

Bristol800

Book of Walks



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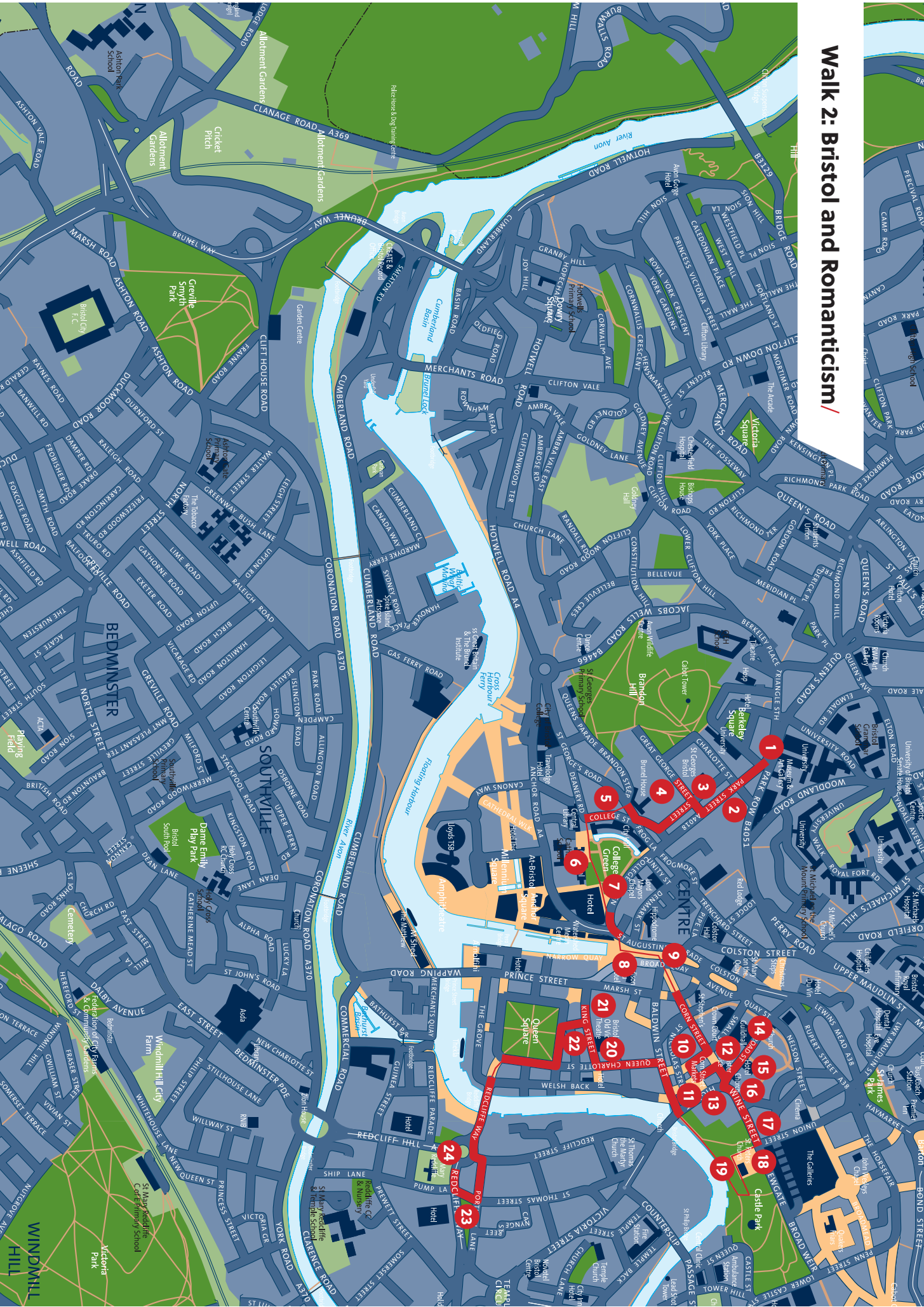
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Walk 2: Bristol and Romanticism/

Romanticism – a period roughly bookended by the years 1780 and 1830 – marked a time of revolution, medical and scientific progress; the beginning of democratic politics; and the wide discussion of ideas.

Bristol was central to this movement. It was a city of political and religious dissent and unconventional views; it was home to newspapers, publishing houses, coffee houses, meeting rooms and lending libraries providing fertile ground for debate; and it produced and attracted a series of uniquely talented writers and thinkers.

This route from Park Street to St Mary Redcliffe enables you to walk in the footsteps of some of the key figures of Romanticism; to learn where they lived, worked, visited, lectured and wrote poetry; and to find out more about the ideas they argued and debated. These include: the Bristol-born boy poet Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770), an icon of neglected genius and the inspiration of the Romantics who followed him; the Devon-born Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), who fostered critical debate with his celebrated series of lectures; and Bristol-born Robert Southey (1774-1843), the radical poet and playwright who became a pillar of the establishment. Coleridge and William Wordsworth (1770-1850), from Cumberland, collaborated on the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, which was produced by local publisher Joseph Cottle (1770–1853) and is now considered a landmark of English Romanticism.

This walk is mainly level with fairly steep declines down Park Street, Hill Street and St George's Road and a short climb up College Street. Allow around an hour to complete the route and longer if you wish to include time for the many attractions and opportunities for refreshments along the way. Other points of interest, unrelated to the Romanticism theme, are also included.

The Walk

The walk begins at the top of Park Street (1) on the right-hand side. Over half of the buildings on this street were damaged or destroyed by bombing in the Second World War but, unlike other areas of the city centre, when they were rebuilt in the 1950s their character remained much the same as before. This was thanks to the efforts of the city architect, Nelson Meredith.

In 1798 Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy came to Bristol to see *Lyrical Ballads* through the press. They stayed with Cottle in Wine Street (which you will see later in this walk). While they were here, they took a trip to Tintern in the Wye valley. By the late 1700s the abbey there had become a popular destination for tourists travelling in search of the picturesque. On 13 July, as they walked down Park Street on their way to Cottle's house, Wordsworth composed the last passage of 'Tintern Abbey', a poem which encapsulates his philosophy of nature.

Wordsworth later wrote:

I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it was written down till I reached Bristol.

'Tintern Abbey' was the last poem to be written for the original *Lyrical Ballads* and it was probably at Cottle's home that it reached the page.

Walk down the hill until you are opposite 60 Park Street (2) on the other side of the road.



Hannah More presenting Ann Yearsley to Mrs Montague (Special Collections, University of Bristol Library Restricted HIAe).

Born in Fishponds, Hannah More (1745-1833) was one of the most influential women living in England in this period. She was a playwright and poet, but is now better known for her religious and political writing, her philanthropy, her educational campaigns on behalf of the poor and her passionate support of the abolitionist movement. In 1762 she and her sisters established an Academy for Young Ladies in specially-built premises on this site, then number 43, following the success of their previous school in Trinity Street. The school concentrated on 'French, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Needlework', with each sister taking responsibility for a particular part of the curriculum. Cottle's sisters were educated here and it is likely that Sarah, Edith and Mary Fricker, the women who married, respectively, Coleridge, Southey and the Bristol poet Robert Lovell (1771-1796), were too. The Mores retired from the school in 1790. More was a patron of the poet Ann Yearsley ('the Bristol Milkwoman'), who also wrote against the slave trade, but Yearsley eventually found her attentions too demanding (see Walk 5).

Continue down Park Street, pausing opposite number 52 (formerly number 47). This was the home of Mary Estlin who was secretary of the Bristol & Clifton Anti-Slavery Society. Ellen Craft, a runaway slave from America, stayed here during her tour of England when she and her husband spoke at public meetings about their experiences. Turn right into Great George Street, noting the building on the opposite corner, the former home of New-York-born Henry Cruger, a Bristol MP, a US Senator and a Merchant Venturer. Cross Hill Street and continue to St George's Bristol (3).

St George's Church was completed in 1823 and was the city's first building in the Greek Revival style. Its architect, Robert Smirke, designed the opera house at Covent Garden and the British Museum. With the congregation dwindling, the building was rescued from redundancy in 1976 by a group of local music enthusiasts, founders of the St George's Music Trust. It is now one of the country's leading concert halls noted for its superb acoustics (www.stgeorgesbristol.co.uk 0845 40 24 001).

Cross the road to The Georgian House Museum (4).

John Pretor Pinney was a wealthy sugar merchant who owned plantations on the Caribbean island of Nevis. He moved into the newly-completed six-storey townhouse at 7 Great George Street in 1791. Wordsworth and Dorothy stayed here between 21 August and 26 September 1795. It was during this time that Wordsworth was introduced to Cottle, Southey and Coleridge and it is likely that some early meetings between Coleridge and Wordsworth took place at Pinney's house, though probably not the first. 'Coleridge was at Bristol part of the time I was there,' Wordsworth wrote in October 1795. 'I saw but little of him. I wished indeed to have seen more – his talent appears to me very great.'

The house's last private owner, Canon R T Cole, presented it to Bristol Corporation in 1938 to be used for the display of Georgian furniture. It has been restored and is open to visitors, showing what life was like above and below stairs in the city in the eighteenth century. Pinney's plantations were worked by enslaved people, but Coleridge, Southey and Wordsworth all wrote against the slave trade.

The Georgian House Museum: Normal opening times: 11am-4pm. Closed Wed, Thu and Fri. No toilet or café on site. Admission is free. www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/georgian-house-museum 0117 921 1362

Return to Hill Street. Turn right and go down to St George's Road. Turn right. Continue past the mini-roundabout to the pedestrian crossing outside Brunel House. This building was originally a hotel that was intended to form part of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's integrated passenger service between London and New York (see Walk 3). Cross the road here, keep straight ahead and continue across the second pedestrian crossing to College Street (5).

Today College Street is mainly occupied by the rear of City Hall (see Walk 1) and a car park. However, in 1795 25 College Street was the home of Coleridge, Southey and George Burnett, the three originators of a movement they called Pantisocracy. Coleridge and Southey met in Oxford and this scheme, to emigrate to America and found a utopian commune-like society in the wilderness, developed during their long discussions. The name for the proposed community came from the Greek *pan-socra*, meaning an all-governing society. The community was to consist of 12 men and 12 women who would support themselves by farming the land. Coleridge and Southey thought that no more than three hours of labour would be required each day, and so planned for the remaining time to be devoted to study, liberal discussions and educating their children. Members of the community were to be allowed their own opinions in matters of politics and religion, but land would be held in common, belonging to everyone.

At the end of College Street cross over Deanery Road to the Central Library, considered one of the city's finest buildings. It opened in 1906. Go through the old abbey archway on the left-hand side for a view of the rear of the building. Its architect, Charles Holden, appears to have picked up some of the new aesthetics coming from mainland Europe that had influenced Charles Rennie Mackintosh in Glasgow. Come back through the archway to see the statue of Raja Rammohun Roy, the Indian philosopher who died during a visit to the city in 1833. He was staying at the home of Lant Carpenter and his daughter Mary, a campaigner for educational reform (see Walk 4). Continue to Bristol Cathedral (6).

In the 1840s Cottle decided that Bristol should inaugurate a project to honour Southey who had been Poet Laureate from 1813 until his death. He initially wanted a monument to be built but the money raised fell short and the committee that took over the management of the campaign downgraded the project to a bust. This was created by E H Baily in 1845 and is installed in the north choir aisle of the cathedral.

Founded as an Augustinian abbey in 1140, the cathedral boasts some of the most important medieval architecture in the UK. Look out for the Norman stone carving in the Chapter House, the medieval stained glass preserved in the cloister, the brightly coloured Eastern Lady Chapel and the lofty arches and vaults which distinguish Bristol Cathedral as being of a medieval hall church design.

Bristol Cathedral: Visitors welcome. Normal hours, excluding services special services and events: Mon-Fri 8am-5pm; Sat-Sun 8am-3.15pm. Admission is free. www.bristol-cathedral.co.uk 0117 926 4879

From the cathedral, turn right and walk along the side of College Green (?).

When Coleridge arrived in Bristol in early August 1794, he came to Lovell's house on College Green in search of Southey. Lovell had been disowned by this rich Quaker family for marrying Mary Fricker earlier that year. When Coleridge reached the house, he found himself in the midst of a lively family party; Southey, Lovell, Mary and Sarah Fricker were all there.

Another of the houses on the green was home to Elizabeth Tyler, Southey's aunt and Edith Fricker's employer. Southey spent a large part of his childhood here and often stayed with his aunt when he was not at university in Oxford, so he frequently saw Edith. Southey proposed to Edith in 1794 and the two intended to emigrate to America along with the other members of the Pantisocracy scheme. However, on 17 October 1794 all thoughts about moving to America were cast into doubt when Southey's aunt found out about the plan to emigrate, as well as Southey's secret engagement to Edith, whom she referred to as 'a mere seamstress'. She threw Southey out of her house without his coat, though it was cold and raining heavily, and told him that she wished to have nothing more to do with him or his family.

Pause outside the Bristol Marriott Royal Hotel. This is built in limestone in the Italianate style and was designed by W H Hawtin in 1864. The extension to the east of the site was built during renovations in the early 1990s. The statue of Queen Victoria in the turning circle outside is by Joseph Boehm and commemorates the queen's Golden Jubilee. While you stand here, note the pretty Art Nouveau upper storeys on number 38 College Green, across the street. This is the former Cabot Café, which was designed by the Bristol architects LaTrobe and Weston (1904). The ground floor originally had grand Mackintosh-style doors and windows, which have been lost.



Broad Quay, Bristol, attributed to Philip Van Dyke, c 1760 (Bristol Culture KS14).

Continue down the hill. Cross Canon's Road and then St Augustine's Parade to the fountains on the Centre Parade (8).

At the time of the Romantics, where you are standing now was the northern section of St Augustine's Reach, a man-made water channel dug in the thirteenth century during the diversion of the River Frome. It was built to increase the capacity of the docks, but was covered over in the 1890s when there was a need to provide more space for road traffic. The water is still there beneath your feet.

Bristol's centre was originally near Bristol Bridge, at the crossroads you will see later on this walk. When people refer to the centre today they usually mean here, the former site of the Tramways Centre, the hub for the city's old tram routes. The area was redeveloped in the 1990s in an effort to overcome congestion problems and to provide a more clearly defined public space. Critical reaction to the scheme by some was less than enthusiastic, but there had been little affection for how it looked before. At the time of writing, it is undergoing further development as part of the Metrobus scheme, which may mean you will have to find an alternative route across.

Keeping the fountains to your right, walk towards the stand of trees ahead of you and the statue of Edmund Burke (9).

Edmund Burke, the Irish philosopher and politician, was the MP for Bristol between 1774 and 1780. In his speech to the electors of Bristol on 3 November 1774, Burke said:

Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation with one interest, that of the whole; where, not local purposes, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member indeed; but when you have chosen him, he is not a member of Bristol, but he is a member of Parliament.

Burke is widely remembered for his opposition to the French Revolution. Wordsworth read Burke's 1790 book *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in spring 1791, and attacked Burke in Letter to the Bishop of Landaff (1793).

Walk back towards the fountains, and cross Broad Quay using the first pedestrian crossing on your left. Turn left, crossing Baldwin Street. Continue straight ahead along pedestrianised Clare Street. Continue into Corn Street, an area once noted for its eighteenth- and nineteenth-century commercial and legal offices. These were lavish buildings designed as visual statements of confidence to reassure customers. Those that survive have mostly been converted into shops and restaurants. Much of their grandeur has been lost at street level, but look up to the upper storeys to get a sense of their former opulence. On your left, you will pass The Commercial Rooms, built in 1810 to provide convivial spaces where the local bankers, lawyers and merchants could meet over coffee. Its designer was the 24-year-old Charles Busby. Its first president was John Loudon Macadam, Surveyor of the Bristol Turnpike and inventor of the road construction method known as macadam. Where Corn Street is pedestrianised, continue to The Exchange (10) on your right.

This was originally a meeting place for merchants, designed by John Wood the Elder and built between 1741 and 1743. To make room, the old hall of the Coopers' Company was demolished. The Coopers were paid £900 and provided with a new site on King Street, which you will see later. Wood had transformed nearby Bath with his designs for Prior Park, Queen Square, North and South Parade and the Royal Mineral Hospital. He would later design The Circus. The brass 'nails' outside the building are historic relics of the tables on which the merchants once conducted their business (there is an information board by the door giving details). The decorative façade depicts products from the four corners of the world, illustrating the global trade in which the merchants were engaged. Look at the clock above the entrance. This was first installed in 1822 and later given two minute-hands, which can still be seen. One hand shows the old Bristol time, which, with the coming of the railway and the need to synchronise train schedules across the country, was adjusted to London time, indicated by the other hand.

just over ten minutes ahead. The building was converted into a corn exchange in 1872 and now provides an entrance to St Nicholas Market. A street market is held outside most Wednesdays.

If The Exchange is open, enter the market and walk straight through, taking note of the courtyard roof over head, an addition from 1870 when it was finally conceded that it might be better to conduct business undercover. Exit the building and turn left to The Rummer Hotel (11) on the corner of All Saints Lane. If The Exchange is closed, walk past the entrance and turn right down the lane. Note this is quite narrow, which may make it awkward for wheelchair users and those with pushchairs.

In late 1795 or early 1796 a group of friends met with Coleridge at The Rummer Tavern to persuade him to start a new radical periodical. Entitled *The Watchman*, it would contain news, parliamentary reports, original essays, poetry and reviews, and Coleridge would be its editor, publisher and chief contributor. Its motto was 'That All may know the Truth; and that the Truth may make us free'.

Having attracted 250 subscribers in Bristol alone, the first issue of *The Watchman* went out on 1 March 1796. Coleridge and Cottle spent four hours arranging, counting, packing and invoicing the copies for the 150-or-so London and provincial customers. The journal was issued every eighth day (to avoid tax) and survived until 13 May, when the tenth and final issue appeared.

Return to Corn Street via All Saints Lane. The church that gives the lane its name dates back to the eleventh century. Opposite the entrance to the lane is the former West of England Bank and South Wales District Bank (12).

This building was designed by W B Gingell and T R Lysaght and built between 1854 and 1857 in an extravagant Venetian style using Bath and Portland stone. The sculptured frieze on its façade is by John Evan Thomas who also worked on the Houses of Parliament. On the ground floor the sculptures depict the five main towns where the bank did business: Newport, Bath, Bristol, Exeter and Cardiff. On the first floor are female figures representing Peace, Plenty, Justice, Integrity and other elements considered conducive to making money in this period. The bank collapsed in 1878.

On this site once stood The Bush Tavern, Bristol's leading coaching inn. It was used by Burke for his political campaign headquarters. Before Coleridge found Southey at Lovell's house on College Green on that day in August 1794, he came here. Coleridge had just arrived in the city having been on a walking tour to Wales. Southey had come to Bristol shortly before him and was busy recruiting friends to their Pantisocracy scheme, including Lovell.

Turn right to the end of Corn Street. You are now at the crossroads that once marked the medieval city centre, where the four principal streets – Corn Street, Broad Street, Wine Street and High Street – met. On your right, at High Street Corner, is 49 High Street (13).

In the days that followed Coleridge's arrival in Bristol, Lovell and Southey introduced him to a city strong in political radicalism. Coleridge met Cottle, whose shop stood on this site. Cottle considered Pantisocracy an 'epidemic delusion' but acted as a patron for the poets and offered Coleridge a guinea and a half for every 100 lines of poetry he produced. In April 1795 he published *Poems on Various Subjects*, Coleridge's first major collection. Cottle also commissioned and printed *Lyrical Ballads*, although he disliked the idea of a joint volume and the plan of anonymous publication.

A red plaque on the building reads:

On this corner site from 1791-1798 Joseph Cottle (1770-1853) bookseller, publisher and poet. The first effective publisher of the poems of Coleridge, Southey, Lamb and Wordsworth (some of whose works were written here).

Turn left down Broad Street, noting on the corner the Old Council House – the city's third, according to records, and now the Bristol Registry Office – and continue to The Guildhall (14).

This building was completed in 1846 and designed by local architect Richard Shackleton Pope, who is closely associated with Brunel's work in the city (see Walk 3). The sculptures of leading Bristolians on the front are by John Evan Thomas. It replaced an earlier Guildhall dating from the medieval period. Until the mid-sixteenth century and before the coming of Council Houses, a Guildhall served as the central meeting place for a city's most important guildsmen as well as its civic leaders (often one and the same).

Crop failure in 1794 and the effects of the war with France resulted in national scarcity, which, by the end of 1795, led to popular protests. In London George III's coach was attacked by crowds throwing stones and crying 'Bread! Peace! No Pitt!'

A meeting was held in Bristol at the Guildhall on 17 November 1795 to congratulate the king on his escape from the attack, but attracted also a large number of people who were against the war. One voice repeatedly called out 'Mr Mayor! Mr Mayor!' in an attempt to be heard. That voice was Coleridge's, arguing that although the war had been costly to the rich, they still had a great deal; 'but a PENNY taken from the pocket of a poor man might deprive him of a dinner'. *The Star*, a London newspaper, published an account of the Bristol Guildhall meeting and reported Coleridge's speech as 'the most elegant, the most pathetic, and the most sublime Address that was ever heard, perhaps, within the walls of the building.'

Cross the road for a clearer view of the building then turn back up Broad Street to The Grand Hotel (15).

The White Lion Inn once occupied this site. Between 28 October and 24 November 1813 Coleridge gave a series of twice-weekly lectures on Shakespeare in the inn's Great Room. The first lecture had to be cancelled when, in the coach at Bath, Coleridge changed his mind about coming to Bristol and decided to escort a lady to North Wales instead. He turned up a couple of days later, agreed on another time, and was then 'only' an hour late for his audience. Cottle wrote that 'the lectures gave great satisfaction'.

The present-day hotel was designed by Foster & Wood and completed in 1869. It has an Italian Renaissance design reminiscent of the buildings of Venice. The ground floor, which projects out to the street, was originally occupied by shops.

Continue up Broad Street to Christ Church (16).

This church, designed by local architect William Paty, was built in 1786, replacing the medieval church that once occupied this site. Southey later wrote, 'I was christened in that old church, & at this moment vividly remember our pew under the organ'. Southey also wrote that when he was young he enjoyed the Quarter Jacks – two figures over the entrance that strike the quarter hours: 'I have many a time stooped for a few minutes with my satchel on my back to see them strike. My father had a great love for these poor Quarter Boys who had regulated all his motions for about 20 years.' The Jacks had been carved by Paty's grandfather and were retained for the new building. The organ, reworked, was also reinstalled.

Turn left into Wine Street. This area suffered considerable bomb damage during the first Bristol Blitz on 24 November 1940, which led to the loss of around a quarter of the medieval city, the Dutch House (a landmark five-storey timber-framed building dating from 1676 on the corner of the High Street) and St Peter's Hospital (the site of which you will visit later in this walk). Where the side wall of Christ Church abuts the end of the Prudential Buildings you will see a plaque commemorating Southey's house (17).

In August 1774 Southey was born above his father's shop at 9 Wine Street, a linen draper's identified by the sign of a golden key. Southey called his place of birth 'Wine Street below-the-Pump', referencing the pump which divided the street.

In a letter in March 1804, he wrote:

When I first went to school I never thought of Wine Street & of that Pump without tears, & such a sorrow at heart – as by heaven no child of mine shall ever suffer while I am living to prevent it! & so deeply are the feelings connected with that place rooted in me, that perhaps in the hour of death they will be the last that survive.



The pump on Wine Street by Charles Bird from *Picturesque Old Bristol*, 1886 (Bristol Reference Library BL10F).

Cottle moved into a house on Wine Street on 7 March 1798, and moved his shop to 5 Wine Street later that month. The shop (since destroyed) was larger than his previous premises, but was in a less prominent position; 35 years later Wordsworth recalled that the move had been financially disastrous.

Among the many other buildings lost on Wine Street during the war was the former Corn Market. By late February 1795 Coleridge had organised a series of public lectures here. Entrance to the lectures was charged at one shilling per head and the money collected was intended to help fund Coleridge and Southey's emigration to America.

The lectures attacked Pitt's government and condemned the war against France. Coleridge dealt well with hecklers. On one occasion, some men who disliked what they heard began to hiss. Coleridge responded instantly: 'I am not at all surprised, when the red hot prejudices of aristocrats are suddenly plunged into the cool water of reason, that they should go off with a hiss!' After the second lecture it was felt necessary to move the third to a private address.

Continue along Wine Street to the pedestrian crossing and cross to Castle Park (18).

This area is also sometimes referred to as Castle Green and Coleridge gave the third lecture of his 1795 series at a house somewhere near here. Further lectures by both Southey and Coleridge were to follow; Coleridge delivered one notable speech attacking the slave trade, and at the end of June he was to begin a series of six lectures at the Assembly Coffee House, on the quayside, comparing the English Civil War and the French Revolution. A prospectus for these lectures has survived but it is not known for certain whether he actually delivered them.

Behind the bomb-damaged ruins of St Peter's Church is The Castle Park Physic Garden (19), supported by Jo Malone London and St Mungo's, the national homeless charity. It opened in 2015.

The garden is close to the site of St Peter's Hospital, which was destroyed in the war. Sometime in 1798 Wordsworth wrote 'The Mad Mother'. It is possible that the subject of this poem is Louisa, the Maid of the Haystack, who lived for a time at the hospital. In 1776 a young, well-mannered girl entered a house at Flax Bourton asking for milk. After leaving, she wandered through the nearby fields and slept under a haystack for four nights. Local women fed her and offered her a bed in their houses, but she refused them. The women then clubbed together to purchase the haystack for her. The girl was eventually taken to St Peter's Hospital, but she returned to the haystack, where she lived for four more years. The locals continued to feed her and gave her the names 'Louisa' and 'The Maid of the Haystack'. Hannah More became involved in her care in 1781, and had her taken to the Henderson Asylum at Hanham; she continued to pay for her keep there until Louisa's death in 1800.



The back of St Peter's Hospital from the Floating Harbour, 1820. Hugh O'Neill (Bristol Culture M2702).

If you can manage steps, walk through the garden, along the side of the church, turn left and then right, passing the linear ponds of Beside the Still Waters by Peter Randall-Page (1993). Continue down the steps then turn right to go down to the waterfront and right towards Bristol Bridge (look out for Seeds of Change, a floating ballast seed garden on your left). If you are unable to manage steps, return to the entrance of the church and take the sloping path to your left down to the waterfront and towards the bridge. Cross the road ahead of you via the pedestrian crossing into Baldwin Street. Continue to Queen Charlotte Street to your left. Turn down here, cross Crow Lane and continue to King Street where you turn right to the Bristol Old Vic (20). (Note that road surfaces in this area are cobbled and can be uneven underfoot.)

This is the oldest continuously working theatre in the English-speaking world and celebrated its 250th birthday in 2016. It has been home to the Bristol Old Vic company since 1946. In 2012 a major refurbishment of the historic Georgian auditorium was completed. At the time of writing the redevelopment of the front-of-house was underway, due for completion in 2018, but the theatre remains open for performances, tours and other activity (www.bristololdvic.org.uk 0117 987 7877).

The Coopers' Hall – which had replaced the demolished premises on Corn Street – became part of the theatre complex in the early 1970s, providing a new, two-tiered foyer space. The Coopers Company, which included many local wine merchants, had long since gone into decline and its hall had been used for exhibitions, Baptist missions, warehousing and auctions since the late eighteenth century.

By 1784 the craze for balloon flights had reached England, and ascents, with or without people on board, were taking place in almost every large city, including Bristol. High balloon ascents prompted advances in meteorology and drew people's attention to the formation and beauty of clouds. Poets and writers, including Coleridge and Wordsworth, saw ballooning as a symbol of hope and liberation. In January 1784 Michael Biaggini exhibited an air balloon at the Coopers' Hall for three days. He charged a 2s 6d (12.5p) entrance fee, and the balloon, around 30ft/9.14m in circumference, attracted much public interest. For an extra 2s 6d, Biaggini allowed those who were interested 'to see the method and process of filling the balloon with inflammable air'.

Continue along King Street to the building on your right, set back from the road behind a paved courtyard. Currently occupied by a restaurant, this was once Bristol Library (21).



King Street, 1825. Thomas L Rowbotham (Bristol Culture M2509).

The Bristol Library Society, founded in 1773, charged an entrance fee and an annual subscription of one guinea per member until 1798, when the fee increased to four guineas. In 1798 the library had around 200 members and held 5,000 books, as well as providing custody of 2,000 books belonging to the city. You were not allowed to become a member if you owned a lodging-house, inn, tavern, coffee house, place of public entertainment or circulating library. The library was made free to the public from 1856. Coleridge, Southey, Lovell and Cottle all valued the library and used it frequently. Southey was library member number 278 and Coleridge number 295.

Furnishings from the library, including the ornately carved over-mantle from the reading room's fireplace, can be seen in the Bristol Room in the Central Library. The building was taken over by the War Pensions Office during the First World War.

Go back to King William Avenue, on your right. Turn here, cross Little King Street and enter Queen Square. Turn left to 2 Queen Square (22).

This was once the home of Josiah Wade, a radical Bristol tradesman who became a principal supporter of *The Watchman*, Coleridge's political journal. Coleridge stayed with Wade from late October to late November in 1813 while he was presenting a series of lectures on Shakespeare and Milton in the city. Coleridge intended to begin a further series on 7 December, but on 2 December a physical and mental crisis, induced by opium and alcohol, overcame him.

Continue clockwise around the square, exiting at Bell Avenue to your left, the pedestrian path between numbers 24 and 26. There is an information board marking the Brunel Mile to your right. Continue straight ahead, crossing Welsh Back to the left-hand side of Redcliffe Bridge. As you cross the bridge, look to your left to the brick-faced former Western Counties Agricultural Co-operative warehouse (1909-12), a Grade-II listed building which was converted by the Bristol Churches Housing Association for social housing in 1997. Continue straight ahead when you leave the bridge. Cross Redcliffe Street by the pedestrian crossing and continue along Portwall Lane, which marks the old city boundary, keeping the car park to your right. Cross Phippen Street and turn right to the Chatterton House (23).

This was constructed in 1749 as the master's house for the adjoining Pile Street School, which was founded around 1739. Chatterton was born here in 1752 and subsequently educated at the school where his father was master. In the 1930s, when the surrounding buildings were demolished to make room for Redcliffe Way, part of the façade of the school was attached to the house. The council-owned building has been used as a museum and currently houses a café.

Chatterton left Bristol for London in April 1770, allegedly disappointed with his lack of recognition at home, and died shortly afterwards of arsenic poisoning. His early tragic end – now thought to have been an accident – has led to the romantic legend of the boy genius destroyed by a philistine world, a legend enhanced by Henry Wallis' famous portrait of the penniless young man lying dead in his London garret.

Re-cross Phippen Street and continue down to Redcliffe Way. Turn right and head to the pedestrian crossing which will take you to St Mary Redcliffe (24).

Queen Elizabeth, on a visit to Bristol in 1574, is said to have declared this to be the 'fairest, goodliest and most famous parish church in England'. Parts of the structure date back to the twelfth century. The Canynges, a Bristol mercantile family, were among the most high-profile of the church's early patrons, paying for major building projects in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Canynges Society, founded in 1848 to raise funds for essential restoration work, is still active on the church's behalf having been revived in 1927. The imposing spire, which was truncated after being struck by lightning in 1446, was rebuilt to its full height of 292ft/89m in 1872.

It was on 4 October 1795 that Reverend Benjamin Spyr married Coleridge and Sarah Fricker in a quiet ceremony at St Mary Redcliffe. Their marriage was witnessed by Mrs Fricker and Josiah Wade. On 14 November 1795 Southey married Edith Fricker, with Cottle and his sister, Sarah, acting as their witnesses. Cottle also paid for the ring and marriage licence. The marriages of Coleridge to Sarah and Southey to Edith were intended as a prelude to emigration. Southey's friend George Burnett also intended to join the Pantisocracy scheme, and proposed to Martha Fricker, one of the younger Fricker siblings. Martha turned him down.

St Mary Redcliffe was where Chatterton claimed to have discovered poems written by a fifteenth-century monk named Thomas Rowley. The poems were hailed as a magnificent find and experts were unstinting in their praise. However, the Rowley poems were found to have been the work of Chatterton himself. Both Coleridge and Wordsworth wrote about Chatterton; Wordsworth in *Resolution and Independence* and Coleridge in *Monody on the Death of Chatterton*.

St Mary Redcliffe: Normal opening hours for visitors: Mon-Sat: 8:30am-5pm. Sun: services are held at 8am, 9:30am, 11:15am and 6:30pm; visitors wishing to view the church but not attend the service are not admitted at these times. The Arc Café is located in the undercroft.
www.stmaryredcliffe.co.uk 0117 231 0060