

Carol's Walk.

Made with the kind permission of Carol Nelson.

You can click on the link below and download the walk onto your mobile.

<https://goo.gl/maps/3dDacahvnLzAN9aY9>

1. Brunel Buttery.

This is near where I live now. Look around and you might see me. If you wave, I'll wave back. I love meeting new people. I'm not as shy as I used to be before I met John. His workmates called him a legend. He was.

You can walk to anywhere in Bristol from the Buttery. If I'm going to meet a friend for a walk, I often start here.

This place is out in the open, so if you've bought one of their tasty bacon sandwiches, watch out for the seagulls. And don't ever leave your pie unattended while you go and get some sauce, or they'll have it. They watch and wait. It seems obvious, but people still do.

Before you go on a walk. Have a cup of tea or coffee. Where did your current life journey start?

2. Spike Island Arts Centre.

I live on an Island.

Look across at the river. Have you ever lived on an Island?

3. A Bond Warehouse.

On your left is the A bond warehouse. It was built to store tobacco for Bristol's cigarette industry. It's disused and derelict now.

I worked at Wills Tobacco Company for 21 years. I used to work in the laboratory testing the moisture content. I had a nice time there. We were like one big family. Every month we had a cigarette or tobacco allowance. I used to give them away. I've never smoked in my life.

I used to work at Number 4 Factory on Raleigh Road, in Bedminster. It's long gone now. There are some new bungalows where it used to be.

Look at this disused building. Where was the best place you worked?

4. The Swing bridge.

This used to swing to get out of the way of boats coming through. It's fixed now, like some things do after a while.

Bridges connect land from one side to another. I moved to Bristol in the 1960's. That was before I met John. Then a quick impulsive decision that I made changed everything. A chance meeting with a stranger.

Stop on the bridge. How many bridges have you crossed?

5. Riverside Garden Centre.

Here you pass by another bonded warehouse. This one is C.

If you're going on a long journey you have to shed things. Objects that you can't carry. You can always go back to them if you keep them safe.

I had a lot of my belongings stored in here when I moved into a flat. I keep them somewhere else now.

When I get my new place, I'll have them all back. Hopefully that won't be too long.

This building was always used for storage. What do you keep safe and locked away? Do you still need it?

6. Hotwells and District Allotment.

Behind the hedge to your left is the allotments. They are nowhere near Hotwells. They are all kept neat and tidy. Sometimes you have to make an effort to grow something worthwhile, and I expect the allotment owners feel the same way.

Look through the hedge. Have you ever grown anything from seed?

7. Ashton Court Mansion.

It has a lovely cafe. It's a converted stable once owned by Lady Smythe. It has tremendous views over Long Ashton looking up at the Dundry Hills.

You can have another coffee here. The cake is a bit expensive but I like looking at it.

While you enjoy your drink, take a moment, and I'll tell you how I met John. First of all, imagine your favourite Elvis song playing in the background. Once, there was a nightclub in Bristol called Romeo and Juliet's. On that fateful night I was walking past and I nearly went in. I've always been a loner and I've never minded going out on my own.

It sounded romantic. I asked a woman who was walking past. "What's it like in there?"

She said, "you don't want to go in there.... it's a bit rough. Romeo and Juliet came to a tragic end didn't they.... Why don't you come with me? I'm going to go somewhere much nicer..."

So, I did. And that's where my life changed, for the better.

Have you ever had a chance encounter that changed your whole life?

8. Ashton Court Estate.

Walk up through the estate to the top gate.

I usually do this walk with my friend Dawn. She's a tall lady and I struggle to keep up. I'm only 4' 10". She wears a pedometer so we always know how far we've walked.

I dance to Elvis Presley every morning for about 30 minutes which is the best way to keep fit. My favourite is Hound Dog and Don't be Cruel. Mostly all the stuff he did before he had his haircut when he joined the Army.

Stop and look at the Deer. Have you ever struggled to keep up?

9. The Public Toilets and a diversion to the Observatory.

Take the path just before you reach the public loos. It takes you to the Observatory. I didn't know what this was called until recently. You can learn something new every day.

This is a good place for another rest.

John was a regimental barber when he was in the Army. He joined up the same year as Elvis. He was a year older. Imagine if he had cut Elvis' hair!

Take a look out across Bristol. Do you imagine how some things could have been?

10. Sharp bend on the corner of York Gardens.

John was a good driver. I used to love sitting next to him when he zoomed round this bend. He was so confident.

When I first met him, he had a cream-coloured Ford Cortina Lotus with a green flash down the side. It was one of the specials at the time. He was the first man I had been out with who had a car. Although, that wasn't the reason I went out with him of course!

As you walk down the hill: Think of something that's made you feel confident.

11. The Cottage Inn.

This is a nice pub. If you want you can have a beer. I don't really drink, just the odd glass of wine, now and again. I worked at Bristol Brewery for a couple of years. They gave me a crate of beer at the end of every month. I used to give it away. It was Fosters, usually. That's an Australian beer. I visited Australia during Lockdown last year. I was there for 3 months. It wasn't a great time to go and I didn't see many people. I met a nice man on the beach but it was 2 weeks before I had to come home so it didn't come to anything.

Look across to the other side of the docks. What sort of things have you given away and why?

12. The Marina.

People live and work on these boats. You could probably go anywhere in the world from here, if you had the right boat.

I often think I spent too much of my life working. Work, work, work.

Do you have any regrets?

The Buttery.

Back where we started.

The lady took me to a club called The Locarno.

The Locarno was named after a town in Switzerland. It has a castle that was designed by Leonardo da Vinci.

That night I met my future husband, John. He came over and asked me to dance, and that was that. I can't remember what the song was. It might have been an Elvis song. I loved Elvis. I still do.

He walked me home that night, but we never went there again. I lost touch with the woman who took me there. She lived in Horfield and her name was Pat. I still feel bad about it. The regret I have is not keeping in touch with her. So, if she happens to read my story, and recognise herself, I would love to meet her again, and thank her for changing my life for the better.

The end of a journey is often the beginning. Put your hand up in the air. If someone else does it too, go over and say hello. You never know what may happen.

This walk was written and compiled by Carol Nelson and Vic Llewellyn.

The additional walker questions are asked by Vic Llewellyn.

