

Walk Two: The City Docks

Last updated: September 2026

Walk Two takes you right around the historic Floating Harbour, which threads its way through the city centre on the old course of the River Avon. Originally an entirely industrial area, the docksides have evolved since the closure of the City Docks as a commercial port in the 1970s, and now play host to a wide range of leisure activities, office buildings and desirable residential developments. Meanwhile the Floating Harbour itself is home to a number of large ships and smaller boats, some of which are inhabited as homes. Here and there, in locations safeguarded by the local authorities, commercial shipbuilding activities remain to give a flavour of the City Docks' maritime past.

Two versions of this walk are available. The **short route** takes in just the western arm of the Floating Harbour, which is generally its most attractive and popular section. The **long route** also does the full circuit around the eastern arm of the Floating Harbour towards Bristol Temple Meads.

Useful Information

Terrain: Largely flat, some steps (avoidable with detours).

Ground: Paved, occasionally uneven.

Key Attractions: The Centre Promenade, Floating Harbour, Watershed, Harbour Inlet, Cumberland Basin, Entrance Locks, CREATE Centre (via optional extension), Underfall Yard, Bristol Marina, s.s. Great Britain, Bristol Harbour Railway, Wapping Wharf, M-Shed museum, Bathurst Basin, Redcliffe Caves, Temple Meads Station, Totterdown Basin, Castle Park, Arncliffe art gallery.

Refreshments: Available from various outlets around the western arm of the harbour and the Old City, and also at Temple Quay.

Starting point: Centre Promenade

Getting there: Widely accessibly on foot or by bus. 20 minutes' walk from Temple Meads Station. Multi-storey car parks at Berkeley Place, Trenchard Street, Harbourside, Prince

Street, Queen Charlotte Street, Nelson Street and Rupert Street.

	Approx. Time	Approx. Distance
Short route	1 hour 45 mins	3.3 miles
Long route	3 hours 30 mins	6.3 miles

The Route

Both the **short route** and **long route** begin at the **Centre Promenade**, overlooking the stretch of the Floating Harbour known as **St. Augustine's Reach**. See Walk One '*Introduction to Bristol*' for more information about this important central space.

St. Augustine's Reach follows the course of the River Frome. At one time, this part of the Floating Harbour extended all the way up to the far end of what is now the Centre Promenade. It was covered over in stages between the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.



View down St. Augustine's Reach

Start by taking Bordeaux Quay, to the right hand (west) side of St. Augustine's Reach. We will be working our way around the harbour in an anticlockwise direction.

On **Bordeaux Quay**, as you pass through the colonnades of the traditional transit sheds that adorn the quayside, you will pass our first landmark, the **Watershed Media Centre**. As well as a café and bar and useful toilets, the Watershed has three cinema screens that show a range of foreign and art-house films.

▲▲ The Watershed café bar is a pleasant and informal place to stop for a drink or a bite to eat with good views of the harbour. A number of other bars and restaurants also line Bordeaux Quay, including the Za Za Bazaar all-you-can-eat buffet.

The dockside buildings on Bordeaux Quay have been converted to provide a range of restaurants and bars, popular on Friday and Saturday nights. You will also pass the distinctive horned structure of Pero's Bridge.

At the southern end of the quay (1), to the right one finds the open expanse of Millennium Square, with an interesting spine-like sculpture that is actually a telecommunications mast, and the distinctive mirrored dome of the planetarium at the We The Curious science centre, above which Cabot Tower stands on the skyline. Ahead of you, across the main part of the Floating Harbour, are the electric cranes of the M-Shed museum. To the left, you will have a good view of the Arnolfini, an art gallery occupying a former tea warehouse.



M-Shed from Bordeaux Quay

Continue straight on into the Lloyds Amphitheatre.

The large, paved and slightly desolate **Lloyds Amphitheatre** is a focal point for events such as the annual Bristol Harbour Festival. At other times, the area is popular with skaters. The crescent-shaped former Lloyds bank headquarters was the first new building completed in the regeneration of this part of the Harbourside area.



View from the Lloyds Amphitheatre

To the left, the amphitheatre offers an attractive view of the eastern arm of the Floating Harbour, including the historic Prince Street Swing Bridge and the distant spire of St. Mary Redcliffe church.

Continue onto Hannover Quay.

During the summer season, from **Hannover Quay**, you may see a steam engine shuttling passengers up and down the Bristol Harbour Railway on the far side of the Floating Harbour. You will also pass through one of the most recent areas of redevelopment, where a highly modern office block abuts the quayside. Pause when you get to Cathedral Walk (2), beyond the office block, where a modern avenue frames a view of Bristol Cathedral on the right.

▲ Hannover Quay is home to a couple of cafés / restaurants that capitalise on its excellent views.



Fireboat 'Pyronaut' passes Hannover Quay

Notice here how fragments of old railway lines remain embedded in the ground as a

reminder of the area's industrial heritage, along with two sets of cast iron buffers. This whole area has changed almost unrecognisably over the course of a few short years, prior to which the site was derelict, occupied by an old gasworks. Before redevelopment started, the quayside was dominated by high stone walls and overgrown with rhododendron bushes.

Just beyond Cathedral Walk, take the suspended walkway to the right of the old railway buffers, descending closer to the water through reed beds. Look out for nesting wildfowl.



The reed beds at Hannover Quay

The walkway through the reed beds offers a fine view of the Great Western Dock and s.s. Great Britain on the left and the colourful terraces of Clifton Wood in the distance (see Walk Six 'The Clifton Hillside'). Directly above the reed beds, an imposing new crescent of flats has been built facing out over the water.

The next section of the walk includes the steps at the far end of the Harbour Inlet. If you wish to avoid the steps, bear right back up to Hannover Quay just before you reach water level. Walk around the end of the modern building on the right to reach a bridge over Millennium Promenade. Walk around the Harbour Inlet at the upper level before going through a stone arch to reach cobbled Gasworks Lane. Turn left to rejoin the walk at Porto Quay (3).

Otherwise, walk around the pontoons at water level to reach the Harbour Inlet.

The recently constructed **Harbour Inlet**, which combines the restored stone East Purifier

House with a variety of interesting modern buildings, has become a very popular spot. A sun-trap that can also be reached by the wide and gently sloping Millennium Promenade, the inlet is home to houseboats and surrounded by bars. A popular cross-harbour ferry takes passengers to and from the s.s. Great Britain on the far side of the water.

▲▲ The Harbour Inlet offers a number of dining and drinking options.

Step off the pontoon when you reach a gap in the low harbour wall. Walk around the Harbour Inlet and then climb the steps to reach Porto Quay.

The viewing platform at the top of the steps on **Porto Quay** offers good views up and down the docks.

Gasworks Lane, an atmospheric cobbled lane bounded by high stone boundary walls that date back to the days of the gasworks, joins Porto Quay at this point (3). The lane used to be called Gasferry Road, and took its name from the Gasworks Ferry, which used to provide a link across the Floating Harbour here. The cross-harbour ferry serves a similar purpose to this day.

Continue along Porto Quay, passing more converted gasworks buildings.



Converted buildings at Gasworks Lane

Porto Quay affords further good views of the s.s. Great Britain on the far side of the Floating Harbour. It is also home to a bust of Samuel Plimsoll, inventor of the Plimsoll Line, an important development in shipping.



s.s. Great Britain from the Mardyke

Porto Quay soon merges with the busy Hotwell Road.

The quayside alongside Hotwell Road is known as the **Mardyke**, and offers extensive views of the Albion Dock on the far side of the Floating Harbour, one of the few remaining sites where commercial shipbuilding can still take place in central Bristol, and the adjoining Bristol Marina.

▲ The Grain Barge, moored at the Mardyke, is operated by Bristol Beer Factory and is a good spot to pause for a drink.

At the far end of the Mardyke (4), follow the quayside walkway round to the left so that you split off again from Hotwell Road and walk along Poole's Wharf.

Poole's Wharf is a highly sought-after residential development consisting of small modern houses on the north side of the widest part of the Floating Harbour. The pastel-coloured terraces may seem twee to some, but, as you will see when you reach the far side of the Floating Harbour, they have been designed this way for a reason.



Communal gardens at Poole's Wharf

Cross the footbridge over Poole's Wharf Marina to reach Rownham Mead.

Poole's Wharf Marina is an old dock inlet from the area's industrial past. Clifton's Georgian crescents are visible for the first time on the skyline behind.



Looking back along the docks at Poole's Wharf

Rownham Mead, at the western end of the Floating Harbour, is another residential development, this time in a dark brown brick. The front gardens of this slightly older development have now matured nicely and are cultivated with pride by the residents, making this a colourful stretch of the quayside to pass through.

▲ *The Pump House next to Rownham Mead is another popular drinking spot.*

Next to the Pump House pub you will find the Junction Lock Bridge (also known as the Cumberland Basin Bridge), an iron swing bridge that crosses the northern Junction Lock between the Floating Harbour and the Cumberland Basin.

Cross the main road, Merchant's Road, at the end of the Junction Lock Bridge (5). Go straight on along Cumberland Basin Road and then turn left through the gap in the fence to reach the walkway around the Cumberland Basin.



Pyronaut cruises through Cumberland Basin

At this point the character of the Floating Harbour totally changes, and is likely to change again if the council's ambitious redevelopment plans bear fruit.

The **Cumberland Basin** is a large open area of water where, historically, ships would have gathered whilst they waited for the lock gates beyond to let them out into the tidal reach of the River Avon; the lock gates are in fact still functional, as this remains the principal entrance to the Floating Harbour. Dominant here are the tobacco bonded warehouses to the south: imposing, monolithic structures in

red brick now surrounded by a network of busy elevated roads built in the 1960s. Beyond the Cumberland Basin is the beginning of the Avon Gorge, Leigh Woods and the slopes of the Ashton Court Estate (we'll get a better look at those areas in Walk Twenty-Five '*Ashton Court, Leigh Woods and the Avon Gorge*').

Follow the walkway along the Cumberland Basin, passing under the elevated Plimsoll Swing Bridge to reach the Entrance Locks. Cross the northern Entrance Lock by walking across the first pair of lock gates (6).



The northern Entrance Lock

The northern **Entrance Lock** area offers good views of the Avon Gorge, the Georgian terraces of Clifton and the Clifton Suspension Bridge; you may also be lucky enough to see the gates open to let a boat in or out of the Floating Harbour if the tide is right.

On the south side of the Entrance Lock you will find the rusting hulk of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's Swivel Bridge, which provided access across the northern Entrance Lock before the present road system was built. Local advocates for the bridge still hope that it can be restored to working order some day.

Cumberland Basin route extension

If you'd like to spend a little more time in this area, you can get a better view of the Clifton Suspension Bridge and see the beginning of the River Avon New Cut, which diverts tidal waters away from the Floating Harbour.

From the northern Entrance Lock (6), cross the iron bridge over the remains of the disused southern Entrance Lock. The bridge is, in many ways, a twin of Brunel's Swivel Bridge.

Reaching Brunel Lock Road, take the narrow footpath to the right of the off-ramp from the Brunel Way above. Follow the path round to reach Hotwell Point, a grassy area where an impressive view opens out over the Avon Gorge and Clifton Suspension Bridge. A peculiar concrete monument here celebrates the completion of the Cumberland Basin road system in the 1960s.

Follow the path on round, passing back under Brunel Way, to reach B-Bond Warehouse, home to the **CREATE Centre**.

▲ The CREATE Centre is the council's sustainability centre, and is sometimes home to interesting exhibitions and seminars. It also has a useful café.

You are now walking alongside the River Avon New Cut. Follow the access road along the riverbank until you reach the guided busway that runs over the Ashton Avenue Bridge. This iron bridge was originally an innovative double decker swing bridge, carrying the Bristol Harbour Railway on the lower level and the main road to Long Ashton via a deck on the roof.

Bear left alongside the busway and go straight on along the footpath that runs under Cumberland Road. Emerging on Avon Crescent just up from the Nova Scotia (7), turn right along the road and then left through the gates to rejoin the main walk at Underfall Yard (8).



View from Hotwell Point

If you are sticking to the main walk, follow the walkway from the south side of the northern Entrance Lock (6) back under the Plimsoll Swing Bridge. Cross the concrete causeway beyond for a view of the disused southern Entrance Lock on your right. Return along the south side of the basin.

The walkway along the south side of the Cumberland Basin provides views of the Clifton Suspension Bridge and the Clifton terraces. Ahead of you the walkway provides a good view of the Junction Lock Bridge and the Pump House.

Climb the ramp at the far end to return to Merchant's Road next to the Junction Lock Bridge (7). Cross the road to reach Nova Scotia Place.



The Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia Place, running alongside the disused southern Junction Lock, is home to an historic pub that gives the street its name. The street offers a good view of a quaint row of old dock workers' cottages on the other side of the water.

▲ In contrast to the others, the historic Nova Scotia retains more of the feel of a local pub.



Old dock workers' cottages from Nova Scotia Place

Just before the slipway at the end of the street, turn right along a short footpath to enter Underfall Yard (8).

If the gates to Underfall Yard are shut, return to the main road and turn left along Avon Crescent. Regain access to the quayside at either:

- *The gates to the car park next to the Harbour Master's office (9), on Cumberland Road; or*
- *The access road next to the sailing club, emerging on the quayside next to the Cottage pub.*

The **Underfall Yard (8)** is an historic part of the Floating Harbour where sluice gates control the water level, draining any excess water off into the River Avon New Cut to the south. It is also home to a small visitor centre and café. However, it is first and foremost a working shipyard, so please tread very carefully as you pass through and beware of hazardous works taking place. As well as the foreground interest, Underfall Yard provides a good view of the colourful terraces of Clifton Wood above the Mardyke.



Underfall Yard

Walk around Underfall Yard and leave via the gates under the canopy to reach the car park next to the Harbour Master's office (9). Go straight on to reach Baltic Wharf next to the Cottage pub.

▲ ▲ The Cottage, beyond the Underfall Yard and the Harbour Master's office, is a great place to stop for a drink on the waterfront, and the food's pretty good too.

As you walk along **Baltic Wharf**, cast your eyes to the north: you will be treated to big, open views of Clifton high up on the hillside behind Rownham Mead. Notable terraces on the skyline include the grand Royal York Crescent, Cornwallis Crescent below and The Paragon and Windsor Terrace to the left (see Walks Five 'Introduction to Clifton' and Six 'The Clifton Hillside'). Further to the right and closer to the Docks are the more modest Victorian terraces of Clifton Wood, which have been painted in a variety of interesting colours.

Baltic Wharf is also home to another residential development. The buildings themselves may not win many admirers but, just like Rownham Mead, the landscaping has now matured, creating a pleasant environment in the pedestrian avenues running through the site. The Baltic Wharf quayside is also home to a number of interesting sculptures. As you pass by Baltic Wharf, the rationale behind the pastel shades of Poole's Wharf on the far side of the water becomes clear: the modern development harmonises well with Georgian Clifton on the hill behind.



Clifton Wood and the Mardyke from Baltic Wharf

Turn right at the end of Baltic Wharf and follow the walkway around the edge of Bristol Marina (10).

Bristol Marina, beyond Baltic Wharf, is home to a large number of small private boats.



Bristol Marina

The presence of a working shipyard and the s.s. Great Britain beyond the marina means that there is no quayside walkway for a short stretch on this side of the Floating Harbour.

Passing the shipyard gates, turn right onto Hanover Place. Follow the road round until you reach an old concrete apron to the rear of the Albion Dock (11). Cross the apron to reach the footpath at the far side.

The **Albion Dock** is the last working drydock in the Floating Harbour.

At the end of the footpath, turn left onto Gas Ferry Road.

Gas Ferry Road is home to the head office of Aardman Animations, creators of *Wallace and Gromit*. Gas Ferry Road will return you to the

quayside next to the **Great Western Dockyard (12)**, which is now the permanent home of the **s.s. Great Britain**, which has been painstakingly restored and now gives a real feel of “living history”. It is one of the city’s most engaging visitor attractions.



The s.s. Great Britain

Turn right along Wapping Railway Wharf.

Wapping Railway Wharf affords good views of the Harbour Inlet and the modern developments you passed earlier on the north side of the Floating Harbour. Wapping Railway Wharf is also home to the **Bristol Harbour Railway**, so watch out for the steam train.

▲ *If you're getting hungry, try the Brunel Buttery, a tiny café which has been operating continuously in this location for many years and always draws a crowd.*

Shortly you will pass the Fairbairn Steam Crane (13). At around 150 years old, the steam crane is Bristol's oldest powered dockside crane, and is still maintained in working order – at the Harbour Festival and on other special occasions, the crane is still operated.



The Fairbairn Steam Crane

Continue onto Prince's Wharf.

Prince's Wharf, beyond the steam crane, is home to M-Shed, the 'museum of Bristol', occupying another old transit shed. The four distinctive electric cranes are also still operational. Prince's Wharf offers another good view of the Arnolfini art gallery, St. Augustine's Reach and the Lloyds Amphitheatre. Mind your ankles around the rail tracks and other paraphernalia embedded in the walkway here.

Just to the rear of a pedestrian square at the west end of M-Shed (14) is the modern development known as **Wapping Wharf**, which has proven a popular destination for food and drink. At time of writing, the site is home to a temporary installation of cargo containers containing a wide range of independent restaurants and other businesses.

▲▲ Wapping Wharf is a great choice for a meal near the docks, although many of the temporary restaurants only have a small number of covers, so seats are in demand.



Prince's Wharf

Prince's Wharf leads you out onto **Wapping Road** next to the **Prince Street Swing Bridge**.

*If you are following the **short route**, cross the swing bridge to rejoin the **long route** at the end of Prince Street (32).*

*To keep following the **long route**, do not cross the swing bridge. Go straight across Wapping Road onto Merchant's Quay.*

As you work your way eastwards towards Temple Quay during the second half of this walk, you will find that the Floating Harbour takes on a more urban, commercial character. Offices will tend to dominate instead of houses and shipbuilding activities, and there will be fewer boats on the water. However, there is still plenty of interest to be had, albeit of a harder and less picturesque kind.

Merchant's Quay was Bristol's first quayside residential development following the closure of the City Docks as a commercial port. The small terraced houses have aged reasonably well. Opposite at this point is an open area of quayside dotted with inlets and buildings known as The Grove, which we will come to towards the end of this walk. The big,

monumental iron ship is the Thekla, now in use as a nightclub.



Merchant's Quay

At the end of Merchant's Quay turn right onto Trin Mills, then bear right next to the footbridge (15) onto Bathurst Parade, reaching the Bathurst Basin.

The **Bathurst Basin** is a sheltered inlet dominated by the monolithic Victorian building of the former Bristol General Hospital in dark grey sandstone, recently restored to the highest standard and converted to flats. The Bathurst Basin was built at the original junction of the Rivers Avon and Malago prior to the construction of the Floating Harbour and the River Avon New Cut. At one time you could exit the Floating Harbour into the New Cut from this location – the swing bridge over the exit is still visible – but the lock has been disused for some time now.

On your side of the Bathurst Basin, **Bathurst Parade** is a mixture of terraced houses and small warehouses in the 'Bristol Byzantine' style of polychromic brickwork. Also notable in the Bathurst Basin is the presence of the former lightship John Sebastian, moored at the southern end of the inlet.



The Bathurst Basin

At the end of Bathurst Parade, turn left and cross the swing bridge onto Commercial Road. Go down the steps onto John Sebastian Quay (or stay on Commercial Road if you wish to avoid the steps). At the far side of the basin, turn left onto Lower Guinea Street and follow it past the General Hospital until you approach the Ostrich pub.

▲ *The Ostrich on Lower Guinea Street is the last opportunity to stop for a drink for a while. With plenty of outdoor seating it is always busy, and is a popular haunt with the boating community.*



The Ostrich, Lower Guinea Street

On **Lower Guinea Street**, beside the Ostrich, is a former railway cutting leading to a disused tunnel, which used to connect the Bristol Harbour Railway to Temple Meads Station. The steps of a truncated footbridge can still be seen to the left of the cutting.

Continue along Lower Guinea Street, bearing right onto Phoenix Wharf.

Beware the uneven surface as you work your way round the corner beyond the Ostrich. You are now in the part of the city centre known as Redcliffe, originally a rival port on the south banks of the River Avon.

Phoenix Wharf showcases the red sandstone that gives the area its name, with the Georgian terrace of Redcliffe Parade sitting proudly atop an imposing crag of the stuff. Take a closer look at the gated openings set into the bottom of the rock face and you may glimpse parts of **Redcliffe Caves**, a network of manmade caves which sprawl out for some distance under this part of Redcliffe. The caves are usually locked, but can sometimes be visited on special open days – bring a torch.

Continue past the timber-clad Benjamin Perry Boathouse (16) onto Redcliff Wharf.



Redcliffe Bascule Bridge from Redcliff Wharf

Redcliff Wharf is a vacant site at time of writing, but is slated for major redevelopment in the years to come. The imposing spire to the right as you traverse Redcliff Wharf is that of St. Mary Redcliffe church, recently dethroned as Bristol's tallest building by a new tower block at Castle Park. We will get a better look at St. Mary Redcliffe in Walk Three 'The Eastern Arc'.

Leave Redcliff Wharf via the small pedestrian gate onto Redcliffe Way, next to the Redcliffe Bascule Bridge.

The dual carriageway **Redcliffe Way** and Redcliffe Bascule Bridge are the last vestiges of the south-western half of the Inner Circuit Road, and originally led to the dual carriageway that was built across Queen

Square in the 1930s (damage thankfully now reversed); see Walk One 'Introduction to Bristol'. Nowadays, the route occupies a lesser position in the road hierarchy of the city.

Cross Redcliffe Way and descend the cantilevered walkway next to the Floating Harbour.

The block of modern flats on the far side of Redcliffe Way is known as Custom House, and marks a change in character for the Floating Harbour as the east side becomes bordered by large Victorian warehouses and modern office blocks. As you descend the cantilevered walkway you will pass the historic WCA Warehouse, a notable concrete-framed warehouse building now converted into flats.

The gate at the bottom of the cantilevered walkway (17), is usually gated and locked. Cut through the lane on the right (Cheese Walk) to reach Redcliff Backs. Follow the road round onto Ferry Street and then cut through the Buchanan's Wharf car park to regain the quayside walkway at the gap between two large red-brick warehouses (18).



Mighty warehouses at Buchanan's Wharf

If the Buchanan's Wharf walkway is also gated and locked, return to Ferry Street and then take a detour onto Redcliff Street,

regaining the quayside walkway via a broad plaza opposite Bristol Civil Justice Centre (19).



Welsh Back and the Granary from Redcliffe

If you glance across the water, you may see that you are now opposite the part of Welsh Back that also featured in Walk One 'Introduction to Bristol', including the landmark Granary in the 'Bristol Byzantine' style. This stretch of quayside will take you past a variety of office buildings towards Bristol Bridge. There's not a lot going on here, but when you pass an open plaza about half way along (19), look to the right for a glimpse of the nicely understated tower of the church of **St. Thomas the Martyr**, next to the new Bristol Civil Justice Centre.

At the end of the quayside walkway, climb the steps or ramp to reach the south end of Bristol Bridge (20).



Bristol Bridge and St. Nicholas' Church

Bristol Bridge and St. Nicholas' Church on the far side of the Floating Harbour will be familiar if you have completed Walk One 'Introduction to Bristol'. These days, Bristol Bridge leads into Victoria Street, a major road

that was superimposed over Redcliffe's Mediaeval street pattern in the 19th Century to provide a link between the city centre and Temple Meads Station. Victoria Street suffered heavy bomb damage during the Blitz, but still retains some impressive Victorian commercial buildings, most notably a former hotel on the corner of Bath Street and the buildings immediately beyond.

Beyond Bristol Bridge, as the quayside walkway continues, you will find yourself opposite Castle Park on the other side of the Floating Harbour. The ruined church in the middle of the park is St. Peter's, which we will get a closer look at later on.



View of Castle Park from Bristol Bridge

Cross the road and continue along the quayside walkway opposite Castle Park.

The buildings along this side of the Floating Harbour comprise a mixture of new build offices and historic brewery buildings converted to residential and commercial uses. Ahead, the new Castle Bridge snakes across the water.

If the little gate is open, proceed through the covered walkway beyond to reach Hawkins Lane at the landing of Castle Bridge.

Otherwise, return to Bristol Bridge (20) and access Bath Street via Victoria Street. Follow Bath Street and pick up the main route from the crossroads (20A).



Glimpses of St. Peter's Church from Finzel's Reach

The redevelopment of the former brewery site has recently been completed and the area is now known as **Finzel's Reach**.

▲▲ Like Wapping Wharf, Finzel's Reach is trying to establish itself as a food and drink destination and has a few options, including an occasional street food market.

At the landing of the Castle Bridge you will find a bar whose outside dining area occupies a large void within the waterfront buildings. A covered quayside walkway was created beyond this point, but at time of writing it is blocked and its future is unclear.

For now, turn right to reach a crossroads at the heart of Finzel's Reach where Hawkins Lane meets Bath Street, Old Temple Street and East Tucker Street (20A).

Turn left along at East Tucker Street. When the street turns sharply right, go straight on if the gates are open, climbing and descending a few steps to reach the covered quayside walkway.

Turn right and make your way to Counterslip at the end of St. Philip's Bridge (21), either via the quayside walkway or via East Tucker Street if you wish to avoid the steps.

Cross Counterslip and regain the quayside walkway, which starts at the junction of Counterslip and Temple Back.

As you cross the road at St. Philip's Bridge, don't miss the grand Victorian building on the north side of **Counterslip**, which is the former tramway generating station that supplied

power for the electric trams that ran in Bristol until the Second World War.

The next section of the quayside walkway, which runs alongside the recently redeveloped buildings of **Temple Back**, provides you with a good view of a most unusual structure on the far side of the docks: the **Shot Tower**, originally used for the manufacture of lead shot, which replaced an earlier tower on Redcliff Hill that was demolished for road widening.



The Shot Tower, from Temple Back

The next section of the Floating Harbour is dominated on both sides by modern office development. It may lack charm compared to the areas downstream, but it's worth doing, if nothing else for the satisfaction of having completed the City Docks circuit.

Continue along the quayside walkway, passing below Temple Bridge, a busy road bridge, to reach Temple Quay at the foot of the Rope Walk (22).

A few narrow boats have taken up residence in the otherwise modern, commercial surroundings here. This part of the Floating Harbour is known as **Temple Quay**, and has been the focus of much of the city's 21st Century office development. The most iconic

structure in the area is the curving Valentine's Bridge. On the far side of the water you will see an unusually shaped residential tower block called 'The Eye'.

Climb the Rope Walk, passing under plane trees.



Temple Quay and Valentine Bridge

At Harratz Place, the small open space next to the Valentine's Bridge, descend the steps to the ferry landing stage (23). If you wish to avoid the steps, detour inland via The Square, Isambard Walk and the Friary, picking up the water again at Meads Reach Bridge (23A).

The Square and **Isambard Walk**, located behind **Temple Meads Station**, are the focal point of Temple Quay, and offer a small range of cafés and shops.

▲▲ The Knights Templar in The Square, a Wetherspoon's pub, is the main opportunity to pause for a drink in this part of the Floating Harbour, and is also a good choice for a cheap and cheerful meal.



The route splits at the ferry landing stage

From the ferry landing stage, pick up the canted walkway, which splits in two. Here, you have a choice. To follow the main route, take the right fork to climb to Meads Reach Bridge (23A), then cross it to reach Glass Wharf (23B). To take a longer route, follow the instructions below.

Totterdown Basin route extension

The walk is probably long enough without this extension but, for the full Floating Harbour experience, you can explore the newest section of quayside walkway and the regeneration area beyond.

Take the left fork from the ferry landing stage. You will find yourself on a floating pontoon walkway running under **Brunel Bridge**, a mighty viaduct in blue engineering brick that carries the main railway lines out of Temple Meads Station.

Follow the pontoon walkway until you touch down on land again at the University of Bristol's newest facility, the **Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus**. Stick to the water's edge until you come out on **Feeder Road** next to **Totterdown Basin**, a green oasis where the Floating Harbour meets the **Feeder Canal**.



Totterdown Basin

Turn left along Feeder Road then left again at the crossroads, crossing a road bridge to reach **Avon Street**. From the bridge, you can take in a view of the Feeder Canal with its many willow trees.



The Feeder Canal

The area around Avon Street is in the process of being redeveloped. In due course, development will open up more of the quayside, but for now, you have to follow the road.

Continue along Avon Street until you have passed back under the railway lines, then turn left to reach Glass Wharf. Follow the quayside round to the right to return to the main route

The Meads Reach Bridge provides a fine view back down towards the Valentine's Bridge.



Temple Quay from the Meads Reach Bridge

From the Meads Reach Bridge (23B), begin making your way back along the north side of the Floating Harbour.

The quayside walkway at Glass Wharf offers a good view back across to Temple Meads Station.

At the northern end of Valentine's Bridge (24), take the steps down to reach the next stretch of quayside walkway. A lift is available if you wish to avoid the steps. If the lift is out of action, you will have to go via Avon Street.



Temple Quay from the north side

At Temple Bridge, follow the walkway round to the right to emerge at the junction of Avon Street and Temple Way. Cross Temple Way at the pedestrian crossing and take either the short flight of steps or the large arch through The Assembly (the office block opposite) to reach a small waterside plaza off Cheese Lane (25).

NB: The pedestrian crossing is still being installed at the time of writing. An alternative crossing point is available via a pedestrian underpass between Broad Plain and Narrow Plain.

One of the Floating Harbour's newest waterside spaces, the plaza at The Assembly is notable for its unique public art installation, comprising various 'twisted' street furniture. **Cheese Lane** itself is a dead end these days, but it was once part of the same route as Avon Street, prior to the construction of Temple Way.



Twisted street furniture at The Assembly

Follow Cheese Lane and turn left onto Passage Street opposite St. Philip and St. Jacob church.

St. Philip and St. Jacob, also known as Pip'n'Jay church, is one of the few historic buildings surviving in this area.

Follow Passage Street until you return to St. Philip's Bridge.



Mural at the Bridge Inn, Passage Street

Take the steps down on the right to reach the quayside walkway next to the Ferryman's Court flats (26). If necessary, the steps can be bypassed by walking via Queen Street and a footway running under the King's Orchard office building at the rear of Ferryman's Court (26).

As you return down the north side of the harbour, you will have a good view of the former tramway generating station and the Finzel's Reach development.

North of St. Philip's Bridge, Castle Park comes into view. At the foot of Castle Park, a small footbridge crosses a small tributary to the

Floating Harbour (27): this is part of Bristol's original castle moat.



Approaching Castle Park

Cross the footbridge. As you enter Castle Park, take the higher path, so that you reach the main pedestrian / cycle path along the Floating Harbour edge of the park (28), next to a small grove of trees planted as a memorial to Bristol's veterans of the D-Day landings in Normandy.

Castle Park provides excellent views of the varied buildings of the Finzel's Reach development and the curving Castle Bridge. The ruin of St. Peter's Church, standing in the middle of the park surrounded by a sensory garden, stands as a memorial to the places and lives lost in Bristol during the Blitz: Castle Park itself was once home to Bristol's much-loved and vibrant main shopping district, focused around Bridge Street, Castle Street and Wine Street, all of which converged close to St. Peter's Church, but the area was wiped out by incendiary bombs, and was never rebuilt after Bristol's post-war planners opted to relocate the shopping district to nearby Broadmead (see Walk Three 'The Eastern Arc'). The tower of a second ruined church, St. Mary-le-Port, can be seen amidst the derelict office buildings that are finally undergoing demolition at the western end of the park.



St. Peter's Church, Castle Park

Other features of interest in the park include various pieces of public art and also the sally port of Bristol Castle, located just off to the right as you join the main park walkway (28).

When you have finished exploring Castle Park, continue along the water's edge to return to Bristol Bridge. Cross the road and bear left onto Welsh Back, still following the Floating Harbour, temporarily retracing your steps if you have already completed Walk One 'Introduction to Bristol'.

Welsh Back is the name given to this leafy stretch of the quayside (the name dates back to the area's trading connections). Look out for a row of freestanding iron columns on the left, presumably part of an old transit shed. Welsh Back is home to a number of popular restaurants and bars, some of which are on boats.



View from Welsh Back

▲▲ Food and drink options around Welsh Back include burgers at Three Brothers, cider at The Apple or a sit-down meal at Aqua – among others.

Looking across the Floating Harbour, you will have a good view of the office and warehouse buildings that you passed earlier. You will also pass the Merchant Navy war memorial (29), which is always bedecked with poppies.



The Merchant Navy war memorial

The end of **King Street** is marked by an ancient and picturesque timber-framed pub known as the Llandoger Trow. Opposite, the Old Duke is known for its live jazz. Stop for a drink if you'd like. From this point, the church of St. Thomas the Martyr can be glimpsed between buildings on the far side of the Floating Harbour.

Beyond King Street, the modern waterfront buildings were required to provide colonnaded quayside walkways, but most of these are now gated and locked, so continue to follow the road. As you pass the turnings on the right, look out for glimpses of leafy Queen Square between the buildings (see Walk One 'Introduction to Bristol').

Opposite the turning for Mill Avenue (30), a gap between the waterfront buildings provides another view of the warehouses on the far side of the water.

Reaching the roundabout at the end of Redcliffe Bascule Bridge, cross over into The Grove.

The pub on the right as you reach Redcliffe Bridge is the 'Hole in the Wall', said to have provided inspiration for the fictitious Spyglass Tavern in Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Treasure Island'. Bell Avenue, next to the pub, offers a another enticing glimpse of Queen Square.

▲ As well as being historically important, the Hole in the Wall is also another good place to pause for a drink.



The Hole in the Wall

On **The Grove**, the next stretch of road adjoining the Floating Harbour, you will pass two bars / restaurants, the Severnshed and Riverstation, occupying small dockside buildings, after which a car park opens up on the left and you can regain a quayside walkway of sorts. You will pass the Thekla (31), the ship now in use as a nightclub that you saw earlier from Merchant's Quay.

▲ There are several popular food options on and around The Grove.

Beyond the Thekla, you will have a fine view back over the Floating Harbour to the Bathurst Basin, the General Hospital, St. Mary Redcliffe and the colourful houses of Redcliffe Parade standing proud above the red sandstone cliff of Phoenix Wharf.



St. Mary Redcliffe and the colourful houses of Redcliffe Parade

Look out for another glimpse of Queen Square via Grove Avenue. You will also pass the Mud Dock, a restaurant in another converted dockside building that doubles as a bicycle hire shop.

*Passing the Mud Dock, bear left and cut across the tarmacked area to reach Prince Street Swing Bridge (32). The **short route** rejoins the long route here.*

Next to the **Prince Street Swing Bridge**, look out for an old hand crane. Next door, the Prince's Pantry occupying a small roadside cabin is a popular takeaway.



Old hand crane, The Grove

Cross Prince Street and continue along the Floating Harbour, following Narrow Quay.

Narrow Quay is home to the Arnolfini art gallery. On the corner ahead, look out for a statue of John Cabot, the Italian explorer who set sail from Bristol to discover Newfoundland. He stares contemplatively across to Prince's Wharf, where a replica of his ship, **The Matthew**, is often docked.



John Cabot ponders the view

▲ The Arnolfini café bar on Narrow Quay offers a final chance to stop for a drink. Customers often take their drinks outside to enjoy them on the quayside.

Turn the corner at the Arnolfini to walk alongside St. Augustine's Reach, still following Narrow Quay.

Continuing along Narrow Quay, you will also pass the Architecture Centre and Youth Hostel. On passing Pero's Bridge, Farr's Lane and Royal Oak Avenue offer a final glimpse of Queen Square. Beyond, the Bristol Inn hotel and car park dominate the quayside. As you complete the final stretch to the Centre Promenade, look out for the buildings of Bristol University on the skyline ahead as you complete Walk Two.

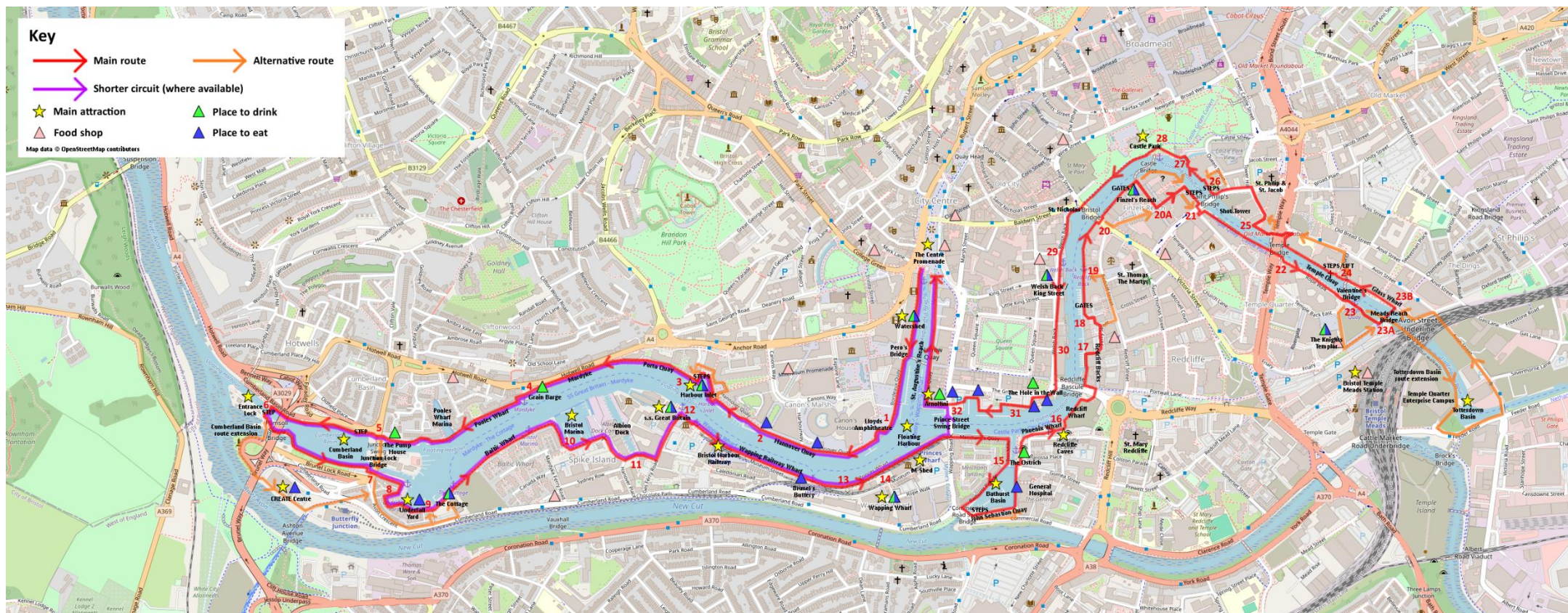


St. Augustine's Reach and the Watershed

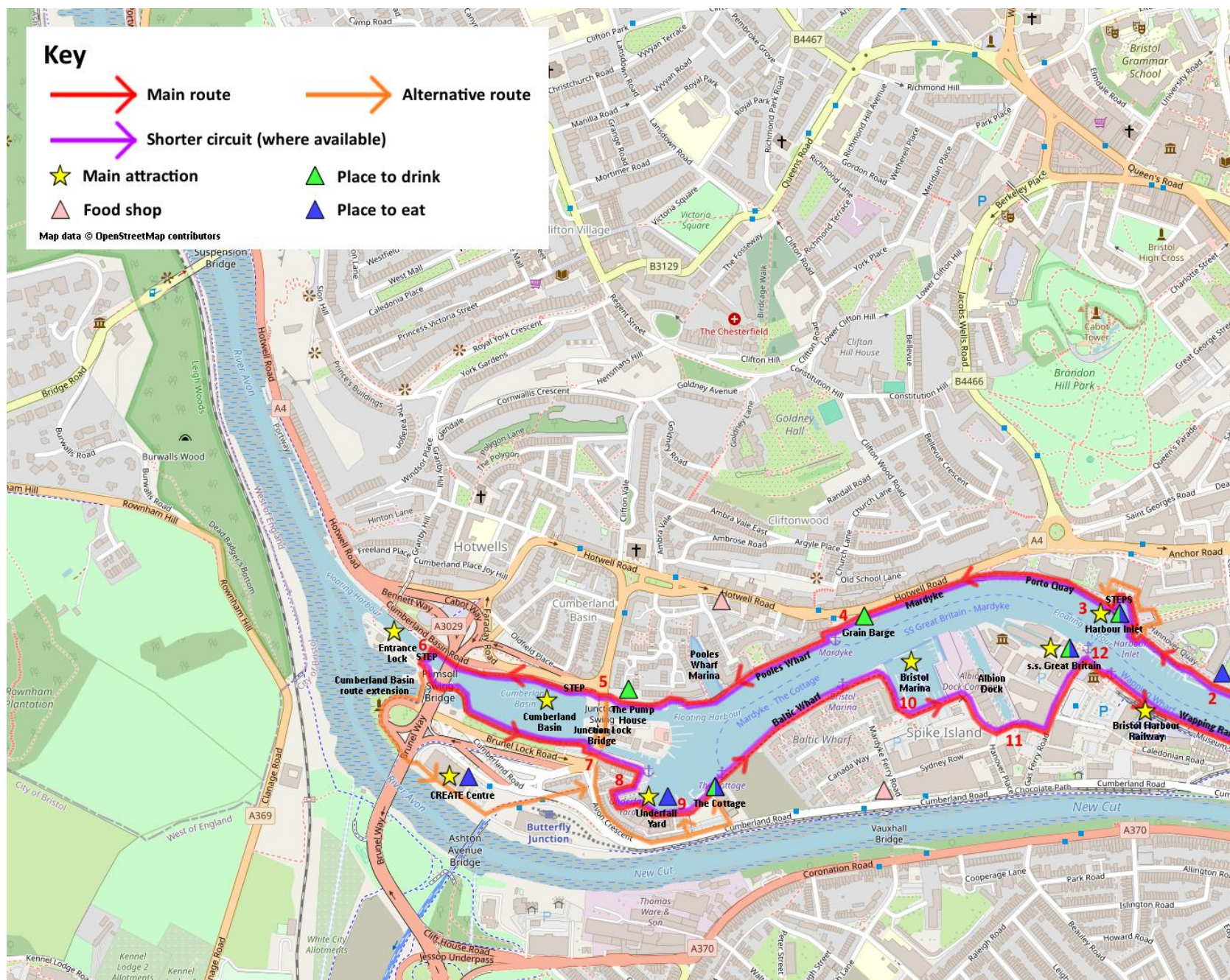
Coming Up

In Walk Three '*The Eastern Arc*' we will get slightly further off the beaten track and will visit some of the edgier areas at the eastern edge of the city centre. We will also finally make our long-awaited visit to Bristol's recently refurbished and extended main shopping area.

Walk Two: Map



Mike's Bristol Walks
Walk Two: The City Docks



Mike's Bristol Walks
Walk Two: The City Docks

