

Gloucestershire Ramblers

News from Gloucestershire Area June 2015

www.gloucestershireramblers.org.uk/GRNews



Upper Forge Bridge - Forest of Dean Ramblers

9th June 2015 we'll be celebrating, the opening of the bridge, footpath and stairs which replace the old stone bridge over the River Lyd at Upper Forge. There's a history behind the project!

In 2009 John Sheraton and Rod Goodman wrote 'Exploring Historic Dean' describing some walks in the forest and highlighting points of interest, geological, natural history and industrial archaeology.

When the old stone bridge at Upper Ford was closed due to serious deterioration it affected one of the walks in the book. It was decided in January 2012 to replace the bridge, providing all necessary agreements could be made. Financing of the bridge would be from the sale of the book and the new bridge would be a wooden footbridge. The book has just had its third print run and is available via our website fodramblers.org.uk

It was nearly 12 months, December 2012 before all consultations were agreed and a planning application could be submitted. Work was held up when the planning application was refused in January 2013, as there could be dormice.

March 2013 with the dormice issue resolved Planning was eventually granted. However Japanese knotweed was discovered and as an invasive plant it had to be dealt with by specialists.

June 2013 work could commence but how to move long metal girders, heavy materials, and bags of stones for the concrete?

The Dean Forest Railway proved to be a great help to move the materials and used their heavy lifting gear to manoeuvre the girders into position.

July 2013 the bridge was completed but still lots of work to lay a board walk, long flight of stairs and a new footpath. Yes the path had to be diverted to cross the new footbridge and provide a safer route to where it joined the road.

October 2013 a further setback as the land was not registered and the footpath could not be dedicated as a PROW until the legal process was completed. November 2013 all the work on the bridge approach was complete and the hardcore on the path was laid. We also installed kissing gates to improve the railway crossing. Gloucestershire Council inspected the site in December and passed the bridge and approaches as meeting the required standards. Then the unexpected VAT bill arrived.

It took another year December 2014 for all the legal paperwork to be completed, all the bills paid and the new route of the footpath dedicated as a PROW.

Which brings us to the present day. After a hectic three years the official opening of the bridge is on 9th June 2015. The event is by invitation and in the company of Forest of Dean Ramblers, representatives from Dean Forest Railway, Mayor & Mayoress of Lydney, the Council, and Kate Ashbrook Ramblers President.

Barbara Fisher, publicity@fodramblers.org.uk

Volunteer for Ramblers

If you enjoyed the above, you may be able to help us in our charitable aims. We strive to keep footpaths open for everyone, today and in the future. The rewards are excellent, the company is great and the results can save an important part of our heritage. We're currently seeking someone who can spend an hour or so browsing a local council website looking at maps in planning applications. Initially it's a first level job uncovering where a development could affect a path, so we can comment if required. We'll help get you going, so if you're interested in maps, walking and footpaths please contact footpaths@gloucestershireramblers.org.uk

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Message from the Chair

Since the last newsletter, three of us attended Rambler's General Council held at Robison College, Cambridge. A summary of the Council meeting can be found on the web site: http://www.ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone/support-and-development/volunteer-toolkits/general-council-2015.aspx.

Much time was devoted to the concept of one member one vote, and its use to elect Trustees. However the debate became rather involved about whether it would be an improvement over the present system whereby members elect their local officers, who choose delegates to vote at General Council. The motion ultimately failed.

To me, one of the highlights of this year's council was an address given by Lis Nielson the Chair of the European Ramblers Association, founded in 1969. One of their aims is to introduce and maintain E-paths, a network of European footpaths through volunteers working in their respective countries. This year the European Walking Festival will be held in Skaine, Sweden between 10-17th September, and they hope to attract over 5000 walkers.

I attended the fringe event on Walking Festivals. The presenters run the White Cliffs Walking Festival which is held every year and now attracts over 1500 walkers, perhaps2000 walkers this year. The walks are located between Deal and Dover and are free, except where admission fees to sites are required. In the audience was a member of the very successful Walking Festival held in Lincolnshire. This festival covers a large area in North East Lincolnshire and Eastern North Lincolnshire and now also includes cycling events.

Historically I am a solitary walker either walking by myself or with my wife. I have been asked a few times about my walks.

Once I've decided where to walk and on the day, I'll follow a map, but keep an eye out for the actual route walked. In the Vale if the route is well walked, the path may follow a line which can be walked all the year round and not just for the few weeks in the Summer. As I walk I sometimes let the local farmer know of animals in the wrong fields. This can happen at any time but usually in Spring when farm animals have to relearn which fields they are meant to graze. When talking to farmers, it's useful to learn their view on gates. If it's not tied open they'd much prefer an open gate was closed, than a closed gate left open. Walking in the countryside, one of the joys is catching a glimpse of wildlife - Roe Deer, Muntjac and butterflies.

Ray Chaney



ramblers.org.uk/bigpathwatch

The big pathwatch is an ambitious survey of all the paths in England and Wales. It's a snapshot taken over the summer of 2015 by anyone with an interest in footpaths. We want to celebrate paths and the many things that make walking great, as well as highlighting issues we encounter.



The survey results should be useful to Local Councils, Land Owners and anyone interested in the public right of way network, as feedback on perception of the walking public on the state of our paths.

From mid July, anyone will be able to select a 1km map square and download a free smart phone app to make it easy to send their responses to the survey during a walk. Alternatively a paper survey can be used to feed back responses later. There'll be guidance for participants so they'll know what to look out for to give consistent reports.

Hopefully it will develop greater awareness of the benefits of walking & footpaths and perhaps improve understanding of our work. The Big Pathwatch project is kindly funded by Ramblers Holidays Charitable Trust as part of our 80th anniversary.

Winchcombe Walking Festival



This is a marvellous event for promoting walking and we again played our part. It's year 6 of this 3 day event and with 22 led walks and a 21 mile challenge it's more popular than ever. A quick survey on one walk revealed 25% from Gloucestershire, 25% from adjoining counties with the rest from further afield, some from China! If you'd like to lend a hand next year, planning begins autumn.



Group Reports

Including GWG 20-30s, we have 10 Groups across the region with led walks ranging from short 3 mile to 12 mile day walks. If you're new, why not try a few to find out which best suits you. If you're looking for regular repetitive walks, also see Walking for Health.

Cheltenham Spa Walkers

A new walking group for members in Cheltenham. At its AGM in Dec 2014, Mid Glos Group voted for dissolution following a productive 27 years and the encroachment of 'Old Father Time'.

In keeping with Ramblers Central Office advice Groups have been reorganised and a new group Cheltenham Spa Walkers formed to be run on an electronic basis by a team of three; one Principal Point of Contact and two others.



One hundred and twelve ex Mid Glos members opted to join in and we are now 'up and running' with a full Programme of walks for the period May – June – July - August. gloucestershireramblers.org.uk/CSW or cont CSW@gloucestershireramblers.org.uk/Des Smyth (PPoC)

Cirencester Report for June Area Newsletter 2015

Walks since out last report have been varied, both in length and area, from an 11 mile walk in Woodchester in February to evening walks of 3 – 5 miles. None have been cancelled due to bad weather and all have been well attended with 38 members on one walk.



On Saturday 7th March 37 members and friends attended a Skittles and Social evening at Down Ampney Football Club. The evening began with a fast and furious skittles match. After a great supper a game of Irish bingo (very different from the English version!) followed and a quiz. Between Monday 9th and Friday 13th March 22 members and guests spent an enjoyable 4 night break at the Toorak Hotel in Torquay. 40members went on our annual Away Weekend on the beautiful Gower Peninsular with good weather and wonderful views.

As well as social events our Footpath Maintenance volunteers have also been busy. On Saturday 21st March Richard Holmes was joined by members of our PMVs (Path Maintenance Volunteers) at the Cotswold Gateway Centre. Their task was to clear an area ready to replace a narrow plank footbridge with a more accessible wooden ABC bridge. Starting at the canal path side branches were trimmed and others removed completely. They then continued to clear the lake side of the path. After lunch in the sun a tidy up was done and the line of the new wider path was marked out with the large branches they had cut down. The end result was very satisfactory and was ready for the new bridge to be installed, by contractors, at a later date.

Our thanks go to the many "silent volunteers" in the group who make all this possible.

Pat Beckley Secretary



Forest of Dean- Wye Valley Walk

Forest of Dean Ramblers has just completed walking the 136 miles of the Wye Valley Walk. It's been an ongoing project since 2013, begun by walking to Plynlimon, the source of the River Wye, in pouring rain. Each year we have done a long weekend to walk a different section of the 136 miles. This year the final stage began at Breinton and 6 days on we completed the trail at Chepstow. Barbara Fisher, Publicity Forest of Dean Ramblers.

Other News in Brief

Kate Clark of BBC Radio Gloucestershire walked with GWG and Cleeve for her Saturday 2pm slot. We're on Facebook! If you are too, are you able to post photos of your walks? Marchants is running a trial Sunday Bus 606S along the Cotswold Way from Broadway to Cheltenham. Glos Warks Steam Railway offers advance group booking deal (perhaps 10:20 from Cheltenham P&R, return on foot)



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A page of Mid Week walks for the Gloucestershire Area

Wed 1 Jul 2015 10:00 11m Bredons Norton and Bredon Hill Barry & Robert 07407 359600 or 07807 342238

Park at Bredon Playing Fields CP (one next to B4080 junction). SO 927369. Walk Mill End, Bredons Norton, Bredon Hill, Elmley Castle, Sundial Farm, Westmancote. Picnic. **M**

Wed 8 Jul 2015 10:00 10m Painswick

Catherine 01452 615382 or 07456 425880 Walker's CP off B4075 opposite Rococo Garden (E179). SO 867105. A hilly walk from Painswick with lovely views on a good day. Picnic. **M**

Wed 15 Jul 2015 10:00 12m Cotswold Way and Lower Woods Susanne 01453 757212 or 07768 403530

Hawkesbury Upton. Park either at Beaufort Arms CP (if stopping for a drink after), Village Hall CP, or on street. Meet outside Village Hall CP (E167). ST 777870. Walk Cotswold Way to Hillesley, across Inglestone Common and through Lower Woods GWT Nature Reserve, return on Cotswold Way. Picnic. **M**

Wed 22 Jul 2015 10:00 10m Bisley and Edgeworth Susanne 01453 757212 or 07768 403530

Park in Bisley in lay-by opposite Windyridge (E179). SO 903064. Walk Bisley, Througham, Sudgrove, Ashcombe bottom, Edgeworth, Waterlane, Battlescombe. Picnic. **M**

Wed 29 Jul 2015 09:30 11m Symonds Yat Circuit Guy 01242 251412 or 07968 797186

Meet Goodrich castle CP (£1.00) (OL14). SO 576197. Quite hilly walk to Coppett Hill, Welsh Bicknor, English Bicknor. Lunch and/or picnic at the Sarazans Head pub Symonds Yat. Return via Huntsham Hill, Huntsham Bridge, Goodrich Church and village. Tea after at castle. Please note earlier start time. M

Wed 5 Aug 2015 10:00 10m Guiting Power Arnold 01242 603576 or 07789 317291

Park at Guiting Power Village Hall CP (OL45/LR163). SP 095245. Walk Castlett, Kineton, Pinnock, Campden lane, Guiting Wood. Picnic. **M**

Wed 12 Aug 2015 10:00 11m Monmouth Roy 01242 245488 or 07766 413176.

Park at church at Mitchel Troy (OL14). SO 492104. Walk Wonastow, Monmouth, Offa's Dyke Path, Treowen, Jingle Street, Trealy. Picnic. ${\bf M}$

Wed 19 Aug 2015 10:00 10m Sugar Loaf Peter 01600 711558

Meet at National Trust CP on road between Bettws and Forest Coal Pit (OL13). SO 292200. Walk to Bryn Arw and along ridge, Cwm Bryn Arw, Pantygelli, return via Sugar Loaf. Picnic stop at pub. **M**

Wed 26 Aug 2015 10:00 11m Castle Combe Mick 01453 542082 or 07443 643462.

Park in Castle Combe Upper CP, just off B4039 (E156). ST 845777. Walk from Castle Combe around the By brook and Broadmead Brook valleys taking in the villages of Ford and North Wraxall and crossing Colerne Down. Moderate with several climbs. Picnic. **M**

Wed 2 Sep 2015 10:00 10m Forest Green

Dave 01452 721729 or 07593 296983. Park in Forest Green football club CP (E168). SO 837001. Walk to Woodchester Park, Coaley Peak, Uley, Owlpen, Newmarket. Picnic. **M**

Wed 9 Sep 2015 10:00 13m Redbrook

Sue S 01594 531227 or 07547 740633.

Redbrook main CP (charge) (OL14). SO 536099. Starting from Redbrook we walk up to the Kymin, Highmeadow Woods, Suckstone, the Biblins and walk back along the river Wye. Moderate walk with one hill. Picnic. **M**

Wed 16 Sep 10:00 10.5m Hunters Hall, Lasborough, Ozleworth, Kingscote Richard 01454 260397 or 07984 853775.

Park in Hunters Hall CP if using the pub, or park in lane to Kingscote opposite. Meet at Hunters Hall (E167). ST 813959.

Fig. of 8 walk, 6.5m am and 4m pm. AM - Newington Bagpath, Lasborough, Ozleworth and Bagpath. Lunch at Hunters Hall or picnic. PM - Kingscote, Kinscote woods and Binley farm. Total ascent 850 feet. **M**

Wed 23 Sep 2015 10:00 12m Winchcombe

Roy 01242 245488 or 07766 413176.

Winchcombe Back Lane CP (fee) (OL45). SP 023284. Walk Langley Hill, Gretton, Stanley Pontlarge, Cockbury Butts, Postlip Mill, Corndean Farm, Humblebee, Waterhatch, Parks Farm, Sudeley Castle. Picnic. **M**

Wed 30 Sep 2015 10:00 10m Cranham Andy & Wendy 01453 885498

Park by Cranham common, near to school (E179). SO 895125. Walk Birdlip and Fostons Ash. Picnic. **M**

Wed 7 Oct 2015 10:00 10m Malverns - Valleys and Hills Jackie 01594 564417

Meet British Camp CP (£3.00) (£190). SO 763403. Into the valley of Colwall, over the railway, making our way to Sugar Hill and onto North Hill. Back over Worcestershire Beacon, Perseverance, Jubilee, Pinnacle and Black Hills. Undulating at start followed by several ascents and descents after lunch.

Picnic. M

Wed 14 Oct 2015 10:00 10m Speech House and Soudley Janet & Geoff 01531 650349 or 07933 737691

CP/picnic area to south of Speech House (near start of Spruce Ride) (OL14). SO 622118. Walk Speech House Lake, Mallards Pike, Bradley Hill, Soudley (lunch Dean Heritage Centre or picnic), Shakemantle, Staple Edge Lodge. **M**

Wed 21 Oct 2015 10:00 12m The Blorenge Mike 01594 562341

Park at Llanfoist CP (OL13). The CP is on the right at the west end of the village, indicated by a very understated sign. SO 286133. Ascend a short incline then Punchbowl and on to summit of the Blorenge. Then via Keeper's Pond to Gilwern Hill where we start to follow Hill's Tramway from the quarry through Pwll Du and down through Garn Ddyrys (setting of Alexander Cordell's 'Rape of the Fair Country'), finally descending the incline back to Llanfoist. Picnic lunch. Moderate with a pesky little incline to start. **M**

Wed 28 Oct 2015 10:00 14m Wye Valley Walk Jenny & Jackie 01600 715719 or 01594 564417 or 07767 351190 on walk morning.

Chepstow Leisure Centre CP (please park at far end) (OL14). ST 528944. A scenic walk overlooking the river Wye via the Giant's Cave and Eagle's Nest, crossing the river at Tintern, climbing to the Devil's Pulpit and returning to Chepstow on Offa's Dyke Path. Two main ascents taken at a pace to suit all. Picnic lunch. **M**

Note:

Ramblers Membership supports our efforts to keep footpaths open. For members all our walks are free. Anyone new is welcome to try a walk but check with leader beforehand gloucestershireramblers.org.uk/midweek/ Sorry no dogs except access dogs. All walks M = Moderate, S=Strenuous