnic tables, public toilets and refreshment kiosks. The paths are surfaced and have some good viewpoints over the valley, offering intriguing glimpses of the river and the surrounding woodlands and nearby houses, old and new.

Loop Walk 3

Frenchay - page 13 *Georgian architecture, quarries and cottages*



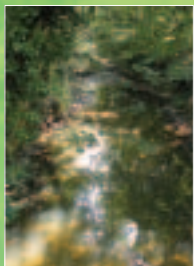
There are two short loop walks around the charming village of Frenchay, following surfaced lanes and tracks.

The shorter route climbs up from the river to wander between the pretty stone cottages that were originally the homes of the men who worked in the nearby Pennant Sandstone quarries. The longer route takes in Frenchay Common where W.G.Grace, the famous nineteenth century cricketer, used to captain the village team. The common is bordered by graceful Georgian houses to the north and has a 'Ha-ha' or ditch and bank on its south side, to keep cattle out. Both loop walks include some steep sections, climbing up or down to the river.



**Loop
Walk 4**

Bury Hill - page 14
Ancient oaks and folks

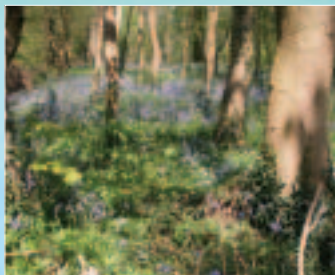


You can take an interesting short loop walk up to Bury Hill, the site of an Iron Age Hill Fort, with a commanding position high above the River Frome. It's a steep climb up the hill but your efforts are rewarded with lovely views over the city of

Bristol and the Avon Valley. Parts of the hill top have been quarried in the past and the stone was used for local buildings including Moor End Farm which you'll pass on the route. Bury Hill is also a special place for wildlife, known for its magnificent veteran oak trees and the rare insects that live on them. The route follows quiet country lanes and a steep footpath through woodland, which can be muddy in wet weather.

**Loop
Walk 5**

Ridge Wood - Page 24
A special place for people, plants and animals



This 3.5km walk climbs up from the Frome Valley Walkway to Ridge Wood, a high point on a limestone ridge overlooking Yate. The walk follows

way-marked footpaths and tracks through Ridge Wood. This wood contains the remains of pleasure gardens that once surrounded a fine eighteenth century mansion called Ridge House. It is close to Barnhill Quarry - a spectacular deep limestone gorge created by quarrying.

The route passes through part of Chipping Sodbury Golf Course, an attractive, landscaped course with lakes. Please make sure you keep to the route through the golf course, and watch out for stray golf balls. Sections of the walk are steep and can be slippery after wet weather.



Walking the way to Health is an initiative of the British Heart Foundation and the Countryside Agency to encourage more people walking in their communities. It aims to improve the health and fitness of people that have done little or no exercise recently.

If you would like to find out more about Walking the way to Health and their exciting, local and free programmes of short guided walks you can contact the local co-ordinators or go to www.whi.org.uk

Walking the way to Health - South Gloucestershire Council, Civic Centre, High Street, Kingswood BS15 9TR
Tel: 01454 863899
www.southglos.gov.uk

Walking the way to Health - Bristol Leinster House, Leinster Avenue, Knowle West, Bristol BS4 1NL
Tel: 0117 377 3458
healthwalks@bristol-city.gov.uk

Additional information

The Friends of the River Frome is a partnership of individuals, local groups and organisations who work together to improve the environment and enjoyment of the River Frome.



In 2002 the Friends of the River Frome carried out a Photographic Survey of the river, recording their favourite places and highlighting the

areas where they wanted environmental improvements. Their photographs illustrated the range of landscapes and wildlife found on the river as well as of the river as well as the need for regeneration and management. You can find out more about the River Frome and the Photographic Survey by visiting www.fromewalkway.org.uk



The Forest of Avon is a special place in and around Bristol where the landscape is being transformed into a unique and exciting

environment. Through hundreds of projects many organisations and individuals are working together planting thousands of new trees and managing existing woodlands for wildlife and sustainable timber production. Improved recreational opportunities in the Forest of Avon are ensuring that local people have space to relax and engage in sport and leisure for a healthier lifestyle.

For more information, contact the Forest of Avon Team on **0117 953 2141**, or go to www.forestofavon.org.uk

Additional information

Enjoy walking

Parts of the Frome Valley Walkway can be muddy at times, particularly in winter when the water level rises after rain. Wear sensible shoes or boots and carry a waterproof so that poor weather won't spoil your walk.

Ordnance Survey Maps

O.S. Explorer maps 155 and 167 cover the route of the Frome Valley Walkway.

Links with other promoted walks

The fold-out map on the front inside cover shows all the promoted recreational path networks in South Gloucestershire and Bristol. The Frome Valley Walkway links with the Community Forest Path in Winterbourne, the River Avon Trail at Castle Park in the centre of Bristol, and the Monarch's Way and The Jubilee Way at Chipping Sodbury. In addition the Frome Walkway links to the long distance Cotswold Way National Trail at Old Sodbury. For details of promoted walks in your area

Tel: 01454 868686 or go to www.southglos.gov.uk in South Gloucestershire, or

Tel: 0117 903 6987 or go to www.bristol-city.gov.uk in Bristol, or

Tel: 0117 953 2141, or go to www.forestofavon.org.uk

Public Rights of Way Public Rights of Way Teams in Bristol and South Gloucestershire undertake essential maintenance on Public Rights of Way.

To report problems or if you have any queries

Tel: 01454 868686 or go to www.southglos.gov.uk in South Gloucestershire, or

Tel: 0117 903 6987 or go to www.bristol-city.gov.uk in Bristol.

The National Trust owns Frenchay Moor. For more details please contact the warden: **0117 973 1645**

Additional information

River Frome in Bristol

Activities and issues concerning the River Frome in Bristol, Eastville Park, Snuff Mills and Oldbury Court should be addressed to Bristol City Council Parks and Estates Dept., Colston House, Colston Street, Bristol, BS1 5AQ. **Tel: 0117 922 3719.**



The Cotswold Way National Trail Officer is based at Cotswold Way National Trail Office, The Malthouse, Standish, Glos. GL10 3DL. **Tel: 01453 827004** or go to www.nationaltrail.co.uk



The **Cotswolds AONB Partnership** works to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB and can be contacted at: The Old Police Station, Cotswold Heritage Centre, Northleach, Gloucestershire GL54 3JH **Tel: 01451 862000** or go to www.cotswoldsaonb.com

The **Avon Valley Partnership Officer** is based at Colston House, Colston Street, Bristol, BS1 5AQ, and works on a number of projects within the Avon Valley, including the River Avon Trail. **Tel: 0117 922 4325**



To report pollution, illegal dumping of hazardous waste and flood incidents **Tel: 0800**

807060. To report obstructions likely to cause flooding and general enquiries **Tel: 08708 506 506**

Thanks to Bristol Record Office and Frenchay Museum for information and copies of historical pictures.

We would like to thank Sarah Douglas for undertaking the research and community consultation work for this booklet along with provision of the text, and for illustrations by Don Hamlet.



Public Transport Information

The Frome Valley Walkway can be accessed by both bus and rail services. Bus stops and railway stations are shown on the maps in this booklet. For timetable information about bus services contact traveline on 0870 608 2608 or go to www.traveline.org.uk



For train information contact National Rail Enquiries on 08457 484950 or go to www.nationalrail.co.uk.

The following information provides a basic summary of public transport provision along the Frome Valley.

Bus Service Access Points

Eastville Park: Services to/from Bristol City Centre, Bristol Bus Station and Stapleton Road Railway Station.

Stapleton: Services to/from Bristol City Centre, and Stapleton Road Railway Station.

Blackberry Hill: Services to/from Bristol City Centre.

Frenchay Common: Services to/from Bristol City Centre.

Whiteshill/Winterbourne: Services to/from Bristol Bus Station, Frampton Cotterell and Yate.

Frampton Cotterell: Services to/from Bristol Bus Station and Yate (including Yate Railway Station).

Yate: Services to/from Bristol, Winterbourne, Frampton Cotterell, Yate, Chipping Sodbury, and Old Sodbury.

Chipping Sodbury: Services to/from Bristol, Winterbourne, Frampton Cotterell and Yate. Also services to Chipping Sodbury, and Old Sodbury.

Old Sodbury: Services to/from Chipping Sodbury, Yate and Bath.

Rail Services

Bristol Temple Meads Station

Irregular service between Bristol, Yate and Gloucester. Regular trains to Stapleton Road Station, though no Sunday service.

Stapleton Road Station

Regular trains to/from Bristol and Severn Beach. Infrequent trains to/from Bristol Parkway, Yate and Gloucester, though no Sunday service.

Yate Station

Infrequent local trains from Gloucester, Bristol Parkway, Filton Abbey Wood, Stapleton Road and Bristol Temple Meads. No Sunday service. Also served by buses to/from Frampton Cotterell and Chipping Sodbury.



Countryside Code

Advice for the public

*Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
Leave gates and property as you find them
Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home*

*Keep your dog under close control
Consider other people*

Advice for land managers

*Know your rights, responsibilities
and liabilities*

*Make it easy for visitors to act responsibly
Identify possible threats to the safety of visitors*

*To find out more about the Countryside Code,
contact www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk, or email
openaccess@countryside.gov.uk,
or telephone 0845 100 3298*



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