

# The Tuckett Trail

## Start

The walk begins at the Bristol Bridge. Frank spent most of his working life in Baldwin Street before his workplace relocated to Victoria Street. Bristol Bridge makes an obvious, and more pleasant, compromise starting point.

## Castle Park to Wellington Road

*This section has changed beyond all recognition since Frank's day. Castle Park did not exist but the area did contain some of Bristol's finest old buildings. Foremost among them was St Peter's Hospital, a 17th century timbered building which stood between the church and the river. Like most of the buildings in the surrounding area it was destroyed in the blitz of November 1940. The shell of St Peter's Church has been retained as a memorial. To get to Wellington Street Frank would have had to walk along streets like Peter Street, which have long since gone. His route would have taken him past St Peter's School, a brass foundry and a very large bath and wash house. More of the River Frome was visible in the 19th century and Frank would have been able to walk beside it well before it can be first seen today in Wellington Road.*

**Walk into Castle Park and follow the broad path with the river on your right. Having passed the remains of St Peter's Church on your left, turn left up a path with a blue sign directing you to Broadmead and Cabot Circus. As you emerge on to the road, turn right along the broad pavement to the end of Broad Weir. Cross the road and take the wide pedestrian lane to the left of the Castlemead tower block. Cross Bond Street at the pedestrian lights. Go left on the other side and almost immediately right. After 50 metres you will see a blue sign directing you left to: 'Frome Valley, St Mark's Road and Eastville Park'. Follow the direction left and continue soon with the back of Cabot Circus car park and houses on your left to reach a pedestrian crossing which you cross to Wellington Road and your first glimpse of the River Frome on your right.**

## Wellington Road to Eastville Park

*Although today there is some light industry to the right of the river by Wellington Road, it appears semi-rural compared with the sight and smells of the large tannery that stood by the river when Frank passed this way. Just behind them he would have seen the machinery and workings of the Pennywell Colliery. Beyond the Riverside Park there were two more tanneries. As you begin to walk beside the permanently busy M32 it is hard to envisage what it was like before it was built and yet it was completed as recently as 1975. Of course in Frank's day railways were the latest form of transport. As he looked left across what is now the M32 just beyond Junction 3 his view would have been dominated by the massive Mina Road Brick Works enjoying expansion brought by the needs of the railways and the housing boom that came with their development. The railway that you pass under after leaving Fox Road was originally the Bristol and South Wales Union Railway. In the early years of Frank's journey to and from work it did not exist and he must have watched the progress of its construction between 1858 and 1863 with interest.*

**Walk along Wellington Road with the River Frome on your right and you will soon find yourself entering Riverside Park. Continue on the path beside the river until eventually you have to turn right over the river and then left through a tunnel under the road. Look out for blue Frome Valley markers on the ground which direct you right from the tunnel and very soon right again through another tunnel. As you emerge from the tunnel, fork left through Baptist Mills Court which brings you to a pedestrian crossing. With a slip road and the M32 on your left follow the path until it reaches Fox Road. Turn left along Fox Road until you reach a blue Frome Valley sign directing you left. Pass under the railway and go left alongside and then under the M32. Where you cross a road under the M32 turn right and continue to walk under the M32 until you have to cross the road. Continue in the same direction to reach pedestrian lights at Muller Road. Cross here to Eastville Park but do not enter the park.**

**Instead, take the pavement left and continue with the park immediately on your right until you reach the last entrance into the park immediately opposite Cottrell Road.**

## Eastville Park to the Frenchay Subscription Bridge

*Frank was one of the prime movers behind the creation of Eastville Park. As a city, Bristol lagged behind others in the provision of public parks. It took the efforts of campaigners to persuade the City Council to create a park for the over-crowded and unhealthy parish of St Philips. The land was purchased in 1889 and the park finally completed in 1909 with building of the lake. It was constructed by the unemployed as a type of job creation scheme and is now regarded as one of the best public park lakes in the country. Beyond the lake you begin to follow one of the most scenic stretches of the river which was popular with artists of the Bristol School in the 1820s. Paintings by its leading light, Francis Danby, can be seen in the Bristol Museum and give a more accurate view of how the river looked when Frank walked along it than can be seen today. The river flows through a series of gorges cut through the Pennant Sandstone between the Frenchay Subscription Bridge and Eastville Park and evidence of the quarrying which was carried on in Frank's day can be seen. The river falls more than 50 feet which led to the establishment of 6 mills along this stretch which must have been familiar landmarks to Frank as most of them operated as corn mills. Snuff Mill is the only one with physical remains which have been painstakingly restored by volunteers. The weirs, which you will see at regular intervals, are the only remaining evidence of the mills.*

**Walk into the park along the path with the railings and the River Frome on your left. When you reach the lake take the path to the left around the lake. At the end of the lake turn left to follow the riverside path and pass a weir before crossing a narrow bridge. The path then brings you to a small and disused road. Go ahead to cross an old stone bridge and then almost immediately left along a well-surfaced path which eventually emerges on to Blackberry Hill near a row of old cottages. Cross the road here and turn left along**

the pavement to cross over the river and take the first right down River View. Go through the car park at the end to enter Snuff Mills Park. Follow the path by the river until you reach a bridge. Cross and turn left. Now, with the river on your left, continue for half a mile. Eventually the surfaced path gives out and you follow a narrow and unsurfaced path, which can be muddy after rain, until you reach some steps. Ascend the steps to turn left out of Oldbury Court Estate and then immediately left to cross the Frenchay Subscription Bridge.

### Frenchay Subscription Bridge to Frenchay Village Museum

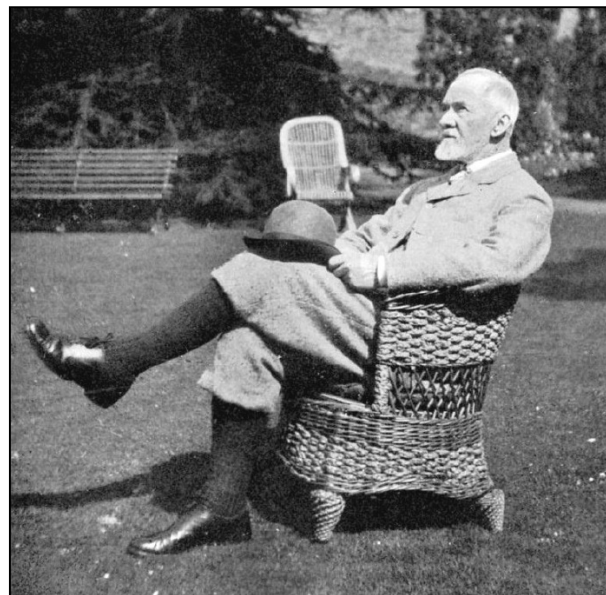
*You have just emerged from Oldbury Court Estate, which was a private estate until 1936 when it was acquired by Bristol Council. The grounds were laid out by the famous landscape architect Humphry Repton at the beginning of the 19th century. From the Frenchay Subscription Bridge, which was built in 1788, look upriver to see the weir and what was once a flock mill. Frenchay, where the quarrying of pennant stone used to be important, was once a working village with shops and workshops, all of which have now been converted to dwellings. The view from the Common, where W G Grace once played cricket, is very attractive. Nonconformists established themselves here in the 17th century building the Quaker Meeting House in 1673 and the Unitarian Chapel in 1691. Several were successful businessmen who built the fine houses which surround the Common. St John the Baptist in the centre of the Common was not built until 1834. It serves cream teas on Sunday afternoons in the summer and The White Lion nearby is open seven days a week. You can find out a lot more about Frenchay and Francis Tuckett at the excellent Village Museum.*

**After crossing the Subscription Bridge turn left and walk up the steep Pearces Hill. At the top cross to the common and walk through some trees and head for the church. Turn left along the path in front of the church. Cross the road and turn right to reach the Unitarian Chapel and next door to it is The Old House which was the home of Frank Tuckett and has a blue**

plaque on it. As an optional extra you continue on for another 200 yards to reach the attractive Quaker Meeting House where Frank is buried. Opposite are Tuckett's Fields which were given to the village as an open space in memory of Frank by his widow Alice. From The Old House retrace your steps and continue with what is currently the wall of Frenchay Hospital on your right to reach Entrance Gate C into the hospital. Go through the gate to the green space on the left. As you look left, the Village Museum is about 200 yards away. Either walk across the grass or take the pavements to reach the Museum. Once you have finished your tour you can catch a bus back to Bristol from the bus stop in the road outside the Museum.

**N.B. Frenchay Hospital is due to close in May 2014 and the land will be redeveloped. But Entrance gate C, the green space and the Museum are all scheduled to remain and so these directions should be unaffected.**

**This trail was produced by Donald Ford of The Ramblers, and has been reprinted by Frenchay Village Museum with many thanks to Donald.**



Frank Tuckett, who captioned this photograph "An Old Tramp of 76 - with F.F. Tuckett's Kindest Regards"

## The Tuckett Trail

An interesting 5-mile route following Frank Tuckett's journey home from work can be followed from the centre of Bristol to Frenchay. Most of it is on pleasant paths along the Frome Valley Walkway. It ends at Frenchay Village Museum (**open Weds 1-4, Sat & Sun 2-5**) where you can find out a lot more about Frank Tuckett.

### Francis Fox Tuckett 1834 -1913

Known as "Frank" by his family, Francis Fox Tuckett is a name well known in mountaineering circles thanks to his scientific mountaineering activities in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Even after a 150 years he is still remembered in the north of Italy, where hotels, geographical features, a mountain shelter, and even a skiing trophy are local reminders of his achievements in filling in blank areas on the maps of the Dolomites. King Victor Emmanuel II of Italy knighted him for his cartographic work.

Here in England he became highly respected as a founding member of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, and a donor of artefacts to both Bristol Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. He was vice-president of The Alpine Club in London in the 1860s, and elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in 1865.

In Bristol he was a leather merchant in Baldwin St., and walked to and from work each day to keep fit for his mountaineering activities. He was prominent in a campaign for the provision of public parks, and was particularly involved in the creation of Eastville Park.

In Frenchay, where he lived all his life, he was a prominent member of the local Quaker Meeting, and a century after his death his influence lives on in the village. He was foremost in the founding of Frenchay Village Hall in 1909, and his widow, Alice, donated much of their land to the village in his memory. Today Tuckett's Field provides an area for recreation even larger than Frenchay Common.