
CHELTENHAM RAMBLING CLUB

GUIDANCE FOR WALK LEADERS

PLANNING

1. Where?

Offer your favourite walk; it doesn't matter if the Club did it last year! Your enthusiasm for the walk will be infectious and knowing the route well will make it easier to lead. Travelling time from Cheltenham is a limitation. Walks should only be on public footpaths, bridleways and roads, concessionary paths or on access land unless the landowner's permission has been obtained.

Remember that riverside paths may flood in winter while bridleways become impossibly muddy. Dark woods should be avoided on evening walks early or late in the season.

2. When?

The Club offers walks throughout the year on weekends and during the week. The proposed dates of walks for the next programme are included in the current programme.

The Club leads walks every Saturday and has an agreement with the Cotswold Club that we will not offer walks on the second or fourth Sunday of the month. Morning or evening walks are held during the week. While morning walks can take place throughout the year, evening walks are restricted to dates between May and August. So that evening walks can be attended by those in employment these walks should preferably start not earlier than 18:15.

3. Distance

How long?

The Club offers several types of walk of varying length.

Evening: 3 - 5 miles 2 - 3 hours

Half day 4 - 7 miles 3 - 4 hours

Full day 8 - 12 miles 5 - 6 hours

Long full day 13+ miles 6+ hours

These are generally circular walks. Occasionally leaders offer 'Figure of 8' walks i.e. a morning and an afternoon walk starting from the same place. Linear walks are possible with the use of car shuttles or public transport.

4. Cheltenham Meeting Point

The meeting places in Cheltenham are identified in the programme and on Meetup. Car drivers are encouraged to offer lifts. You will need to estimate the distance to the start of the walk so that the travel fee can be calculated at the current rate. Add 10 minutes to the estimated travel time to allow for booting up.

5. Starting Point

Walks have to be planned around car parking spaces, so parking for up to 20 cars is necessary for some evening walks. If a pub car park is chosen, the permission of the landlord is obligatory. You should encourage patronage of the pub afterwards. Charges for public car parks must be noted in the programme.

When planning an evening walk with parking in a lay-by give consideration to HGV drivers who may want to park there overnight. Ramblers should be encouraged to share cars and disperse them around villages.

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THE WALKOVER

6. Equipment

A 1:25000 map [OS Explorer] is essential as it shows field boundaries. There is a Club Map Library and details can be obtained from the Committee. A compass, some secateurs, a mobile phone, a whistle and a torch might be useful.

7. Deputy Leader/ Backmarker

Try to do the walkover with a fellow member as this will boost your confidence. He or she could lead the walk if you are unable to do so on the day. Committee members may be able to help. When a large number of ramblers are expected on the programmed day, a backmarker to accompany slower walkers is essential.

8. En - route

Make a note of any features which might be important later, e.g.crops, livestock etc. Any problems should be reported to the County Council. Note the terrain so that guidance is given in the programme notes, e.g. 'hilly', or 'could be muddy'. Look out for refreshment and comfort stops.

The final walkover needs to be within a few weeks of the actual walk.

Walks without walkovers should only be contemplated by experienced leaders when a small group is anticipated, unless the route is taken from a guidebook.

9. Timing

Walkovers sometimes take slightly longer than the actual walk, but stiles cause delays to large groups. You will need to allow 10 to 15 minutes for tea/coffee stops. Evening and half-day walks tend to proceed at 2 - 2½ mph and full day walks at nearer 3 mph. An hour should be added for every 1000 feet to be climbed.

10. Lunch

On full day walks particularly in winter many ramblers like to have the opportunity to shelter and eat warm food in a pub. Other ramblers need alternative shelter such as church porches. Inevitably pub lunches, especially on Sundays, are prone to slow service. Whereas a picnic lunch will often last less than 30 minutes, a pub meal usually lasts a full hour. Walk leaders should express their intention clearly in the programme. Should the latter be chosen, the landlord should be contacted to ascertain whether walkers are welcome, the type and price of food available. Landlords appreciate an indication of the numbers of meals wanted. Avoid overestimation! Sometimes a mobile phone call during the walk is helpful.

11. Instructions to ramblers in the programme

Leaders may ask all those who plan to do a walk to contact them. This enables the leader to change details or cancel the walk for example in case of low numbers or bad weather. This avoids disappointment and unnecessary journeys.

Leaders may stipulate 'No dogs' when they do not want dogs on the walk. Where dogs are allowed, they should be on short leads at all times.

ON THE DAY

12. At the start

If possible, go to the meeting place in Cheltenham to ensure that everyone who needs a lift has one. If you cannot do so, ask someone else to be there. For safety reasons, count the number of walkers. Welcome everybody to the walk, especially those new to The Club. Give out or ask for any notices. Ramblers often appreciate a few comments about matters of interest.

If you feel that anyone has come inadequately equipped for the walk, you may refuse to allow that person to walk. The same applies to members who bring dogs on 'no dog' walks. The Committee will support you if you have any of these issues.

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13. During the walk

The leader should strike a balance between leading efficiently at the front and spending time with members.

When you stop to let the last person catch up, give them a while to rest too. Don't just power on now that the group is back together.

Stop to admire the view, first of all it's beautiful. Secondly it's a great, subtle way of introducing small breaks if people are getting tired.

The Countryside Code should be respected. Gates should be shut unless previously left open.

Ramblers should be encouraged to shout back about this and also about the presence of motor vehicles and bikes.

If it becomes apparent the walk will finish in the dark, leaders should walk at a suitable speed so that people can negotiate hazards safely.

A backmarker is strongly advised as one can prevent the group becoming split or help a rambler in difficulties. This is particularly important in bad weather or darkness when the leader and backmarker should consider wearing hi-visibility clothing or a reflective arm band.

Both you and the backmarker should take a whistle. The Club's emergency code is:-

Two blasts - Slow down and make contact, we are losing you.

Four blasts - Stop we have an accident / illness / lost person.

Dogs should be closely controlled. They must be on leads on roads and near livestock and wildlife.

Incidents caused by dogs are not covered by the Club's insurance.

14. Walking on Roads

The route of all rambles should be off-road where reasonably practicable. Where road walking is necessary, use pavements and safe crossing points. Where there is no pavement walk in single file on the right, facing oncoming traffic. Cross to the other side before sharp right-hand bends.

15. Safety First

It is a rule of the Club that the Club accepts no liability for member's health or safety, so members walk at their own risk. Most problems can be overcome through common sense!

Thunderstorms can be frightening in open countryside. Do not shelter under trees! It is safer to squat down in the open. In mountainous areas, groups should descend promptly to a safer altitude.

Should you have concerns about the desirability or safety of a walk, for example because of extreme weather conditions, you have the right to cancel it or modify the route.

Ideally, leaders should have a mobile phone for use in emergencies. In the event of an emergency where there is no mobile phone reception, the leader may need to organise the summoning of help with someone else in the party.

16. After the walk

CRC is a sociable walking club so if convenient, nominate a pub or tea shop afterwards! Who knows, your fellow ramblers might even treat you!

Without leaders there can be no walks so the Club encourages new leaders. The Club Officers and members of the Committee will be pleased to offer advice.

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Walk Information Required for the Programme

Date Meeting time in Cheltenham. Meeting place in Cheltenham.	Name of the walk, type of walk, terrain. Starting time, starting place, map number(s), grid reference. Post code? The walk, refreshments.	Distance. Car share contribution. Leader. Phone numbers.
Sat 5th 08.55 Tivoli Road	Cotswold Challenge Full Day /Hilly Start at 09.30 from Woodmancote village, the one near Rendcomb, OL45/LR163/SP004088. Walk: Rendcomb, North Cerney, Bagendon, various Duntisbournes, Burcombe Lane. Picnic lunch.	11 Miles £2.00 Your name 01242 123456 07123 456789