

Contents

Walks Programme	2
Walking with other Ramblers groups	2
Some walks from the January programme	2
News and Events	3
Rambler accuses the government of standing still on countryside access	3
Bristol transport project updates	3
Feature Articles	4
Editorial	4
Partners and Sponsors.....	5
Ramble Worldwide	5
Outdoor Retailers	5
Books and Maps	5

Walks Programme

All 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 January programme

This is just a small taster selection of the walks that are available. Always check the website for the full, up-to-date programme:

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

Sat 17th January – River Avon and Ashton Court (B/C walk, 5 miles)

For those who haven't been rambling in a while, or who prefer a gentler option, this pleasant walk through green areas close to Bristol's centre may be just the thing.

We'll start at the Clifton end of the Suspension Bridge, proceed to Leigh Woods, then steeply down to the River Avon. There are classic views of Clifton and Hotwells as we walk towards the Floating Harbour. We shall then stroll to Ashton Court and stop at the mansion for a short break with more classic views, this time of the city and Dundry Hill. Here there is the option of a café and toilets, although many prefer to bring their own hot drink and snack. We shall then go uphill through the park and return to the Suspension Bridge.

The paths are generally firm and well surfaced; being close to the city there is an element of walking on pavements. However there is a steep hill down through Leigh Woods with some tricky parts, and a fairly steep, grassy climb through Ashton Court.

Sun 25th January – Chepstow and Gaer Hill (A walk, 14 miles)

This walk is based in the Welsh side of the lower Wye Valley, meandering across hills, through woodland, pastures and lanes from Tintern down to Chepstow, where we will pause for lunch (and to check whether toasted bread still grows on trees given that the Mari Lywd should have taken place there the previous day). If the weather is kind, there will be fine views across the valley on the route. There will also be a number of steps along the way.



News and Events

Ramblers accuses the government of standing still on countryside access

It has been a quarter of a century since the landmark Countryside and Rights of Way act, but there has been no significant legislation to expand and improve access to the outdoors in the last 16 years; despite the current government's pre-election promises.

The Ramblers has sent an open letter to the head of the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs detailing the government's failure to engage with access issues and its shelving of various walking-related projects.

The full Ramblers view, and a link to download the letter, can be found here:

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/news/government-accused-neglecting-publics-access-nature-25-years-landmark-legislation>

Bristol transport project updates

Bristol is currently undergoing three major sets of works for transport schemes: the City Centre; A4 Portway, and Bus Route 2 which runs vertically through the city centre.

Information on all three projects can now be found at:

<https://bristolonthemove.com>

In particular, the *News and events* tab provides information on road closures and other construction works. And if that doesn't sate your enthusiasm for transport project updates, you can also sign up for a newsletter (at the bottom of the page).

Feature Articles

Editorial

If I had to pick any time of year to go out at night for a walk, I would probably not pick this one. And yet, most of Britain seems to celebrate the New Year by doing just that.

In Scotland and the North, the custom of first footing is no longer practiced as enthusiastically as it once was. However it used to be normal for people to set out to visit friends immediately after the chimes of midnight; bringing them luck for the new year with symbolic gifts of coal, whisky and cake.

In the South, a similar principle seems to be at work in the custom of wassailing: large groups of revellers going door-to-door with a large communal cup of cider, calling down blessings on each house (and expecting the householder to top up the cup in return). In Wales, a later variant of the tradition replaced the cup with the skull of a dead horse on a pole, with the revellers demanding entry to each house (and the festive fare within) via a singing contest. It takes all sorts.

In the West Country, it wasn't only households that were wassailed. And in fact, the Apple Wassail continues in some orchards to this day. In the freezing cold of January, revellers travel to their local cider orchards to ensure a good harvest in the autumn by scaring away evil spirits, placing gifts of toast on the tree roots or branches, and pouring cider over the roots (presumably as encouragement). Some of that cider, of course, goes a little astray during the process. It's thirsty work, scaring spirits.

Many of these customs have been discarded over the years, as communities have become less close-knit and people have found things to do of a night that don't involve heading out into the January frost. However, I think it best to be prepared, and should any would-be wassailers walk in this direction they will find me well supplied with drinks and cake.

But I'd appreciate it if you could leave the horse's skull at home.

Ceiswyn

(pron. KICE-win)

Anyone interested in modern day orchard wassailing may wish to note that there is an organised wassail taking place at Bishop Sutton on the 18th of January, with such spirit-scaring activities as gunshots and morris dancing. For more information, see the website at: <https://www.suttontheatre.com/>

Other wassails may be available.

Partners and Sponsors

For a full list of official Ramblers partners, see the website at:

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking-hub/offers-and-promotions>

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, including chains such as Blacks and Millets.

Cotswold Outdoor



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

Note that Snow+Rock and Runners Need are part of the Cotswold Outdoor group.

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 20% discount to Ramblers members, with the code RAMBLERS20.

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.
