

ARNOS VALE DISCOVERY WALK

Discover the people, wildlife and history that make Arnos Vale so special.
Walk takes 1 hour

Start at the Reception in the East Lodge

1 Home sweet home

For generations, cemetery staff lived with their families in the Lodges at Arnos Vale. While no one lives in the Lodges anymore, the tunnels underground make a comfortable home for roosting bats.

2 Lost but not forgotten

Arnos Vale is the last resting place of more than 530 servicemen and women who lost their lives during WW1 and WW2 and other conflicts. The 239 men buried in 'Soldiers and Sailors Corners' (See point 16) are casualties who came mainly from the UK, Ireland and the Commonwealth.

3 A place of pilgrimage

This impressive monument marks the grave of one of Arnos Vale's most famous people. Rajah Rammohun Roy is known around the world as the "Father of Modern India". His grave is a place of pilgrimage for visitors from near and far.

Bristol landmarks to visit: The Rajah's statue on College Green and portrait in the City Museum.

4 A working cemetery

Arnos Vale Cemetery opened in 1839, and has stayed open as a working cemetery ever since. There are now more than 300,000 people remembered here.

5 No expense spared

When it came to funerals and gravestones, the Victorians wanted the grandest they could afford. The Matthews family spent £1,000 on their memorial (equivalent to about £61,000 in today's money).

6 Bristol's best

Arnos Vale is the last resting place of many people who played an important part in shaping the city. Mary Carpenter set up a 'Ragged School', providing free education for Bristol's poorest children.



7 Showing its age

After more than 180 years, the landscape has transformed since the first burial of Mary Breillat, here on 29th July, 1839. At that time this whole hillside was open fields with a view to the River Avon and industrial Bristol, when the Victorian smog cleared.

8 Traces left behind

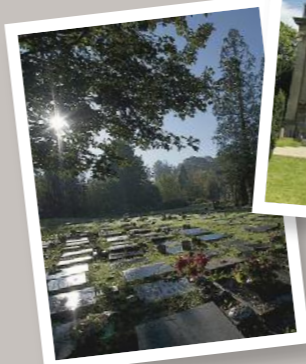
This is the tallest obelisk in Arnos Vale and would have taken great skill to carve. Like paintings in a gallery, memorial masons liked to sign their work, perhaps as a way to advertise their skill.

9 Height of fashion

The beautiful evergreen trees like Irish Yews and Austrian Pine you see towering overhead were considered very fashionable when the cemetery opened. Other exotic species favoured by the Victorians from around the world, are the Chilean Pine (or 'Monkey Puzzle') and Western Red Cedar.

10 A place for many faiths

You are now standing next to the Anglican Chapel. Arnos Vale Cemetery was built with two chapels so that the cemetery could accommodate a range of beliefs. The Non-conformist or dissenters chapel is over the other side of Garden of Rest 1. All the historic buildings on site are designed to look like ancient Greek buildings.



Visit safely – The Discovery Trail includes some slopes, muddy paths and steps.
The Woodland Walk is more challenging and includes steps, steep slopes and rough terrain.



WOODLAND WALK

Carry on exploring Arnos Vale by taking our woodland route to discover more. This route is a bit more challenging and visits some hidden places at the top of the cemetery.
Walk takes 1.5 hours

12 Muller's orphans

George Muller was famous for caring for thousands of orphans during his lifetime. When he died in 1898 immense crowds turned out for the funeral and to see the carriage pass. There is a both a road and an avenue named after him near where his orphanage was situated in Ashley Down.

13 Underwood Centre

Named after Arnos Vale architect Charles Underwood, this woodland hideaway plays host to weddings, funerals, woodland burial services, forest schools, kids clubs and much more.



14 Sunshine corner

This sunny spot is full of graves and is also a wonderful species-rich grassland. It is dotted with native wild flowers and plots alongside floral tributes and memorials.

15 Community garden

The containers and planters are maintained by members of the local community, making this spot a lovely place to sit and relax. New groups are always welcome to help out.

16 Sailors' Corner and Cross of Sacrifice

The Cross of Sacrifice is a focal point for remembrance for all those killed during the two World Wars. Nearby you will see Sailors' Corner, last resting place of many WW2 sailors.

17 Nature friendly

Located in the heart of the city, the Natural Burial Woodland is Bristol's first natural green burial site. This area was previously an old orchard with greenhouses that provided plants for the cemetery.

18 A haven for wildlife

Take a look over the wall at the wonderful habitat that is home to our bats, owls, foxes, badgers and many other creatures. Check the trees for nest boxes and bat roosts. How many can you see?



19 Bristol's growth

When Arnos Vale first opened, the landscape around you was all fields. The city of Bristol has grown around the cemetery, making it a vital green space in an urban setting.

From here, head across to the Spielman Centre where you can take the right-hand path and continue your walk or enjoy a well earned break in the Café and visit the exhibition in the basement.

11 Saved but not safe

Arnos Vale was saved after decades of neglect and is now managed by the Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust as a charity dependent on public donations.

As a charity, we need your help. Please donate at arnosvale.org.uk/donate. Every donation helps us protect and enhance this special place.