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Walks Programme

The latest information about our walks programme is available on our website: <https://bristolramblers.org.uk>. Any additional walks are added as they are submitted. To see all the walks on specific days, or of specific lengths or difficulties, go to <https://bristolramblers.org.uk/List-programme>. From this page you can also download or print the list of walks, or add walks to your calendar.

Walking with other Ramblers groups

Remember that your Ramblers membership entitles you to join walks all over the country. Locally, <http://www.avon-ramblers.org.uk> lists forthcoming walks organised by the eight Ramblers groups in the Avon area. The website also has links to other groups' websites. So if there is a gap in the Bristol walks programme, have a look to see what else might be available!

Some walks from the December programme

This is not an exhaustive list of the walks available. Always check the website for the most up-to-date information:

<https://bristolramblers.org.uk/List-programme>

In particular, several Saturday walks are in planning and expected to be added to the December programme soon.

Wed 29 Nov – North Bristol Parks (B walk, 6 miles)

A walk through Eastville Park, Oldbury Court, Snuff Mills, Stoke Park and Purdown. There are some inclines, and the ground is likely to be muddy in places. Please bring your own refreshments.

Sun 3 Dec – Venturing beside the Avon in East Bristol (B walk, 12 miles)

This excursion is very much a 'semi-urban' walk, which explores the eastern fringes of Bristol in some depth. Some of it you may already be acquainted with, other sections you will almost certainly not be aware of... well, until now that is!

We begin and finish at Warmley Station, (cafe and toilets available), and in between shall visit Willsbridge Mill and Hanham Court, walk beside Siston Brook, the 'Dramway' and the R.Avon, and return via Stonehills and Cock Ridge. Lunch is at the Chequers Inn (or the Old Lock & Weir if you prefer).

The going is fairly gentle and agreeable for the most part, with a surprising degree of interest and variety to entertain us as we make our way along a complex of lanes, lines, commons and small hills.

I hope you will care to join me - I guarantee that you will have learnt a great deal more about this very pleasant part of Bristol than you previously knew...!

Sun 3 Dec – East of the Arwallt (A walk, 14 miles)

An exploration of the 'foothills' and lowlands east of the Black Mountains; a picturesque mixture of pastures, woodlands, the odd vineyard, churches, a castle, and – to bring us bang up to date - a solar farm.

We start the walk heading west to visit the Skirrid summit, our morning stop, overlooking a rounded, very green lump - The Arwallt. There follows an undulating route to our lunch stop at Llangattock Lingoed, home of the beautiful medieval church of St Cadoc's and the iconic Hunter's Moon pub (also medieval). The afternoon follows the Offa's Dyke path to the wonderfully preserved White Castle, taking our break in the sheltered recesses of the Keep. Finally we head off to visit a complete contrast, the Solar Farm, before shortly returning to the start.

Note that there is a charge of £5 per car at walk start, so car sharing is recommended!

Wed 6 Dec – Flax Bourton (B walk, 6 miles)

A circular walk from Flax Bourton via Bourton Wood, Backwell Hill, Jubilee Stone and Farleigh. There is one significant ascent/descent. There will be a stop for coffee, so please bring your own refreshments.

This walk is accessible by public transport: take the X1 or X2 from Bristol Bus Station to the Jubilee Inn stop at Flax Bourton. The start point is near the village hall; across the main road and follow the footpath.

Sun 10 Dec – Cock Ridge (A walk, 14 miles)

With the evenings drawing in, I've recently been investigating territory close to home, and which can be easily and quickly reached.

This walk fits the bill - it's a complex figure-of-eight excursion on the eastern extremities of Bristol. It's rather urban in nature, and perhaps not particularly physically challenging, but it does provide a pleasant and enjoyable outing of some real interest and variety. Even better, much of it will be completely new to the vast majority, and will doubtless enhance your knowledge of the area, as well as revealing a lot of green spaces you would otherwise be quite unaware of....

The walk connects Warmley, Keynsham and Hanham via Willsbridge Mill, the R. Avon, Hanham Court and Longwell Green. It is some 14 complicated miles in length.

I hope you'll come along as I'm sure you'll be pleasantly surprised by what's on offer - I also defy you to subsequently try to work out on the map exactly where you've been and just how you managed to do so. Quite a challenge!

Wed 13 Dec – Frenchay, Snuff Mills, Stoke Park Circular (B walk, 6 miles)

Pleasant, easy paths, tracks and quiet lanes from Frenchay Common, along part of the River Frome walkway to the open parkland and woods of Stoke Park. The route may be muddy in places, but there is a chance to see wood carvings in Stoke Park.

There is the option of a Festive Meal in the White Lion at the end of the walk; you must book this for yourself in advance via the White Lion website. Say you are with the Ramblers. Note that there is a £10 deposit for the meal.

Sun 17 Dec – Solstice Stomp XVII (A/B walk, 17 miles approx)

The 17th annual Solstice Stomp will follow the usual pattern. We will meet at the Clifton end of the Clifton Suspension Bridge around 7:55am to start walking westwards at 8:00am before the sun rises slowly at our backs. Various villages, woods, and the occasional hill will follow as we head to a lunchtime pub stop. Afterwards we will head back to finish by the Observatory in Clifton for sunset at 4:01pm (the earliest sunset time in Bristol in the year).

Due to expected jetlag on the part of the traditional leader, there will be a special guest leader for this year's stomp.

Sun 24 Dec – Thornbury and River Severn (B walk, 9 miles)

A scenic, fairly flat pre-Christmas walk, visiting Thornbury, St Arildas Church, River Severn, Littleton Upon Severn and Jubilee Way.

Sun 31 Dec – TBA (B walk, 8 miles approx)

The last walk of 2023 is currently expected to be in the area of Oakhill, but may change depending on ground conditions. Check the website for any updates.

Wessex Wanderer Railway Walks

By Dorothy G

Wessex Wanderer Railway walks, led from stations along the Heart of Wessex, Weymouth to Bristol railway line will soon reach their 30th anniversary year. This programme of walks runs from April to October each year and is led by leaders from Ramblers groups along the length of the Weymouth line. Walks are of varying lengths, some being linear (from station to station) and some circular, departing from and returning to the same station.

Despite the challenges of working around train strikes this year, Ramblers leaders have managed to offer varied and enjoyable walks.

We plan to hold our annual lunchtime social gathering at the end of January, to which you are warmly invited.

Please check out our website later in the year: www.wessexrailwaywalks.org.uk

Contact the coordinator, Joy Harrison, if you would like to join our circulation list: joyousgooner59@btinternet.com

The next season's programme is usually compiled early in the New Year but, thanks to having a responsive website and no longer issuing printed programmes, walks can be added later than this, should new leaders come forward with their "walk offerings". As an enticement to current and potential walk leaders in 2024, GWR is providing free travel passes for both the recce and the walk itself (for both walk leader and co leader)!

We are keen to publicise our walks. So please help by talking about us to other walkers, particularly to those reliant on public transport. We have plenty of posters and leaflets available for distribution, should you know of places where these could be profitably displayed.

Walking News and Events

Bristol Ramblers Group AGM

The Bristol Ramblers AGM took place on 19th October at Redland Green Bowls club, which turned out to be a wet, windy night, with significant traffic issues. This likely explains the lower turnout than past AGMs, despite the attractions; which included a range of vegetarian snacks, complementary wine, and a very entertaining talk.

Business

In the business section of the meeting, the Treasurers report and accounts were accepted, and John Wrigley was appointed as independent examiner for 2023/24. Heather Toyne, the Chair, thanked the Committee, Walk Coordinators, leaders and members for a successful year, and described some of the highlights of the year; offering particular thanks to Roger Britton who was stepping down as Coordinator the Don't Lose Your Way (DLYW) initiative, and Geoff Daniels, who was leaving his role as Treasurer. The roles which were agreed for the forthcoming year were as follows:

Committee members:

- **Chair** Heather Toyne
- **Secretary** Carew Reynell
- **Treasurer** Bob Gibson
- **Minutes Secretary** Peter Budden
- **Membership Secretary** Julie Westgarth
- **Webmaster** Tony Parsons
- **Walks Editor** Tony Parsons
- **Web Page Editor** Tony Parsons/Sarah Marshall
- **Footpaths Officer** Keith Budd
- **eBoot Editor** Ceiswyn Blake
- **Wednesday & Saturday Walks Representative** Sue Fox
- **Planning & Environment Officer** (Vacant)
- **Publicity/Communications Officer** (Vacant)

Other key volunteer roles:

- **Walk Coordinator A Group** Bob Gibson
- **Walk Coordinator B Group** Paula Cannings
- **Walk Coordinator Saturday Walks** Aubrey Newport
- **Walk Coordinator Wednesday Walks** Margaret Ruse
- **Walk Coordinator Evening Walks** Keith Budd
- **PROW Liaison/Lead** Roger Britton
- **DLYW Coordinator** (Vacant)

Guest speakers

The Area Secretary, Jeff Rowlands, provided a brief overview of national activities, including the significant project on Safety Management, which will include a comprehensive set of materials to support Walk Leaders. This is out for consultation

by Ramblers HQ during November, with a final draft, together with learning modules on Assemble, expected to be available in March 2024.

Keith B and Carew R jointly gave a presentation entitled 'Walking in the Dolomites – the Alta Via 2 and Via Ferrata'. Alta Via 2 is one of currently eight such Alta Via in the Dolomites. The dramatic scenery, narrow paths with steep drops, sections of path linked by vertical metal ladders and the variety of accommodation huts, in particular, were highlighted by stunning photographs. Additionally, Keith displayed and demonstrated some of the necessary safety equipment. The talk was highly appreciated by those present.

Ramblers Christmas Gift Membership

If you've enjoyed your Ramblers membership this year, why not invite your loved ones to join in – all while supporting access to our country's great outdoors?

For details of buying a gift membership, see the Ramblers website:

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/support-us/gift-membership>

Note that for pre-Christmas delivery, you should order your gift membership pack before Dec 13th, and include the word 'Christmas' in your gift message.

Feature Articles

Editorial

Dieu, outre l'eau, l'air, la terre et le feu, a créé une cinquième élément; la boue.

There are days when I think Napoleon Bonaparte had a point.

Not so much about overthrowing the government and establishing a dictatorship (although I'm sure we can all sympathise with the temptation), but he definitely knew what he was talking about when it came to mud.

With earth and with water, you know where you are. Possibly uncomfortably wet-footed, but at least your shoes are clean and you don't have brown stains halfway up your trousers. Mud, however, is a constant force that either sucks your feet down or makes them slither sideways. It forms a hidden trap beneath recently-fallen leaves and renders some slopes completely impassable.

And yet – have you ever watched small children in mud? Splashing joyously about in wellies, not just careless of the mess but positively reveling in it?

Maybe, instead of staring sadly at yet another pair of ruined shoes and considering taking up bog-snorkeling, we should consider following their example. Perhaps, just once in a while, it's worth putting away our adult dignity and putting on our wellies to try and recapture the joy of squidging and slipping.

Or I could just wax my new boots for the fifth time and hope for a white and, more importantly, solidly frozen Christmas...

Ceiswyn

(pron. KICE-win)

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Partners and Sponsors

Ramblers Walking Holidays



Ramblers Walking Holidays is the Ramblers holiday walking partner. If you book a holiday with Ramblers Walking Holidays and let them know that you are a Bristol Ramblers member, this Group will receive a contribution (£10 for UK holidays, £20 for short haul, £30 for long haul). See <https://www.ramblersholidays.co.uk/faqs#tab-the-walking-partnership>

Note that this has no impact on the price you pay for the holiday.

Outdoor Retailers

Most outdoor gear shops offer discounts to Ramblers members.

Cotswold Outdoor



Cotswold Outdoor is the Ramblers national sponsor, and their discount is 15%.

Taunton Leisure



Taunton Leisure sponsors this local Group, and also offers 15% discounts. There are stores available in Bristol, Taunton and Exeter.

Books and Maps

Ordnance Survey

The Ordnance Survey are working with the Ramblers to open the way for everyone to enjoy the outdoors in a more accessible, safe and sustainable way.

Ramblers members can enjoy 25% off a new subscription to OS Maps Premium, using code RAMOSM. Additionally, £5 will be donated to the Ramblers for each valid subscription.

Stanfords Book Shop

Stanfords is a specialist retailer of maps, travel books and other travel accessories, with stores in London and Bristol. They offer a 10% discount to Ramblers members.

Cicerone Press



Cicerone publishes guide books for walkers and cyclists. They offer a 25% discount to Ramblers members, with the code RAMBMD25.

You are receiving this communication as a member of the Bristol group and you have previously asked to be kept informed of the Ramblers work by email. If you no longer wish to receive communications like this, please update your mailing preferences at www.ramblers.org.uk/my-account.
