



**Walk 1**

**A circular walk from Keynsham to the Chequers and Willsbridge**

Maps: OS 1:25,000  
Explorer 155 Bristol & Bath

Distance: 5.5 miles  
Time: Allow a minimum of 2½ hours  
Terrain: Easy. Riverside, fields. Mud at times  
Start: Keynsham High Street, outside the Parish Church  
Post code: BS31 1DQ, NGR ST654688

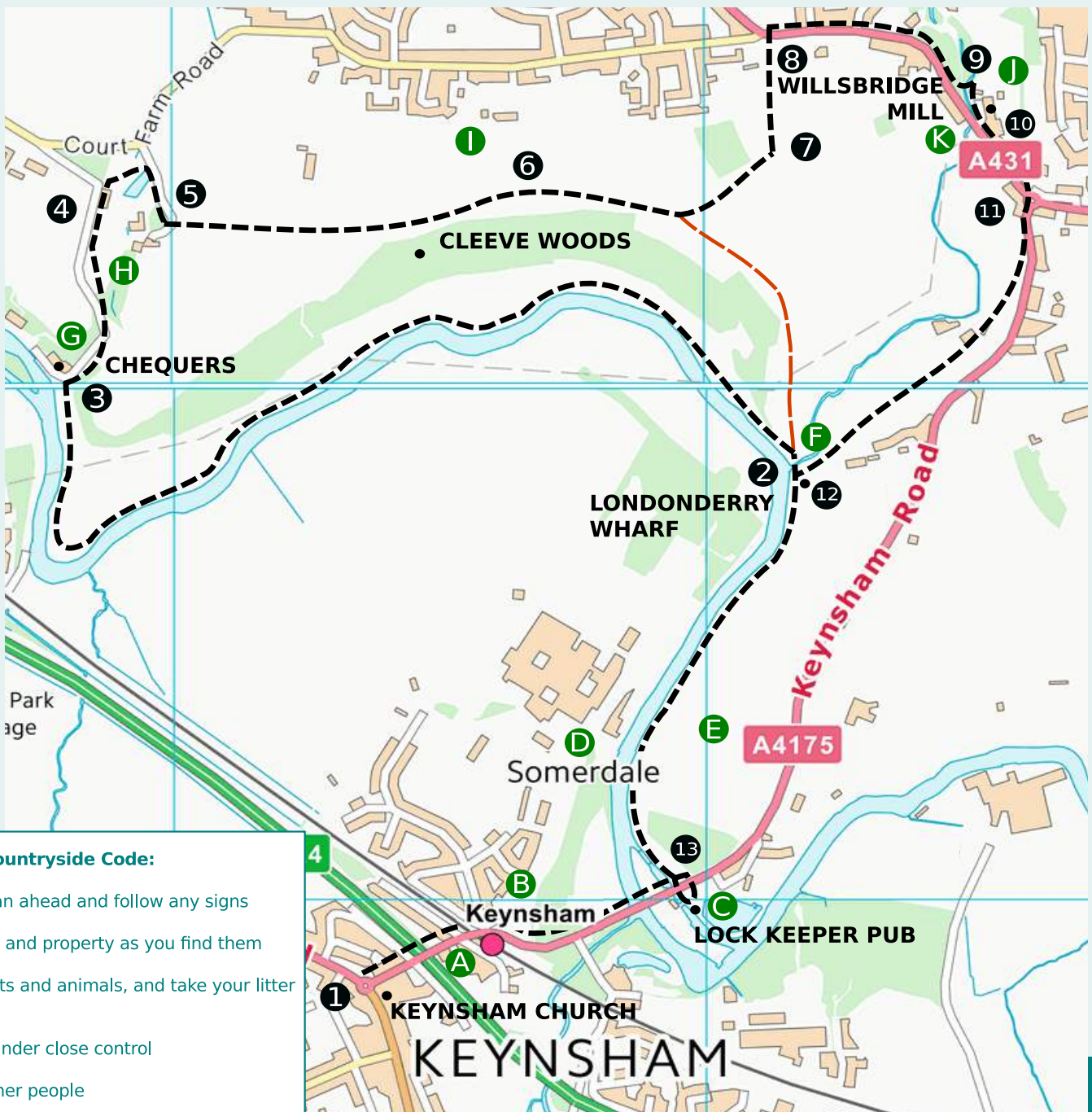
**Public Transport:**

Rail: The start of the walk is 350yds west of Keynsham Railway Station

Bus: All routes through Keynsham stop by Keynsham Church.

Parking: Keynsham central area carparks (pay and display)

Refreshments: There are pubs at Chequers and a cafe at Willsbridge Mill.



**Follow the Countryside Code:**

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people



① Starting at Keynsham Parish Church, take the Bitton road (A4175) towards the railway station.

① Note stone arch on the right leading to Parkhouse thought to be from Keynsham Abbey. **A**



② After 100 yards on the left, just inside the main gates to the Somerdale development, is a fenced area with information and artefacts from the Roman villa found when the site was developed. **B**



Lock Keeper Pub and original road

Continue down the hill, over the river, cross the road and go down steps to the marina.

Turn **RIGHT** and take the footpath by the side of the **LOCK KEEPER** pub past the River Avon Trail information board, going under the road bridge and on along the tow path on the side opposite the former Cadbury's Factory buildings. **C D E**



Cadbury's Factory building

③ After about half a mile, the path bears **LEFT** over a stone bridge at **LONDONDERRY WHARF**. **F**



Londonderry Wharf- bridge

Follow the towpath for a further three quarters of a mile along to **CHEQUERS**, an attractive hamlet with pubs suitable for a refreshment break. **G**

As a detour, it is possible to walk the 0.5 mile downstream to **HANHAM MILL** and back, passing the remains of a once thriving coal mine.



Hanham Mill cottages

④ Turn **RIGHT** up the lane beside **CHEQUERS** and continue to the top.

⑤ Go past Hanham Lodge and turn **RIGHT** through an arch following the path for 100 yards to the church lane. Turn **RIGHT** to Hanham Court and Church. **H**



Hanham Court and Church

⑥ A few yards short of the drive to the house, turn **LEFT** through a kissing gate to the church. After 100 yards turn **LEFT** through a gate signposted Willsbridge, go up through the woods and over the brow of the hill.

⑦ On your left in the distance you can see "Sally on the barn". **I**

⑧ Keeping Cleeve Woods on the right continue along a narrow fenced path to the kissing gate.

At this point, for a shorter walk omitting Willsbridge Mill, take the right fork and continue down the hill back to Londonderry Wharf, crossing Siston Brook and back to Keynsham.

⑨ Bear **LEFT** along the edge of the field and follow this path until it reaches a track.

Turn **LEFT** along the track to reach the roundabout at the top of **WILLSBRIDGE HILL** (A431).

⑩ Turn **RIGHT** and cross the road by the bus stop at the mini roundabout and continue down the hill for 200 yards and turn **LEFT** into the footpath to **WILLSBRIDGE MILL**, which used water power to grind cattle food until the 1930's. This mill has been restored with a café open at weekends. **J**



Willsbridge Mill

⑪ For an interesting 0.75 mile detour, follow the path to the left of the mill for 0.3 mile, turn **RIGHT** and **RIGHT** again to regain the road just below the mill, traversing a section of the **OLD DRAMWAY**.

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10 At the Mill turn **RIGHT** into the wildlife garden. Continue through the garden with Siston Brook on the left to the main road. Cross the road, turn **LEFT** and follow the road to the mini roundabout. **K**



Former Hat factory

Climb over the stile at the end of the field, cross the track and through the kissing gate.

Cross the field to the path by Londonderry farm going through a kissing gate and crossing the road until you reach the River Avon with the stone bridge over Siston Brook on your right.

11 Turn **RIGHT** and after 50 yards, climb the stile into the field, turn **LEFT** onto the path marked Dramway. Follow the path keeping the hedge on the left.

**i** Watching for the limestone blocks embedded in the path with holes drilled in them from the dismantled track.



Dramway stone

On the left is the bridge where the original route of the Dramway passed under the road to reach Avon Wharf, above Keynsham Lock.



Dramway tunnel

12 Turn **LEFT** at Londonderry Wharf and follow the path across the field and through the community wood back to Keynsham Lock

13 Return to **KEYNSHAM CHURCH**, up the hill past Keynsham Station. On the right, opposite the station car park, notice the path which once was the track of FRY'S Chocolate Train.



Picture taken of 1935 souvenir tin - shows Fry's Chocolate Factory

## Points of Interest

**A** This archway is a reconstruction of the doorway of a coach-house to a mansion built by the Bridges family on the Abbey site, using stone from the Abbey bequeathed by the family. The coat of arms is that of the Bridges family who bought the remains of the Abbey. The mansion built by the Bridge family was demolished in 1775. Carved Anglo Saxon and Abbey Stones found in 19th century can be seen in the arch.

**B** Just inside the main gates to the Somerdale development on the right is a fenced area which contains artefacts from the small Roman villa unearthed when the factory was built in 1924-5.





**C** The road to the Lock Keeper Pub is the remaining section of the old road abandoned after the flood damage of 1968 when the old County Bridge was destroyed. The weir adjoins the site of the old BRASS MILL whose 8 huge water-wheels made a major local industry possible.



**D** The factory at Somerdale was built in the 1920s after the merger of Cadbury Brothers and J.S.Fry and Sons. The factory was completed in 1935 and in its heyday employed over 5000 people. In 2007 Cadbury's announced that manufacture was being moved to Poland with the loss of 500 jobs. Kraft bought Cadbury's in 2012 and the factory closed soon after.



**E** The low fields on your RIGHT, known as SYDENHAM MEADS, were the setting of a decisive point in the MONMOUTH REBELLION of 1685. Having gathered a substantial army, the Duke vacillated here for several days, lost the initiative and allowed the King's forces to build up a commanding position.



**F** Londonderry wharf was built in 1833 as a branchline from the original dramway to avoid the toll at Keynsham lock. The wall of the wharf still forms the riverbank. Coal from Coalpit Heath, Kingswood and Warmley was delivered to this via a horse-drawn tramway, known as The Dramway. The weighbridge office can be seen on the right before the towpath bridge and the Official's Cottage (known as Jackie White's) is still occupied.

**G** The Lock and Weir pub at Hanham Mills was the original Chequers and an ancient ferry crossed here. The weir powered several mills. In around 1690 water was pumped from the Avon, up into the duck pond and on through hollow elm logs to a large reservoir at Lawrence Hill, where some Bristol residents paid 40s (£2) per annum for "fresh" water. The lock opened in 1727, thus improving the passage of coal and quarry stone towards Bath. The Bristol floating harbour opened in 1809, making the river here non tidal.

**H** Hanham Court and Church is a rare example of a small manor house attached physically to the local church. Hanham Court once belonged to the monks of Keynsham Abbey and the church is believed to be 15th century. After the dissolution of the monasteries, Hanham Court passed to the Creswicke family in 1638.



**I** "Sally on the barn" refers to the figure on top of Court Farm Barn, which was originally used by monks of Keynsham Abbey to store tithes. The barn was of great value and was guarded by large gates hung between large stone posts. The statue is of Ceres, goddess of harvest, and is thought to have been recovered from the remains of the Abbey and placed on top of the barn in 1839 by John Couch.



**J** Willsbridge Mill was built from locally quarried sandstone and used water power for milling flour, then for rolling iron and latterly to grind cattle food until the 1930s. It was extensively damaged in the 1968 floods.

**K** The Queen's Head pub was originally a private house built from locally quarried stone in about 1660. It became a licensed establishment in 1719. The rank of industrial buildings which adjoined the pub was built around 1790 and included a hat-making business run by George Burgess and then by John Barlow. The Queen's Head played an important part in local life as it was used for vestry meetings about local administration and poor relief, the Court Leet (a poor man's court), meetings of the Friendly Society.

