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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 July 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 30 June - Clutton, Pensford and Keynsham (B walk, 12 miles)

This is a linear walk starting from Clutton, which can be reached by bus from the bus station or Temple Meads.

We walk via Blackberry Hill, Hunstreete to Pensford (part of the 3 peaks walk). There is a refreshment stop at Pensford; note that there are public transport options that allow you to join or leave the walk here. Then onward to Keynsham via Publow, Compton Dando and Chewton Keynsham. There are two buses an hour back to Bristol from the walk end, and the option of a train.

Please bring bus/rail passes and/or money for the fares!

If you intend to join or leave the walk at Pensford, please let the leader know. This walk is part of Ann's special birthday celebrations!

Sun 30 June – The Four Tops (A hill walk, 17 miles)

A chance to traverse Pen y Fan and the three closest high points in a single walk. Starting from the northern side of Beacons the route should allow us to steer clear of the crowds for most of the day. There's one quite exciting section which will be new to many, where we're very unlikely to meet anyone at all! Assuming the weather is kind the distance will be around 16.5 miles / 26.5km and 4,400ft / 1340m ascent.

Should the weather forecast look less good, then we can do all the tops via a shortened route with about 1000ft / 305m less ascent.

OS Map used: Explorer OL12

Sun 7 July – Rugged Coast Path (A walk, 15 miles)

This strenuous walk starts with the climb to Bossington Hill with glorious sea views. We then head for Selworthy Beacon before descending to Bratton Wood. The route crosses Wood Combe and then follows a path towards Minehead with fine views. The lunch stop is at Minehead harbour. The afternoon is a combination of the South West Coast Path and the Rugged Coast Path. There are frequent ascents and descents but the glorious views more than compensate for the effort.

OS Map used: Explorer OL9

Wed 10 July – Caldicot Castle and Black Rock (B walk, 5 miles)

A circular walk full of history down the ages and spectacular views over the River Severn. We shall pass close to the Prince Of Wales Bridge and look over towards Avonmouth and Bristol from the Gwent Levels.

We start at the magnificent Caldicot Castle, which is well worth the time to explore before or after the walk. There's a small cafe for drinks, cakes and ice creams but it does not serve sandwiches or other lunch food.

The walk passes a neolithic long barrow, an Iron Age and subsequently Roman fort, a Norman castle and Victorian and Twentieth Century engineering. We shall pause to give time to look at information boards as we walk. If your preference is for sustained walking this walk may not be for you.

Sun 21 July – Kilmersdon (B walk, 10 miles)

Regulars may recognise this walk, but this time reversed to allow for lunch break at Mells where there is a choice of refreshments - picnic opposite community cafe, community cafe, walled garden cafe and Talbot Inn. I have added a 3 mile extension through an industrial landscape that in the 1500's manufactured edged agricultural machinery sent all over the world. The walk is largely on hard surfaces, but includes woodland and fields which may be muddy.

Note that Google Maps' suggested route to the start follows some narrow roads. Drivers may prefer to go via the A4 and A39.

Sat 27 July – Caldicot Castle and Black Rock (B walk, 5 miles)

A circular walk full of history down the ages and spectacular views over the River Severn. We shall pass close to the Pont Tywysog Cymru and look over towards Avonmouth and Bristol from the Gwent Levels.

We start at the eponymous Castle in Cil-y-Coed, which is well worth the time to explore before or after the walk. There's a small cafe for drinks, cakes and ice creams but it does not serve sandwiches or other lunch food.

The walk passes a neolithic long barrow, an Iron Age and subsequently Roman fort, a Norman castle and Victorian and Twentieth Century engineering. We shall pause to give time to look at information boards as we walk. If your preference is for sustained walking this walk may not be for you.

Sun 28 July – Dursley from Wotton (B hill walk, 13 miles)

At 13 miles and 2500ft you may think this is not much of a hill walk, but remarkably steep ups and downs and the opportunity for some fine views swing it for me. I hope you agree.

Sadly the New Inn at Waterley Bottom seems to have gone for ever, but that brings new opportunities. By going on to Dursley we can visit the excellent Old Spot pub or the Bank Café.

Note that in the best rugged traditions of hill walking, there are one or two awkward stiles and some brambles and nettles to negotiate with.

Wed 31 July - Flax Bourton, Bourton Combe and Backwell (B walk, 7 miles)

The walk is undulating initially, heading through Bourton Combe towards the Jubilee Stone for views and a coffee break (bring your own), before descending into Backwell. From there, the route is fairly level through fields and a shared cycle path to the finish. Refreshments can be taken at the farm shop/cafe after the walk.

Walking News and Events

Leading Group Walks

By Heather T and Carew R

Could you lead Group Walks?

We are only able to sustain our programme of walks because of our generous volunteer walk leaders. Could you be one of them?

If you've ever considered dipping your toe in the water, there is lots of help available to improve your confidence and get you started, including local training, national e-learning and resources, or finding an experienced local 'buddy' to help you to plan and lead your walk.

John Wrigley and Carew Reynell have also offered to provide local training to supplement the national material. Past similar training has been well received, including tips and tricks that are likely to be new to even experienced walkers. If you would be interested in either a buddy or local training, please contact either your walks coordinator or: secretary@bristolramblers.org.uk

On the Bristol Ramblers website there is a page just for leaders, with helpful information relevant to our local group:

<https://www.bristolramblers.org.uk/leading-group-walks.html>

National Guidance and Training

There is also new guidance and resources for leaders on the national website:

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking-hub/resources-walk-leaders>

This guidance is important in highlighting the steps we can take to ensure the safety of our walkers, and we would encourage all leaders to take a look.

Bristol Ramblers Committee agreed to implement the national guidance in line with existing Bristol Ramblers good practice:

- **Ratios of walkers to leaders/backmarkers** We know that most of our walks include experienced leaders, who can help out if necessary. This will generally cover the ratio requirements in the national guidance. The Bristol Ramblers committee agreed, therefore, to continue with current practice: that is to appoint an experienced walker as a back marker when appropriate. This will usually be when there are 10 or more walkers, although there may be some types of terrain or conditions when a backmarker is appropriate for fewer walkers.
- **Walk Registers/next of kin details** Bristol Ramblers will not require walk leaders to take registers, or ask for next of kin details for regular walkers, as most of our walkers are already known to the leader. Instead, we will ask leaders to encourage walkers to carry “emergency contact” cards (“ICE cards”) in the top of their rucksacks, where they can be easily found in an emergency. (It is also possible to add emergency information to the lock screen of your phone, though the way to do this depends on your phone version and manufacturer)
- **Training and skills development** We encourage all leaders to take a look at the national guidance and other resources. There are also two online courses for leaders, total time is 2.5 hours: <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/support-us/online-training> (You will need to register for a training account first)
 - Preventing and Managing Incidents
 - Walk Leadership Foundations
- **Training and skills development for new leaders** Any new leaders not currently set up in the national system as Walk Leaders will have to undertake the on line training above. This is a national requirement which is mandated.
- **Risk assessments** The Committee agreed that leaders should assess risks when planning a walk, though the assessment does not need to be stored for any particular period of time. We already have a pro forma on the Bristol Ramblers website, which may be helpful.

Bristol Ramblers Committee Meeting: 11th June

The following is a summary of the key points discussed.

Numbers joining our walks

Our walks continued to be well attended in the period since the last committee meeting in February, boosted by the May Walk Fest, although there were 5 Wednesdays when there were no walks. The full figures are shown in the table below.

	Wednesdays	Saturdays	Sunday B	Sunday A	Beginner A
Average	13	15	17	9	9
Highest	22	32	23	13	9
Lowest	5	6	9	5	9

May WalkFest

Carew was thanked for acting as Bristol Ramblers coordinator, encouraging leaders to come forward to produce another great programme for the annual Bristol WalkFest - and now also North Somerset WalkFest, which covered the same period. He provided a report on numbers attending each walk.

The walks with the highest attendance were the Failand Bluebell walk, with 32, and the Waterfall Walk with 31. Overall there were 419 people joining Bristol Ramblers WalkFest walks, compared with 278 in 2023 and 216 in 2022.

Eileen Bartlett was thanked for acting as the Bristol Ramblers rep on the WalkFest Steering Group. Carew and Heather will undertake this role in the future.

The Committee praised leaders for all their time and commitment.

AGM 16th October

Final arrangements were discussed for the AGM on 16th October, which will again take place at Redland Bowls Club. All committee members have agreed to stand to continue in their role for 2024/25. All members are welcome to attend the AGM and have your say on what you think we should be doing next year; and partake of free refreshments.

Bristol Ramblers website

There is now a feedback button at the foot of the Bristol Ramblers website, so that users can let Sarah and Tony know if anything can be improved on our website.

National Guidance

The main item on the agenda was a discussion, to which Walk Coordinators were invited, regarding how Bristol Ramblers will implement the new National Guidance for walk leaders. The decisions made have been circulated to existing leaders, and are included in the *Leading Group Walks* advice on page 4.

Join a future Bristol Ramblers meeting

Would you like to see what happens in a Bristol Ramblers meeting? Or maybe you are interested in joining the Committee! We would love you to join our next meeting at the end of August. Contact: heather.toyne@btinternet.com

Bristol's Public Rights of Way

The Bristol Ramblers liaise regularly with the Council's PROW team, discussing items such as:

- The council's progress in updating the 'Definitive Map' with 'Definitive Map Modification Orders' (DMMO). The Definitive Map is considered an authoritative record of public rights of way, granting legal protection to important pedestrian routes.
- The current status of DMMOs that we are aware of or helped raise. DMMOs often concern well-used or useful pedestrian routes that are not currently protected and may be at risk, and the process of adding them to the Definitive

Map may involve researching old maps, physically visiting the relevant locations, and preparing reports.

- Blocked rights of way.
- Paths in need of maintenance, or the anticipated conclusion of major maintenance work.

In particular, the most recent meeting included:

- Concerns about how quickly the Council team was acting on illegal blockages to rights of way. The council reassured our representatives that new blockages were being acted upon quickly; recent stories in the media mostly represent a long build-up of historical problems.
- Unintended consequences of recent anti-protest legislation. The above 'long tail' may prove easier to deal with now that the old slaps on the wrist have been replaced with unlimited fines and prison sentences. One recent 'flagrant' blocker of a right of way was fined a rather unanticipated several thousand pounds.
- Plans to upgrade the Portway to make it more friendly to pedestrians and cyclists.
- The possibility of the Council team leading a guided walk around the new pedestrian routes in the Hallan Marsh area.

If you find a problem with a public footpath, remember you can report it using the links accessible from the top menu of the Bristol Ramblers website.

Somer Valley Ramblers Walks and Teas – Sunday 8th September

Somer Valley Ramblers are celebrating the last day of their walking festival with a tempting menu of walks and teas. The courses on offer are as follows:

- **Stroller (3 miles)** Starting at 10am and 2pm. Northeast direction out of Midsomer Norton. Quite a lot of firm walking surface but also some field and uneven track terrain.
- **Short walk (6 miles)** Starting at 10am. Walking to the north of Midsomer Norton. Includes hills up and down. Good views (weather permitting). Natural History and Industrial Heritage interests. 205m elevation.
- **Medium walk (9 miles)** Starting at 10am. South of Midsomer Norton. A varied route through fields, woods and river valleys.
- **Long walk (14 miles)** Starting at 10am. West of Midsomer Norton to Hinton Blewett and return. Fields, tracks, woods, village. 260m elevation.

All walks start at The Somer Centre, Gullock Tynning, Midsomer Norton BA3 2UH. The grid ref is ST 669 543. The venue has car parking facilities and is a short distance from the bus routes through Midsomer Norton. Tea and cakes will be served at the end of the walks!

Feature Articles

Editorial

*The sun has got his hat on
Hip hip hip hooray*

*The sun has got his hat on
And he's coming out today*

*All the little birds are singing
All the little gnats are stinging
All the little bees in twos and threes
Buzzing in the sun all day...*

- Gay & Butler, 1932

Have you got your hat on? This editor hasn't, and that is likely why she's already suffered her first sunburn of the year.

She is also currently wondering what all the little biting insects live on when they can't get Ceiswyn.

In other words, summer is here and we can hopefully look forwards to a joyous few months of romping around some of the most lushly beautiful countryside in the world without catching our deaths of cold. However, before we go and get all overenthusiastic about our unaccustomed good fortune, it may be worth remembering that even dry footpaths and clear skies may be enjoyed all the more for a little preparation.

- **Sunscreen** The most vital and ubiquitous of these recommendations. I am still looking for the perfect sunscreen that won't smear my spectacles and will also, for preference, rub itself into my back, but any factor 30-50 will do in a pinch. Note that sunscreen doesn't interfere with your skin's ability to get vitamin D from sunlight; it also doesn't prevent you getting a tan. If you can refer to my skin's slow progress from blinding snow to Dulux 'Barley White' as 'a tan'.
- **Insect repellent** Admittedly, your editor always forgets to carry this. Which may be one reason small flying arthropods keep getting so over-friendly. For those holidaying in Scotland, Smidge is supposedly everyone's perfume of choice; the editor personally isn't sure how effectively it keeps the midges off, but I have no intention of finding out how much more gregarious they might be if I *don't* wear it.
- **Hydrocortisone cream** You may carry a tube of this in your first aid kit for years without needing to use it (don't let it go past its use-by). However if you do get bitten by something really nasty, you will want that little tube *a lot*.
- **Antihistamines** Even if you've had no problems with allergies in the past, there may come a day when the pollen is overwhelming, or when you encounter a new plant or insect that disagrees with you violently. Imagine the delight, for example, of my friend who discovered she was allergic to horsefly bites when she got her first one ten miles into a marathon. Be safe! Don't do marathons. But also, carry antihistamines.
- **Rehydration/electrolyte tablets** We all know about taking enough water with us on hot days, but water isn't enough. In fact, sometimes too much water can even be bad for you! Electrolyte tablets dropped into your water will replace the essential salts and minerals you lose in perspiration. Alternatively you can make your own rehydration solution by dissolving 6 tsp of sugar and ½ tsp of salt in 1l of water. This is exactly as vile as it sounds. You might experiment with adding a little orange or other fruit juice to the mixture; be bold, you can't make it taste any worse.

Place your bets now on how much of this wise advice your editor will actually heed next time she skips out onto a tempting pathway leading through meadows under an impossibly bright blue sky.

Or indeed, how long it will take her latest dratted mosquito bite to fade...

Ceiswyn

(pron. KICE-win)

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.
