



Cleeve Group 40 Anniversary

John Duck current Group Chair invites Margaret Davies founding Secretary to cut the cake!

Sunday 18 August saw long and short walks depart Southam Village Hall to arrive back at 3pm for the ceremony.

Over 50 past and current members attended a very successful day.

The Group was formed in 1984 by members of Gloucestershire Area including Tewkesbury Walking Club.



Group AGMs 2024

Arrive 30 mins early.
Check programme details.

November

Sun 3, GWG inc 20s-30s
14:00 Nettleton

Sat 16, Forest of Dean
13:30 Yorkley

Sun 17, Cleeve
12:30 Southam

Sun 17, Cirencester
13:30 Ampney Crucis

Mon 18, Gloucester
15:00 Upton St Leonards

Sat 23, South Cotswold
13:00 Frampton Mansell

December

Sat 14, North Cotswold
12:30 Blockley Little Hall

Cirencester Group 50 Anniversary Year



Cirencester Group continued to celebrate 50 years of Rambling and took their banners on a trip to Torquay.

Meanwhile back home, Bill Irving led a WW2 evening walk and Marian Preston organised an evening of skittles, fish and chips. The Clemence bridge was finally opened in honour of some of the Group's founding members.

Area AGM 18 Jan 2025

Sat 13:00 King's Stanley,
Hosted by South Cotswold

Vacancies!

There are always opportunities to lend a hand.

Area Council Meetings

Wed, 25 Nov 7:30pm

Wed, 29 Jan 7:30pm

Find us: Meetup, Facebook





Some Group Activities

One of 59 Ramblers Areas, Gloucestershire has 8 Ramblers Groups: Cirencester, Forest of Dean, South Cotswold, Gloucester, Cleeve, North Cotswold, Gloucestershire Walking Group with its 20s-30s sub-group.

It's AGM Season!

During November, Groups get together to review their efforts over the past year and look forward to the next. There's always space to help join in. The pay may be low but the rewards of doing something useful are high. Why not come along and see what the teams have been up to. Everyone welcome!

Forest of Dean Group

found this sculpture on a walk near Linton.



South Cotswold Group

We have continued to maintain our membership numbers and have also managed to run a full walks programme although we have made some changes. Our Monday shorter and leisurely paced walks continue to attract large numbers of walkers so we decided we would do a weekly walk and so far have managed to get enough walk leaders to do this. We also recognised that some of our members preferred to do longer faster walks so we have introduced one a month to run alongside our normal Saturday walks and there seems to be sufficient numbers and walk leaders to continue this. We again in the summer held a picnic walk social event which was very popular. We had a slightly shorter Saturday walk followed by a buffet lunch which was also attended by some of our members who no longer do the walks but enjoyed catching up with everyone.

I'd like to thank all my fellow committee members, walk leaders and others who do work for the group for their continued support.

Ann Adams (Chair) southcotswoldramblers.org.uk

North Cotswold Group

North Cotswold continued their programme of evening walks throughout the summer. Some members also enjoyed a holiday at Selworthy and met some Exmoor ponies.



Winchcombe Country Show - 26 August Bank Holiday



Next to Cotswolds National Landscape, we gratefully shared Winchcombe Walkers are Welcome gazebo.



Gerry Stewart 1933-2024 Footpath Protector and Author

The next page has a piece written by Gerry describing three of his walking routes. Here he's at the 2015 Winchcombe Walking Festival, the town where he was born. He became a staunch protector of public rights of way, saving many paths for all of us.

He became Cleeve Footpath Secretary when the Group was formed and continued with the committee until easing up, at the beginning of this year.

He campaigned for replacement of stiles with gates or gaps. Shortly after his death, Cotswold Wardens coincidentally installed a wooden kissing gate at Dumbleton on the walk in his hand, St. Kenelm's Way.

Thanks for everything Gerry!



Countryside & Paths Round-up



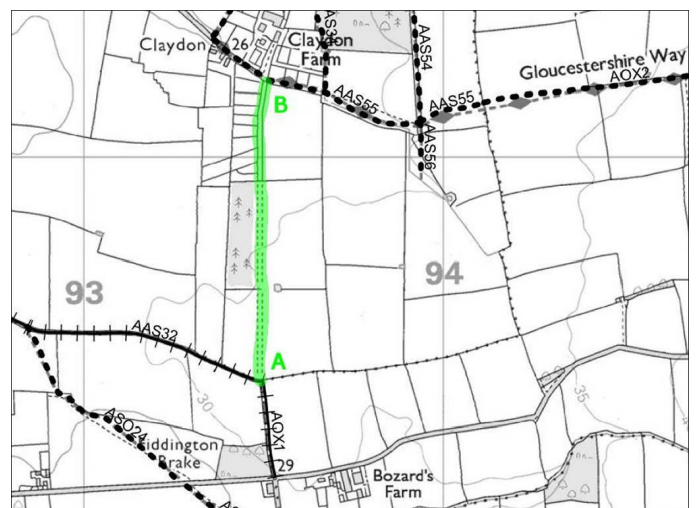
MLS8 Leonard Stanley development. We've sought to retain the path in a green corridor to benefit walkers and residents.



Should we press for signs near paths 'Beware Pedestrians crossing'?



New A417 road scheme continues at Shab Hill.



Lost Way claim at Claydon near Tewkesbury.



Gloucestershire Way, Wysis Way, Three Choirs Way - Beginnings

The walks arose from the resurgence of public interest in countryside walking in the early 1980s and more particularly in response to the Countryside Commission (forerunners of Natural England) urging Highway Authorities to promote suitable well signed walks in the countryside. There was an emphasis on the provision of long-distance regional walks and establishing them on OS maps.

Other than the Definitive Map which came into being circa 1950, the two factors which really started to open the countryside for walking, was the provision of signposts indicating where rights of way left roads and showing the routes on OS mapping.

At that time, I happened to be in the pleasant position as a Rights of Way Officer employed in a rapidly developing PRoW section of the county council's highway division. I was also a founder member of both Cleeve Ramblers and Tewkesbury Walking Club a couple of years earlier and whose considerable memberships were helpful pioneers of all three routes, and later in carrying out the initial waymarking.

Gloucestershire Way

The Gloucestershire Way is the County Council's premier long-distance path and its creation was formally adopted, and applauded, by the Council. The PRoW Manager of the day, Mark Parker, was successful in obtaining a Millennium Heritage Award of £40,000, a considerable amount at the time, for initial signposting and publicity and with particular emphasis on providing access for less able walkers. (The grant was welcome, but paltry compared with the huge sums, £400,000, later made available for the Cotswold Way). Gloucestershire Area Ramblers chose to walk the route as a Millennium Heritage walk over four weekends. The walk involved many parishes some of whose councillors accompanied the walkers at various times. The walking groups also received blessings as they passed though from the Bishops of Gloucester and Tewkesbury and from several parish vicars.

The County Tourism Officer had organised a competition for Gloucester school children in the design of a Millennium kissing gate which was duly unveiled at the finish of the Ramblers walk by the Mayor of Gloucester accompanied by county councillors and other dignitaries including the County Lord Lieutenant.

The Gloucestershire Way is very much a county long distance path and a recognised and promoted walk by the County Council.

Wysis Way

Similarly, in response to the Countryside Commission's demand for regional walks, the GCC Public Rights of Way Manager (with one full time and one part time officer) had proposed a route which Tony Drake, the Ramblers Footpath Secretary denounced as being far too bland and trivial to adequately display the Ramblers landscape in Gloucestershire.

When I appeared on the scene Tony immediately directed me to locate a dusty file in the PRoW office which contained the outline and maps of a route he had partly devised between Monmouth and Thameshead. In due course this became the Wysis Way, the name being chosen, after strong debate, from a long list submitted by Group members.

Although only half the length of the Gloucestershire Way it is an equally pleasant route across the grain of the county, linking, not only three of England's major rivers, but also three National Trails from Offa's to the Thames Path.

With this background the Wysis Way is very much a Ramblers route currently maintained occasionally, by Cirencester Footpath Team.

Three Choirs Way

The Three Choirs Way is also a fine walker's route being pioneered initially through long walks by members of Tewkesbury Walking Club, many of whom also being Ramblers members.

The route, eventually of a hundred miles, evolved out of three successive years of annual weekends, based in the countryside of the three cathedrals and included attendance at the music festivals.

The TCW was the earliest of the trio as it was the musical weekend and visit to Gloucester Cathedral, which led to the publishing of the Gloucestershire Way with themes of both Ivor Gurney's and Will Harvey's poetry and musical themes of 'Forest Vale and High Blue Hill' and 'Song of Gloucester'.

My hope is that this brief background will convince Ramblers, and walkers generally, that the three routes, representative of the pleasant countryside they pass through, are worth sustaining for a long time to come.

Gerry Stewart, 12 May 2023