

# 1 Walk Planning Checklist

Thank you for leading Group walks for the South Cotswold Ramblers, it is much appreciated

## A - BEFORE THE WALK - CHOOSE THE ROUTE (perhaps with back-marker)

- 1) consider area, length/timing, circular/linear, season, ascent/terrain, and avoid roads where possible
- 2) from map, guidebook or internet or combination, research points of interest so as to be able to give an occasional short countryside interpretation, helping to bind the group together, giving people time to catch their breath if they are struggling, and providing general interest, enhancing the experience
- 3) is public transport possible? Otherwise choose easy to find start point with suitable parking
- 4) think which way round to walk, steep slopes should be fairly early in walk when people are fresh but avoid starting steeply up to avoid tendon injuries, try to incorporate a short level section as a warm up - even round the car park if necessary
- 5) check timings (stiles will slow larger parties), 2 mph as a guide unless an easy paced walk, lunch options (preferable to do not more than 5 miles before a pub lunch so as to arrive before 1pm), shelter for picnic if wet, rest stops
- 6) if morning walk is over 5 miles, suggest in the programme that a small picnic is brought as a precaution, in case a large group makes the going slower than anticipated (eg lots of stiles or a hold-up) and the walk might finish after 1 pm
- 7) plan drink and refreshment stops every 60 to 90 minutes, particularly in warm weather

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## B - RECCE (preferably with a back-marker)

- 1) walk full route well in advance, take a map, report problems to Footpath Secretary, note critical navigation points and bearings, assess risks, adjust route/escape routes if necessary, check timings, plan rest and comfort stops
- 2) describe in Group Programme after checking with any pub to be used. It is important that the stated distance is correct (measure carefully - ask Mike to check if you like). The terrain rating L, L/M, M, M/H or H should be fairly described and any particular difficulties e.g. lots of stiles / one very steep ascent be highlighted. **NB** Inexperienced walkers may be at their limit and will be highly dependent on the accuracy of this information
- 3) directions to the start point should also be included if it is not straightforward. Choose whether to add your mobile phone number for use on the day
- 4) not always necessary, but you might feel happier walking part or all of the route again nearer the date if complicated/ long time gap, preferably with the on-the-day back-marker

## C - THE DAY BEFORE

- 1) check and assess weather forecast, review alternative routes
- 2) check your personal gear including map, first aid kit, (everyone is encouraged to bring their own small first-aid kit for self-treatment of minor injuries), and whistle (a long blast means stop)
- 3) check public transport, check with pub if used

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# 2 Walk Leading Checklist

## D - ON THE DAY – AT THE START

- 1) hopefully a very rare occurrence but if in your opinion weather conditions are really bad, it is your decision whether to cancel or curtail the walk on grounds of health and safety
- 2) aim to arrive early, ensure sensible parking, be welcoming, especially to newcomers, offer non-members joining details at some stage or forward their details to Membership Sec.
- 3) check fitness and equipment of party, a lack of proper footwear or equipment could put them or others at risk
- 4) welcome everyone, introduce yourself, walk details, points of special interest, drink and lunch stops, where to take particular care (e.g. crossing a busy road), estimated return time (a larger group and/or lots of stiles means a later finish)
- 5) ask walkers not to walk in front of the leader without his/her agreement and for health and safety reasons keep together, pausing to regroup at junctions of paths
- 6) announce/appoint the back-marker (preferably someone who has reced route, if not **make sure they are aware of route** and any tricky junctions), they should remain near back to close gates, ensure that no-one falls behind unseen, use a whistle, mobiles or 2-way radios if party needs to stop
- 7) ask that anyone who needs to drop back for a comfort stop to tell the back-marker, and if they decide to leave the walk altogether to inform the leader and/or the back marker
- 8) ask if anyone has any questions
- 9) count party and signal the start

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## E - ON THE DAY – THE WALK

- 1) start off quite gently at first to warm up, stay at or near front, look behind often to see your back-marker, and be in earshot of the backmarker's whistle! Assess the ability of the group
- 2) set a reasonable pace, watch for stragglers, don't always move on just as the back-marker appears, give time for people at the back to have an occasional short rest
- 3) pause to regroup larger parties over stiles every 2 to 3 fields and also in woods and turnings, concentrate on navigation
- 4) leader and back-marker should keep an eye out for anyone who might be struggling and encourage them with a short chat
- 5) in the hopefully rare event of someone being ill or injured, ask if there is a trained first aider. If necessary send back-marker forward with the party about 100 yards away, leader plus one person to stay, phone or send two for help
- 6) in reasonable weather, don't rush lunch: for many, eating out of doors is an enjoyable aspect of open-air recreation
- 7) **enjoy the walk - as much as you can!**

## F - AT THE END OF THE WALK

- 1) check everyone has returned
- 2) report any incidents to the Group Secretary and/or Chairman, including details of witnesses
- 3) report any obstructions to the Footpath Secretary
- 4) on your return home, sometimes write a brief description of your walk aimed at local newspapers (numbers attending, itinerary, unusual happenings and so on), and telephone or email the details through to the Publicity Officer
- 4) relax - until your next one - and offer your date early - thanks!

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