

Be a Bristol Explorer & discover Bristol with Temple Local History Group

Number 1 - "A walk to discover the Boundary marks of medieval Bristol"

Free Sample - all others £1

Warning - Any history walk in the centre of the city means crossing roads, always use the crossings and wait for the lights. Don't try and read this leaflet when you are crossing the road!

Today we are going to look at the least noticed features of our historic heritage, the old parishes of medieval Bristol. Although not all the churches remain as places of worship and the parishes themselves have been reallocated, or combined, many of the old parish boundary marks survive. It is these surviving marks that we are going to search for. Let us start at the Victoria Street end of Bristol Bridge using the map as a guide.

Bath Street is now within Courage's Brewery although there is usually daytime access. Through the gate and go down the terraced street until you reach number 9. Look up on the wall between the two houses and there are your first marks. These 1790 marks are the only survivors for the Parishes of Temple or Holy Cross and St. Thomas'.

Leave Bath Street, cross Bristol Bridge to the downstream side, and go along to the centre of the river. Look for the metal plate set between the upright rails. The cypher, NS42, marks the boundary of St. Nicholas parish, the church to your right. Cross the bridge to Castle Park riverside walk. Fifty yards along set in the wall just below the parapet is a mark for St. Peter's Parish, the ruins of which are further along on your left. This, the only remaining mark, was donated to the city by our group and installed by the Park contractors in February 1994. Leave Castle Park and return to the High Street. Cross to St Nicholas Street; using the map for guidance go to All Saints Lane. The lanes and alleys are a good place for mark hunting because they represent the remains of the old medieval street pattern, and are a modern reminder of the days when Bristol was a walled city. Remember that there are many different styles and locations to look for.

Leave the market area by Exchange Avenue turn left into Corn Street. How many marks did you find? *Which parish was marked by the keystone above the market doorway?* Go as far as St Nicholas Street, a sharp turn right and you should be facing the dark entrance of Leonard Lane. This lane continues the line of the old city wall and the narrowness and darkness gives a good idea of the scale of streets in medieval Bristol, but of course to complete the picture remember to imagine the noise, squalor and smells of that age. Now, go along the lane, on your left you should find two adjacent stones incised S.T.L.42 and St. Stephen's Parish. Further along there are more marks, nearly opposite the railings. Just before entering the passageway at the far end of the lane, on your left, high up by the stained glass window, is yet another for St. Leonard's parish. Go through the passage into Small Street, but before leaving, look at the deep grooves in the left hand wall. These were caused by horse drawn wagons tipping sideways and rubbing against the wall because of the camber of the cobbled roadway.

Referring again to the map, you will be able to find marks just down the road to your left and opposite, for St Werburgh's, the church was in Corn street before being moved in the 19th century to the district that now takes its name. Cross to Bell Lane, (continuing the line of the city wall). You should be able to find marks here for St John the Baptist Parish and again in Tower Lane there are marks for St. John's adjacent to Mark stones for Christ Church.

Continue towards the Pithay and take the first right hand lane leading to Broad Street ending this short walk, which has been designed to give you an idea of the diversity of the marks and their different locations. If this has aroused your interest and you would like to know more (have you found any near where you live?), write to us at the address below for our book, "The Ancient Bristol Parishes" (£5.75 including postage - cheques to TLHG please) which provides a drawing for every mark and tells how to find them and includes chapters describing parish life and why the boundaries are walked. Read how Bristol grew from a border town between Mercia and Wessex, and the effect this had on the development of the organisation of Bristol's parishes. Includes photographs and descriptions of the churches mentioned.

Additional information:- **Duration** (at normal walking and looking pace)= **2 Hours**.

Special needs (such as Steps, Narrow Entrances. Wheelchair/Baby Buggy access)= **None**.

This is one of a series of Temple Local History Group's "Explorer Leaflets". If you have enjoyed this voyage of discovery and you want to know about other leaflets in the series, send a Stamped Addressed Envelope to TLHG at 33 Springfield Grove, Henleaze, Bristol BS6 7XE, England.

If you also want to, or are already researching Bristol's history, you should register with the Bristol History Research Exchange. Send a separate SAE to "BHRE" at the same address for details. The BHRE has been set up to provide a free forum for the exchange of research requests, notes and discoveries on all aspects of Bristol's history.

Collect five answers, there is one question (*in italics*) asked in each leaflet, to "TLHG Explorers" at the above address with a SAE and five correct answers you will receive your own free "Bristol Explorer" badge.