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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/display-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.

Some walks from the May programme

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

<https://www.bristolramblers.org.uk/display-programme>

Sun 28 April - Marshfield and Colerne (B walk, 12 miles)

A walk on the border between Somerset and Wiltshire, passing by St Catherine's Court on the Limestone Link.

Sun 28 April – Northern Malverns Rollercoaster (A hill walk, 13 miles)

This hilly walk takes in all the Malverns tops north of the Malvern Hills Hotel. A gentle start is followed by the ascents of Table Hill and North Hill among others before we descend to Great Malvern for lunch. A steep post-prandial climb leads us to the summit of Worcestershire Beacon. We then follow the undulating ridge to the start.

While the distance is relatively short and most of the climbs are not long this is a strenuous outing with a total ascent of around 3,000 feet. There is also an option for hill walkers to climb Herefordshire Beacon at the end of the day. Anyone who has had enough by then will have the choice of relaxing in the pub or the roadside cafe while the extra hill is bagged.

Wed 1 May – Long Ashton and Ashton Court (B walk, 5 miles)

Through the outskirts of Long Ashton, over the top of the golf course and through woods (hopefully with lots of bluebells) up to Ashton Court meadows for a coffee stop. Then across the top meadows with views over Bristol, down through woods to the deer park and return past the mansion to the start point.

Wed 1 May – Abbots Pool (B walk, 5 miles)

A circular walk starting from the Clifton end of the Suspension Bridge. The route passes through the National Trust's Leigh Woods and the village of Abbots Leigh. On a clear day, the Welsh hills can be seen across the Severn Estuary. Beyond

Abbots Leigh lies Abbots Pool, a serene pool in a beautiful wooded location. In May, it will be bursting with new leaf and birdsong. After pausing by the pool, we will return to Clifton via the wide open spaces of the Ashton Court Estate.

Wed 1 May – Downs Walk (C walk, 2 miles)

This is the launch walk for Bristol WalkFest, so may be busy!

Join us for a leisurely walk around fascinating parts of the Downs, with short stops from time to time to discover how nature conservation works in protecting our wildlife (helped by goats!) in our stunning local green space – Bristol's 'jewel in the crown'. Level walking, across grass.



Thu 2 May – Bishops Knoll (B walk, 6 miles)

Discover the hidden secrets of Bishops Knoll, with varied trees and terraced paths and an astonishing history. We meander from the Downs to Bishops Knoll and then climb steeply back up. Refreshments can be purchased before and after from the Downs cafe.

Thu 2 May – Riverside Revelation (B evening walk, 4 miles)

A varied and entertaining evening excursion which manages to incorporate a great deal into two short hours! A lovely lake, an arboretum and a riverside stroll feature prominently, along with some charming encounters with the wooded Trym Valley and back lanes that will constantly surprise you.

Sat 4 May – Failand Bluebell Walk (B walk, 6 miles)

This walk undulates through fields and woods with some stiles and the likelihood of horses and cattle. There are extensive views across the estuary on a clear day, and several bluebell woods en route. Likely to be muddy in places.

Sat 4 May – Paradise Bottom and 50 Acres (A introductory walk, 12 miles)

This introductory (A) walk is for fit people who want to try a harder grade walk than our (B) Moderate or (C) Easy walks.

Starting from the Bristol end of the Clifton Suspension Bridge, we will head west across Leigh Woods, and the slopes of Clifton gorge, through woods and fields, past streams, pools and rivers, with occasional expansive views across the Bristol landscape.

The pace will be fairly fast, and should suit reasonably strong walkers. There will be some ups and downs as we cross from the bottom to the top of the gorge a few times.

The walk will break into 4 quarters, with three short stops for elevenses, lunch break and mid afternoon snacks. Please bring a packed lunch, and ideally a sit mat or something to sit down upon while you rest for 10 minutes.

Sun 5 May – Winsley (B walk, 12 miles)

A figure of 8 around Dundas featuring both canal and skyline stretches, including Avoncliff, Freshford, and Brown Folly woods.

There are two steep ascents, and lunch will be at the Seven Stars, Winsley.

Sun 5 May – Kymin (A walk, 15 miles)

This walk starts from Cadora Wood near Bigsweir Bridge in the Wye Valley, heading east towards Slade Brook. After following the stream, it climbs up in a north/northeast direction to Clearwell through fields. Turning west and then north, we reach the village of Newland with a fine church. Continuing to and through Bunjups wood to reach A4136, the walk heads for Kymin Naval Temple where we should be rewarded with fine views of Monmouth, the Black Mountains and further fields if the weather is agreeable. The rest of the route follows Offa's Dyke path back to Cadora wood passing Redbrook. It is a gentle A walk through streams, fields and dotted woodlands where wild garlic, bluebells, wood anemones and celandines flower in abundance if the timing is right.

Sun 5 May – Around the University (C walk, 4 miles)

Taking in buildings and grounds that make up the main departments of the University site in this area of the city.

You may have been a student, employee or visitor, and either never ventured beyond the University library or are looking for a short trip down memory lane. Or you may have lived or worked in Bristol without paying much attention to the University. Either way, here's your chance for a relaxing stroll.

Sun 5 May – Chew Valley Afternoon Walk (B walk, 5 miles)

An afternoon walk in the beautiful Chew Valley. Heading west from Pensford we pass Bymills and Stanton Drew stone circle before heading up to Norton Hawkfield and Norton Malward where we cross the private airfield. The return is downhill to Pensford.

Tue 7 May – Westbury Weaver (B walk, 5 miles)

An intriguing wander around the leafy suburbs of Westbury-on-Trym and adjacent parklands. Using a complex array of quiet, hidden lanes, we make our way from the Downs through handsome Henleaze to lovely Badocks Wood. Then it's on to innermost, historic Westbury village, Canford Park, Badminton School, and eventually back to our start-point on the Downs. Expect to be in for some delightful surprises.

Tue 7 May – Seven Parks Walk (B walk, 8 miles)

We will walk along the river through Barton Hill, cross over at St Annes, and back via Arnos Vale and Victoria Park. The route is along pavements and paths.

Tue 7 May – Long Ashton and Failand (B evening walk, 4 miles)

A walk up the hill from Long Ashton to Failand and back.

Wed 8 May – Leigh Woods and Nightingale Valley (B walk, 8 miles)

Through National Trust woodland, down to the River Avon via Paradise Bottom, along the riverside path towards the Suspension Bridge, then a steady climb up Nightingale Valley to return to the start point.

The route is mainly hard surface tracks, with moderate slopes that may be muddy and slippery after rain. There will be a refreshment stop on route (bring your own drinks and snacks).

Wed 8 May – Henbury Greenway (B evening walk, 4 miles)

A delightful walk linking Blaise, Henbury & Hallen via a series of parks, fields, hills & streams.

Expect the unexpected on this entertaining outing, plus good views over the ever-changing north Bristol landscape as well as some olde-worlde interludes....!

Thu 9 May – Brunel, Banksy and botany fest (B walk, 11 miles)

A circular walk that is full of interest. From the Bristol Beacon, we will walk along the Floating Harbour (Banksy, Brunel) and beside the Avon, ascending through woodland to Ashton Court for a lunch/picnic stop, and returning across the Suspension Bridge to the start point.

Sat 11 May - Badocks Wood via Brentry and Southmead (B walk, 5 miles)

An urban walk on a mixture of surfaced paths and footpaths, some of which may be muddy in places. It is mainly flat, with two short uphill sections. Bring your own refreshments for a short break during the walk.

Sat 11 May – Waterfall Walk (B walk, 6 miles)

A circular walk from Clutton Church. A lovely spring walk on fields: a couple of stiles and a bit of up and down, but nothing too strenuous. The route will initially follow the Limestone Link and then on Nanny Hurn's Lane to Cameley (12th century church). We will follow the Cam stream to Temple Bridge and cross fields to the Stephen Vale Nature Reserve. Then on to the waterfall and back to Clutton Church.

Tue 14 May – West Bristol Explorer (B walk, 6 miles)

Join us on this leafy walk through Stoke Bishop, Coombe Dingle, Blaise and Westbury on Trym. The route will follow a mixture of paths and hard surfaces, so please wear comfortable, supportive footwear. Although this is a city walk, we will see plenty of trees along the way.

Tue 14 May – Purdown and Eastville Park (B evening walk, 6 miles)

A delightful evening stroll incorporating a fascinating assortment of lanes, allotments, and an array of the most unusual buildings, as well as some of the best, green, inner-city viewpoints in Bristol. All this, plus two lovely lakes, a city farm and riverside walking.

Wed 15 May – Sea Mills Circular (B walk, 6 miles)

The walk starts and finishes at the Water Tower on the Downs. We make our way across the Downs to a lane and a path that take us down to the Portway. We then follow the path that runs beside the Avon to Sea Mills. We leave the path at Sea Mills and follow the River Trym to the Millhouse pub and through woods. As we emerge

from the woods we spy a path ahead that takes us up past the Botanical Gardens to the Downs, the café and the Water Tower!

Wed 15 May – Blaise Maze (B evening walk, 4 miles)

The very best of Blaise in one amazing excursion around this lovely parkland!

Enjoy the House, the Folly & the Hamlet, plus Beech Cathedral & Henbury Church & so much more.

Steep in places, but well worth the effort - If you love nature, you will be delighted by this walk!

Thu 16 May – Maes Knoll (B evening walk, 5 miles)

Walk over Maes Knoll to the village of Norton Malreward and back.

Fri 17 May – Around Stoke Bishop and Coombe Dingle (B walk, 6 miles)

Starting from the Water Tower on the Downs, this circular walk will explore the leafy suburbs of Stoke Bishop and Coombe Dingle. We will go up to the Blaise Estate along the Community Forest Path, then down to Sea Mills and back through Sneyd Park to the Downs. Some ups and downs, maybe some mud if the weather is wet.

Sat 18 May – Clutton to Folly Farm (B walk, 6 miles)

After carefully crossing the main A37 we walk across fields and woods with wonderful views before reaching Folly Farm nature reserve. We stop for a short coffee break before climbing Round Hill and taking a walk through Folly Woods. We cross a beautiful wildflower meadow and have views back down over the farm estate before exiting onto Featherbed Lane. The return to Clutton is partly along the route of an old railway track. There is one stile on this route. Please note that dogs are not welcome on this walk.

Sun 19 May – Nailsea Round (B walk, 9 miles)

The route follows roads and foot paths, muddy occasionally, with a lunch stop at the Blue Flame pub.

Mon 20 May – Abbots Pool (B walk, 5 miles)

A circular walk starting from the Clifton end of the Suspension Bridge. The route passes through the National Trust's Leigh Woods and the village of Abbots Leigh. On a clear day, the Welsh hills can be seen across the Severn Estuary. Beyond Abbots Leigh lies Abbots Pool, a serene pool in a beautiful wooded location. In May, it will be bursting with new leaf and birdsong. After pausing by the pool, we will return to Clifton via the wide open spaces of the Ashton Court Estate.

Tue 21 May – Paradise Bottom and Abbots Leigh (B walk, 5 miles)

The walk descends to Paradise Bottom then climbs 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. Peaceful woodland, riverside and open fields. There will be a stop on route, so bring refreshments.

Note that the paths may be muddy in places, and walking boots advised.

Tue 21 May – Ashton Court and Clifton (B evening walk, 5 miles)

Celebrating our wonderful Suspension Bridge. Splendid views of both the River Avon and the city are to be had, deer to be observed in Ashton Court, and the architectural delights of Clifton to be savoured along the way.

Wed 22 May – A Dundry Round (B walk, 6 miles)

We meet at the free car park in Dundry, and head towards the pylons. There are spectacular views over Bristol, Somerset and even Wales! At Castle Farm we join the Monarch's Way and descend to a path that heads up and through woods, to the lane that takes us back into Dundry.

Wed 22 May – Lawrence Weston Moor (B evening walk, 4 miles)

Get off the beaten track with this unusual walk exploring locally unique water-meadows, and enjoying excellent views over Avonmouth and the Bristol Channel.

Starting from Henbury, we will quickly gain access to the green, open space that is Lawrence Weston Moor, with reed beds unique to this area. We will cross the Moor, and after a short urban interlude we will enter woodlands and ascend to Napier Miles House. The route follows the fringes of the Blaise estate, weaving along more narrow trails until it plunges entertainingly back down into Lawrence Weston. A series of lanes then leads to the Blaise Riding School. Finally, via fields and paddocks, we cross a ridge or two before returning to our start point.

There are some gentle ascents on the walk and one steep descent, and some mud is almost inevitable when near the reed-beds.

Thu 23 May – Westbury Weaver (B evening walk, 5 miles)

An intriguing wander around the leafy suburbs of Westbury-on-Trym and adjacent parklands. Using a complex array of quiet, hidden lanes, we make our way from the Downs through handsome Henleaze to lovely Badocks Wood. Then it's on to innermost, historic Westbury village, Canford Park, Badminton School, and eventually back to our starting point on the Downs. Expect to be in for some delightful surprises.

Fri 24 May – Around the University (C walk, 4 miles)

Taking in buildings and grounds that make up the main departments of the University site in this area of the city.

You may have been a student, employee or visitor, and either never ventured beyond the University library or are looking for a short trip down memory lane. Or you may have lived or worked in Bristol without paying much attention to the University. Either way, here's your chance for a relaxing stroll.

Fri 24 May – From Sea Mills to Kingsweston Down (C walk, 6 miles)

A pleasant, circular walk starting by the River Avon at Sea Mills, walking up through the woods to Blaise Castle Estate and up onto Kingsweston Down. We'll descend through Shirehampton Park and return, hopefully, if it's been dry, along the Severn Way alongside the River Avon. If it's been wet we'll return through the 'garden city' suburb of Sea Mills itself.

Sat 25 May – Bishops Knoll (B walk, 6 miles)

Discover the hidden secrets of Bishops Knoll, a mix of varied trees, terraced paths and an astonishing history. This walk meanders from the Downs to Bishops Knoll and includes a steep climb back up after. Refreshments can be purchased at the beginning and end in the Downs cafe.

Tue 28 May – Stapleton and Greenbank (B evening walk, 4 miles)

An evening circuit of considerable variety, featuring architecture old and new, woodlands and lakes, hidden valleys, cemeteries, and a splendid former railway viaduct to cross.

We will start by exploring a little of the charming suburb of Stapleton before descending to the lovely valley of the River Frome. It's then on to Eastville via a complex mixture of woodland trails, footpaths and suburbia, briefly observing the former Bristol Lido, followed by a section of the Bristol-Bath cycle-route. We will then suddenly find ourselves high atop Royate Hill viaduct, with terrific views of the local area. We will descend to Greenbank's large and fascinating cemetery, before regaining the cycle-path and heading for Ridgeway Park. We will complete our circuit via Eastville Park and its impressive lake, taking a look at the Frome-weir, and returning to the olde-worlde pleasures of our start point.

There are one or two short steep sections.

Wed 29 May – Floating Harbour, Suspension Bridge, Clifton Village (B walk, 6 miles)

Wander through some of the areas which draw visitors to Bristol. Even if you think you know Bristol well, you may discover some new paths.

Note that this walk crosses the suspension bridge. There is no alternative route that avoids this crossing.

Please bring your own drinks, snacks and picnic lunch for stops on route. Depending on size of group and availability of seating, we may have a cafe stop but do not rely on this.

Thu 30 May – Hambrook Figure of Eight (B evening walk, 5 miles)

A circular evening walk from the very pleasant and green open space that is Hambrook Common. The walk is a heady mix of lovely riverside walking, farmland and pretty hamlets, all conjoined by a labyrinthine maze of entertaining lanes, footpaths and fields. This, plus an ancient hill fort, make for an especially varied and interesting evening out. It's hard to believe that you're within an arm's length of the M4 & M32 at times, and on the edge of the city! There is a fine country pub at the walk's end.

Sun 2 June – Around Hazelbury Manor (B walk, 12 miles)

An easy walk with no dramatic hills, this route goes via the old "Poldark" part of Corsham with a lunchtime stop at the Flemish Weaver pub. There is an optional tea stop at the Quarrymans' Arms above Box; omitting this can reduce the walk to 10 miles.

Walking News and Events

WalkFest

The arrival of good weather and warm sunshine once again heralds the annual Bristol Walkfest.

All this month you can enjoy walks of various distances and themes, from self-guided sound walks that use your smartphone to play snippets of history at certain locations, to walking sports, to treasure hunts. For the full list, see the website:

<https://www.bristolwalkfest.com/>

Note that if you use the search to look for walks, you will only see results that appear on the first page. For the full list of walks and events, we recommend downloading the PDF to browse from: <https://www.bristolwalkfest.com/bristol-walk-fest-2024-programme/>

Bristol WalkFest Launch Event (Wednesday 1st May)

This year, WalkFest begins with a walk on the Downs, starting from the water tower at 5.30pm, and visiting the Goat Gully and the Sea Walls before returning to Ellis Brigham by 6.45pm, ready for the main event at 7.00pm.

Ellis Brigham are hosting, at their Whiteladies Road shop, the following guest speakers:

- **Robin Tetlow** Author of Beyond Bristol: 24 Country Walks, Beyond Bristol 2: 24 More Country Walks and Beyond Bristol Again.
- **Sophie Brown** Founder of Bristol Steppin Sisters, a walking group aims to help motivate women of colour to foster an interest in walking and visit places they would not have ventured to otherwise.
- **Bristol Hiker Girls** Charlotte and Becky run this wonderful meet up group for womxn that now has over 1,700 members on Facebook. The group provides an opportunity to link up with friends and meet new people whilst enjoying all the benefits of the great outdoors.
- **Hannah Atkinson** Founder and walk leader at Queer Hiking Bristol, a walking group that encourages the LGBTQ+ community into the outdoors. They provide a safe space and various walk lengths to bring people together to connect with nature and each other.

Tickets, £5.35, are needed for the event but not the walk and can be purchased on the BWF website: <https://www.bristolwalkfest.com/event/bwf-launch-event/>

Outdoors Unlocked: Ramblers General Election Pledge

In the run up to the 2024 general election, the Ramblers are calling for all political parties to commit to removing the barriers that prevent many people from enjoying walking in nature, from a lack of green spaces to unnecessary stiles to poor signage.

For more information (including a downloadable PDF) or to sign the petition, see: <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/what-we-care-about/outdoors-unlocked>

Petition to Reopen the Concorde Way and Community Orchard

A petition has been launched to urge Legal & General to reopen the Concorde Way at Lockleaze for walkers and cyclists, and to dedicate the path as a public right of way.

The route was originally closed for housing development, but due to structural issues and rebuilding the path and green spaces have been off-limits for three years, and are expected to be closed for another year and a half. For more information, or to sign the petition, see: <https://www.change.org/p/urge-legal-general-to-reopen-the-concorde-way-community-orchard-at-lockleaze-bristol>

Bristol Ramblers Walking Routes

Back in 2008, Bristol Ramblers member Nigel Andrews devised a walk from Bristol to Brecon. He wrote a guide to the walk and had it published as a book. The book is now out of date, but a replacement is now available as a PDF on the Bristol Ramblers website. You can also download a gpx file for the route.

Subsequently Nigel devised the Greater Avon Way walk from Bradford on Avon to Portishead. This is also available on the Bristol Ramblers website.

For these and other routes, see: <https://bristolramblers.org.uk/other-walking-opportunities.html>

Data Protection and You

Don't forget that, as per last month's eBoot, if you want to retain access to any of our old newsletters and programmes, you will have to download them to your own computer before the end of May.

Feature Articles

Editorial

According to my *Forager's Calendar*, late spring is *the* time to go out and gather, with wild plants from seaweed to broom (yes, really, apparently the flower buds taste a little bit like peas) to wild onion all at their best.

In the modern age of shelf-stable but bland supermarket produce, foraging has made something of a comeback; no longer a supplement to the diet of the poor, but now a delicacy for those who are blessed with the time and inclination to seek out the appropriate green leaves amidst a sea of inappropriate green leaves. Bookshop shelves groan with the weight of books on edible plants and how to cook them.

What is rather less well advertised are the pitfalls.

For starters, you don't want to end up on the wrong side of the law. The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) has a rather long list of plants that are not to be picked or otherwise messed with; I don't believe many edibles are on that particular list, but I haven't cross-checked all of them, and 'Schedule 8' is subject to occasional review and update. In addition, uprooting *any* wild plant is an offence; and while there are obviously exceptions, none of those exceptions involve 'I was peckish and it looked

tasty'. So while you're free to pick the leaves of wild garlic, those wild onions had best be left in the ground.

Also, there is what I call The Umbelliferae Problem (with a fine disregard for basic taxonomy). That is, the young stems of cow parsley are apparently rather tasty, with a fine crunch and a delicate flavour of parsley. They're also almost identical to hemlock, which is both less tasty and a lot more lethal. Worse, I have seen those two similar-but-crucially-different species grow so inextricably interbedded that it was hard to tell which stem belonged to which plant. Great for a low-cost variant of Russian Roulette, not so good for a salad.

I'm not trying to put you off foraging; I'm more than partial myself to a bit of wild garlic, or the odd late summer bilberry. But please forage wisely, and always leave a few leaves or flowers for the animals and insects. After all, they don't have access to Asda.

Ceiswyn

(pron. KICE-win)

For those of you with an unhealthy enjoyment of dense legal text:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/contents>

Partners and Sponsors

Ramble Worldwide



Ramble Worldwide (previously Ramblers Walking Holidays) is the Ramblers holiday walking partner. If you book a holiday with Ramble Worldwide 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.rambleworldwide.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.
