

TWO RIVERS, WESTBURY

OR 'THE ELEPHANT'

10K



WHY DO IT?

It is great pity that this route had to be left out of 'Out from the Centre' on the grounds that it barely touches the Community Forest Path. It is one of my favourites and since it is on my doorstep, barely a week goes by when I don't run along it. It is one of those routes, which varies from season to season and, because it follows a tidal river, from tide to tide. The variety of textures underfoot and the scents that are given off by the plants brushed past at the side mean that it could even appeal to a guided blind man.

I also love the way that it cuts across the arterial routes of northwest Bristol to explore a landscape invisible to those who remain in their cars. Starting in Westbury Village it follows enclosed paths and green lanes to Sneyd Park. From there, it goes through Old Sneed Park, a nature reserve looked after by the local community, and Bishops Knoll Wood, which is under the stewardship of the Woodland Trust. It then follows the wooded banks of the Avon and the Trym Rivers back to Westbury.

If I were to walk this route from Westbury, I would probably start from the Victoria in Chock Lane, but it is difficult to park there, so I have written it up to start from the iconic ironmongers' Mogfords next to the war memorial on the roundabout, which is visible from the free car park in Westbury Hill and from the bus stop in Canford Lane.

For refreshment, Westbury Village has pubs for every taste, three Indian, a Thai, an Italian and an English restaurant as well as a café or three, a Chinese take away and a recommended fish and chip shop. The route also passes the Mill House Inn in Sea Mills.

If you are travelling by bus, the 1, 20, 21 and 55 all pass through the centre of the village.

It is also possible to access the route at Sea Mills Railway Station. The hourly train service from Temple Meads to Avonmouth is subsidised by Bristol City Council, and can turn out cheaper than the bus if you can get to Temple Meads, Lawrence Hill, Stapleton Road, Montpelier, Redland, Clifton Down, Shirehampton or Avonmouth Stations. The train journey adds an exciting additional element to a family day out in any case, especially as it goes through a tunnel under the Downs.

FROM THE WAR MEMORIAL TO THE FOREST PATH

With your back to Mogfords' turn right down the High Street and then right again up Church Road.

Turn left before the parish church to emerge on the bridge over the Trym past the Villager restaurant.

You can see the Trym running beneath you over the wall to the left. You can often see grey wagtails there. To the right, the Trym is culverted under the gardens of the cottages on the right.

Turn right up Trym Road, and then right again up Chock Lane, past the River of Life Christian Centre. *(The Trym is again visible on the left, beside a small public garden.)*

Go up Chock Lane by the footpath on the left past the Victoria. *(Beware! The path runs out before the top of this road, which is a bit of a rat run!)*

At the top of Chock Lane, cross **with care**, traffic-filled Eastfield Road into the snicket opposite.

Through the snicket, turn left up Priory Court into Eastfield.

In Eastfield, turn right; go over the crossroads into Grange Park and look for a footpath on the right beside some Leland Cypresses.

Follow the footpath beside the walls of Redmaids' School until you emerge from behind the Lodge onto Westbury Road.

Turn left and then right on the pedestrian crossing.

Turn left over another zebra crossing into Downs Road. (Take care. Cars do not always notice pedestrians here.)

Use the right hand pavement of Downs Road, which points to a footpath on the left, opposite a deluxe scout hut.

Follow the path below Badminton School to a stone stile.

Cross the bottom of Cote Lane to another stone stile.

Follow the path down some steps and around to the left.

Carry straight on down, past an ascending path on the left, to emerge on a road.

On the road, turn left and then right down Rylestone Grove.

Follow round to Parry's Lane (a major road) and use the pedestrian refuge to cross into Stoke Abbey Dairy.

Contrary to appearances, the right of way goes through the yard of the dairy to a path behind the houses in the far right hand corner.

The path goes straight on past a crossroad and past a road down to the right. Ignore the fork to the left. The correct route is partially un-metalled.

Follow the left hand pavement up some steps and along to a major road.

Turn left to a pedestrian refuge, cross the road and then turn left and then right down Church Avenue to the Stoke Bishop parish church of St Mary Magdalene.

FROM THE FOREST PATH TO SEA MILLS STATION

Turn right down Mariners' walk to Old Sneed Park. ***(This is the only section of the Community Forest Path used on this route. It is poorly maintained and you need to look out for rubble underfoot.)***

Turn left and then right up Glenavon Park.

Take the first left and look for path to the left down to a gate (opposite some private garages on the right.)

The gate is the entrance to the Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve, which is looked after by local volunteers.

Follow the path down to kissing gate. ***I have seen roe deer here and there is an attractive artificial lake on the left.***

Carry on through the meadow (often boggy) to a field gate. If the gate is shut, there is a kissing gate off to the left.

The path through the next meadow, which can also be boggy, leads to a stile on the left into Bishops Knoll Wood. ***(Buzzards can sometimes be seen hunting the edges of these woods.)***

Follow the path up through the wood and diagonally left across a track to another stile into another part of Bishops Knoll Wood.)

Over the stile, turn right and then left alongside the railway line. ***(There are a number of great trees along this stretch, including redwoods and an ancient yew on the left.)***

Keep to the path as it swings left and right along a terrace past an espalier to some steps down to a gate.

Go through the gate and down under the railway to another gate.

Turn left alongside some derelict playing fields to emerge beside a dangerous road (The Portway.)

There is extreme danger, especially from cars approaching from the right. Use the pedestrian refuge to cross the road and turn left along the cycle path.

Turn right down steps to the riverside.

Turn right and follow the path alongside the river until you emerge at the confluence of the River Trym at Sea Mills harbour.

If you keep your eyes open you may see mallard, black-headed gulls, a cormorant, perhaps a heron and various waders including lapwings, curlew and sandpipers along this stretch.

FROM SEA MILLS STATION TO THE MEMORIAL

After pausing to admire the view, turn right under the railway bridge and follow the harbour side under the road bridge.

Follow bank of the River Trym across one road and then through some trees to emerge on a road opposite the Millhouse Pub.

Cross over road and turn right, left and left again around the pub.

Continue to follow the riverbank, marred by Himalayan Balsam, when you rejoin it, until a footbridge over the Trym.

Over bridge, turn right and follow river through a meadow and under a road bridge.

Follow concrete path over sewer pipe past Japanese knotweed to emerge at Coombe Dingle car park.

Go through car park and continue to follow stream to footbridge and kissing gate into a meadow.

Turn left and follow path through meadow to a kissing gate at the far end into next field.

Go up through trees and along path to gap into a wood. (NB the path through the wood has an adverse camber toward the stream, and there are dangerous spikes concealed on the right of the path, just before it emerges onto a drive.

Go right and left over an iron footbridge over the Trym into another meadow.

Turn right and follow path to a stile into a golf course.

In golf course go straight ahead along right hand side of the fairway past a spring and a wood on the left.

Look for a path up through the trees on the right,

At the top turn right and continue alongside wood.

When trees stop go straight ahead across fairway (looking out for golf balls from the right) to a stile onto a track.

Turn right and then left on track alongside stream to a bridge.

Continue over bridge to steps up to Falcondale Road.

Cross when safe to a footpath down right hand side of petrol station opposite.

Go straight ahead down road at the end of the path, past an arched building onto Westbury High Street.

Turn left down the High Street and then right down Trym Road.

There is a view of a turret of the college, which was slighted by Prince Rupert's men during the Civil War. The turret overlooks the river Trym, which runs along the college boundary before disappearing under the front gardens of a row of cottages.

Turn right again over the bridge by the Villager and go down College Road to look at the remains of the College.

Turn left at the Kingfisher café to return to the War Memorial.