

CHELTENHAM RAMBLING CLUB

GUIDANCE FOR WALK LEADERS

1. Where?

Offer your favourite walk, it doesn't matter if the Club did it last year! Travelling time from Cheltenham is a limitation. Walks should only be on public footpaths and bridleways, 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?

We have a reciprocal agreement with the Cotswold Club so the basic monthly programme is:-

- 1st weekend Saturday and Sunday
- 2nd weekend Saturday only
- 3rd weekend Saturday and Sunday
- 4th weekend Saturday only
- 5th weekend Saturday and Sunday

Evening walks are held weekly from mid - April to early September. The time at the meeting point for evening walks should not be earlier than 6-15 p.m, so that ramblers in full-time work are not inconvenienced, except at the beginning or end of the season.

3. Starting Point

The meeting places in Cheltenham are Andover Walk on Saturdays, Bayshill Road, (Ladies College Reception) on Sundays and Lypiatt Road on evenings, Pittville Lawn kiosk may also be used. Car drivers are encouraged to offer lifts. You will need to estimate the distance to the start of the walk to allow adequate time and so that the travel fee can be calculated at the current rate.

THE WALKOVER

4. Equipment

A 1:25000 map [OS Explorer] is essential as it shows field boundaries. The Club Library is kept by a Committee member.. A compass, some secateurs and a torch might be useful.

5 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.

6. 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.

Lay-bys used by HGV's are sometimes occupied overnight so should be avoided. Ramblers should be encouraged to share cars and disperse them around villages.

3. 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.

7. 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 m.p.h and full day walks at nearer 3 m.p.h. An hour should be added for every 1000 feet to be climbed.

8. 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 phonecall during the walk is helpful.

9. Instructions to ramblers in the programme

Leaders may ask members to phone them should ramblers intend to drive to the start of a walk directly. This is helpful when a walk is a long distance from Cheltenham in case of low numbers or bad weather, so it can be cancelled.

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

ON THE DAY

10. 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. You may ask participants to turn off their mobile 'phones as many ramblers dislike the disturbance they cause. The Committee will support you if you have any of these issues.

11. On the walk

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

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.

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.

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.

12. 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.

If you do not possess a mobile phone make sure that somebody else on has one. Be aware that mobiles do not work in some remote areas, so you may depend on a whistle!

Should a rambler decide to leave a walk before the end, the leader should, if possible, advise the person that the Club no longer takes any responsibility for him or her,

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 curtail the route.

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!

Stephen Wall - Revised November 2010

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Without leaders there can be no walks so the Club encourages new leaders. Proposal forms are available from the Programme Secretary. The Club Officers and members of the Committee will be pleased to offer advice.

PLANNING

1. How long?

The Club offers several types of walk of varying length.

Evening 2 - 3 hours	3 - 5 miles
Half day 3 - 4 hours	6 - 8 miles
Full day 5 - 6 hours	9 - 12 miles
Long full day 6+ hours	13+ miles

These are 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.