

Gloucester Cathedral Ramblers' Walk - Saturday 6 December 2025 - Report

Prinknash Abbey, Kites Hill Nature Reserve, Cud Hill, Painswick Beacon and Prinknash Abbey: Circular Walk

The weather forecast for the day was somewhat off-putting, patchy rain and a strong breeze, but there were still seven of us (Andrew, Ian, Jon, Sister Judi (a new Rambler), Margaret, Richard and me) gathering in the Prinknash Abbey Café carpark. The gates unlock at seven so well before our nine am rendezvous.

All seemed well as we set off around the drive to the old monastery (parts of which date to the 1300s). The closed off private drive up to the Portway was an unwelcome surprise. Some of us visited the chapel whilst the route was replanned. Fortunately, beyond the graveyard there is a permissive path that allowed access to the road.

Onward again along the slope of Kites Hill and Popes Wood, the beech leaves carpeting the forest floor with brown (see photograph). We crossed the road to Painswick and went as far as the Blow family memorial looking for a bit of shelter for a drinks stop. There was a wide view across Severn Vale from Cud Hill despite the low cloud and occasional light shower.

A bit of backtracking and a careful road crossing took us to the base of Painswick Beacon. The brave went up and over enduring the blustery wind (see photograph). The circumspect went around to join up in the shelter of the beech trees along the escarpment. Onward to Cranham Corner and the last climb up through more beautiful beechwoods. Once over the top we turned west and down through the woods aiming for the Prinknash Abbey drive. Another busy road crossing then the café came in sight. Hot drinks and food in the warm after an energetic morning out in the weather.

Bruce Matheson

14 December 2025

Both photographs courtesy of the author.