Walking in Gloucestershire

Website for Walkers

Are you fed-up with doing the same old walks?

Walking in Gloucestershire is the website for you!

With hundreds of walks to download and print, free, it also has books of walks, contact details for all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group all the information is there in one place.

John said 'There is so much walking information on the web but it is difficult to find. Walking in Gloucestershire, part of the ***Walking in England*** suite of websites – one for each county in England, has brought it together in one place so whether you are walking from home, or away on holiday, you will be able to find a walk suitable for you'.

With walks from half a mile to twelve miles plus long, and a note of suitability for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone can find a walk to enjoy.

So home or away, check out the websites and get walking!

John Harris#

- Walking and Cycling
- Rights of Way online map
- Lost – 49,000 miles of footpaths
- Slow Ways
- Colesbourne Snowdrops

Slow Ways

In the News

You may have seen Slow Ways featured on both ***BBC News*** and ***ITV News*** on October 16th? "Slow Ways…seeks to elevate the position of walking in our national conversation, to be seen not just as a worthy, healthy hobby but part of our national transport infrastructure".

Slow Ways in a snail shell

Slow Ways is a project to create a network of walking routes and ***footpaths*** that connect all of Great Britain's towns and cities as well as thousands of villages.

Using existing footpaths, people will be able to use the Slow Ways routes to walk between neighbouring settlements or combine routes for long distance journeys.

During lockdown 700 volunteers from across the country collaborated to produce a first draft of the Slow Ways network, creating a stunning Slow Ways map in the process. This incredible effort has led to the creation of 7,500 routes that collectively stretch for over 110,000km.

While COVID-19 has forced millions of us to stay at home and indoors, that hasn't stopped us from being collaborative, imaginative, creative and productive.

We are currently working on building a website that will host all of the Slow Ways routes information and hope to launch that later this year.

All of the routes information that we collate will always be free to browse, search, view, share, download and enjoy.

Want to find out more? ***Read the FAQs on the Slow Ways Website***.

Slow Ways Group

Wouldn't it be nice if we had a ***Slow Ways Group*** in Stinchcombe. And be in at the start of the project in January 2021.

Further Reading

- Guardian
- Ordnance Survey
- Country Living

Lost – 49,000 miles of footpaths

Curry and Sarcasm

When you move from America to England there are things you appreciate in a special, deep way only made possible by being raised bereft of them. The NHS is one that springs to mind. Also curry, sarcasm and footpaths.

When I lived in the mountains of North Carolina, surrounded by hundreds of acres of beautiful forest, it was all off-limits to me, except for the area set aside as a national park. There, you can't walk through privately owned land. Unless you risk being prosecuted for trespassing, or possibly being shot at. Meaning unless you know the landowner, all you can do is look from a distance.

The missing miles of footpaths

In England the footpath network contains paths dating from 5000 BC, used by Neolithic people to move from place to place. Some date from the Romans, and some from Anglo Saxon times. Given the prevalence of long barrows and other sites sacred to Neolithic humans in this area, it is likely that some of the paths we enjoy were walked on many thousands of years ago. **I think that is pretty marvellous**. Our right for free access these footpaths has been fought for by the Ramblers, established in the 1930s to protect the rights of people to access the countryside.

Obviously a lot has changed in the last several hundred years, and the Ramblers recently pored over old maps, square kilometer by square kilometer to find lost footpaths. What they found was shocking. There were over 49,000 miles of historical footpaths missing from modern maps, almost a **thousand miles in Gloucestershire alone**! This represents almost a third of the footpath network in England.



Walking a local footpath

Finding and reinstating

The government has given a deadline of **January 1st 2026** to re-map the routes and preserve them. This seems like a long way away but will be upon us before we know it. This deadline was established as part of the Countryside and Rights of Way act of 2000. However, as the clock ticks down the government has taken no action towards mapping and preserving historic footpaths. Of course at the moment they have quite a lot of other things on their plate.

Some of these paths have been:

- developed over or
- legally extinguished or
- are small fragments

The Ramblers Association – Don't Lose Your Way

The Ramblers are prioritizing paths which add value to the footpath network, such as

- completing circular routes
- resolving dead ends
- adding walking to areas without many off-road walking options.

They are **looking for volunteers** to help with this mission which they've named Don't Lose Your Way, by finding and mapping these routes, and where appropriate applying for them to be restored.

For more information on how you can help with this work, you can go to the Ramblers Website where there is an extensive FAQ.

These footpaths have been established over many hundreds, or

indeed thousands of years, and are easy to take for granted, but once they are gone they are gone forever. To join the South Cotswold Ramblers see their website

Jessica Burchfiel

Piers Court Footpaths

From the Owners of Piers Court