

GLOUCESTERSHIRE AREA NEWS



ramblers
at the heart of walking

February 2014



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Area News is issued three times a year in February, June and October. Items of news and suggestions or other features are always welcome.

Deadline dates: 6th January, **6th May** and 6th September

Chairman's Report

Firstly thanks to our outgoing chairman Richard Davis, membership secretary Mike Garner and webmaster Nichola Goodliffe for their work over the past few years. We're also grateful to Des Smythe and all at Mid-Glos Group for hosting the AGM in December.

Foremost in our minds is funding cuts over at the County Council where Public Rights of Way is being outsourced. A poll currently running on Ramblers' website suggests the quality of footpaths is in decline - a theme followed by Radio Gloucestershire late last year. In response a number of members have said they'd like to try to help with secateurs and loppers (or perhaps being an organiser) so if you're able to offer some time please contact your group or drop an email to our new box volunteers@gloucestershireramblers.org.uk. The attached Group reports show the way our footpath teams seek to resolve diversions and obstructions. Again we're not sure of resources we may need but please let us know if you're willing to help have a look if there's an issue near you.

Ramblers' aim is to keep footpaths open for walking. The benefits of enjoying our heritage and countryside, walking for health and tourism to our local communities, can't be overstated. County plans for the Cotswold Way and the Gloucestershire Way at the Air Balloon may need our feedback too. <http://a417missinglink.co.uk/the-solution/>



Maria Castellina from Central Office with Gloucestershire Area Officers at our December AGM.

This year is the 40th anniversary of our first group, Cirencester. To celebrate they have a number of events based on walks and events in their first year. Meanwhile GWG has added young 20-30s walks, some groups are testing 5 mile walks and we'll be at the 5th Winchcombe Walking Festival May 16-18th.

We're learning more about new media such as Facebook, Twitter and Wordpress as a way of promoting walking, all of which makes for an interesting challenge. I look forward to meeting you and hearing your views - perhaps on a walk! See you soon.

Bernard Gill chair@gloucestershireramblers.org.uk



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Cirencester Group Clearing paths at Miserden



GLOUCESTERSHIRE AREA MID-WEEK WALKS

Map numbers: E = Explorer; OL = Outdoor Leisure; LR = Landranger. Sorry, no dogs!
2014

- Wed 5 Mar 10:00 10m Around Avening** Andy & Wendy- 01453 885498
Minchinhampton Reservoir CP (E168/LR162) SO 854013. Gatcombe, Avening, Weighbridge. Medium to hard walk. Picnic.
- Wed 12 Mar 10:00 10m 'Paddy's walk' from Mitcheldean** Catherine - 01452 615382
Meet at Wilderness CP on A4136 (OL14) SO 659171. Down to Mitcheldean, up to May Hill, then down to Longhope and up following the Gloucestershire Way to the top. Picnic.
- Wed 19 Mar 10:00 10m Sugar Loaf** Catherine - 01452 615382
Park on side of road alongside the Bell Pub, Glanrywyney, on A40 (after going through Abergavenny) (OL13) SO 239163. This is a delightful hill, virtually a mountain with wonderful views in all directions. Route via Llangenny with 596m ascent. Picnic.
- Tue 25 Mar 10:00 9.5m Much Marcle** Diana - 01242 578777 or 07528 697023 (walk morning)
Park considerably in Much Marcle and meet on road near church (E189/LR149) SO 658327. Walk Ridge Hill, Woolhope, back up to the hill and down again. Will be taken very gently! Picnic. Possible pub for drinks.
- Wed 2 Apr 10:00 11m Hills and valleys around the south of Gloucester** David & Henrietta - 01452 302024 or 07831 234790 (walk morning)
Robinswood Country Park CP - small CP in Fox Elms Rd. NOT Reservoir Rd. Visitor Centre. (Off A4173 Stroud Rd. at top of the hill, then 2nd left up to CP.) (E179/LR162) SO 835147. Two climbs in the morning, easier afternoon. Robinswood Hill, Sneedhams Green, Cud Hill, Edge, Harescombe, Brookthorpe, Whaddon. Picnic.
- Wed 9 Apr 10:00 10m North Malverns Summits** Janet & Geoff - 01531 650349 or 07933 737891 (walk morning)
British Camp CP (£3 for day) (E190/LR150) SO 763403. Walk Evendine, Colwall, Mathon Lodge Farm to End Hill (Picnic lunch), then visiting all the Northern Malverns Summits (North Hill, Table Hill, Sugar Loaf Hill, Worcestershire Beacon) and back along the ridge to British Camp.
- Wed 16 Apr 10:00 11.5m Hornsleaslow** Des - 01242 245666 or 07939 615749 (walk morning)
Hornsleaslow Quarry (disused) Limited parking - fill cars (OL45/LR150) SP 130322. Walk Hinchwick Manor, Jackdaws Castle, Cutsdean, Hornsleaslow farm. Mostly undulating. Picnic.
- Wed 23 Apr 10:00 11m Shakespeare 450th Birthday Walk** Roy - 01242 245488 or 07766 413176 (walk morning)
Park at the Bell pub CP (far end), Welford-on-Avon. Please consider patronising pub at end of walk (E205) SP 148522. Easy going walk from Welford-on-Avon to Weston-on-Avon, Clifford Chambers, Stratford-upon-Avon, Monarch's Way, Avon Valley footpath, Luddington Lock. Picnic.
- Wed 30 Apr 10:00 10m Stanton** Arnold - 01242 603576 or 7789 317291 (walk morning)
CP next to Stanton Cricket Club (OL45/LR150) SP 067343. Walk Stanway, Stumps Cross, Taddington, Shenberrow Hill, Buckland, Laverton. Picnic.
- Tue 6 May 10:00 9m Ledbury** Diana - 01242 578777 or 07528 697023 (walk morning)
Park in Ledbury - numerous car parks - Bridge St.(£1.50), Lawnside Rd., Bye St.(£2.50). Meet by Bye Street toilets -signed from the High St. (E190/LR149 SO 710376. Walk Arknell farm, Coddington, Herefordshire trail. Picnic.
- Wed 14 May 10:00 11.5m Forest of Dean Wander** Mike I - 01594 562341
Meet at Wenchford Picnic Area (OL14) SO 655080. Walk Oldcroft, Mallard's Pike, Staple-Edge, Soudley, Blaize Bailey, Soudley (again) and Broome Hill. Moderate with two stiles. Picnic.
- Wed 21 May 10:00 10m Painswick Circle** Ann & Gerry - 01242 511679 or 07901 503834 (walk morning)
Park on side of unfenced road that crosses the golf course 400m SSW of Painswick Beacon (E179/LR162) SO 867117. A circle around Painswick to Edge and the valley bottom passing Paradise. Picnic.
- Wed 28 May 10:00 10m Woolhope** Susanne - 01453 757212 or 07768 403530 (walk morning)
Woolhope Village Hall CP (E189/LR149) SO 610360. Walk Haugh Wood, Wye Valley Way, Sollers Hope and Marcle Ridge. Picnic.
- Wed 4 Jun 09:45 10.5m Brimpsfield** Ken - 01242 573717
Brimpsfield Village Hall CP. Share cars if possible. Please note earlier start time (E179/LR162) SO 939128. Buckle Wood, Cranham, Sheepscombe, Whiteway, Miserden, Caudle Green, Eddington valley. Picnic.
- Wed 11 Jun 10:00 10m Garway Hill** Susanne - 01453 757212 or 07768 403530 (walk morning)
Park by the side of Garway common, off minor road to south of pub (E189/LR149) SO 466225. An undulating walk going up to and around Garway hill passing near Kentchurch and taking in parts of the Herefordshire trail. Picnic.
- Wed 18 Jun 10:00 12m Bath Spectacular** Guy - 01242 251412 or 07968 797186 (walk morning)
Meet Selwyn Hall CP Box (just off A4 at top of village) (E156) ST 824685. Bring bus pass if eligible. This is a (hilly) linear walk on the last stage of the Palladian Way. AM Walk to Monkton Farleigh, Warleigh Woods, The Dundas Aqueduct & the Kennet and Avon canal. Good café lunch or picnic at Brassknocker Basin. PM Monkton Combe, Prior Park Estate, (bring NT card if a member) descend into Bath via Widcombe. Tea after. Return to Box on local bus. Please ring leader for possible car sharing.
- Wed 25 Jun 10:00 10m Cleeve Hill** Hazel - 01232 254105 or 07884 094363 (walk morning)
Quarry CP near Cleeve Hill golf club (E179/LR163) SO 989272. Cleeve Hill, Cockbury Butts, Stanley Mount, Winchcombe, Winchcombe Way, Humblebee Cottages, Belas Knap, Wontley Farm, Cleeve Common. Picnic.

REMINDER - GRWalks lists all the led walks from Area Mid-Week Walks, the seven geographical Gloucestershire groups and the Gloucestershire Walking Group (for 20s 30s & 40s) in convenient date order. See www.gloucestershirearearamblers.org.uk
NO COMPUTER? Send one or more 9x6 inch SAEs to editor Mike Garner (GRWalks), Southcot, The Headlands, Stroud GL5 5PS.



GROUP REPORTS

South Cotswold

Our Walks Programme continues to thrive with 43 walks in the current programme covering November to February. Numbers on walks are being well maintained even in the rain. November saw the first leg of our Ice Cream Walk being completed over the next year in 8 stages from Winstones Ice Cream Factory on Rodborough Common to Uphill near Weston Super Mare. The 80+ mile walk has attracted some useful publicity in the local press and also Country Walking Magazine. The picture below shows us at Winstones on the first stage.



On the holiday front we are looking forward to trips to the Lake District in June, organised by Mike with HF Holidays and to Dunster in September staying at the Yarn Market Hotel.

The Footpath Committee are still beavering away, examining proposals for path diversions and

extinguishments. They are also involved in path clearing where there are obstructions caused by vegetation and are able to attend to those reported to them fairly quickly. In our last annual report Bob Frewin reported in the last year over 80 man hours spent on clearing more than 50 separate paths in the South Cotswolds. Although not part of the South Cotswold Group activities we should also mention the work of Stroud Rambling Club with footpaths. We sometimes tend to be a bit critical of affiliated clubs who seem to exist only for walking and do not involve themselves so much in the additional work which we carry out as Ramblers.

Some years ago the Stroud Club embarked on an exercise to walk over all footpaths in the Stroud area on a grid square basis. This project has been completed but they continue to carry out regular walks to monitor and rectify problems where possible.

A further three kissing gates have been installed as part of our programme financed by the sale of Walks Books bringing the total in excess of 25. On the social side some 20+ Group members recently attended a concert given by Stroud Symphony Orchestra who performed Elgar's Overture Cockaigne, Mozart Piano Concerto No 20 with soloist Katya Apekisheva and Brahms Symphony No 3.

Richard Davis, Chairman



North Cotswold

North Cotswold Group continues to be active and provide a walks programme featuring 2 walks per month with a high proportion of "Figures of 8" to allow maximum flexibility. Attendance at walks in 2013 has reduced slightly partly due to fitness issues amongst some of the Group stalwarts. Email reminders have now been re-instated which has undoubtedly had an impact on attendance. The winter programme has focussed on "local" walks including a number of "Sparkling Walks" which can be conveniently offered as Figure of 8 walks. Our last walk of 2013 included a tour of a large solar farm (~60 acres) just off the A44 near Blockley. To compensate walkers for this little bit of personal indulgence a warm glass of mulled wine and Festive nibbles awaited them at the end of the walk.

In 2013 our linear walk (with minibus support) took us from Buckingham to Hatherop on The Palladian Way.

We enjoyed good weather and views of Stowe Landscape Gardens, Blenheim Park and the ruined hall in Minster Lovell. In 2014 we plan to complete the route to Bath with the promise of more Palladian architecture to come and some good pub lunch stops.

In 2013 the Group entered into a new agreement with The Cotswold Voluntary Wardens to provide materials to be used for the maintenance and improvement of local footpaths. Some of the proceeds from the sales of North Cotswold Diamond Way and Sparkling Walks guidebooks have been transferred to a "Materials Account" at a local timber merchant. The North Cotswold Group will identify footpath problems and agree work to be carried out by The Cotswold Wardens. If you are walking the Diamond Way or a "Sparkling Walk" and see a footpath problem please let me know and we will investigate.

Sue Salmon



Forest of Dean Ramblers

We have enjoyed our usual varied programme this year for which we heartily thank all walk leaders. Seventeen of us and 1 dog had another trip away to Lake Buttermere in September and stayed at the Ramblers Hassness House. We appreciated the food, the views, the weather and the walks, and were surprised to discover that our guide came from Ledbury. Our walks covered mountains and lakes and were both long and short to suit all abilities. Although one should be wary of fit smooth talking guides who might lead the less fit of us to attempt walks we should think more than twice about, and I speak from personal experience here! But it was all great fun and we concluded that we would probably, almost all of us, do it again!

Our AGM was well attended with the "bring and share" supper providing a good table for everyone including vegetarians. We have some changes, plus three new members to welcome onto our committee, so all-in-all a very successful evening.

Our walks in the forest and beyond have been well attended through the year, although as I write it is

New Year's Day and chucking it down with rain, so I'm not sure that we will be so well represented as in past years when we have been known to have close on 50 people turn out for a New Year's Day excursion. For once I consider a bad head cold to be fortuitous which is why I'm here and not there honest!

On 22nd January 2014 we shall be holding our first social of the year in the form of a talk by a leader from HF holidays, explaining their history and all that they can offer to groups such as ours. This will also be a "bring and share" supper but with the added incentive of free wine to help our "social" along. We have held several quiz nights and are investigating other ideas for social evenings such as a group dinner.

Our next trip away is planned for April and we are venturing to countryside just outside of Aberystwyth, which will be a far shorter drive than the 6 hours up to the Lake District. Again this venture has proved popular and we are just short of filling a 17 roomed hotel. We wish all Ramblers a Happy and Healthy New Year and hope to see you in the Forest of Dean in 2014.

June Burden



Cirencester Ramblers

The group has had very good attendance on their winter walks with 34 walkers on 15th December for their Christmas lunch walk, when they amused early morning shoppers by parading through the town in their festive gear. More members joined them for lunch at Ingleside House afterwards.

Our Footpath Secretary Richard Holmes has created a new group called "Path Maintenance Volunteers" (PMV) who will be working to keep paths open and improve access. (We will be supplementing the work of Cotswold Wardens in the areas they do not cover.) On 9th November in very inclement weather they managed to clear a "non existent" path on a very

steep slope on the Miserden estate. This work is in addition to our Footpath Volunteers who are systematically surveying, yard by yard, all 288 miles of paths in the Cirencester Area.

The coming year will be a busy one as it is the 40th Anniversary of the group with many events planned. Each month in 2014 we will recreate one of the original walks from the first year of the group's existence. We are dedicating a Memorial Gate to Peter & Jean Clemence (inaugural members of the group) in recognition of their contribution over many years. This is already in hand.

Pat Beckley



Cleeve Group

Firstly I would like to wish everyone a Happy Walking New Year. Cleeve Group enjoyed an active 2013 and are hoping for the same in 2014.

Our October break in ST Ives with HF was excellent, the weather was good and the walks and leaders likewise. We have still to finalise our spring trip, either dates or destination.

Cleeve AGM was fairly well attended and all offices were filled, however that of treasurer was only filled

thanks to a previous treasurer, Don Evans, taking on the duties for this year only. Next AGM we will need a new Treasurer and Secretary.

The winter walks programme is well under way and despite some mud we have had some very pleasant walks. The spring programme is under construction and should be complete shortly.

The group footpaths committee is again meeting bi-monthly and working its way eagerly through the issues raised.

Brian Payne



Gloucester Ramblers

On top of our Christmas Party a group of us also went to Scotland for the New Year (Party all the way with Gloucester Ramblers - and we also walk occasionally!!). Apart from day trips and a traditional Scottish New Year we put our walking boots on for a

walk around the local loch and also up the nearby mountain and, having got suitably muddy, some also had a go at the fancy dress in full 'used condition' walking gear...but despite the authentic appearance we didn't win any prizes....a bit of failure in the humour department I'm afraid.

David Sanderson