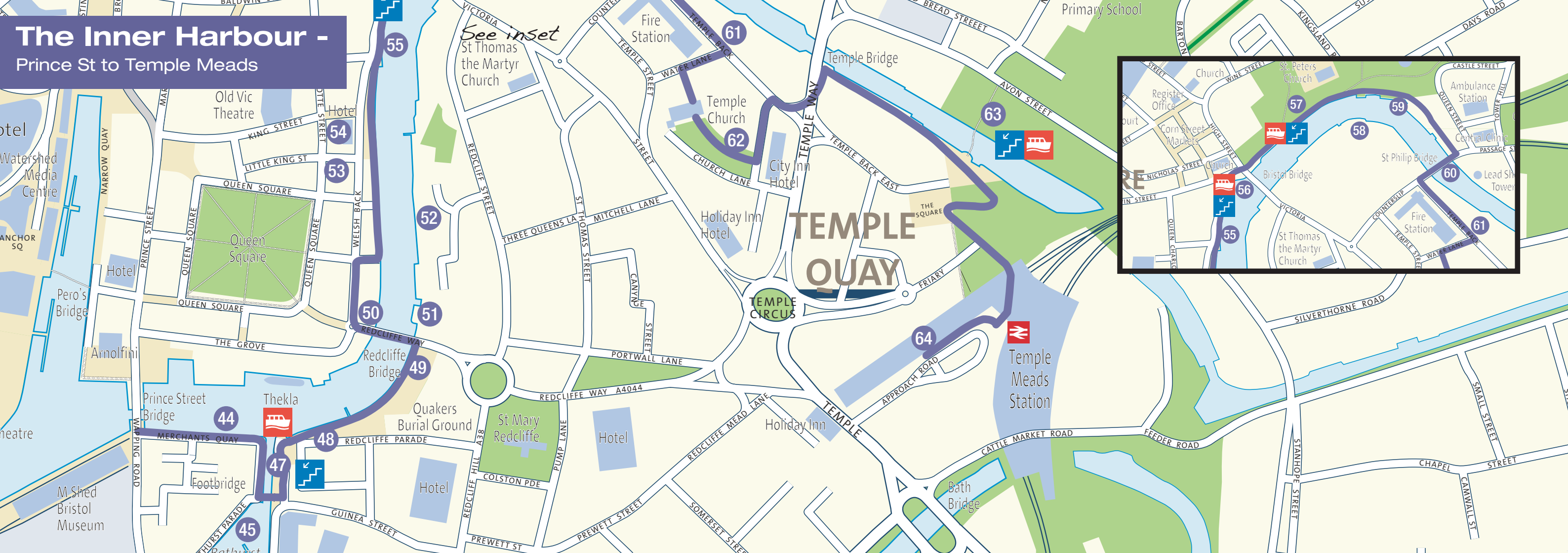


The Inner Harbour - Prince St to Temple Meads



The Inner Harbour – Prince Street to Temple Meads

Start at Prince Street Bridge, south side. Keeping the water to your left move east along the quayside to the corner.

- 44** This was Bathurst Wharf (now called Merchants Quay), constructed in the 1860s and for many years the home of transit sheds and an oil seed mill. On the opposite side of the Harbour you can see the Thekla, a Baltic coaster brought to Bristol in 1983 to serve as a floating entertainment venue, and River Station restaurant, once the River Police base, built in the 1950s. The lock at the end, now disused, leads into Bathurst Basin.

Continue to the footbridge.

- 45** Bathurst Basin was part of Jessop's Floating Harbour scheme and was created by enlarging the mill pond of the tidal Trin Mills which had stood here since the Middle Ages. At the far end of the Basin another lock led into the New Cut, used as an access by smaller vessels bypassing the main entrance to the Harbour. Bathurst Basin could be used as a half-tidal basin. The footbridge stands on the site of a railway bridge (see 68).

(From the lock in the south west corner you can cross the road and join the New Cut at 34)

- 46** Bristol General Hospital was completed in 1858, with its ground floor devoted to warehousing for ships visiting the Basin. It was used as a location of the BBC drama Being Human in 2009. It is scheduled to close as a hospital in 2010.

Cross the footbridge and turn left

- 47** The Ostrich is one of remarkably few traditional dockside pubs in Bristol. Above it is the splendid Georgian Redcliffe Parade – worth a detour up the steps for the view over the Harbour from the car park.



- 48** Continue past the old ferry slip onto Midland Wharf (renamed Phoenix Wharf in the 1970s for the renovation work funded here by Phoenix Assurance). There are metal plaques on the wall commemorating this and explaining about Redcliffe Caves, which you also pass. The black wooden shed is named for Benjamin Perry, the tug and barge owner whose base this was. Follow the quayside around the shed.

- 49** Redcliffe Wharf was for decades the base for the Lucas Brothers who traded with West Africa for palm oil, a staple in the manufacture of soap. Currently it is a base for traditional boatbuilding and occasional events whilst it awaits redevelopment. Opposite the wharf is Severn Shed, now a modern restaurant, but also the earliest remaining transit shed in Bristol built for short-term storage of goods from steamships in 1865.

Continue along the quayside to the road gate and cross the road at the zebra crossing to your right. Make your way to Redcliffe Bridge.

- 50** The bridge was completed in 1942, and is a bascule bridge (one which lifts to allow ships through). There are excellent views from it up Welsh (on the left) and Redcliffe Backs towards Bristol Bridge. The Backs are named such because they were once literally the backs of merchants' houses from where goods were loaded directly to ships. Vessels from Wales frequented Welsh Back, whilst Redcliffe Backs were named for the once-autonomous township on this side of the river.

Cross the bridge to Welsh Back and follow this to Bristol Bridge. You can pick your way along the water's edge behind the single-storey transit sheds and more modern buildings.

- 51** Redcliffe Backs on the opposite bank were lined for most of their length with granaries and mills. The Western Counties Agricultural Society had a mill on the site of the new flats by the bridge, and they also owned the next three buildings. The imposing red brick warehouse was completed in 1910, a pioneering concrete framed structure; the less-glamorous neighbouring cheese warehouse is entirely concrete. Alongside this is an older red-brick warehouse from the mid 19th century.
- 52** Next, after a modern infill building that replaces a granary destroyed in the war, are the red brick towers of the Buchanan's Wharf development. These were another granary and mill built by Proctor Baker, a prominent local grain merchant and the chairman of the Docks Committee for many years at the end of the 19th century. He later sold his business to Spillers, who moved to Avonmouth in 1937.

53 As you emerge from the sheds on Welsh Back at Little King Street, you should look inland for The Granary, a grain store built in the Bristol Byzantine style by architects Ponton & Gough in 1869. In the 1960s it housed a well-known nightclub and has recently been converted into flats.

54 Also close to Welsh Back, in King St, is the Llandoger Trow, a pub in a 17th century half-timbered building, one of the last remnants of this style of building in a city once renowned for its early architecture. The pub takes its name from the regular sailing barges that came from Llandoger in South Wales. Tradition has it that Daniel Defoe met Alexander Selkirk here and was inspired by his tales to write Robinson Crusoe.

55 Close to the end of King St, back by the water, is the 'bomb hole', part of Welsh Back that was damaged by bombing during World War II and retained as a memorial. Alongside this is the Merchant Seamen's memorial, commemorating those who lost their lives sailing from Bristol.



56 Bristol Bridge is the reason for Bristol being where it is. In the early days of the city, this was the best point at which to cross the river and to which to bring ships conveniently on one tide. A settlement grew around the crossing from about 1000AD. The bridge was made a permanent structure about 1247 and replaced in 1769 with the one seen today. Its roadway was widened in the 1880s. It marks the limit of navigation for any vessel that can't pass beneath its arches.



At Bristol Bridge, cross to Castle Park. Continue through Castle Park, bearing right to keep close to the water.

57 Castle Park has been formed from the centuries-old commercial centre of Bristol that was destroyed by bombing in the Second World War. That centre developed on and around the site of Bristol Castle, which had been destroyed by Cromwell in 1647. There are interpretive panels in the Park that explain its history. On the Harbour wall, look out for the large fig tree, one of many alien species that have arrived with shipping over time and continue to thrive.



58 On the opposite side of the Harbour are the remaining structures from Georges' Brewery (later Courage's). There was a brewery on this site from the mid-18th century, run from 1788 by Philip George and his family. Next to it was Conrad Finzel's sugar refinery, the largest of many in Bristol, which finally closed in 1881. The refinery sprawled around the corner as far as St Philips Bridge, but part of it was redeveloped in 1900 to create the tall red-brick building. This was the Bristol Tramways generating station, where the power for Bristol's tram network was created. In 1940, the bridge was bombed, cutting off the supply to the whole network and putting an end to the trams.

59 Part-way round the path crosses Castle Ditch, the remains of the moat that once surrounded Bristol Castle.

(To avoid the steps at the end of the next stage, turn left after Castle Ditch bridge and right onto Queen Street, then right again to St Philips Bridge).

Continue on the path to St Philips Bridge and up the steps. Cross the road carefully.

60 From the centre of the bridge, there is a good view down Temple Backs. This was once Bristol's industrial backyard, particularly on the left bank. From the bridge in about 1890 there was, in quick succession, a lead works, an iron foundry, a glass bottle works, a white lead works, a railway locomotive factory, a major railway bridge, a gas works and a soap factory. The right bank wasn't much more salubrious. There's little to show where any of these were, but the phallic-shaped shot tower, now part of an office development, was latterly part of the lead business here. This tower was a replacement for the world's first shot tower devised and patented by William Watts in 1782 on Redcliffe Hill but demolished in 1968 for road improvements.

Cross the bridge and turn left into Temple Back.

61 On your left, integrated into a new building, is the façade of the Central Electric Lighting Station, Bristol's first generating station for electric street lighting. It opened in 1893.

Turn right into Water Lane and then left into Petticoat Lane alongside Norfolk House. Fork left at the footpath in the gardens

62 This takes you into the gardens surrounding the ruins of Temple church. As well as being a lovely place for a break, it has a connection with the story of the Harbour. In 1791 its vicar, William Milton, proposed a New Cut as part of the projected scheme. Jessop adopted his idea in the final plan, but Milton had to wait nearly 20 years for recognition of his role.

From Temple church gardens, exit to Temple Rose Street in front of the City Inn and turn left to rejoin Temple Back. Turn right and continue to Temple Way. Cross at the pedestrian crossing and turn left, back towards the bridge. On the right just before the bridge is a ramp leading back to the waterside.

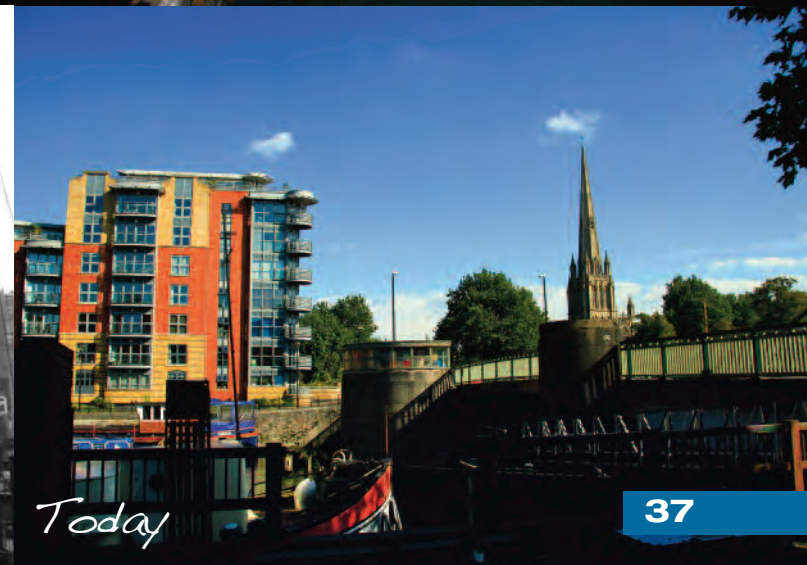
63 On the opposite bank is the site of Bristol's last major glass works, which closed in 1923, and the Midland Railway's goods warehouse. The Great Western Railway maintained a stranglehold on the Harbour, effectively barring its competitor from obtaining a rail connection closer than this. Where you are standing was the edge of the GWR goods yard, alongside Temple Meads railway station and once the largest covered goods yard in Europe.



Head up the steps or ramp away from the water and towards Temple Meads station. Follow the route into the station booking hall, exiting again through the main doors to the right. Continue to the bottom of the station approach ramp.

64 Temple Meads station was built in several stages. IK Brunel designed the first, a terminus, and this is the stone building on the right at the bottom of the ramp. It opened in 1833 and closed to trains in 1965. Sir Mathew Digby-Wyatt completed the station that we use today in 1878.

(From here you can join the Railway route at 65 or the New Cut route at 69 or the Feeder Canal and River Avon route at 75.)



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