



Potter around Pill

Pill sits on the southern banks of the River Avon and has a long history, from its pottery-making days to the pilots guiding ships up the water.

Meander along the riverbank and then up onto Watchhouse Hill for glorious views all around during this short walk.

Walk information

Distance: about 1¾ miles

Difficulty: easy, with a short climb to the top of Watchhouse Hill

Duration: about an hour at a leisurely pace

Refreshments and toilets: shops in the precinct, and you can use the toilet in the Community Resource Centre if you ask

Map: OS 154 Explorer

How to get there

Start at map ref: ST 526 758

By car: park considerably in the village centre or around the creek

Pill means tidal inlet, small harbour or creek. The original name of the village was Crockerne Pill, meaning 'pottery wharf' after the large-scale pottery (crocker) industry which thrived here in the middle ages.

Pill has been a maritime community since the 13th century and was home to pilots, the men who guided boats safely up the Avon Gorge to Bristol.

The pilots were in competition with each other to intercept incoming ships, which led to the design of a new boat – the Pill Pilot Cutter – now regarded as one of the finest wooden boats ever built.

However, in 1918 the pilots decided to stop competing and share out the work.

From the shopping precinct, walk down the steps to the grassy area leading under the railway bridge and towards the creek.



At the creek there is a monument to commemorate the Methodist preachers who sailed from Pill to America in the 1770s.

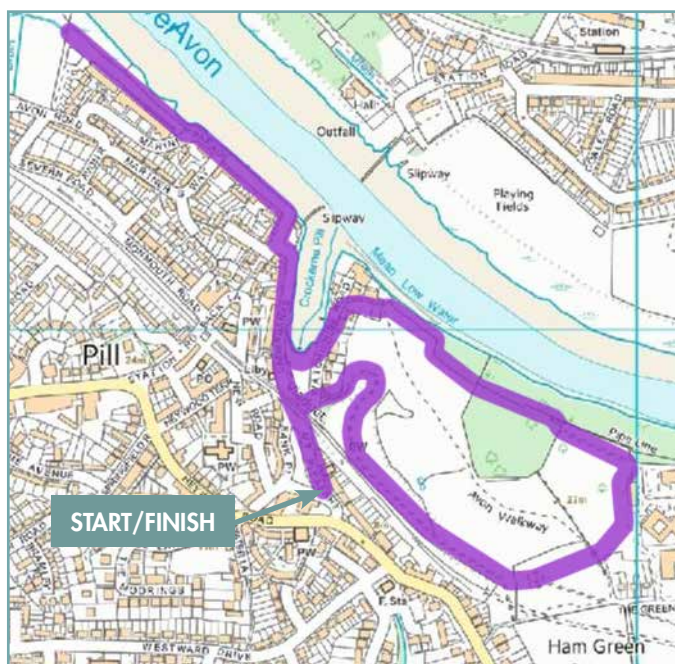
Walk along Underbanks past the Curry House, Duke of Cornwall pub and Pump Square, with the HQ of Portishead Cruising Club.

Step up onto Marine Parade, with the River Avon now in front of you and the M5 crossing ahead.

Walk along the paved path to the end, up the steps, and follow the grassy path for a short while.

This is Pill Foreshore and there is a bench to sit and take in the views.





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The area is of international importance for birds, fish and its inter-tidal habitats. Large numbers of wading birds such as redshank, snipe and curlew use the estuary, particularly in winter.

There is a kissing gate into the grazing marsh but it is not easy walking as the ground is uneven and soft and the surface hidden by grass. If you did want to try it, only attempt it on the driest of days, as the long grass can soak a pair of trousers.

Instead, retrace your steps back to Pill creek. Walk around it to the other side, and then down to the end of Watchhouse Road.

Turn right down the track between the garages towards the big white house, Grade II listed Mulberry Cottage.

Continue up the cobbled lane past the cottages, over a stile, and up onto Watchhouse Hill towards the summit. Turn around to take in the wide-ranging views.

Watchhouse Hill is a conservation site owned by North Somerset Council

and a Green Flag-awarded park, meaning it is kept to the highest standards.

Keep to the wider stone path through the trees, with a green fence on your left.

You will then pass an orchard on your right. The orchard originally belonged to Ham Green Hospital but became wild and overgrown after the hospital closed in 1999.

The Friends of Watchhouse Hill helped restore it and it's now a pleasant community orchard of more than 30 different varieties of apples, with picnic benches in the centre.

Annual apple days and village picnics take place here, along with educational projects with local schools.

Keep following the path around the edge of the orchard and you'll exit into open parkland.

Head towards the circular mound, go around it and follow the path on the opposite side. You are now on Sustrans route 41.

Follow the paved path past the sculptures, as it winds back down the hill to Watchhouse Road and the creek.

