

Covid-19 Coronavirus shuts down Ramblers Activities.

It was 17th March this year that Ramblers Board of Trustees through Central Office announced that all led walks were to be cancelled, until at least the end of May, and other activities suspended too. This followed feedback from Groups and Areas across the country, with the escalation in spread of the virus, and increasingly strong guidance from Government.

Traffic light system

It's likely that as spread of the virus subsides there will be some easing of restrictions.

The main considerations for Ramblers will be to

1. manage risk
2. apply good health and safety practice
3. accept there is an element of personal responsibility
4. consider the vulnerability of members or groups

For Ramblers activities to restart we need to:-

1. Apply Government guidance on social distancing
2. Follow the government's social contact guidelines
3. Ask whether the activity can be done safely, to protect the safety of volunteers
4. Travel separately - can the activity be done without public transport or car sharing or crossing borders
5. Act responsibly - ask if it's ok to carry out the activity.

When restrictions begin to be lifted it may be possible to assess various activities using a traffic light system

Green - what can be done safely e.g. Route checking

Amber - what needs some caution e.g. Bramble cutting

Red - what can't be done for now e.g. Group walks

Continue to check Ramblers advice on the website page ramblers.org.uk/volunteer-zone/coronavirus

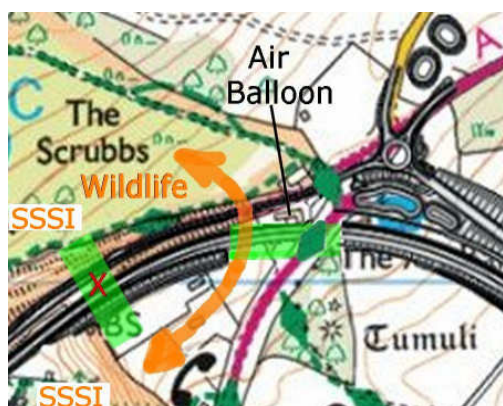
Cotswold Way 50th Anniversary Sunday 17th May 2020



One of the casualties of the virus lockdown was the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the inauguration of the Cotswold Way by Gloucestershire County Council during Footpath Week 1970.

A number of members took the opportunity to use their local exercise walk to explore a very empty National Trail.

It's hoped that, all being well, a similar event will take place next year at around the same time.



A417 Missing Link at Air Balloon – Plans Delayed 12 months.

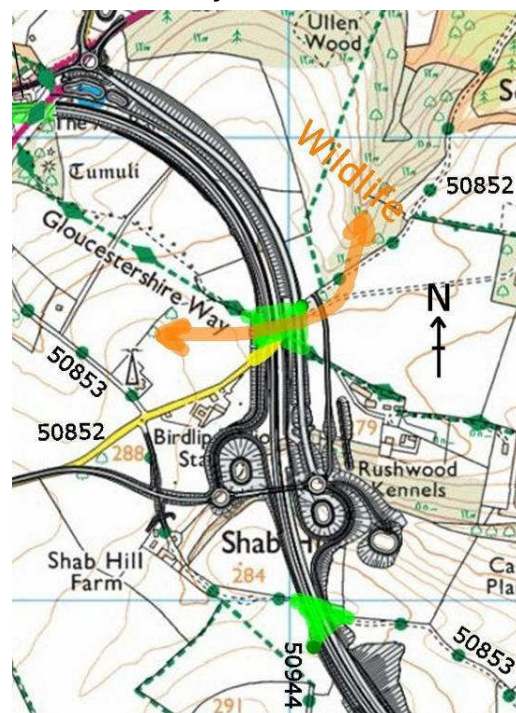
Despite possible design updates it is still hoped to complete in 2024.

There were concerns that the scheme would not meet the planning requirements for a new road within an AONB.

The green bridge location is being reviewed and may be better on a migration route for wildlife (left). There is also a need for a surfaced cycle

route from Brockworth onwards to Birdlip, Stockwell and Nettleton. It could use Dog Lane Bentham, cross the new A417 at the Cotswold Way retaining the Air Balloon, and pass through Barrow Wake car park.

Shab Hill junction (right) is proposed between cycling, riding & walking routes such as the Gloucestershire Way. Green bridges would allow people and wildlife to avoid roundabouts and minimise impact & severance in this 'landscape-led' project.



(Maps Ordnance Survey & Highways England)

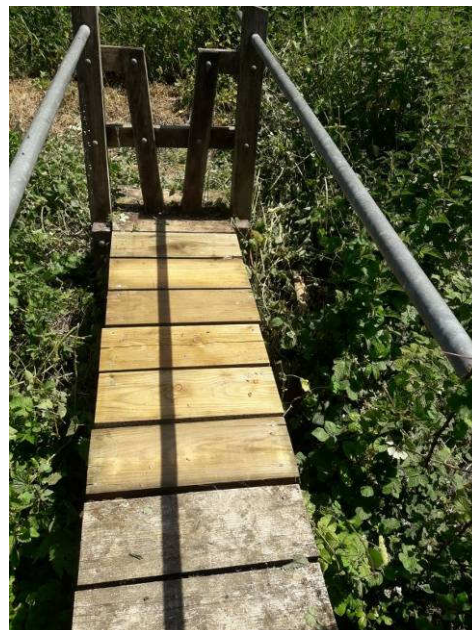
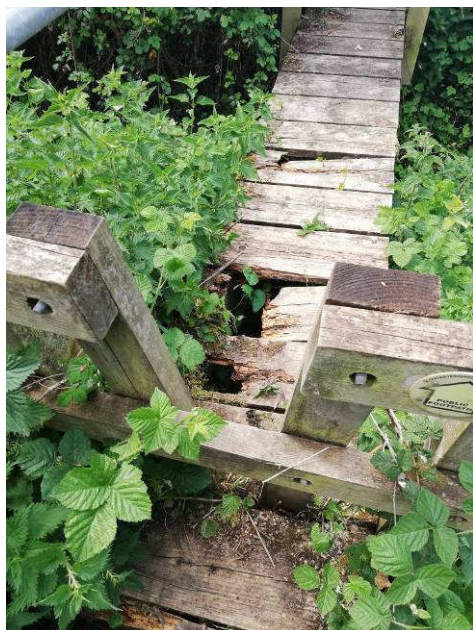
Diary Dates

Gloucestershire Ramblers
Area Council Meeting
7:30pm using Zoom
Wed 29th July 2020
Wed 30th Sept 2020



Find us: Facebook, Meetup

Another Bridge Repaired



With virus control measures in operation, many walkers are carrying out exercise walks on paths they may not have used for a while. A member of Cheltenham Rambling Club let us know about this bridge next to the River Chelt at Prior's Norton. Gloucester Group Footpath Secretary raised it with Gloucestershire County Council. The Public Rights of Way team deemed it urgent and, while using social distancing, carried out a repair within 2 days. Issues like this can be reported directly through GCC website, via Ramblers Pathwatch or email footpaths@gloucestershireramblers.org.uk.

The route planning tool above from nmcramblers.org.uk gives the OS map 2+5+5 grid reference. Use Ctrl+C to copy the number and Ctrl+V to paste it to a report. Try Shift+ PrtSc keyboard buttons to copy any screen image for resize & crop.



The Walking Environment

Hydro-boring activity through the new A417 development area has led to footpaths being covered with plastic matting and a temporary diversion of the Cotswold Way.

Plans for new housing developments should include 'green' corridors especially around paths.

This plan at Brockworth shows Linden Homes proposals to create a line of trees alongside a footpath (green dashes). Other new paths (orange) were not indicated on maps but were regularly walked.

A meeting with GCC PRoW Officers in early March revealed that their budget has increased by £150k this year for improvements to footbridges (see above) and £25k for urban footways.

While the Covid-19 virus has led to more individual walking, it has also led to more reporting of footpath issues. Here, while out on an exercise walk, someone has helped cleared a path through brambles. Elsewhere this gate on an ORPA (Other Route of Public Access) green lane was found locked. A County Council quick call to the landowner and they've not only opened it, they've tied it open.

This could be a good opportunity to become monitors for our local paths. It would save our Footpath Secretaries a trip if you're able to give feedback on a local footpath issue. If you are interested in lending a hand, for a while, as a footpath monitor, please let us know by email at [footpaths](mailto:footpaths@gloucestershireramblers.org.uk) or [countryside](mailto:countryside@gloucestershireramblers.org.uk).



Some Group News

Gloucester Ramblers Group

We now have an annual dinner in January rather than a pre-Christmas meal and this year's event was enjoyed by all at Bowden Hall.

Group walks and social events have inevitably been cancelled from mid-March, including a walking holiday at Kingsbridge in Devon and a coach trip to Waterperry Gardens near Oxford. We hope group walking, with some restrictions, will restart in the Autumn but we'll be guided by advice from Ramblers Central Office.

In the meantime, many of us have been rediscovering local footpaths during our daily exercise and sometimes trimming overgrown foliage. Several blocked paths have been reported to Gloucestershire CC.

We have kept in touch through Nigel Bone's weekly Exercise Update, which is now on Edition 11. Many members have contributed descriptions of their walks, photos and even poems to this popular newsletter.

John Bent-Marshall



Cirencester Ramblers Group

The Committee have been keeping in touch during these difficult times.

Unfortunately our Away weekend in April to Ilfracombe had to be cancelled, but we hope to reinstate it later in the year.

Also a day trip to Blenheim Palace had to be cancelled.

Inevitably the work of the Footpath Committee has been restricted by Covid19, this is what we achieved prior to the lockdown and work that has not involved any outside visits or meetings. The closer working with the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens is proving very helpful. Of the 42 parishes the Cotswold Wardens have at least 18 parishes covered by their Parish Wardens.

The Path Maintenance Volunteers made a good start in 2020 with two working parties before the lockdown. On the March visit several of the paths had clearly recently been under water, so progress was restricted by mud and surface water. We even had to resort to returning by walking along the roads! We are now within a stone's throw of May Hill so the next time we should reach this significant landmark.

There is a new initiative to replace the stone to mark the end of the Thames Path at Thames Head. Cirencester Ramblers have agreed to support this project which plans to replace the stone with something more interesting.

The series of leaflets 'Walks around Cirencester'. These are being updated at the present time and a new booklet should be available shortly.

Membership Changes from 10th January to 30th April 2020. During this period: 4 Joined; 3 Moved In; 1 died; 5 Lapsed; 4 Left the Group; and 7 Resigned. This includes Affiliate Members.

Pat Beckley - Cirencester Ramblers

Obituaries

RON CLOKE 1933 – 2020 Cotswold Rambling Club and the Ramblers Mid-Glos Group

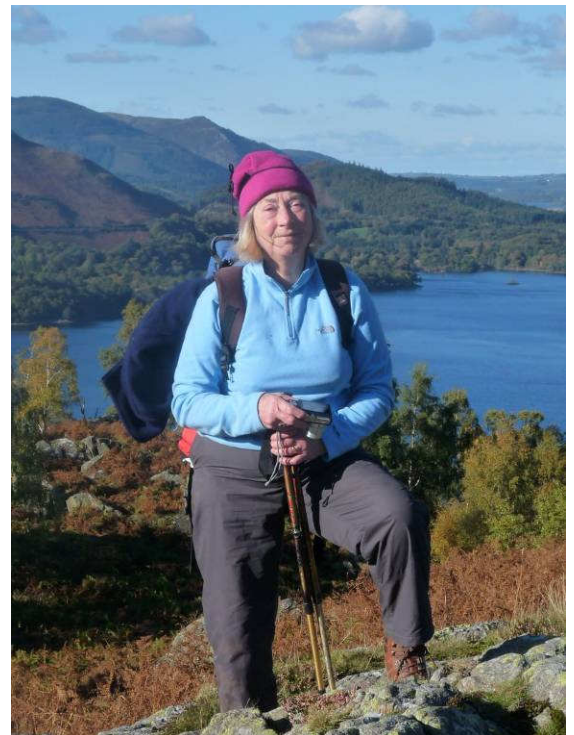


Ron Cloke (centre back) passed away on 30th April following a stroke. A rugby player in his earlier days he came to rambling later in life. He joined the Cotswold Rambling Club and the Ramblers Mid-Glos Group in 1994 where he met his future wife Frances. The couple led many walks and also quickly got involved in the running of the Group. Ron was Treasurer from 1995 to 2005 and was a Group representative on Area Council. Frances was Group Chair from 2001 to 2005. They were loyal supporters of Gloucestershire Area and regularly attended the AGM's.

Ron was also an active member of the Group Footpath Committee and the Working Parties led by Richard Lacock and later Frank Wragg which built stiles, kissing gates and footbridges and did a lot to open up the Cheltenham Circular Footpath. After Mid-Glos Group disbanded Ron continued doing practical work with the Cotswold Wardens.

SHIRLEY POULTON (nee Hacker) 1938-2020
Cheltenham Rambling Club, Gloucestershire Mid-Week Walks

Shirley sadly died on 7th April 2020, a victim of pancreatic cancer. Her introduction to rambling involved walking with her family and with the Cheltenham Rambling Club. Then from 1955 mountaineering took up most of her weekends after she became a founder member of the Gloucestershire Mountaineering Club, and where she met her husband-to-be, Steve. Steve's RAF career took them to many different places, including Scotland where many mountains were climbed. On their return to Cheltenham in 1992, Shirley joined the Gloucestershire Ramblers Mid-Week Walking Group and led many of the walks. Val Palmer, a fellow mountaineer, became her regular walks partner and they explored the Cotswolds, Forest of Dean, Marcle Ridge etc. to develop interesting walks for the Group. After walks Shirley would often brew drinks in the campervan for the thirsty walkers. When Steve retired from the RAF in 2001, he joined her in route planning and on the walks. Only in recent years did Shirley find the distance and pace of the Mid-Week walks uncomfortable so they turned to their own shorter walks



Cirencester

Robin Lloyd passed away on 8th January 2020. Sincere condolences were sent to his wife Judy.

Twenty six members along with family members and friends joined in a celebration of his life in Down Ampney Village Hall on 21st January. A keen walker and cyclist, he was a very active member of the group and will be sorely missed.

Area Mid-Week Walks

With virus measures in place there is no led walks programme until at least the October issue.