

## A BOOT UP BRISTOL

Rodney Legg

Dramatically poised on the edge of the Avon Gorge, the city of Bristol incorporates its own walking country. Wild walks and country walks begin from Clifton Down. The Clifton Suspension Bridge links both with genteel Ashton Park and the virtual jungle of Leigh Woods. There is also a rich and romantic strand of maritime history from the Romans at Sea Mills to Brunel's steamship *SS Great Britain* back in the dock where she was built.

Ten selected walks, each in a circuit of five to nine miles, tackle varying terrain and suit the needs of families, groups of friends or individuals looking for a gentle stroll or a longer walk. They also explore the city's setting, just beyond the urban sprawl, where you can escape into a very different world. Rocky chasms fringe the Mendip Hills. On the other side of the great conurbation are the Bristol Channel marshes below the two Severn Bridges. Bristol abounds in engineering works on the grand scale.

The practical route-master approach, with easy to follow descriptions and maps, is laced with quirky potted facts about connections and treasures en route. Photographs likewise are chosen both to capture the feeling and theme of very different walks that bring an element of excitement to the easiest, cheapest and healthiest leisure pursuit.

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 Bristol 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

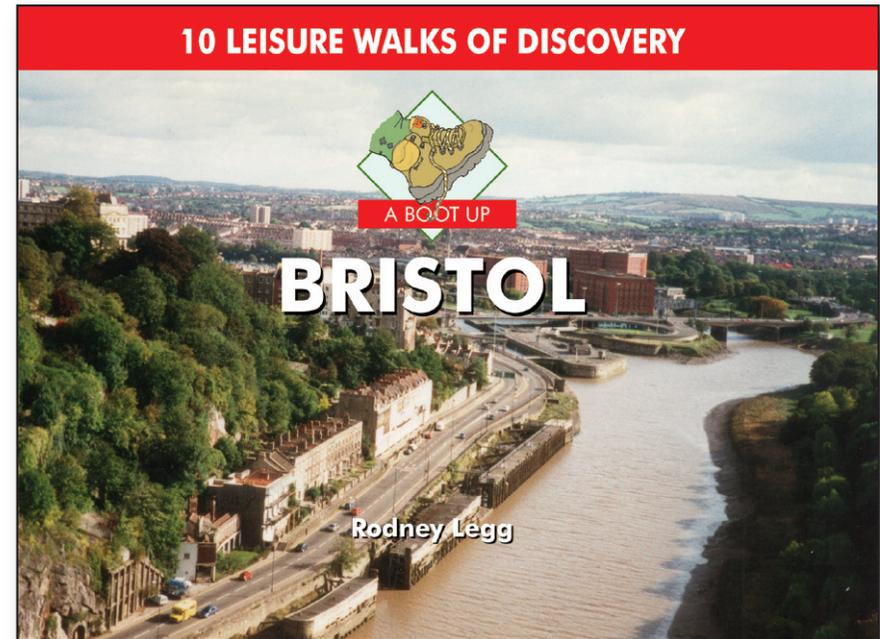
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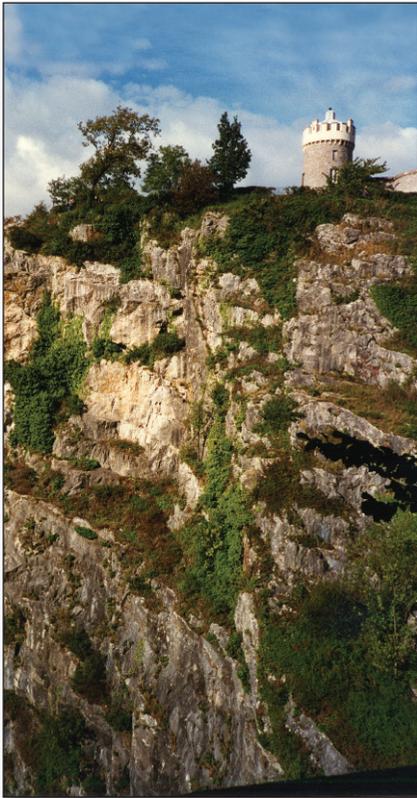
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# A BOOT UP BRISTOL



Avon Gorge and Camera Obscura.



SS Great Britain.



Blaise Castle Museum.



Deer farm at Chelvey Batch.



Glimpse of Clifton Suspension Bridge.

St Anne's Church

16

### 3 Blaise Castle and Kings Weston Hill

Publicly-owned mansions, follies and woods in a 6-mile hilltop circuit

The original Blaise Castle, something in the trees, is an Iron Age hill-fort. Bristol Corporation bought Blaise Castle Estate, with 400 acres of woodland, in 1926 to preserve the hilltop setting

of a folly-like mansion with four cone-topped towers. It was built in 1771 by Thomas Fort, the Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers, and looks the part, being 'all ship-ships and Bristol fashions'. It became the home of Quaker banker John Scudsett Harford.

In 1809 he commissioned John Nash to turn it into an architectural delight with a picturesque-style thatched dairy and Blaise Hamlet of nine Hobbit-like homes. The corn mill is Sheaford Mill from West

12

11 Kings Weston Hill

10 The Green

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

17

Levels:

Length: 6 miles

**Termin:** Muddy in places and quite demanding on the slopes.

**Park and start:** The car-park for Blaise Castle Estate is beside Kings Weston Road to the west of the house.

**Public transport:** Buses from the city centre to Kings Weston.

**Website:** [www.bristol.gov.uk/parks](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/parks)  
[www.kingswestonestate.co.uk](http://www.kingswestonestate.co.uk)

Harford, being dismantled and brought here in 1952, when its original location was flooded for Chew Valley Reservoir. Kings Weston House, the other mansion on the ridge, is a Sir John Vanbrugh extravaganza from 1710. It was created as a gentrified mock-castle.

Example of a double-page spread.

Blaise Castle and Kings Weston Hill