

Hermitage Walk

A short, waymarked walk with spectacular views mainly through woodland



Time: 30-45 minutes

Distance: 1 mile

Route difficulty: Easy. Paths mainly unsurfaced, but the route is fairly level

Parking: Along Romney Avenue, near the Cameron Centre



Ruth Coleman

▲ *Medieval pillow mound. These pillow-shaped mounds with flat tops concealed artificially created tunnels and burrows for farming rabbits. In medieval times, rabbits were highly valued both for their fur and as a delicacy.*



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▲ *The tunnels, winding paths, glades and other historic features were the work of Thomas Wright – now recognised as a leading exponent of 18th century landscape gardening.*

Route description

- 1** Enter the Estate at the entrance leading from the triangle of grass across the road, just north of the Cameron Centre. Keep the group of five fir trees to your right as you bear left. Walk towards the marker post on the left of the gap at the entrance into the open area at the top of the Estate.
- 2** Bear left and walk between the two brambly mounds to the top of the field for a spectacular panorama. The view extends to the Cotswold Hills to the left, Bedminster Down and the Mendip Hills to the right and – said to be the highest point in the area between them – Kelston Roundhill, approximately eight miles away.
- 3** Continue towards marker post and enter Long Wood.
- 4** Follow the winding path through the wood, passing an ancient oak on your right. You will meet another marker on a wider path between the two woods.
- 5** Continue left with Long Wood on your left and Hermitage Wood on your right. The banks and ditches either side of the path survive from the landscaping carried out in the mid 18th century. The tunnel under the bridge you will walk over connected the two woods with their irregular serpentine walks.
- 6** Bear right at the marker near the north side of the bridge you have crossed. You have now entered Hermitage Wood. There was once a hermitage here - a small building styled to be a rustic retreat. Further exploration will reveal a circular glade. This is a great place for games. Look for bats here around dusk.
- 7** Continue winding your way through semi-ancient woodland curving around to your right.

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▲ Wood anemones and bluebells

Chris Bahn



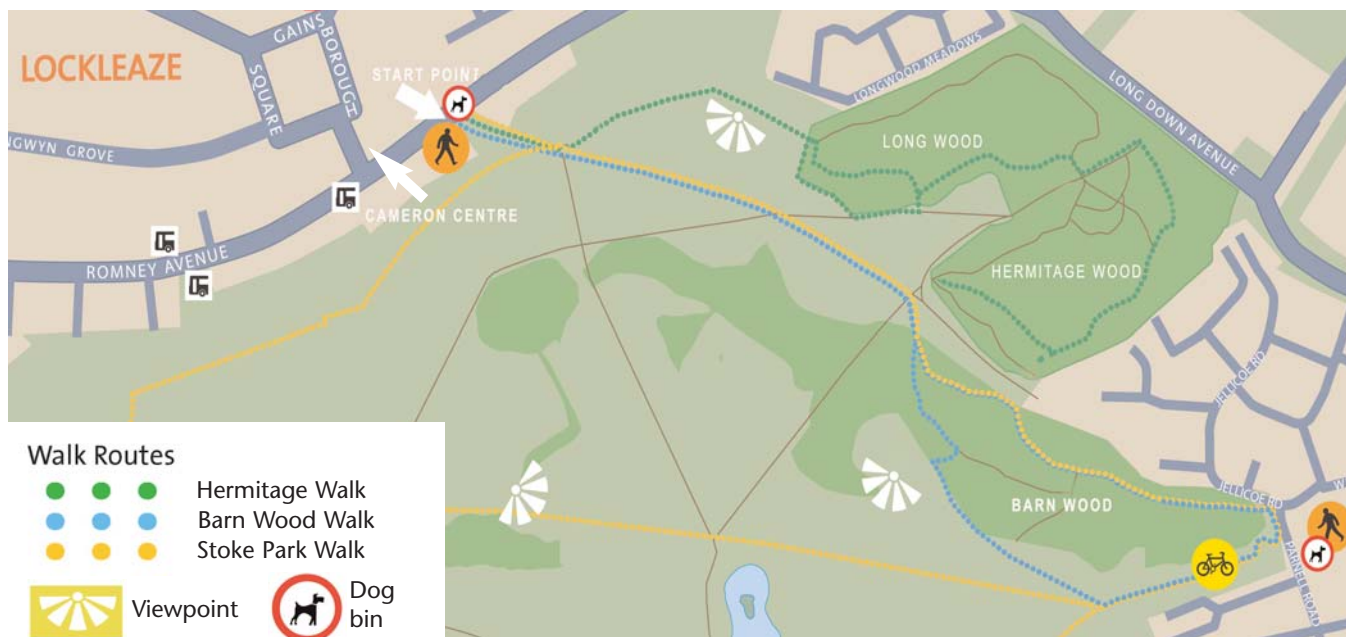
▲ Remains of medieval cart track

Look out for a marker on your right – it shows the way through the wood.

This part of the wood hosts a fantastic display of bluebells and wild garlic in spring. The woods are alive with many bird species, including, chiff-chaff, blackcap, jay, robin, wren, song thrush, blue tit, bullfinch, goldcrest, nuthatch, treecreeper and both the great spotted and green woodpeckers. In summer you may see swifts, swallows, peregrine falcons, buzzards and tawny owls.

If you wish to see the cobbled remains of the medieval cart track continue straight ahead – find it just beyond the next gate.

- 8 Continue through Hermitage Wood to the mature horse chestnut tree at the woodland edge. Cross the grass to either re-enter Long Wood or to skirt its edge and make your way back to the start point.



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Enjoyed this walk? Try another Stoke Park circular walk. There is also an Estate leaflet with a guide to the many fascinating historic features to be discovered at Stoke Park. Download from:

www.bristol.gov.uk/stokepark

