

## A BOOT UP BATH

Rodney Legg

Roman Bath, like Rome itself, is surrounded by its Seven Hills. These are the obvious target for walks up and out of the city. Inevitably, however, they are somewhat demanding, so walks that are short but strenuous have been mixed with those that are easy but longer. The latter, with circuits up to nine miles, stretch out along the River Avon and its partner in the landscape, the Kennet and Avon Canal. The towpath heads towards creations of industrial archaeology of national renown, such as the Dundas Aqueduct, where canal long-boats cross three other transport systems - rail, river and road.

Scenic and exhilarating country walking is literally within sight and step as you reach out from the city. On one side the landscape becomes the Cotswold Hills, encapsulated at its most civilised in Dyrham Park, whereas on the other side the deep-cut valleys hide some of the most desirable homes in the land, around villages like Combe Hay.

The ten selected walks, ranging from 3 to 8 miles, suit the needs of families, groups of friends or individuals looking for a gentle stroll or a longer walk, and reflect the many varied facets of the area. Places are selected with problem-free parking and public houses and tea-rooms en route if possible. Instructions are as basic and clear as possible, but you will also have things to see pointed out to you. The emphasis throughout the ten walks is to notice what is odd and quirky - so you do not miss what makes the effort and exercise truly worthwhile.

Halsgrove's new-format guidebook, containing maps, photographs and useful information will ensure a great walking experience. Packed with colour, the book is an ideal reminder of a visit to Bath and its hinterland.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rodney Legg is a prolific author and historian who has published hundreds of country walks. Nationally he is active in the environmental movement having been chairman of the Open Spaces Society since 1989 and a member of the ruling council of the National Trust from 1990 until 2009.

### HALSGROVE CATALOGUE

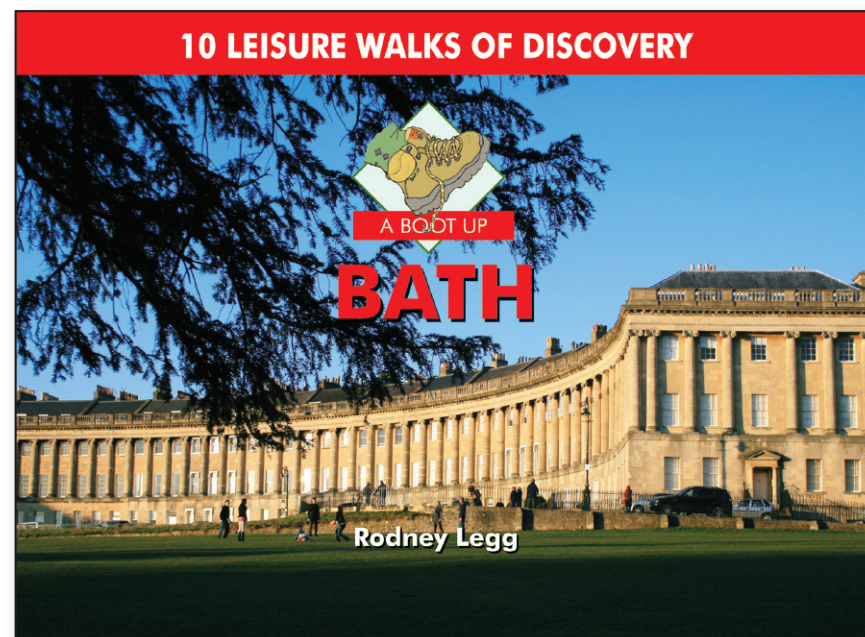
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**Roman City and Georgian Bath**

**1** Turn right (W) in 50 metres into **Pierpoint Place**. Bear left (SW) along **Old Orchard Street** in 75 metres. Pass the **Masonic Hall**, which was the original Theatre Royal in 1750 – with its plaque for actress Sarah Siddons. Turn right (W) in **Henry Street** in 150 metres. Former **Lord Gots** was to the right. Continue straight ahead along **New Orchard Street** to return to **Southgate Street** in 300 metres. Both the **Bus Station** and **Bath Spa Station** are located to the left in 500 metres. Returning along **Dorchester Street** we cross **Bumfilds** (closed – the city's ancient bridge) which incorporates the almost 2,000-year-old sulphurous drain from the Roman Baths. It empties between the bridges into the River Avon.

Baths and Abbey

**2 Bath Skyline and Prior Park**

A 6-mile circuit that goes up and down the hills between stunning follies in the landscape

**1** At up mine eyes into the hills, I learn Bath, at one of the great European spas. Count the hills, for they are said to have replaced in

Roman minds the Seven Hills of Rome. These hills were heavily populated in pre-historic, being bordered with field systems, settlements and hill-fort, though as an extension to the neo-classical revival of Georgian Bath they became increasingly wooded. Today there are almost too many trees, such as around the **Shorn Caddle** eye-catcher, which is of national significance as it was built by the most notable of follies designers – **Sanderson Miller** – in 1742. Its commission was from **Allen Allen** who introduced **John Wood** to Bath, and was its **Postmaster**. He proved that Bath's own cream time-

**Levels:** 1 mile  
**Terrain:** Mostly dry and well paths, but some areas including rough grass.  
**Park & route:** From the folly on the south side of **Claverton Down Road** known as the **Newwood Avenue** turning into the University and the entrance to **Rainbow Wood Farm**.  
**Start ref.:** ST 774 638  
**Distances:** 642 feet  
**Public transport:** From the University.  
**Websites:** [www.priorpark.org.uk](http://www.priorpark.org.uk)  
[www.recreation.org.uk](http://www.recreation.org.uk)

Example of a double-page spread.



*Somerset Coal Canal.*