



# Cycling Bristol

10 short leisure routes between 2 & 16 miles





Visit: [www.betterbybike.info](http://www.betterbybike.info)  
for advice, maps and everything  
you need to get cycling.



# Introduction

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Cycling is a fun way to get around, improving fitness and reducing stress. It is often the quickest way to get around Bristol.

## Choose a route

The routes in this booklet are suitable if you are just starting out cycling and want to try routes in and around the city. It will provide you and your family with new ideas for discovering Bristol by bike.

The majority of the routes start in Queen Square in central Bristol. However, it is just as easy to start at any point in a route.

## Ability level

The routes are differing lengths and a grading system has been provided with a suggested ability level. This is only a guide. The distances given do not take into account any return journey (unless it is a loop). The times for each route factor in time for short breaks and stops to take in views.

**Enjoy your bike ride around our beautiful city.  
If it means you consider cycling for your daily  
commute then all the better!**



## Ability Levels

- 1** For all users including inexperienced or beginner cyclists. Any hills will be very gentle and any on road cycling will be on quiet roads.
- 2** For the slightly more experienced cyclist or those who may feel a bit more confident. There may be the occasional steep hill (don't be afraid to get off and push!) and occasional short stretches on busier roads.
- 3** For the reasonably experienced cyclists. The rides will be longer, with some steep hills and with cycling on or alongside busy roads for long stretches.

Times given for rides are for an average cyclist. Times allow for plenty of stops.





## Routes

All Routes start in Queen Square except Route 8 Blaise Castle Loop and Route 10 Ring Road Loop.

All of these routes incorporate off road sections that are shared with pedestrians. Please ensure that you cycle with a consideration for ALL users. Some of these routes are not lit after dark. If you don't feel comfortable cycling in the dark ensure that you make arrangements to complete your ride in sufficient time.

## Comments

Whilst every effort has been made to check that these routes are suitable, changes do happen. If you have any comments to make about the routes, recommendations for routes for further re-prints or comments about their suitability please let us know on:

[city.transport@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:city.transport@bristol.gov.uk)

## Clothing

Although you don't need special clothing we would recommend that you dress appropriately. It is always wise to carry waterproofs with you and ensure that your bike has been checked for safety. If cycling at night make sure you have working lights and wear hi-vis gear.





1	Distance: 5.3 miles	Time: 1-2 hours	Ability level: 2
St Philips Green Way / Whitchurch Railway Path – Queen Square to Horseworld via Temple Meads, St Phillips, Kensington Park and Stockwood.		Ride on two little known off road cycle paths and view a mix of significant historic transport sites, mixed with some havens of urban wildlife and tranquillity.	
2	Distance: 6.6 miles	Time: 1-5-2.5 hours	Ability level: 2
Ashton Court Loop – Queen Square and return via Bower Ashton, Ashton Court, Clifton and Harbourside.		Cycle over the world famous Clifton Suspension Bridge, visit the country park close to the heart of a city at Ashton Court and find a quiet off road cycle path.	
3	Distance: 9.7 miles	Time: 2-3 hours	Ability level: 2
Frome Greenway Loop – Queen Square and return via Cabot Circus, Eastville, Stapleton, Lockleaze and St Werburghs		Follow the route of the River Frome out of the city and return via the locally renowned St Werburghs City Farm.	
4	Distance: 3.5 miles	Time: 1-2 hours	Ability level: 2
Malago Greenway – Queen Square to The Junction via Southville, Bedminster and Lower Knowle.		Follow the route of the Malago River out of the city to what was once the main site of a major local industry.	
5	Distance: 2.7 miles	Time: 1-1-5 hours	Ability level: 1
Harbour Loop – Queen Square and return via Harbourside, Cumberland Basin and Baltic Wharf.		A tour round the historic Bristol harbour.	



**6** Distance: **15.2 miles** Time: **2.5-3.5 hours** Ability level: **3**

**Ashton-Pill Loop – Queen Square and return via Harbourside, Hotwells, Sea Mills, Shirehampton, Pill and Ashton**

A trip along the length of the River Avon from central Bristol almost to its mouth and back again.

**7** Distance: **5.8 miles** Time: **1-2 hours** Ability level: **2**

**The River Avon Trail – Queen Square to Hanham Lock via Temple Quay, Barton Hill, Crew's Hole and Conham.**

Once you reach the river a virtually traffic free route out into the country.

**8** Distance: **7.9 miles** Time: **1.5-2.5 hours** Ability level: **2**

**Blaise Castle Loop – Sea Mills Station and return via Coombe Dingle, Blaise Castle Estate, Lawrence Weston and Shirehampton.**

Take your bike on the Severn Beach Line and cycle through the beautiful Blaise Castle Estate and back via the Lawrence Weston Greenway.

**9** Distance: **9.5 miles** Time: **1.5-2.5 hours** Ability level: **1**

**Bristol & Bath Railway Path - Queen Square to Bitton via Easton, Fishponds, Staple Hill, Warmley and Oldland Common.**

Take a trip on the first off road cycle path built in the UK and still regarded as one of the best.

**10** Distance: **8.2 miles** Time: **1.5-2.5 hours** Ability level: **2**

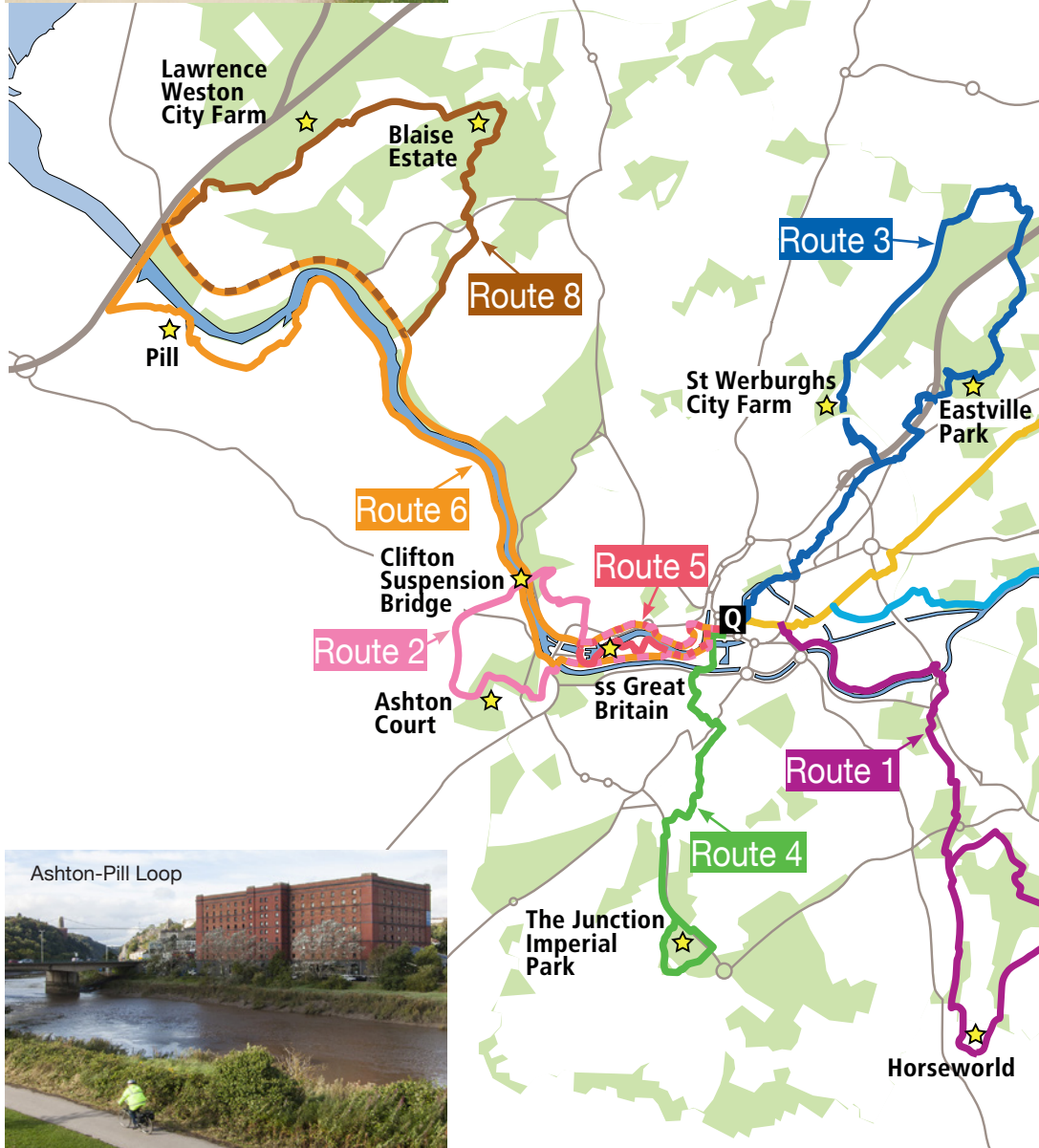
**Ring Road Loop - Mangotsfield and return via Emerson Green, Bromley Heath Frenchay, Fishponds and Staple Hill.**

A surprising and enjoyable ride around the ring road, through the delights of Oldbury Court and along a section of the Bristol & Bath Railway Path.





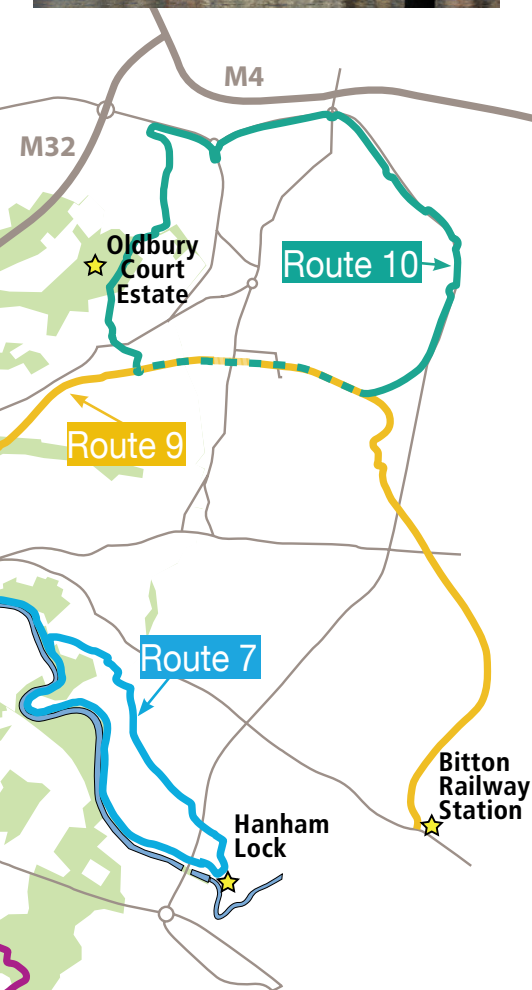
Queen Square



Ashton-Pill Loop



Harbour Loop



- Q** Queen Square
- ★ Attractions on route



# Queen Square



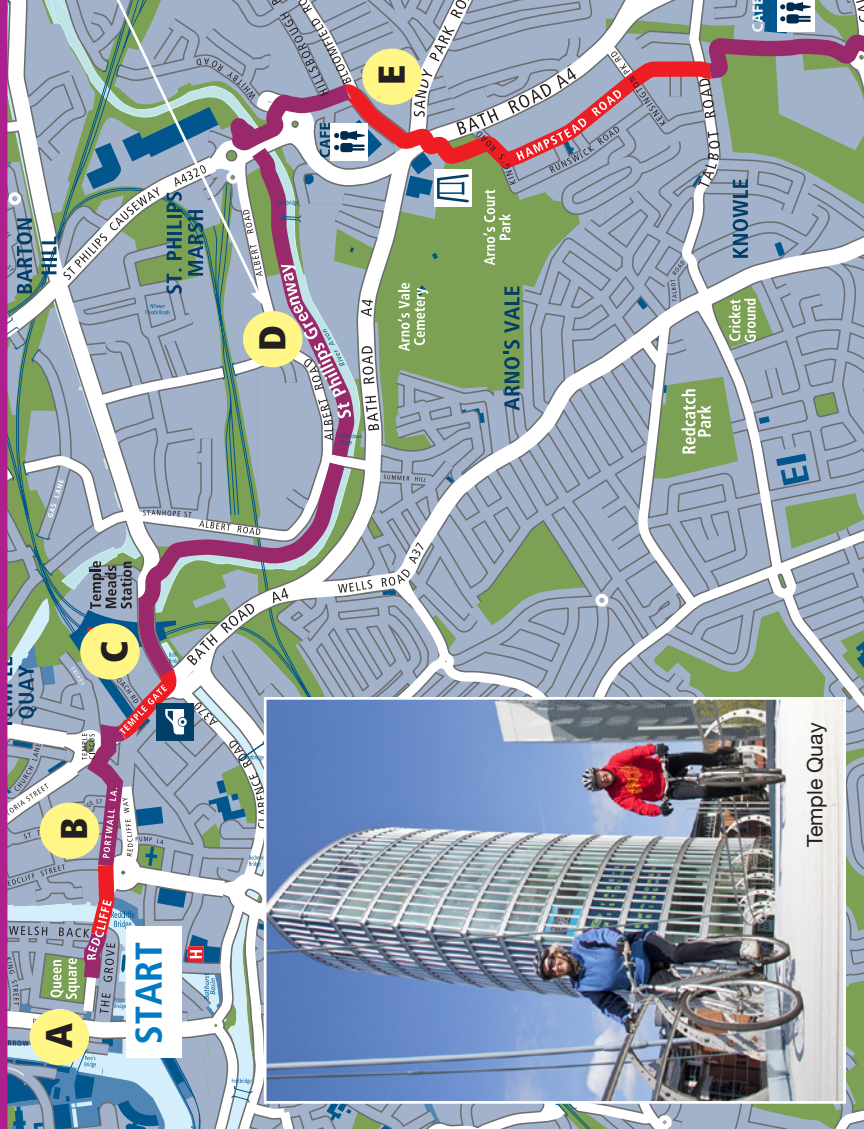
The construction of Queen Square which started in 1699 was named in honour of Queen Anne. During the Bristol Riots in 1831 much of the Square was destroyed. Another threat came when in 1937 a road was sliced diagonally through the Square. Thankfully this was removed in 2000 and the Square is now back to its glorious best.

Queen Square is located in the city centre adjacent to the Harbourside and The Centre. It is within a short cycle of Temple Meads Station and there are several car parks close by.

Visit [www.travelwest.info](http://www.travelwest.info) to find out about all your travel options in the area.



# St Philips Greenway- Whitchurch Railway Path



Temple Quay



St Philips Greenway



**A** Queen Square

**B** This section of the Brunel Mile was opened in early 2008 as part of the celebrations of 200 years since the birth of Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

**C** The original Temple Meads station immediately abuts the main road. This was built in 1840

by Brunel and is the oldest surviving railway terminus in the world.

**D** The St Philips Greenway is a haven for wildlife and tranquillity in the heart of the city.

**E** The former Brislington Depot of Bristol Tramways.

**F** Whitchurch Railway Path runs along the line of the former Bristol & North Somerset Railway. This line ran between Bristol and Frome, but closed in 1968.

**G** The Stockwood Greenway runs through Stockwood Nature Reserve, which is a preserved area of old farmland.

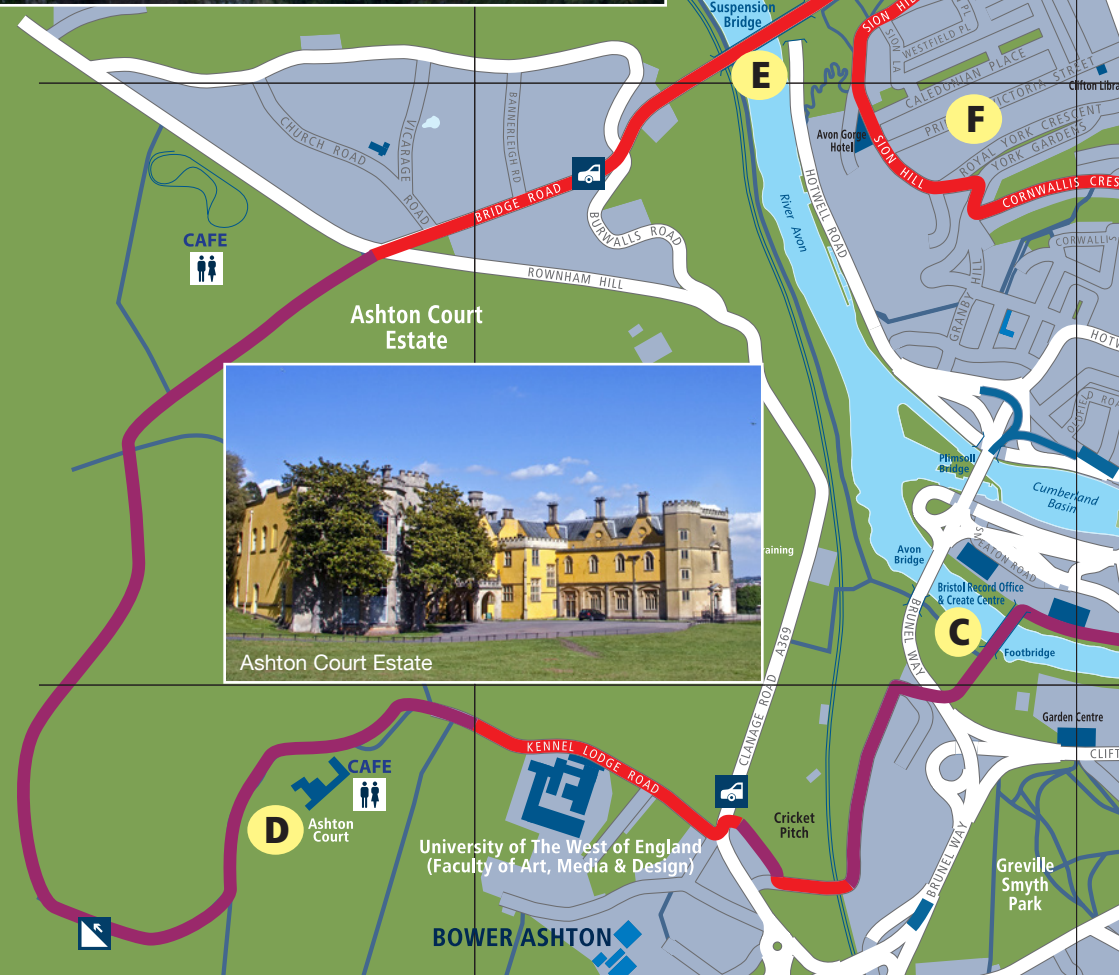


# Ashton Court Loop



Clifton Suspension Bridge

-  Route off road
-  Route on road
-  Busy roads
-  Steep hill
-  Toilets
-  Play park
-  N



Ashton Court Estate

**A** Queen Square

**B** The Chocolate Path is so called because the surface resembles a giant chocolate bar!

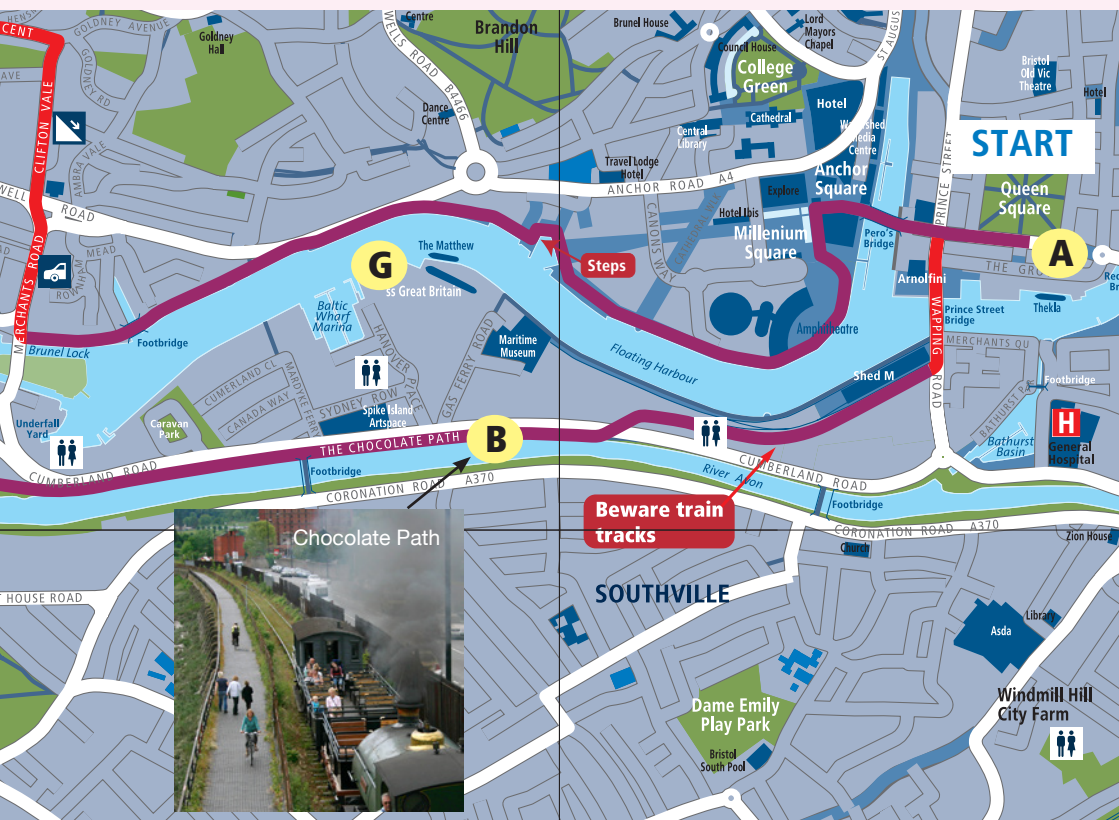
**C** Ashton Avenue Swing Bridge was originally a two tiered bridge with railway on the bottom deck and a now non-existent top deck that carried road traffic out of Bristol before the Cumberland Basin road network was built.

**D** The Smyth family who were major landowners in south Bristol first developed Ashton Court in the 17th century. The Mansion house has sections that date back this far. Visit: [www.ashtoncourtestate.co.uk](http://www.ashtoncourtestate.co.uk) for more details.

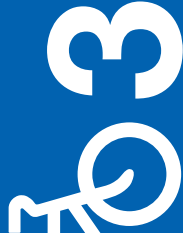
**E** Clifton Suspension Bridge was completed in 1864 to a design by Brunel. Unfortunately he had died in 1859 so never saw it completed.

**F** Arguably the most famous rank of houses in Bristol is Royal York Crescent. Completed in 1820 they give fantastic views.

**G** The Great Western Dockyard where the ss Great Britain now sits was where it was originally launched from in 1843. It returned home in 1970 after sitting derelict in the Falkland Islands for many decades. Visit [www.ssgreatbritain.org](http://www.ssgreatbritain.org) for more information.



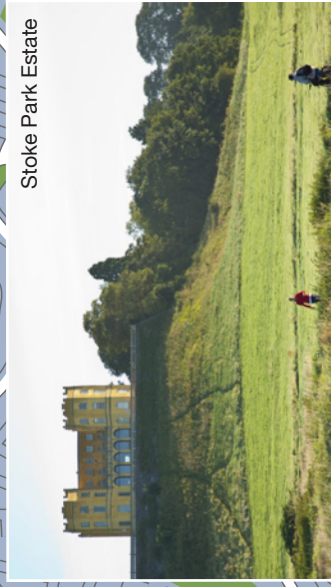




# Frome-Greenway Loop



Eastville Park

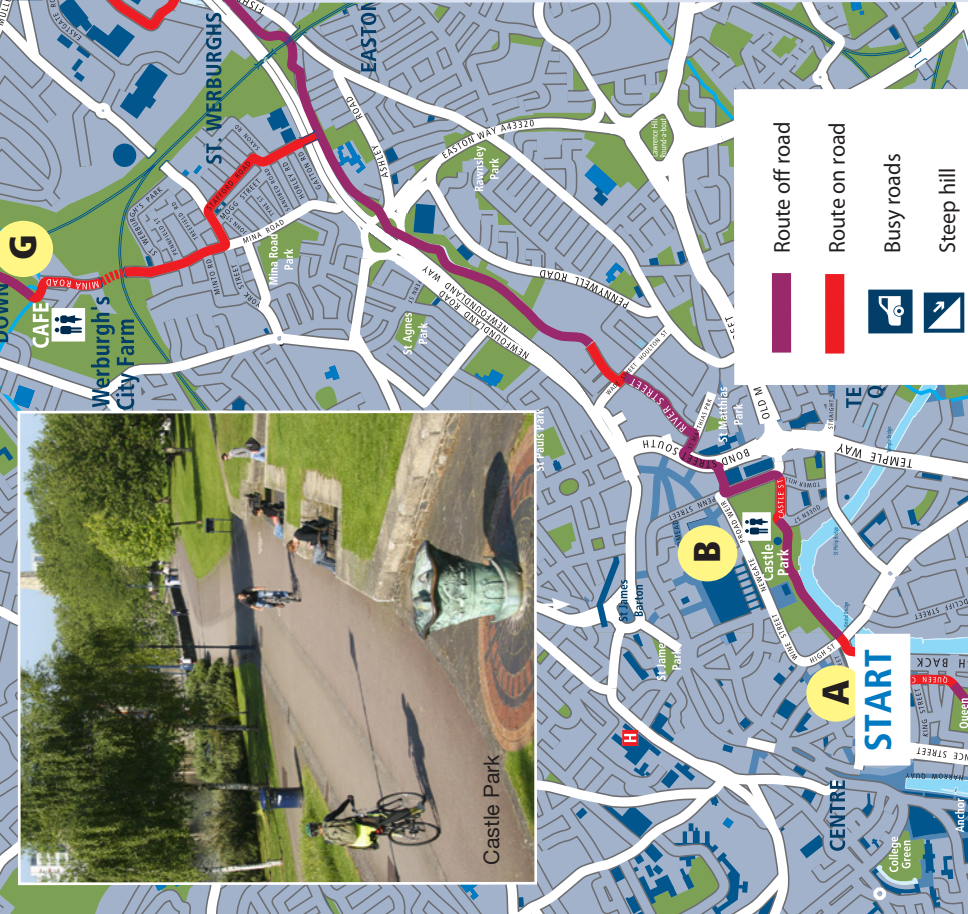


Stoke Park Estate





Castle Park



- A** Queen Square
- B** Castle Park was the site of the main Bristol shopping area until World War II. During various air raids the majority of the area was destroyed and rather than rebuild here, Broadmead was chosen as the site for the new shopping area.
- C** Until 1998 Eastville Stadium stood where Ikea now stands. This was formerly home to Bristol Rovers FC and was a greyhound-racing venue. Over 39,000 people once congregated here!
- D** Eastville Park is of Victorian origin and the now ornamental lake was once a boating lake.
- E** Stoke Park was once part of the imposing Dower House, which has now been converted to flats.
- F** Hermitage Wood is one of the few remaining wooded areas in this part of the city.
- G** St Werburghs City Farm was founded in 1980 and is free to visit. The award winning café is also worth trying.



4

# Malago Greenway







**D**

This is the first time that the Malago appears in view. From the New Cut it has been built over.

**A** Queen Square

**B** The old gateway was once the entrance to Bristol Gaol, hence the name of Gaol Ferry Bridge which you will shortly cross.

**E**

Crox Bottom runs along the side of Imperial Park. The industrial looking flats were once the offices for Wills Tobacco. The site of the retail park was once home to the factory, which was demolished in 1990. when production moved out of the city.

**C** The open space at the end of Church Lane was once the site of St John's, the parish church of Bedminster. It was partially destroyed in the 1941 blitz and pulled down completely in the 1960s.



Route off road



Route on road



Busy roads



Steep hill



Toilets



Play park



N

# Harbour Loop

 Route off road

 Route on road



Busy roads



Steep hill



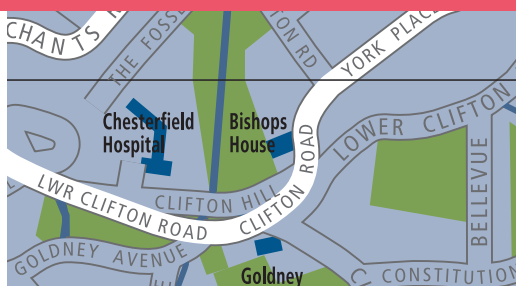
Toilets



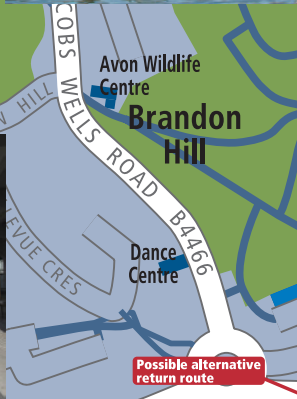
Play park



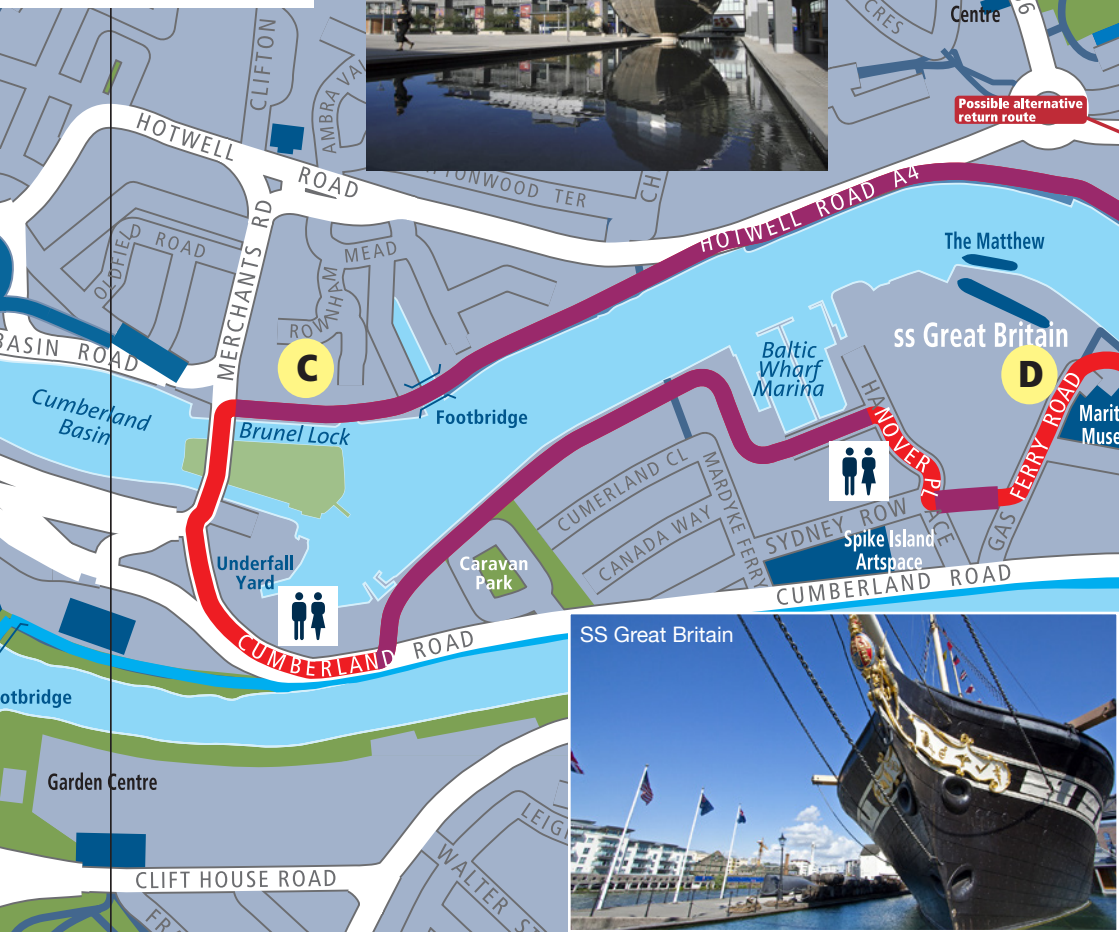
N



Pero's Bridge



Possible alternative return route



SS Great Britain



**A** Queen Square

**B** Millennium Square is built on the site of former dockside warehouses. It's worth investigating to see how many statues you can find!

**C** The engineering heritage in this part of the city is immense. You cross over the original dock gates here before Brunel made them wider a

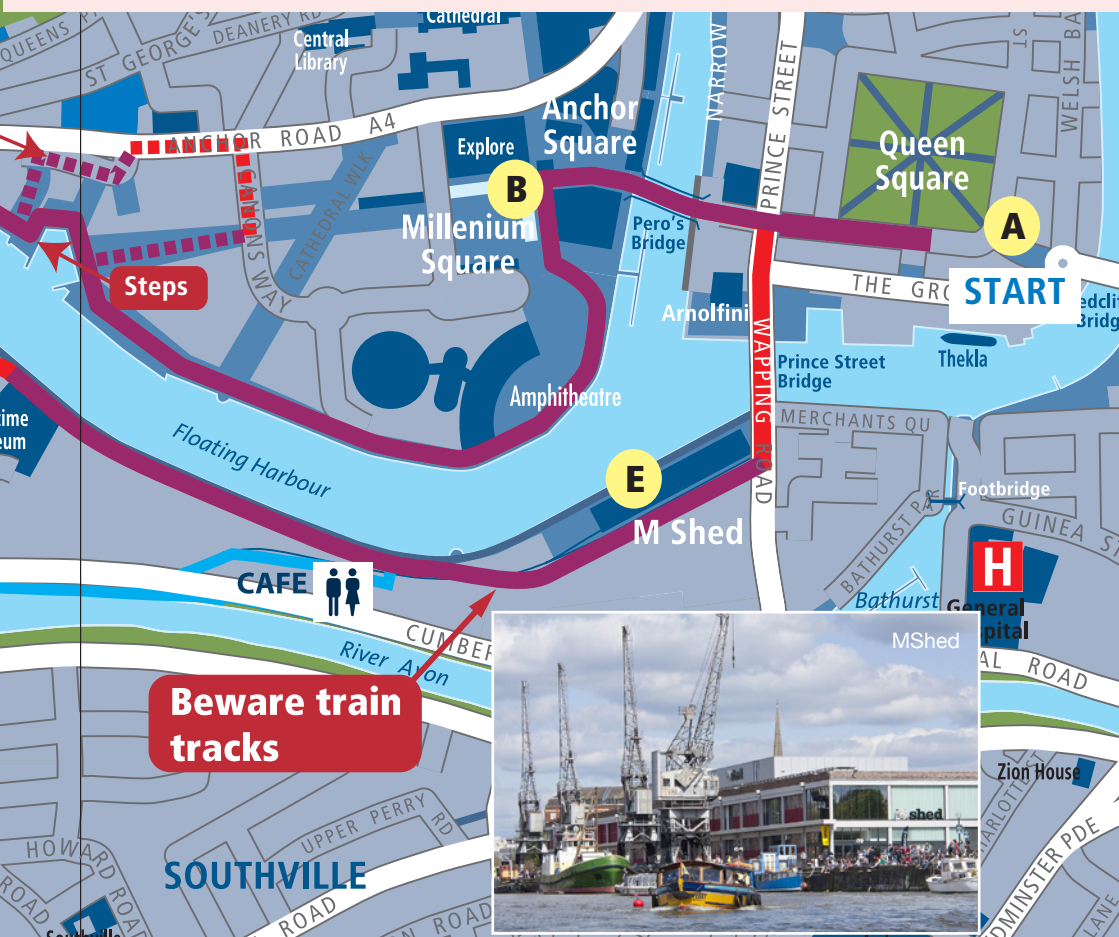
little further out and the Pumphouse pub was the home of the original mechanism to open and close the dock gates.

**D** The Great Western Dockyard where the ss Great Britain now sits was where it was originally launched from in 1843. It returned home in 1970 after sitting derelict in the

Falkland Islands for many decades. Visit [www.ssgreatbritain.org](http://www.ssgreatbritain.org) for more information.

**E** The new museum, M Shed, is sited on the former Industrial Museum which itself was the site of former dock warehouses.

For more information visit [www.mshed.org](http://www.mshed.org).





## Ashton-Pill Loop



**A** Queen Square.

**B** The Clifton Rocks Railway was designed to reduce impact on its surroundings and if you don't look you can still miss it. It was opened in 1893 to take passengers from the ferry landing stages by the river up to Clifton. It closed in 1934.

**C** The viewpoint here looks down on Horseshoe Bend. When Bristol was

still a busy port this section was notorious for ships running aground.

**D** It is a slightly unnerving experience knowing that you are cycling alongside a motorway, but it is a safe and well segregated path and the views are well worth it.

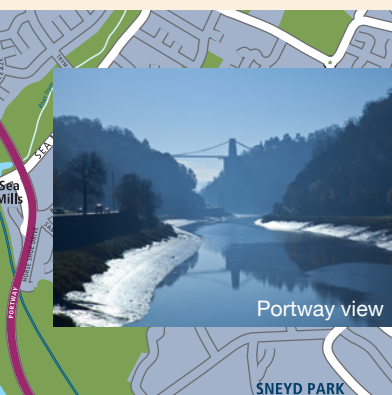
**E** Pill was traditionally home to pilots who would guide shipping up to Bristol. This now goes no further than Avonmouth Docks, but Pill still retains the feel of a seafaring town.

**F** This section of the Avon Gorge is home to lots of wildlife and

there are cycle routes up through Leigh Woods to investigate further. You are also aware of the transport route the cycle path is part of with the River alongside the Portishead railway line and over the other side of the river the A4 which you cycled alongside on the outbound journey.

**G** Clifton Suspension Bridge was completed in 1864 to a design by Brunel. Unfortunately he had died in 1859 so never saw it completed. In many ways it looks more spectacular from underneath than when you are on it.

**H** The Chocolate Path is so called because the surface resembles a giant chocolate bar!



Inset map enlarged

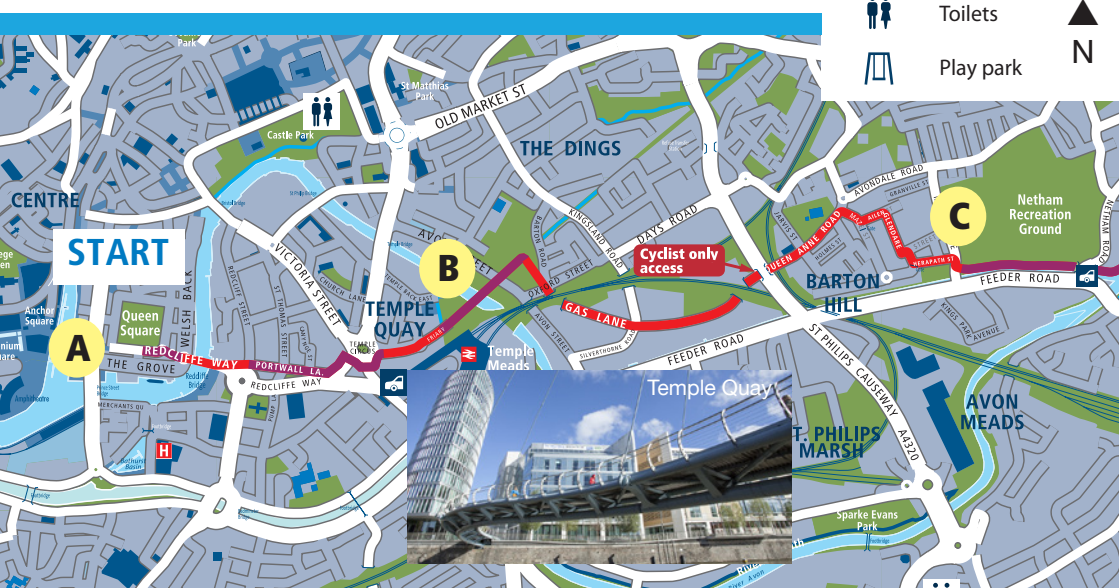




# 7

## River Avon Trail

- Route off road
- Route on road
- Busy roads
- Steep hill
- Toilets
- Play park
- N



**A** Queen Square.

**B** The Temple Quay development is built upon the site of former railways sidings and derelict industrial areas.

**C** Netham Park was once home to the Netham Chemical Works. The raised up nature of the park was created from waste products produced by the factory and was locally known as The Brillos.

**D** Troopers Hill rises up to your left at this point. Its name may have come from soldiers being camped there during the Civil War. It has a long industrial heritage and you can still see evidence through the chimney and sections of walls.

**E** From Conham River Park you can catch a ferry during Summer months and visit Beese's tea gardens on the other side of the river.

**F** Avon Valley Woodlands is a large nature reserve with a plethora of wildlife. Keep an eye out for the kingfishers.

**G** Hanham Lock is the first one on the Kennet and Avon Canal and the two pubs here give you a perfect excuse to stop and have a rest.





River Avon

Troopers Hill



River Avon view

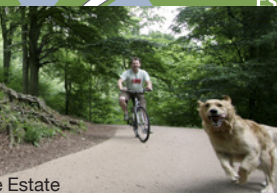


Hanham Lock





Blaise Castle Estate



Estate

COOMBE  
DINGLE

Kissing gate

SEA MILLS



Sea Mills Harbour

**A** Sea Mills Station at Sea Mills historic harbour is one of several halts on the Severn Beach Line. [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) for times and fares.

**B** The route alongside Hazel Brook includes a number of points of interest. Look out for Stratford Mill, which was moved here when Chew Valley Lake was created as a reservoir.

**C** Blaise Castle House was built in the 18th century by John Harford a wealthy Bristol merchant. It now houses collections from Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery.

**D** Lawrence Weston City Farm is built on the site of a former tip. Visit: [www.lwfarm.org.uk](http://www.lwfarm.org.uk) for more information.

**E** The viewpoint here looks down on Horseshoe Bend. When Bristol was still a busy port this section was notorious for ships running aground.

START



# Bristol & Bath Railway Path

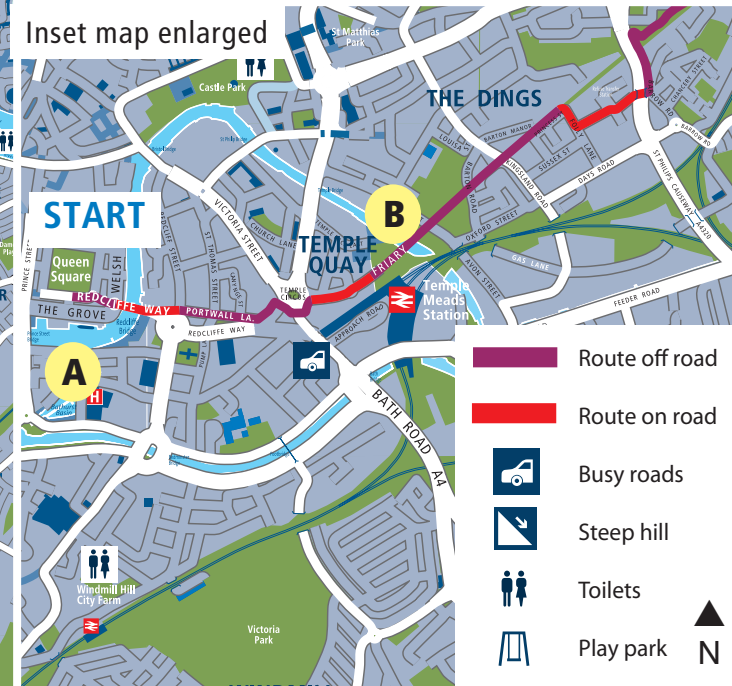


Bristol Entrance



- A** Queen Square
- B** The Temple Quay development has been built upon the site of former railways sidings and derelict industrial areas.
- C** The path is built on the old Midland Railway Line. This closed in 1971. Industry was attracted to the railway and at this point you pass the rear of the old Elizabeth Shaw chocolate factory.

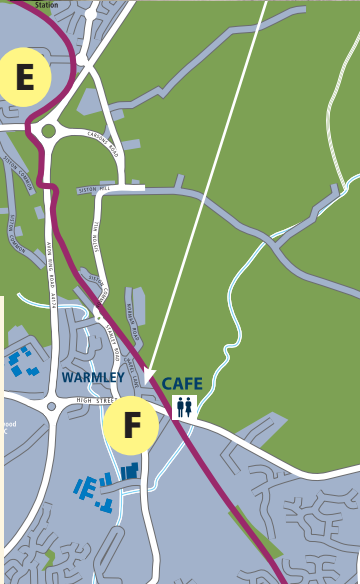
Inset map enlarged



- Route off road
- Route on road
- Busy roads
- Steep hill
- Toilets
- Play park



- D** The tunnel is 0.3 miles long and can feel cold and damp even on a warm summers day. Don't worry, it is lit along its full length!



**E** A chocolate factory used to be located in the middle of a triangle of tracks at Mangotsfield Station, so that when a train passed on one section you could not see it, but the acoustics made it sound like it was passing in front of you. This was the inspiration for the play *The Ghost Train*, written by Arnold Ridley later of *Dad's Army* fame.

**F** Warmley Station is one of many old stations that have at least partially survived. Did you spot the remnants at Staple Hill and Mangotsfield?

**G** The Avon Valley Railway runs from Oldland Common out towards Bath with its main headquarters at Bitton Station. Visit [www.avonvalleyrailway.org](http://www.avonvalleyrailway.org) for information relating to opening times and events.

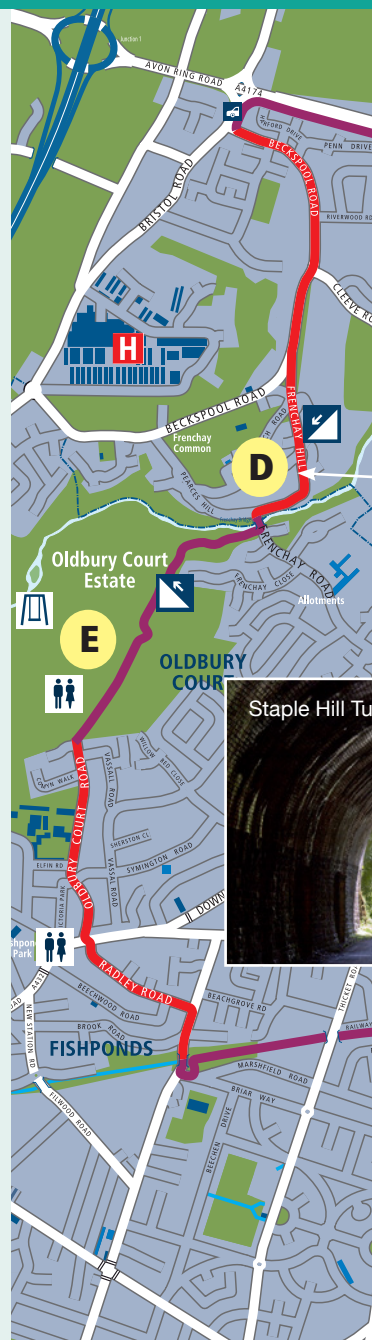
**H** Although Bitton is the end of our ride the path continues all the way to Bath which is only a further 4 miles away. If you are still feeling fit why not carry on, but don't forget the return journey!



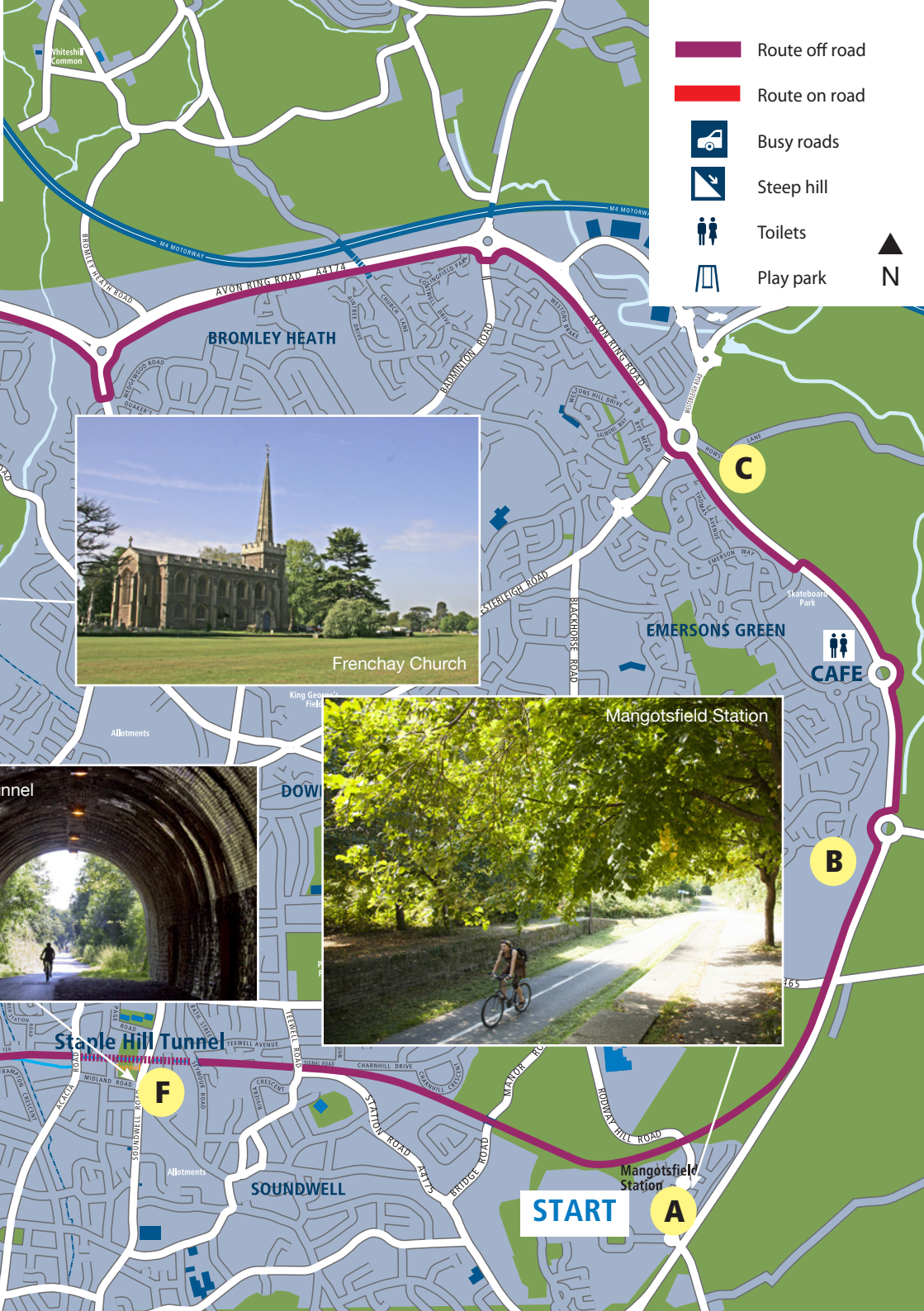
# 10

## Ring Road Loop

- A** A chocolate factory used to be located in the middle of a triangle of tracks at Mangotsfield Station, so that when a train passed on one section you could not see it, but the acoustics made it sound like it was passing in front of you. This was the inspiration for the play *The Ghost Train*, written by Arnold Ridley later of *Dad's Army* fame.
- B** This section of the existing ring road was the last to be completed as it was delayed by various objections. This meant that for a number of years in the late 1990s there were two separate sections with a gap in the middle!
- C** Until the 1990s the site of Emersons Green was open farmland.
- D** Frenchay has the feeling of a village within a city. There is open common land, a beautiful church and a lovely pub on the common to stop and take a rest.
- E** Oldbury Court Estate has a history stretching back to Domesday times. The house attached to the estate existed until the 1940s when it was demolished.
- F** The tunnel is 0.3 miles long and can feel cold and damp even on a warm summers day. Don't worry, it is lit along its full length!







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with bike buddies
- Fix your bike – find local bike shops  
and repairs
- Mountain Biking - stunning bike trails  
on your doorstep
- BMX – discover pump tracks and  
local bike parks
- Save money – tax free savings when  
cycling to work



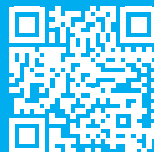






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for maps, advice and everything you need to get cycling



Bristol, Bath & NE Somerset, North Somerset and  
South Gloucestershire region.

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