

Contents

Walks Programme.....	2
Walking with other Ramblers groups	2
Some walks from the February programme.....	2
Walking News and Events.....	4
WalkFest 24	4
Bristol Ramblers Committee Meeting – January	5
Avon Ramblers Social and AGM – Saturday 24 February	6
Rights of Way in Crisis	6
South Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood	7
Feature Articles	7
Editorial	7
Partners and Sponsors.....	8
Ramblers Walking Holidays.....	8
Outdoor Retailers	8
Books and Maps	8

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 February 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>

Sat 3 Feb - Shirehampton, Kingsweston and the River Avon (B walk, 7 miles)

A second chance at this pleasant walk. Up the Avon, into Shirehampton, then up to Kings Weston Down where we can break for coffee at the house. We'll then walk towards the Avon, get some fine views over Horseshoe Bend and return to Shirehampton. It's mostly through green areas, apart from a necessary walk up into, and through, Shirehampton along the pavements.

Sun 4 Feb - Thornbury to Littleton on Severn (B walk, 9 miles)

We start by walking to St Arildas Church with its lovely churchyard, then on the Severn Way to the River Severn. We then make our way via the Jubilee way to Littleton on Severn, where there is the option of a pub stop, before continuing on the Jubilee Way back into Thornbury via some interesting stiles. The walk is fairly flat, but there are two small climbs.

Sun 4 Feb - Banwell to Bleadon (A walk, 15 miles)

A busy, roller-coaster of a walk that makes its way through the southwestern fringes of the Mendips.

We begin at the very pleasant village of Banwell, quickly surmount a ridge, head over farmland to Barton, then head steeply up to the top of Crook Peak! It's then downhill all the way to Loxton, before a steady, long pull up Christon Hill, then on to Bleadon, the "Queens Arms", and lunch.

The afternoon is less demanding, eventually returning us to Banwell via Whitley Head and a complex series of lanes.

Expect lots of open hillsides and expansive views, plus occasional woodlands, much of it set in rural surroundings – this has the potential for a good day's walking!

Wed 7 Feb – Portishead Circular (B walk, 6 miles)

This is a mixture of surfaced paths, coastal footpaths, harbourside and field walking, taking in the Coast Path, Portishead Down and Marina. The route may be muddy in places, and there is quite a steep climb near the start of the walk. There is the option of a pub at the end.

This walk can be accessed by public transport; take bus X4 from Bristol Bus Station to Nore Road, Portishead.

Sat 10 Feb – Paradise Bottom and Abbots Pool (B walk, 5 miles)

The walk descends to Paradise Bottom and Miles Dock before climbing back past Leigh Woods car park to take the Monarchs way to Abbots Leigh. It then crosses the A369 to Abbots Pool and ends along Sandy Lane. Parts may be muddy, particularly where we follow the Monarchs Way.

Sun 11 Feb – Clevedon (B walk, 11 miles)

A delightful wander around the very pleasant town of Clevedon and its immediate environs.

This outing tries to encompass as many aspects of Clevedon as it can via an 11 mile walk - if you don't know the area at the outset, you will come the finish! And if you don't like what you see, you get your money back...!

Be prepared for woodlands, golf courses, ancient churches, clifftop paths, a marina, parks aplenty and footpaths you were quite unaware of, as well as a few more hills to climb than you had possibly expected...

So come along, enjoy the views and the fresh, seaside air, and stretch those legs and lungs into the bargain!

Sun 11 Feb – Dursley Figure of Eight (A walk, 14 miles)

Our hilly route includes Waterley Bottom, Stinchcombe Hill, Cam Long Down and Uley Bury. There is also attractive valley and woodland walking as well as a fine section of the Cotswold Way along an escarpment.

Wed 14 Feb – Compton Dando (B walk, 5 miles)

We walk beside the River Chew to Chewton Keynsham, then across fields to Burnett/Tucking Mill, and return. There is one stile and one ascent/descent, but there may be several muddy parts depending on the weather. There is the option of a pub at the end of the walk.

Sun 18 Feb – Mendip Meander (B walk, 12 miles)

A yomp from the Blackmoor Nature Reserve, where rare plants grow over the old lead mine workings (though probably not at this time of year), over Beacon Batch, on to Dolebury Warren, and then onto arguably the Best Pub in the area.

Sun 18 Feb – Wye Valley and the Gloucester Way (A walk, 15 miles)

This walk follows mostly the Offa's Dyke Path and the Gloucestershire Way. Starting from The Park car park on the B4228, we head for the Offa's Dyke Path along the old/hill route up toward St Briavels Common until Bigsweir bridge, briefly stopping to view the ruins of Tintern Abbey from the Devil's Pulpit. Then we turn east away from the Offa's Dyke Path into a valley and up to St Briavels, where we have lunch with the option of a pub.

After lunch we head south/south east towards the Severn to follow the Gloucestershire Way until just before Poors Allotment nature reserve, which we cross to return to the cars. There are fine views of the Wye Valley and the River Severn if the weather is kind. The total ascent is approximately 2800 feet.

Sun 25 Feb - Corsham to Colerne Peacock Trail (B walk, 10 miles)

Corsham was the home of a lot of MOD bases, and the Peacock Trail comes from the peacocks that reside at Corsham Court but also can be seen around town. The walk is along footpaths and quiet lanes and has some steep ascents and descents, also crossing fields with numerous stiles.

Starting at Corsham we go via Pickwick (where Charles Dickens got inspiration for the Pickwick papers), Middlewick, the Larches, Colletts Bottom Wood and Weavern Farm and Thickwood to Colerne for lunch, where there should be a pub available. From there we go via Widdenham Farm, Rudloe Manor and back via Pickwick Lodge Farm and Guyers Farm to Corsham. This walk will more than likely be wet and muddy. Look forward to seeing people there

Note that the car park in Corsham costs £5.40, so car sharing where possible is strongly advised.

Sun 3 Mar – Priddy Winter Circuit (B walk, 8 miles)

This walk begins in Stockhill, and takes in the views of the Somerset levels at the Ebbor viewing area. We then descend to Priddy where we stop at the Queen Vic for a short break. From there we walk past the Bronze Age Nine Barrows site, winding gently back to our start point. The walk gives a brief flavour of the Mendips, taking into account the unpredictable weather of March!

Walking News and Events

WalkFest 24

The annual WalkFest will once again be taking place throughout May, with the support of the Bristol Ramblers as well as other organisations.

In previous years, there has been in the region of 150 walks and events, with walks of all shapes and sizes and themes; the vast majority of which are free. We would encourage you to take this opportunity to explore aspects of Bristol that may be new to you.

From the outset, Bristol Ramblers have made a substantial contribution to the programme of walks. WalkFest walks can take place at any time during May –

weekday or weekend, daytime or evening – and in any part of Bristol, not necessarily at the usual times or places for Ramblers walks.

If you would be willing to lead a walk, please contact carew.reynell@gmail.com to sort out the details. The deadline for submissions is 16th February.

We will publish a link to the Festival Programme when it becomes available.

Bristol Ramblers Committee Meeting – January

The committee had their regular bimonthly meeting on 10th January, with Walk Co-ordinators attending for the first part. A surprising amount of business was discussed, including WalkFest and leader First Aid training.

Bristol WalkFest May 2024

Once again there is a tight deadline for walks to be submitted. Walk Co-ordinators will be seeking walks for May which are in the Bristol area, or accessible by public transport.

Walk numbers update

At each meeting, the Committee receives an update from co-ordinators summarising the attendance on each type of walk since the last committee meeting, as shown in the table below:

	Wednesday	Saturday	Sunday B	Sunday A
Average	17	9	15	11
Highest	29	12	21	20
Lowest	9	5	8	3

These figures are generally consistent with expectations based on previous years.

First Aid Training

Walk Co-ordinators had sought feedback from leaders that confirmed that leaders would like to attend first aid training, and ideally this would be a short course focused on scenarios most likely to occur outdoors.

A one-day course will now be commissioned by the Committee, with more details to follow through walk co-ordinators for active Bristol Ramblers leaders.

Website

Three issues associated with the website were discussed:

- The process of changing to Joomla 4 as our website platform will hopefully take place seamlessly over the coming months.
- The Committee discussed how long we should retain documents such as newsletters which are currently on the website. Removal of old documents is generally considered good practice, both for data storage reasons and in some cases for data protection.

- The Committee also agreed to add some additional material to the group website in the Leaders area, including details of training, and suggestions on what should be included in a First Aid Kit.

Area AGM

The Chair reminded the Committee that they and all members of Bristol Ramblers are invited to join the Area AGM on Saturday 24 February. Further details are included in a separate section below.

Bristol Ramblers AGM

The Committee considered possible speakers for the next Bristol Ramblers AGM. If you have interesting experiences related to walking or the outdoors that you might be willing to share, please contact the Bristol Ramblers Chair before the end of February. The next AGM will take place on Wednesday 16th October.

Engaging Members in the Committee

The Committee recognized that some members may feel remote from the Committee. All members are invited to contact the Bristol Ramblers Chair or other Committee members if there is a topic you would like us to address. In addition, the minutes of Committee meetings will be made available on the website once they have been approved.

Members are also welcome to attend Committee meetings. If you would like to attend a future committee meeting, please email the Chair at:

heather.toyne@btinternet.com

The next committee meeting is 29th February.

Avon Ramblers Social and AGM – Saturday 24 February

The Area AGM will be taking place on Saturday, 24 February at the Somerdale Pavilion, Keynsham, BS31 2FF. All members of area groups are invited to attend. The programme includes:

- 1030: Four-mile circular walk along some less-used and newly-created paths, beside the rugby pitches, up over the motocross area and alongside the river. The route will be fairly level, except for a few steps, and one short, steep climb. If possible, please bring a change of footwear for entering the pavilion afterward.
- 1230: Buffet in the Terrace Suite
- 1315: Area AGM
- 1345: Talk by Malcolm McDonnell, Ramblers trustee

Papers for the AGM will be circulated nearer the date.

If you have any queries, please contact: area-secretary@avon-ramblers.org.uk

Rights of Way in Crisis

A recent BBC article has drawn attention to the increasing problem of blocked or overgrown rights of way.

A BBC request to local authorities found almost 32,000 recorded obstructions to footpaths; with 45 local authorities unable to provide data, and more obstructions likely going unrecorded. And the number is only increasing.

For more on this story (and video footage that some members may very much empathise with): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-67937253>

South Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood

Planning has begun for the South Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood project, which covers the BS3 area, including Southville, Windmill Hill and Bedminster.

In this earliest phase, the project team are collecting information from local leaders and organisations to find out the main difficulties and needs in their communities. There will also be an opportunity later this year for local residents and commuters to have their say – so if you are one of those affected, you may want to keep an eye on the project page at: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/people-and-communities/liveable-neighbourhoods/south-bristol-liveable-neighbourhood>

Feature Articles

Editorial

One of the great constants of walking with the Bristol Ramblers is the pub stop. It may be in the middle of the walk, or in the afternoon, or even at the end; but at this time of year it is a haven of warmth, fellowship, plumbing and (usually) Butty Bach.

But how essential is it really?

There are down sides to the pub stop, as well as the obvious benefits. Designing a walk to pass an appropriate hostelry rather constrains the walk leader's imagination, and those who don't drink may find themselves trying to perch on a wall halfway across the village if there isn't a handy park or convenient graveyard close by. "Forty five minutes for lunch?" may seem far too little for those looking forward to supping a pleasant pint beside an open fire, but far too much for those who expect to be spending the same time eating increasingly soggy sandwiches in the cold.

This was even more of a problem during The Great Plague, when service was so slow at the few pubs that were open that a thirsty hiker might still be waiting for their drink half an hour after ordering. Conversely, one could argue that those pubs that survived still need all the help they can get to stay open – especially the ones that are well placed for passing walkers.

On the third hand, the growing demographic of coffee drinking walkers may not much care about the survival of rural pubs, especially ones that charge an arm and a leg for a very sad cup of instant that doesn't even come with a biscuit.

But pub-lovers may rest assured that this is one Ramblers tradition that seems unlikely to change – at least until someone introduces the rural posh café...

Ceiswyn

(pron. KICE-win)

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.
