

Gloucester Cathedral Ramblers Walk - Saturday 16 August 2025 - Report Haw Bridge to Ashleworth

Saturday 16 August dawned clear, cloudy, warm and bright. The temperature was forecast to rise from 18°C at 09.00 to 22°C at midday, after which the cloud would break and the temperature would rise further to 28°C. The humidity would be 62%, and the wind would be east-northeast at 5 to 10 mph. In the event, the walking conditions were ideal. The medium-level cloud shielded us from the sun and the gentle breeze on our backs was quite refreshing.

Eleven of us - Alison, Anne, Colin, Gary, Geoff, Jean, John, Jon, Michael, Mike and me - met at Gloucester Bus Station shortly before 09.00 for the No 351 service bus to Tewkesbury. It was especially good to welcome Anne, who was joining the Ramblers for the first time. Ginny also joined us for the bus journey to Ashleworth, where she intended spending a couple of hours exploring. The Ramblers continued to Haw Bridge where we began our walk at 09.50.

We discussed the route and relevant safety issues for the walk outside the 18th Century Haw Bridge Inn, formerly the Passage Inn. Walking south on the west bank of, but well above, the River Severn, we passed several houses in The Haw hamlet, two of which are timber-framed. The others are mainly 18th Century brick buildings, some with grand river frontages. At the southern end of The Haw, we discovered that Haw Farm is home to some alpacas and a small flock of colourful guinea fowl. Further on, there were a number of fishing platforms at river level, and what initially appeared to be a quarry ahead of us, albeit on the other bank of the river, but which turned out to be the Red Lion Inn Camping and Caravan Park rising up above the pub on the northern edge of Wainlode Hill. We paused briefly to drink from our water flasks opposite the Red Lion Inn - under new management from the spring of this year - where the river turns abruptly west to run alongside Wainlode Cliff: a freestone precipice and Site of Special Scientific Interest. During this pause, Colin pointed out that the water in the river was some 2 feet below its usual level judging from the appearance of the warning posts in the centre of the river; Geoff added that, with the lack of rainfall further upriver, the Severn was currently too shallow for narrow boats between Gloucester and Tewkesbury.

A little over 4 km further, we reached Ashleworth. During the walk, it was noticeable that the grass in the fields beside the river was green as opposed to the scorched grass around Gloucester. On one stretch alongside the river, there was a lot of invasive Himalayan Balsam. On reaching Ashleworth Quay, we left the river at the now defunct and much-lamented Boat Inn, closed as it was no longer financially viable because of frequent flooding. We then visited the Grade 1 listed Saxon Church of St Andrew and St Bartholomew and the 15th Century Tithe Barn (to Alison's delight) before heading along footpaths to Ashleworth Hub, passing en route a very grand entrance gate with an engraved plaque stating it was where the Ashleworth GP lives. We arrived at Ashleworth Hub at 12.00 noon for some very good refreshments. The footpaths we used in Ashleworth are now part of the Three Choirs Way, which has been re-routed to avoid the road-walking necessitated previously. At slightly after its scheduled time of 12.54, the No 351 service bus arrived and whisked us back to Gloucester, where we arrived at 13.25. The attached photograph of the 11 Ramblers was taken outside Ashleworth Hub by Ginny Dickinson.

In sum, we were blessed with ideal weather. The area around The Haw, the riverside walk, the Church of St Andrew and St Bartholomew, and the Tithe Barn were all most interesting. Everyone on the walk was excellent company, and the conversations ranged far and wide. Culminating in the refreshments at Ashleworth Hub, it was a most enjoyable morning's walk.

Peter Barrett

18 August 2025