

Image: Bristol Museums Mb6360

The Archaeology of Bristol: a source guide



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Introduction

You don't need to pick up a trowel to find out about Bristol's amazing archaeology.

Information held at Bristol Archives, Bristol Museums, Bristol Reference Library and in the Historic Environment Record can help you explore the archaeology of the city without getting covered in mud. Online resources such as the Know Your Place website and the Portable Antiquities Scheme database also mean that often, you don't even need to leave your armchair.

Now it's over to you! Pick a place or take a look at one of the resources below to see what you can discover about the archaeology of Bristol.

Using this guide

The first section of this guide highlights some of the main resources that you can use. It includes information on historic maps and plans; aerial and historic images; early histories and topographical art; previous archaeological investigations; and archaeological artefacts.

Each section starts with a short introduction to the resource type before briefly summarising how to access the material. A detailed description of the main historical and archaeological resources relating to Bristol follows. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but should provide a useful starting point for your research.

As the modern boundaries of Bristol now include places that were once in the county of Somerset (if south of the river Avon) or Gloucestershire (if north of the river Avon), information from Somerset, Gloucestershire, and Bristol, is included.

Material held by Bristol Archives and Bristol Museums is recorded with its associated reference number in brackets. Bristol Archives references have their name as the prefix and Bristol Museums references start with BRSMG. If you wish to enquire or access this material, you will need to quote this reference number.

The second section of this guide highlights the main places that hold information about Bristol's archaeology. It includes an overview of the resources available at Bristol Archives; Bristol Museums; Bristol Reference Library; the Portable Antiquities Scheme; and Know Your Place. Details of how to search and access material, as well as who to contact and where to look online, are also provided.

The final part of this guide provides a list of further resources to help you with your research. These include: websites; books; local archaeological societies; and other museums, archives and libraries that may hold relevant collections.

Throughout the guide, material and resources that are available online are hyperlinked. Clicking on the blue link will open the relevant webpage in a new window.



Image: Bristol Museums BMG M3304

Investigating maps

Investigating maps

Archaeologists investigate historic maps and plans to try to find out how an area has changed over time, this is often known as map regression.

Studies usually start with the most recent map and work backwards to identify when buildings, roads, boundaries and other features appear, disappear or develop. Map regression helps build up a picture of how land was used and provides a rough date for when structures were added, extended or removed.

Bristol Archives, Bristol Museums and Bristol Reference Library hold a large range of maps, plans and similar sources, covering the city and surrounding areas. These include early maps, enclosure maps, tithe maps, OS maps and plans from private estates.

Many of these maps are available online via Bristol Museums' collections online and Know Your Place. A selection of historic maps is also displayed on the first floor balcony at Bristol Museum & Art Gallery. Facsimiles of frequently used plans and maps are available in the Bristol Archives' searchroom and copies of most maps are available in the Bristol Reference Library (some are original publications).

Further maps are available to search online via The National Library Scotland Maps webpages and Old Maps Online.

Top tip

Some maps, especially early ones, ignore certain details or include features that were never built. So just because something appears on a map, it doesn't mean it definitely was there.

Map resources

Early city plans

The Mayor's Calendar, begun in 1479, contains an illustration of the ancient town centre (Bristol Archives CC/2/7). It features the four town gates and the High Cross at the junction of High Street and Wine Street. There is an online version available via [Bristol Museums: copy of Mayor's Calendar plan](#) (BRSMG U18).

Plans of Bristol by William Smith, dated 1568 (Bristol Archives 9389/5) and George Hoefnagle (Bristol Archives 282, BRSMG M5277), look very similar. They show the castle, Bristol Bridge and the areas of Redcliffe and Temple (to the south of the River Avon). The Hoefnagle map is available online via [Bristol Museums: George Hoefnagle plan](#)

John Speed's map of Gloucestershire, published in 1611, has an inset of the city of Bristol (BRSMG M3304)

James Millerd created the first measured plan of the city in 1671. His 1673 plan has twenty small views of public buildings and other objects in the margins. (Bristol Archives 40875, BRSMG Mb6690, BRSMG R0020). Later editions were published in 1710 and are available online via [Bristol Museums: Millerd's Map 1710](#) (BRSMG M4173).

John Rocque's plan of 1742 is orientated west to east, rather than north to south, and is the second largest plan of the city (Bristol Archives 07770/1, BRSMG Mb347). You can see Rocque's 1750 plan on the '1746 to 1803' basemap on Know Your Place or via [Bristol Museums: Rocque's plan of Bristol](#)

Benjamin Donne compiled a plan of the city in 1773 with a reference key to churches and public buildings (similar to a modern A to Z map). Several later editions were produced (Bristol Archives P.St J/PI/8/f, 08192 and others, BMAG Mb379).

Richard Benning's engraving of a plan of the city, originally published in 1780, is included in William Barrett's History of Bristol (Bristol Archives Bk/769, BMGA Mb418).

William Mathews published a city plan in his first guide to Bristol in 1794 (Bristol Archives 3811/24). It covers a wider area and includes Hotwells and Clifton. The next edition, published in

1815 (Bristol Archives Dir/8, BMGA M770), shows the diversion of the Avon into the New Cut (completed 1809) and is available online via [Bristol Museums: Mathew's plan of Bristol](#).

Benjamin Donne, son of the 1773 map maker, published his own version in 1800 (Bristol Archives 11168/65a). It extends from Hotwells to St Philip's Marsh, and includes Clifton and Kingsdown. Benjamin Donne the Younger also produced a larger plan in 1826 that extended to the developing areas of Durdham Down, Redland, Cotham, Montpelier, Cumberland Road and Coronation Road (Bristol Archives 20894/70, BMGA Mb379).

John Plumley and George Ashmead produced the largest plan of the city. It was started by Plumley in 1813 and completed by Ashmead in 1828 (Bristol Archives 04481). The plan shows parishes and includes reference keys to churches and public buildings. Smaller scale versions were issued in 1833 (BMGA M760), 1846, 1871 and 1882 (BRSMG Mb2693). You can view a black and white version of the 1828 Ashmead plan as a basemap on Know Your Place. You can view the 1882 edition online via [Bristol Museums: Plumley and Ashmead plan 1882](#)

Other sources for early maps

John Speed's map of Gloucestershire with an inset of the city of Bristol (1611) and Speed's map of Somersetshire (1579) are available through the British Library's online gallery. You can view them here: [British Library: Speed's map of Gloucestershire](#) and [British Library: Speed's map of Somersetshire](#)

[Old maps online](#) indexes over 400,000 maps from around the world and includes maps from the British Library as well as other institutions. Early maps on this website include maps of Gloucestershire and Somerset by Christopher Saxton (1579) and John Blaeu (1646).

Board of Health maps

The Public Health Act of 1848 established local Boards of Health. Bristol Corporation, acting as the Board of Health for the city, commissioned George Ashmead to produce two series of maps in 1854 and 1874. These large scale maps were used to plan drainage and sewage systems designed to prevent the spread of diseases such as cholera. You can view the Board of Health plans on the 1854 Ashmead and 1874 Ashmead basemaps on Know Your Place.

Enclosure maps

Enclosure maps record boundaries which were created when open fields, common land and waste land was turned into small, individually owned fields. Houses are marked on most maps, which often means they are the earliest map evidence of properties. Most enclosure maps date from 1780 to 1820.

Bristol Archives holds a number of enclosure maps, including for Kingswood Common (Bristol Archives BristolPlans/arranged/196); Westbury on Trym; and several parishes in Somerset and Gloucestershire (Bristol Archives 31965, 37959). To find further records, search Bristol Archives' online catalogue for both 'enclosure' and 'inclosure'.

Tithe maps

Tithes were a tax to maintain the church. They were originally paid in produce but a monetary payment was introduced with the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836. To calculate the sum owed, large scale maps were made of each tithe district (usually a parish) from 1836 to 1854.

Maps show numbered plots which relate to documents known as apportionments. These documents contain written information about the area including names of owners and tenants, the land use and rent to charges due.

Maps may not show all land in an area, as they exclude land exempt from tithes, or where tithes were already paid in cash before the Tithe Commutation Act.

A set of maps and apportionments, arranged alphabetically by parish is kept at Bristol Archives (Bristol Archives ref EP/A/32). Tithe maps for Somerset and Gloucestershire are held at the relevant county archives. Bristol Reference Library holds a copy of Somerset tithe maps covering areas of south Bristol on microcard, and copies of the 1840s tithe maps and apportionments for Bristol and South Gloucestershire on microfilm.

You can view Bristol's tithe records on Know Your Place. The tithe maps appear as a 'basemap', while apportionment information can be found by clicking on the 'historic parishes' information layer. If the area you are researching is not covered, take a look at the Know Your Place websites for the neighbouring counties. Go to [Know Your Place: Bath and North East Somerset](#), [Know Your Place: South Gloucestershire](#) or [Know Your Place: North Somerset](#).

Ordnance Survey maps

Ordnance Survey (OS) is Great Britain's national mapping agency. The earliest maps were created in the 1700s by the military for coastal defence. Detailed maps for the whole country were created in the 1800s and recording archaeological sites became obligatory from 1816, though not all sites are shown. Many different editions of Ordnance Survey maps, in a range of scales, have been produced since then.

You can access various Ordnance Survey maps from 1844 onwards on Know Your Place. Ordnance Survey maps from the 1830s to the present day covering Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset, the former county of Avon and other counties are held at the Bristol Reference Library. Other Ordnance Survey maps are also available in the Bristol Archives searchroom.

The [National Library of Scotland's maps website](#) provides free access to OS maps, with more detail on precise survey and publication dates for each map sheet, plus guides to OS abbreviations and symbols.

Estate and industrial maps of Bristol and surrounding areas

Bristol Archives look after maps from estates owned by various bodies in Bristol including Bristol Corporation and Bristol City Council; the Society of Merchant Venturers; Bristol Municipal Charities; and the Church of England. These can be found by searching the Bristol Archives' online catalogue. A 1746 survey of Clifton (made by John Jacob de Wilstar for the Society of Merchant Venturers) can be seen on the '1746 to 1803' basemap on Know Your Place.

Family estates

Bristol Archives holds records of several wealthy Bristol families who commissioned plans of their country estates and extensive land holdings. The following plans were made for the Smyth family of Ashton Court (Bristol Archives AC) or the Southwell family of Kingsweston House and are available on the '1746 to 1803' basemap on Know Your Place:

- A plan of the parish of St George and Kingswood, produced by William Maule in 1803 (Bristol Archives AC/PL/60a-b)
- A plan of lands at Stapleton dated 1767 (Bristol Archives AC/PL/88)
- Isaac Taylor's plan of lands at Kingsweston drawn in 1772 (Bristol Archives 26570).

For more information on these and other maps held by Bristol Archives including Blitz maps, title deed plans, coal and colliery maps, building plan books, Goad insurance plans and others, read [Bristol Archives maps and plans: sources for research](#).

Be a buildings detective

Sometimes archaeologists need to research the history of houses, schools, workplaces, and other structures. There are many different resources that may help with this including historic maps, title deeds, wills and probate, electoral registers, census and trade directories.

If you want to study a specific building or house, the [Bristol Archives Building and house history: sources for research](#) lists how to go about finding this information.

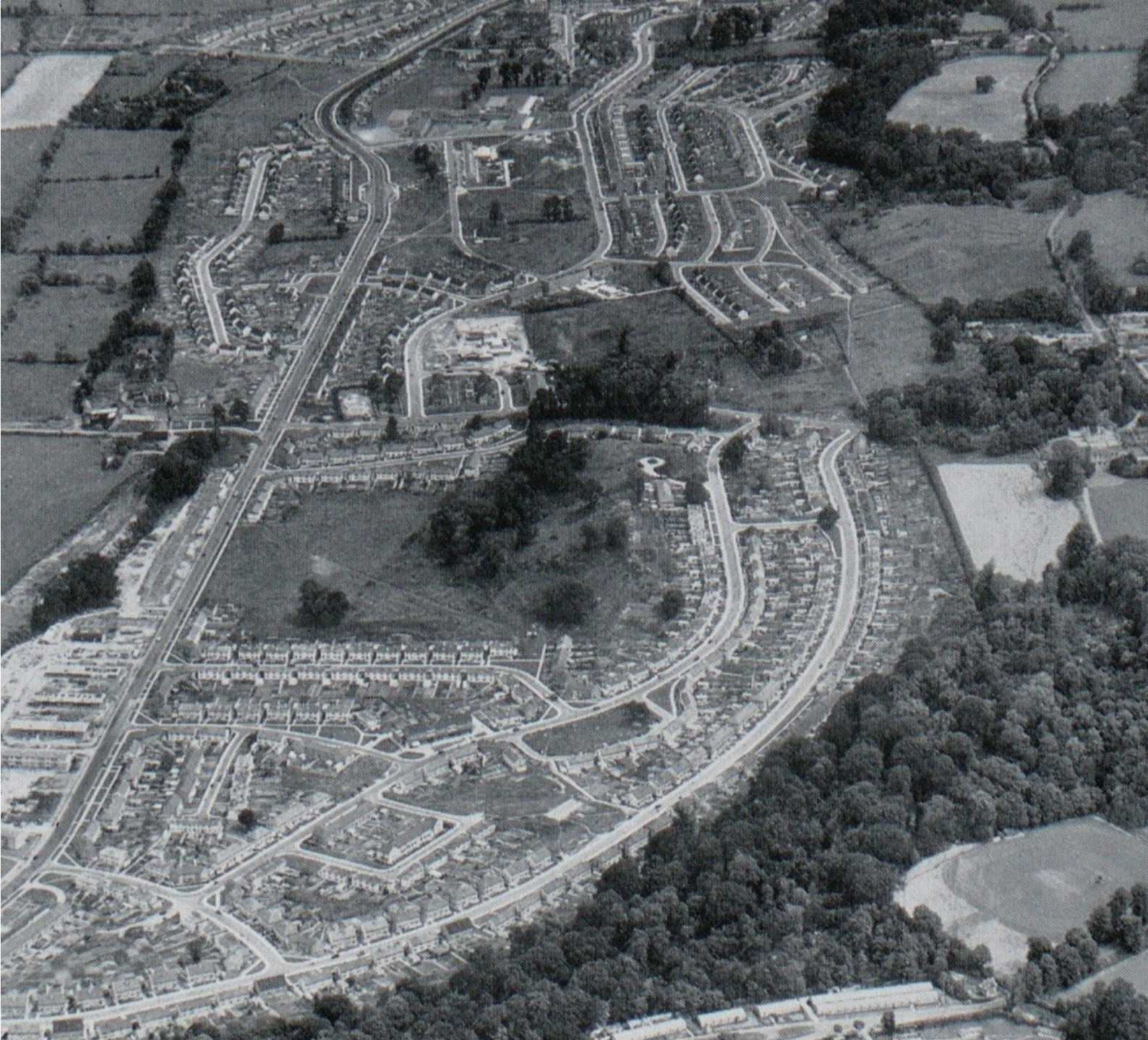


Image: Bristol Archives 40826-HSG-109

Archaeology from above

Archaeology from above

Looking at settlements and landscapes from above can help you explore, identify and record archaeological sites. Features below the surface, such as walls or ditches, can create cropmarks or differences in soil colour that are often seen more clearly from above. Earthworks like banks and ditches are also easier to see from the air and it's possible to identify features that aren't usually visible from the ground.

A wide range of aerial imagery is available through Bristol Archives, Bristol Reference Library, Know Your Place or through other online collections. This includes historic and modern aerial photographs, Airborne Laser Scanning (ALS or Lidar), and satellite imagery.

Bristol Archive's online catalogue contains details of aerial photographs in various collections. Information about the material held by the Bristol Reference Library is available on catalogue cards within the library. Other imagery is available online at the webpages listed below.

Top tip

Look at as many photographs and images of your site as possible. Viewing your site from a range of angles, in different seasons and over several years can help you to identify features that are only visible at certain times or in specific conditions.

Aerial resources

Satellite imagery

[Bing Maps](#) allows you to look at the area you are researching with an 'aerial view' and a 'birds eye view'. Aerial view overlays satellite imagery onto the map and gives you a view from directly above. Bird's eye view displays aerial imagery taken at an oblique 45 degree angle and captured from low flying aircraft.

[Google Earth](#) and Google Earth Pro also overlay satellite imagery onto a map. Images are sourced from a variety of satellite companies and have been taken over at different times. They are then blended together to create one image.

[Google Earth Pro](#) is free to download and has an added layer that allows you to see a range of historic images overlaid on a map. Select the area you are interested in and click 'view' then 'historical imagery' to scroll back in time.

Lidar imagery

LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) is an aerial surveying method. It works by illuminating the ground surface with a laser light and measuring the reflected light with a sensor. Differences in laser light return times and wavelengths can then be used to make digital 3D surface and terrain models. As lidar can pass through tree cover, it can be used to survey densely wooded areas.

Lidar commissioned by the Environment Agency is available to download if you have the correct computer programmes. If you just want to look at the lidar, go to the [National Libraries Scotland Maps 'side by side'](#) viewer. You can then compare the Lidar and a historic or modern map of the same area alongside each other. You can search Lidar at 1m or 2m. Select DSM if you want the results to show the earth's surface and everything on it (like buildings, trees and vegetation). Select DTM if you just want to see the bare earth.

Aerial photographs

[Historic England: aerial photograph collection](#) holds over 4 million images. They cover the whole of England and date from the early 20th century to the present day. Not all of these are online but

you can request a free search to find out what aerial cover we have for your area of interest. You can also arrange to view prints free of charge in their searchroom in Swindon.

Bristol Archives' catalogue includes images produced for the City Valuer's Office in the 1920s and 1930s (Bristol Archives 44819/3) and commissioned by the former Avon County Council in 1991 (Bristol Archives 45535/13). The photos from the City Valuer's Office are available on the 'Bristol from above' information layer on Know Your Place. The '1946 aerial' basemap on KYP also shows a 1946 aerial photographic survey by the RAF.

Bristol Reference Library holds a number of aerial images of Bristol and beyond including: a pictorial survey of Bristol from the 1920s; black and white aerial images of Bristol and Avon from the 1970's; colour images of Bristol from the 1980's; and a black and white aerial survey of the former county of Avon from the 1990's. Images are available to view in person at the library.

The [Britain from Above website](#) features images from the Aerofilms collection, a unique aerial photographic archive created between 1919 and 2006.

The [Cambridge Air Photos website](#) has almost 500,000 oblique and vertical images in black and white, colour and infrared.

[The Historic Environment Image Resource](#) contains digitised historic photographic images from all over the world dating from the late nineteenth century onwards. It includes archaeologist Mick Aston's collection of aerial photos of Somerset.

[The National Collection of Aerial Photography](#) (NCAP) is one of the largest collections of aerial imagery in the world. It contains tens of millions of aerial images featuring historic events and places



Image: Bristol Museums Ma3805

County histories

County histories

County histories often contain useful notes on the archaeology of the local area.

Early histories, created in the 1700 and 1800s, were usually written by educated, wealthy and well connected men. They tend to reflect the interests of individual writers but usually include a history of each parish with information on notable families, ownership of estates and any archaeological discoveries made. The whereabouts of the finds they describe are often no longer known.

County histories of Somerset, Gloucestershire and Bristol are listed in this guide to ensure that all areas of the modern city are covered. Bristol Reference Library has copies of all of the editions listed below. Histories available at the Bristol Archives are shown alongside their Bristol Archive reference numbers. Online versions for most of the following county histories are also available via Google Books, the Internet Archive or Wikipedia.

Top tip

The interpretation of archaeological sites changes as new evidence is discovered so the ideas in these early histories are often outdated. Their focus is also usually on Roman archaeology as writers were most familiar with this period.

County history resources

County Histories of Somerset

'The History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset' by John Collinson was published in 1971 in three volumes (Bristol Archives refs. Bk/423-5). Collinson's history covers the whole county and contains valuable records of church monuments, many of which are now lost. All three volumes are available online via the [Internet Archive: Collinson's History of Somerset Volume 1](#), [Internet Archive: Collinson's History of Somerset Volume 2](#) and [Internet Archive: Collinson's History of Somerset Volume 3](#).

'The History and Antiquities of Somersetshire' by William Phelps was published between 1836 and 1839. Seven parts were issued between 1835 and 1839, when they reappeared in two volumes. Volume 1 is available online via [Internet Archive: Phelps' History of Somersetshire](#).

County Histories of Gloucestershire

'The Ancient and Present State of Glostershire' by Sir Robert Atkyns was published in 1712 (Bristol Archives refs. Bk/414-5). It was the first history of Gloucestershire to be written and includes engravings of county seats and manor houses by the artist Johannes Kip.

'A New History of Gloucestershire' by Samuel Rudder was published in 1779 (Bristol Archives ref. Bk/413). Rudder borrowed from Atkyns's county history, gathered new information with a questionnaire and travelled extensively claiming to create the content. A version is available online via [Wikipedia: Rudder's History of Gloucestershire](#)

'Historical, Monumental & Genealogical Collections relative to the County of Gloucester' by Ralph Bigland was published sporadically. Two volumes were published between 1791 and 1794 and further instalments followed. The project remained unfinished until a definitive edition was published in four volumes by the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society between 1989 and 1995.

'The History of the County of Gloucester' by Thomas Rudge was published in 1803 two volumes. Rudge's history aimed to provide a concise and updated version of Adkins earlier history. Both volumes are available online via the [Internet Archive: Rudge's History of Gloucestershire Volume 1](#) and [Internet Archive: Rudge's History of Gloucestershire Volume 2](#).

County Histories of Bristol

'The History and Antiquities of the City of Bristol' by William Barrett was published in 1789. Barrett created the first history of Bristol using early deeds, surveys and other records from wealthy families such as the Smyth family of Ashton Court. An online version is available via the [Internet Archive: Barrett's History of Bristol](#).

'The History of Bristol, Civil and Ecclesiastical' was published in 1816 in two volumes. The first volume was written by John Corry, and the second volume by Rev John Evans. Both volumes are available online via [Internet Archive: History of Bristol Volume 1](#) and [Internet Archive: History of Bristol Volume 2](#).

'Memoirs Historical and Topographical of Bristol and its Neighbourhood' by Samuel Seyer were published in two volumes between 1821 and 1823. Seyer's history contains information about some of the archaeological sites within Bristol. Both volumes are available online via [Internet Archive: Seyer's Memoirs of Bristol Volume 1](#) and [Internet Archive: Seyer's Memoirs of Bristol Volume 2](#).

Correspondence and papers relating to Seyer's Memoirs of Bristol (Bristol Archives ref. 12147) and Seyer's collections for a second part, on the topography of Bristol, are preserved in manuscript volumes at Bristol Archives (Bristol Archives ref. 44954).

'Bristol Past and Present' by James Fawcner Nicholls and John Taylor was published between 1881 and 1882 in two volumes. Their history contains topographical maps and drawings as well as illustrations of archaeological objects discovered. Both volumes are available online via [Google Books: Nicholls and Taylor's Bristol Past and Present Volumes 1 and 2](#) and [Internet Archive: Nicholls and Taylor's Bristol Past and Present Volume 3](#).

'The Annals of Bristol' by John Latimer were published between 1887 and 1908 as five separate works (Bristol Archives ref Bk/1139). They cover the history of Bristol between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.

All volumes are available online via [Internet Archive: Latimer's The Annals of Bristol in the Nineteenth Century](#), [Internet Archive: Latimer's The Annals of Bristol in the Nineteenth Century Continued](#), [Internet Archive: Latimer's The Annals of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century](#), [Internet Archive: Latimer's The Annals of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century](#) and [Internet Archive: Latimer's Sixteenth-Century Bristol](#).

Several annotated versions with added engravings and early photographs are also held at Bristol Reference Library.

The Victoria County History

The Victoria County History (VCH) was founded in 1899 as a national project to write the history of every county in England. VCH publications present encyclopaedic histories of each county, from the earliest archaeological records to the present day, and include details of the topography, landscape and the built environment. A complete set covering the whole of England is held at the Bristol Reference Library.

Volumes 1 to 2 for of the Victoria County History: Somerset can be found at Bristol Archives (Bristol Archives Bk/930, Bk/931) and the full text for volumes 1 to 10 can be accessed online via [VCH: Somerset publications](#)

Volume 2 of the Victoria County History: Gloucestershire contains information about Bristol's religious houses and can be found at Bristol Archives (Bristol Archives Bk/929) or accessed online via [VCH: Gloucestershire publications](#)

The Bristol Record Society

The Bristol Record Society (BRS) was founded in 1929 to study and publish the historic records of the City and County of Bristol. A complete set of BRS volumes is available at Bristol Archives and Bristol Reference Library. Volumes also appear online five years after their publication in print via [BRS: publications](#). Over 100 other primary sources and scholarly works, including records volumes, pamphlets, research monographs and topographical prints of Bristol are also available online via [BRS: links](#).

A Gateway of Bristol, which was removed & sold & stands now at Mount Pleasant, Parish of Driflington about a mile from the City. July 25th 1789

the middle is much larger

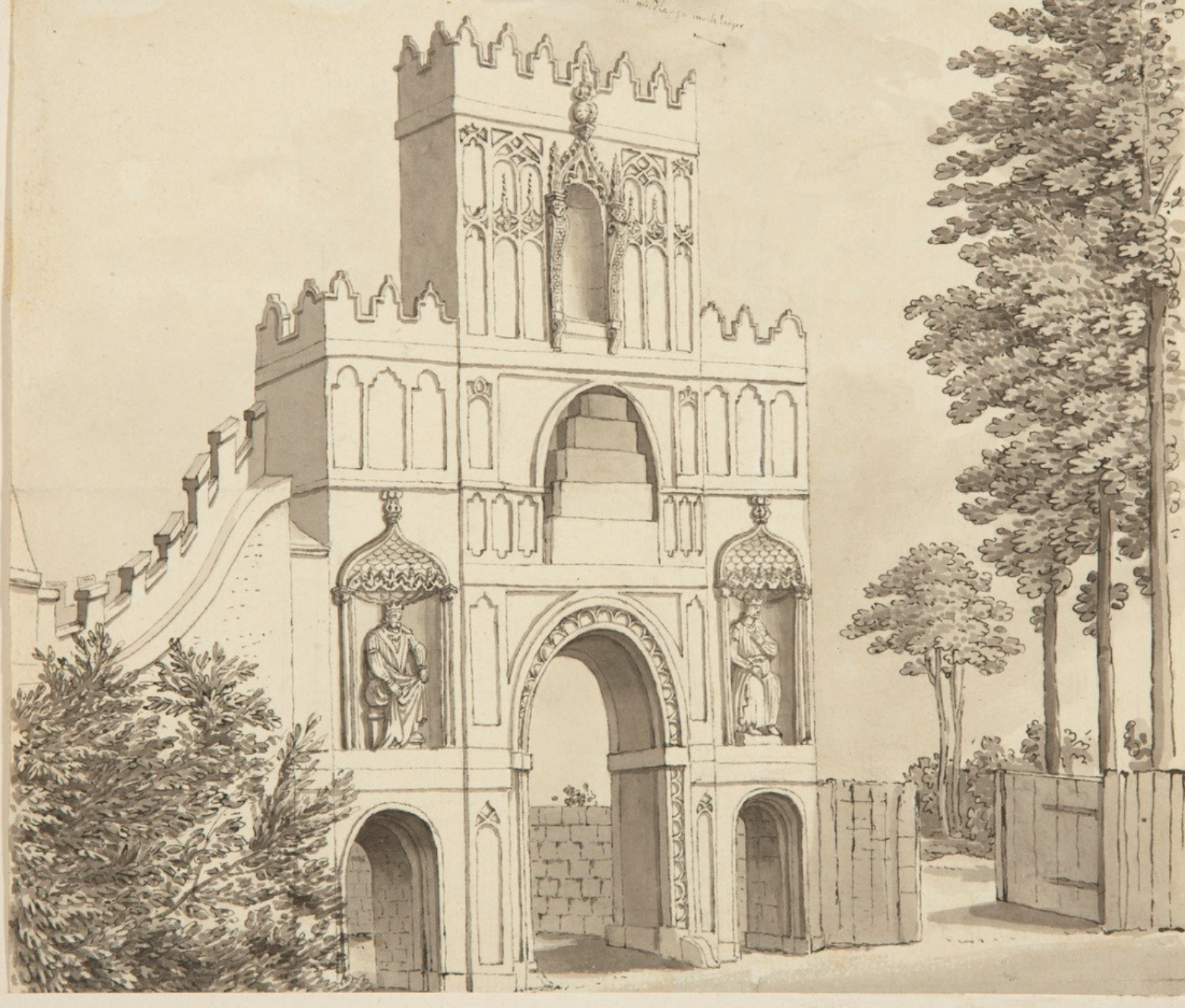


Image: Bristol Museums Ma3728

Art and Archaeology

Art and Archaeology

Paintings, prints and drawings that show a landscape, townscape or street can be a useful resource for the archaeologist. These are usually known as topographical artworks.

Many of them were created to illustrate local histories and images of sculptures, archaeological artefacts and architectural plans were also produced at the same time. A large amount of these artworks pre date photography, making them the only record we have of what a place once looked like.

Major collections are looked after by Bristol Museums, Bristol Reference Library, and the British Library. Digitised images are available via Bristol Museums' collection online, Bristol Library Flickr webpages and Know Your Place.

Place names

Place names can be a useful clue when investigating your local area. They may hint at how a place was used, what kind of settlement it was or who lived there. Names can also describe a place's geographical relationship with other towns and villages or refer to archaeological features in the landscape.

Bristol takes its name from two Saxon words 'Brycg' and 'stowe' (Brigstowe) – 'Brycg' is Saxon for bridge and 'stowe' Saxon for meeting place.

The English Place-Name Society (EPNS) was established in 1923 to conduct a county by county survey of the place names of England. Almost all English counties have been surveyed and work is ongoing. Copies of the EPNS Journal and Survey volumes are available at the Bristol Reference Library.

Art resources

The Braikenridge Collection contains over 1400 drawings of Bristol commissioned by G. W. Braikenridge in the 1820s. Braikenridge aimed to 'extra illustrate' William Barrett's History and Antiquities of the City of Bristol, which had few images. He paid local artists to draw the city's streets, buildings and harbour. Part of the collection is looked after by Bristol Museum and made available through the Bristol Museum collection online (enter the search term 'Braikenridge'). A further 30 boxes containing engravings, newspaper articles and manuscript text by Braikenridge are held at Bristol Reference Library. Images from you collection are also available online via the 'Braikenridge' layer on Know Your Place.

The Loxton Collection contains over 2000 pen and ink drawings created by Samuel Loxton. These were made for the Bristol Observer between the 1890s and 1920s. Artworks are held at Bristol Reference Library along with copies of the Bristol Observer newspaper, which can be retrieved from storage with notice. Digitised images are available via [Bristol Library: Flickr](#). Almost all 2000 of them are also available via Know Your Place.

Samuel Hieronymus Grimm travelled extensively in England recording everything he saw for his patron Sir Richard Kaye. Grimm visited Bristol between 1788 and 1790 and made over 100 drawings of the city and the surrounding area. The collection is looked after by the British Library and can be accessed through the [British Library: online gallery](#) (enter the search terms 'Samuel Hieronymus Grimm' and 'Bristol'). Bristol Museum also hold copies of some of the artworks, which can be accessed via Bristol Museums' collection online (search for 'Samuel Hieronymus Grimm'). A selection from the British Library are also available via the 'British Library collection images' layer on Know Your Place.



Previous archaeological work

Previous archaeological work

Finding out about archaeology that has already happened is a great way to discover more about your local area.

Archaeological and antiquarian investigations have taken place in Bristol for at least 200 years. The evidence that they have uncovered has helped shape what we know about the city today. Some of these past investigations are described in local archaeological journals. Larger sites may also have their own monograph or book. All of the journals listed below are available through Bristol Reference Library. Journals available at the Bristol Archives are shown alongside their Bristol Archive reference numbers. Most journals are also available online.

Commercial companies are also required to produce a report about each site, known as site report, as part of their brief. These are usually available as printed copies at Bristol Archives or online via Know Your Place or the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) Library.

Further information and a summary of each site is also recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER). The majority of this is available on Know Your Place via the 'monuments' and 'archaeological reports' layers.

Archaeological resources

Archaeological Journals

The Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Transactions are the society's annual journal. Dating back to 1876, they contain reports of archaeological excavations, articles of original historical research, book reviews and reports of the Society's activities during the year. All but the latest editions are available on the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society website. Visit [Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society: Search the Transactions](#) to explore them.

The Clifton Antiquarian Club Proceedings contain the results of fieldwork and information about society meetings and excursions. The Clifton Antiquarian Club were active from 1884 to 1912 and produced seven volumes during this time. These are available at Bristol Archives (Bristol Archives ref 10523) and an index to all volumes can be found online via [Clifton Antiquarian Society: index](#). The society was revived in 2006 and they now publish a modern version of the Proceedings. For more information visit [Clifton Antiquarian Society: Proceedings](#).

The Somerset Archaeology and Natural History Society Proceedings contains sections on all aspects of the society's activities. The first volume appeared in 1849 and the whole collection is currently being digitised. 100 are currently available via the [Somerset Archaeology and Natural History Society: digital proceedings](#).

The University of Bristol Speleological Society Proceedings cover all aspects of cave and karst research, including geomorphology, cave biology, prehistory and the history of cave studies. The first volume dates back to 1920. You can access them via [University of Bristol Speleological Society: proceedings](#).

The Bristol and Avon Archaeological Society publish a regular journal containing reports and summaries on archaeological fieldwork undertaken in the former county of Avon. Copies of older journals are available online via [Bristol and Avon Archaeological Society: journals](#).

Archaeological site reports

An archaeological site report records information that might be lost during redevelopment. They document the history of the site, with maps, plans and historic photographs, and list sources used for research. Site reports also describe what archaeology has been undertaken and include

section drawings, site plans, photographs and information on artefacts found. As these reports aren't published and distributed in the traditional sense, they are often described as being 'grey literature'.

Reports are made publically available via the [Archaeology Data Service \(ADS\) Library](#). The number of reports in the ASD Library is increasing steadily through the [OASIS project](#), which helps field archaeologists share reports and other site information with heritage organisations.

Reports from Bristol & Regional Archaeological Services (BaRAS) are also listed on the Bristol Archives online catalogue (Ref. Bristol Archives 42743 and others). PDF versions of site reports from BaRAS and other archaeological companies are available online via the 'archaeological reports' layer on Know Your Place (black pins). This layer also gives the date and location of archaeological fieldwork (white pins).

The Historic Environment Record

The Bristol Historic Environment Record is a database with over 7000 entries containing information about Bristol. It can tell you about: historic buildings and monuments; archaeological excavations and finds; and historic landscapes. Many of these records are available via Know Your Place.



Archaeological artefacts

Archaeological artefacts

Studying artefacts from local archaeological and antiquarian investigations can also help with your research.

Archaeological finds build up a picture of what life was like in the past. Artefacts can tell us what people wore, what they ate, what kind of houses they lived in, and much more. They can be used to date a site, to identify what an area was used for, or to reconstruct what a place might have looked like. If human remains are discovered, they can also provide information about the health of past populations.

A large number of archaeological objects discovered over the last 200 years have been collected by Bristol Museums. A selection of them are displayed at Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, M Shed and Blaise Museum. Information about them can also be found online via Bristol Museums' collections online.

A small amount of material can be found elsewhere, either in private ownership, or looked after by other institutions including the British Museum. An increasing number of objects found in Bristol by metal detectorists, or people digging in allotments and gardens, have also been recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). Information is available via the PAS finds database.

Artefact resources

Bristol Museums care for several million archaeological objects of local, regional and national importance. The collection spans all periods of human history and includes everything from the earliest prehistoric stone tools to Victorian potties.

Information about objects, where they were found and who collected them is available via Bristol Museums' collections online. Adding material to the online catalogue is ongoing. To find objects discovered in your area, enter the name of a place, a parish, a district or a known archaeology site. Highlights are available on the 'archaeological object' layer of Know Your Place.

The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) also have useful information about archaeological objects found in your local area. Set up to record archaeological objects found by members of the public in England and Wales, the PAS database contains all the finds reported to the scheme. You can search their database online and there is a handy postcode search that you can use to see what has been recorded near you.

Think you've found something interesting?

Then let us know! Contact the museum team (details on the Bristol Museums page of this guide) and we will be able to put you in touch with an archaeologist who can take a look at what you've discovered. Information may then be added to the Bristol Historic Environment Record, the PAS database or to the Bristol Museum catalogue.

Please don't try to dig up anything you've discovered. This could damage the archaeology and, depending on the type of site, might be illegal.

Report your finds

To report an object or group of objects to the Portable Antiquities Scheme, please contact the Finds Liaison Officer for Gloucestershire & Avon (details on the PAS page of this guide).

The Finds Liaison Officer will then make an appointment to see the material and help identify it. They may want to photograph the object and record information for the database including a description and a findspot. If you think you might have found treasure, the FLO will also be able to deal with this for you.

What counts as Treasure?

In archaeological terms, Treasure is defined in law by the 1996 Treasure Act. It includes:

- Any object made of at least 10% gold or silver (other than a coin) that is at least 300 years old. Prehistoric objects containing any amount of precious metal count as Treasure.
- Any group of two or more prehistoric metallic objects from the same find.
- 2 or more gold or silver coins or 10 or more coins made of other metals that come from the same find spot and are at least 300 years old.
- Any object, whatever it is made of, that is part of the same find as another object that is Treasure.
- Any object that would previously have been Treasure Trove, but does not fall within the categories above.

By law, finds of potential Treasure must be reported to the Coroner in whose district they were found within 14 days of discovery. Your local FLO will be able to help you with this. For more information go to [PAS: treasure](#).



Bristol Archives

Bristol Archives

[Bristol Archives](#) care for historic records relating to many different aspects of the city's history. These include official documents dating from medieval times onwards; public records from the courts, coroner, hospitals and police; records of local businesses, charities and other organisations; parish registers and other religious records; and records of local estates, families and individuals. Bristol Archives also look after large collections of maps, photographs and films.

Searching and accessing Bristol Archives

The [Bristol Archives: online catalogue](#) contains information about what's available, and the [Bristol Archives: photographic collections](#) contains information on digitised images.

These collections are available for research in a public searchroom at B Bond Warehouse. This service is free and open to everyone. For more information, go to [Bristol Archives: plan your visit](#).

Contacting Bristol Archives:

- Bristol Archives, B Bond Warehouse (via Create Centre), Smeaton Road, Bristol, BS1 6XN
- 0117 922 4224
- archives@bristol.gov.uk
- [Bristol Archives: website](#)



Bristol Museums

Bristol Museums

[Bristol Museums](#) care for collections of art, archaeology, social and industrial history, geology and natural history. They also run Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, M Shed, Blaise Museum, the Georgian House Museum, the Red Lodge Museum and Kings Weston Roman Villa.

The archaeology collections are the largest in the south west of England and have formed over 200 years. Today, the majority of material comes from professional archaeological fieldwork and the museum is the recognised repository for archaeological archives from Bristol and South Gloucestershire. This means that records, drawings, photographs and objects from archaeological projects undertaken in Bristol and South Gloucestershire are deposited at the museum.

Objects are displayed at Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, M Shed and Blaise Museum. Collections in store are made available through collections online, special events or are available on request.

Using the archaeology collections

Much of the collection is available to search via [Bristol Museums: collections online](#). Cataloguing is ongoing and digital images are being added all the time.

The 'keyword search' will search across all fields and all collections. For a more advanced 'detailed search', select either 'British Archaeology' (for one off finds, items of treasure and antiquarian collections) or 'Archaeological Site Archives' (for archaeological fieldwork).

Once you have identified the material you are interested in, you can book an appointment to see it or ask for more information. Remember to quote the museum accession number.

Contact Bristol Museum

- Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, Queens Road, Bristol BS8 1RL
- 0117 922 3571
- bristolmuseums@bristol.gov.uk
- [Bristol Museums: collections](#)



The Portable Antiquities Scheme

The Portable Antiquities Scheme

Every year thousands of archaeological objects are discovered by metal detector users or people walking and gardening. [The Portable Antiquities Scheme](#) encourages the recording of archaeological objects found by members of the public in England and Wales.

Over 40 Finds Liaison Officers (FLOs) work for the scheme, including the FLO for Gloucestershire & Avon who is based at Bristol Museum & Art Gallery. FLOs liaise with the public and record their discoveries on the PAS database. This helps advance knowledge of the history and archaeology of England and Wales.

Searching the PAS database

The PAS encourage people to use their data and images as widely as possible. You can either perform a basic search across all fields or you can click on a range of more complex search options and select: 'advance search'; 'numismatic (coin) searches by period'; a 'map search'; or an easy 'postcode search' to see what has been found in your area. To search the database, visit [Portable Antiquities Scheme: search](#).

Contact the Finds Liaison Officers for Gloucestershire & Avon

- Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery, Queen's Road, Bristol, BS8 1RL
- Mobile: 07825 966086
- Tel: 0117 922 2613
- kurt.adams@bristol.gov.uk
- www.finds.org.uk



Image: Bristol Library

Bristol Reference Library

Bristol Reference Library

[Bristol Reference Library](#) care for a large local history collection which includes street directories; electoral registers; local catalogues and indexes; illustrations; maps; and newspapers and magazines.

Using the collections

The Reference Library is on the first floor of the Central Library. You can search the collections using the [LibrariesWest catalogue](#), which combines the catalogues of Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, Dorset, North Somerset, Poole, Somerset and South Gloucestershire libraries. The online catalogue lists about half of the items in the reference library. It does not include many of the items acquired before 1985. To search these items, visit Bristol Reference Library and check the library card catalogues, or ask the librarians to help you.

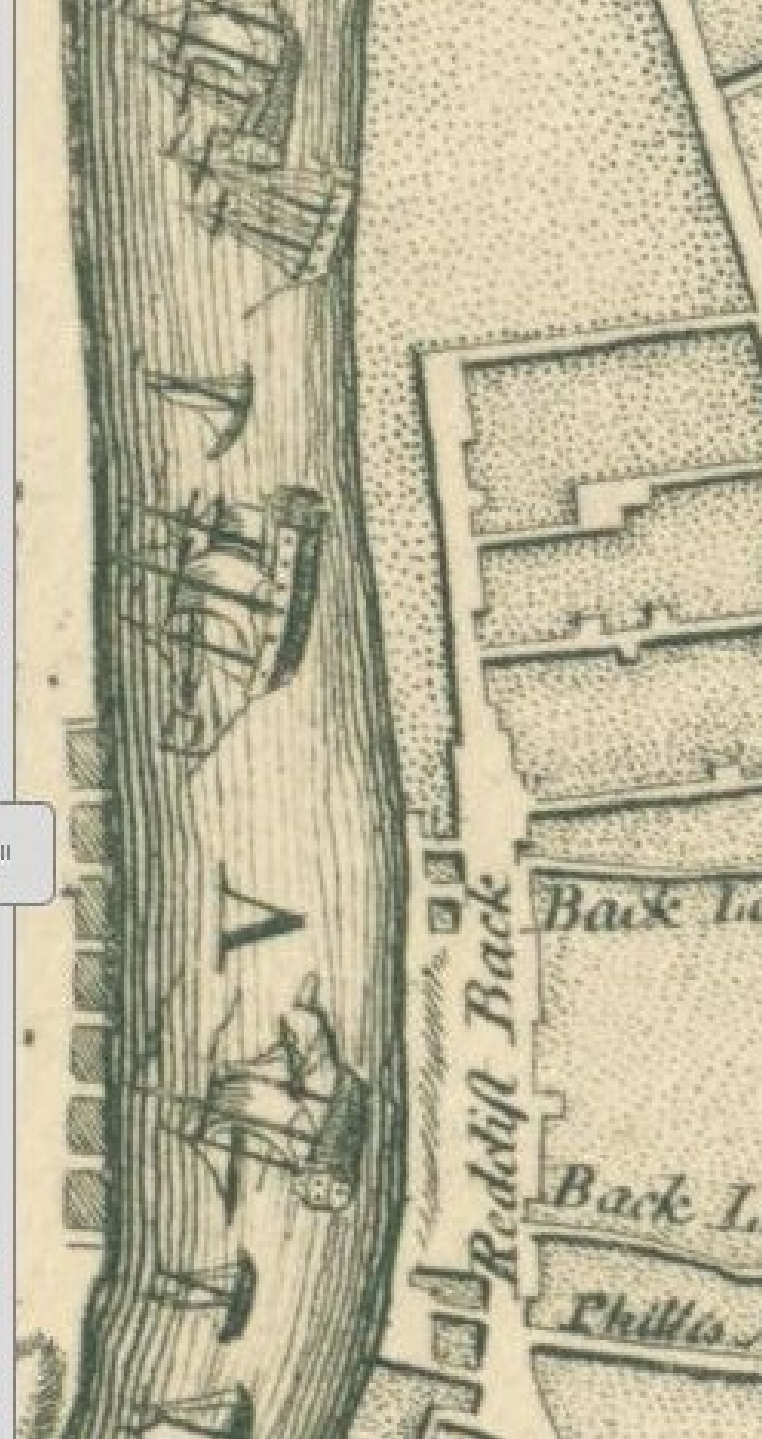
Once you have details of the material you would like to view, including the library reference number, you can request access from the Reference Library.

You need to tell librarians ahead of time if you'd like to see and manuscript material or hard copies of newspapers. To view rare or valuable items, the library will need up to five working days in advance. To use manuscript material, you'll also need to bring proof of identity and address to use manuscript material. You can use your passport, driving license, recent utility bill, or a combination to cover both name and address.

The library also provides access to a selection of online newspapers and magazines via [Bristol Library: online newspapers and magazines](#).

Contact details:

- Bristol Central Library, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TL
- 0117 903 7202
- refandinfo@bristol.gov.uk
- www.bristol.gov.uk/libraries-archives



Know Your Place

Know Your Place

[Know Your Place](#) is an online digital mapping resource containing historic maps of Bristol and the south west region. It provides access to Bristol's Historic Environment Record data, which includes archaeological fieldwork, listed buildings and archaeological monuments. It also contains thousands of images from the city's collections, including images from Bristol Archives, Bristol Museums and Bristol Reference Library.

Searching Know Your Place

Know Your Place allows you to compare two maps at once by overlaying one on top of the other. To view available maps, click on 'basemaps' and select a 'main map' and a 'comparison map'(each map has an image with its name and approximate date beneath).

You can also view linked information using 'information layers'. Select the type of record you want to see and a series of coloured dots will appear on the map. Click on a dot to open a pop up box containing further information from the resource you selected.

For more guidance on searching this resource, visit the [Know Your Place: explore the map](#).

Adding to the Community Layer

You can add information and images about the history of your neighbourhood to the 'community layer'. Entries can cover: family history and personal memories; pictures of architectural details, buildings or memorials; local sites of historic interest; and much more. To find out how to add your own discoveries to the map, visit [Know Your Place: preparing records community layer](#).

Contact the Know Your Place Team

Know Your Place is hosted and managed by Bristol City Council. To report a technical fault email: GIS_Supportteam@bristol.gov.uk

If you have a question about the content on Know Your Place, email: citydesigngroup@bristol.gov.uk

Further resources

Online resources:

[ADS Archives](#) contain data from around the world. Records range from large scale academic research projects with thousands of complex data files, to small scale commercial archives with just a few image files. The collections can also include journals, monographs and grey literature. ADS Archives are best used when you are searching for a particular type of archaeological data.

[ARCHSEARCH](#) is an integrated online catalogue indexing over 1.3 million metadata records. Records briefly describe archaeological events, monuments or sites and are taken from a wide range of sources. Archsearch is best used for searching for archaeological information related to a particular geographic location.

[Building the Future, Transforming our Past: Celebrating development-led archaeology in England, 1990-2015](#) by Historic England explains how and why archaeology became part of the planning process look and highlights the benefits of of 'development led archaeology'.

[British History Online](#) is a digital library of printed primary and secondary sources for the study of Britain and Ireland, with a focus on the period 1300 to 1800. It provides access to 1300 volumes, plus 40,000 images and 10,000 tiles of historical maps of the British Isles.

[The Domesday Book](#) was compiled in 1086 AD for William the Conqueror. It records the land and resources held in England for almost every settlement in England.

[Heritage Gateway](#) allows you to cross search over 60 resources for information on England's historic sites and buildings. Key datasets include Historic Environment Records (HERs), Sites and Monuments Records (SMR), listed buildings, scheduled monuments and the Historic England Excavation Index.

[Historic England Technical Guidance](#) are a range of online resources that are aimed at anyone working on heritage projects. They cover practical guidance on surveying, managing and caring for historic buildings and their settings, as well as specialist techniques for investigating heritage.

[Introductions to Heritage Assets](#) by Historic England are a series of short online documents that provide a brief, up to date, factual overview of types of particular building, landscape, site or monument and development of ships and boats.

[The Society of Museum Archaeology](#) promotes museum involvement in all aspects of archaeology, a greater public understanding of the archaeological past and an appreciation of the importance of archaeology. A wide range of resources are available on their website.

Further reading:

A large amount has been written about the archaeology of Bristol and the surrounding area. Literature relating to specific archaeological sites is referenced above, but for an overview on the archaeology of Bristol, read:

'Bristol: A Worshipful Town and Famous City: An Archaeological Assessment (Urban Archaeological Assessment)' by Nigel Baker, Jonathan Brett and Robert Jones, 2018. This volume provides the first major synthesis of Bristol's archaeology and is illustrated with maps, drawings, plans and photographs that help explain the development of the city. It concludes with a range of future research themes.

'The Archaeology of South West England' edited by edited by C J Webster, 2007 (an online pdf is available via [Somerset Heritage: The Archaeology of South West England](#)). Created as part of the South West Archaeological Research Framework, this publication contains summaries of the archaeology region by period and identifies any gaps in knowledge and future research topics.

For more information on the origins of some of Bristol's place names, see 'Your City's Place Names: Bristol' by Richard Coates, 2017

For an online bibliography, visit [The Archaeology Data Service \(ADS\) Library](#). This online resource brings together bibliographic records and e prints for published and unpublished archaeological documents. It includes data from the OASIS, Internet Archaeology, The British and Irish Archaeological Bibliography (BIAB) and other sources. Search 'Bristol' or the name of the street, parish or area you are researching to find relevant books, reports and articles.

Museums with local archaeological collections:

[The British Museum](#) was founded in 1753 and opened its doors in 1759. It was the first national museum to cover all fields of human knowledge. Its collections contain archaeology from all over the world, including objects from Bristol and region. The [British Museum: collections online](#) allows access to almost four and a half million objects in more than two million records.

[The Museum of Gloucester](#) tells the story of the city's origins as a Roman settlement and its subsequent development to the medieval period. It collects archaeology from the whole county of Gloucestershire.

[The South West Heritage Trust](#) run the Museum of Somerset in Taunton, Somerset Rural Life Museum in Glastonbury, The Brick and Tile Museum in Bridgwater and work in partnership with Weston Museum. They care for archaeological collections from Somerset Museums Service and North Somerset Council. The reserve collection is stored at the Somerset Heritage Centre and is available for researchers and visitors to look at by appointment.

Archives and libraries with local collections

[The Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Library](#) is an excellent resource of specialist books and periodicals on archaeology, architecture, history, geography and local studies. As well as a unique collection of local materials, there are also good runs of national series and other county society journals. It is housed on the Hardwick campus of the University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham.

[The British Library](#) is the national library of the United Kingdom. It cares for over 170 million items including: books; newspapers; sound recordings; patents; prints and drawings; maps; manuscripts and more. They also keep the nation's archive of printed and digital publications.

[Gloucestershire Archives](#) keep and share documentary evidence relating to Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire. They also hold local and family history resources relating to Gloucestershire.

[Somerset Archives and Local Studies](#) hold the major written evidence for the history of Somerset and Devon. They care for 10 million archives dating from the 8th century to the present day. Their Archive and Local Studies Services have centres in Taunton, Exeter and Barnstaple.

[The Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society Library and Archive](#) is housed at the Somerset Heritage Centre. The earliest collections date back to 1850 when a library was first formed. Books and journals are acquired via purchase, exchanges with other societies, donations and bequests. The archive contains topographical artworks of Somerset from the Braikenridge Collection, the Pigott Collection and the Roland Paul Collection.

[The University of Bristol Library Special Collections](#) contain a rich and diverse range of printed books and journals, archival resources and artefacts. These include a notable collection of national, county and local histories; topographical sources; medieval manuscripts; the Pinney family papers; and a series of Brunel's sketchbooks and other papers.

Local archaeological societies

There are a number of excellent local archaeological societies in the region. Each society offers its members a wide range of benefits including a programme of talks, walks and visits; a journal; newsletters; a chance to meet likeminded people and much more.

The [Bristol and Avon Archaeological Society](#) is a lively, friendly society for everyone interested in the archaeology and history of Bristol and its surrounding area.

The [Bath and Counties Archaeological Society](#) is an active and friendly society for those interested in the archaeology of Bath and a large distance around.

The [Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society](#) offer a wealth of resources for everyone interested in the history and archaeology of the region.

The [Clifton Antiquarian Club](#) seeks to promote a better understanding of our archaeological heritage and is based in Bristol.

The [Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society](#) promote the study of archaeology, natural history, local history and historic buildings with particular reference to the historic County of Somerset.

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