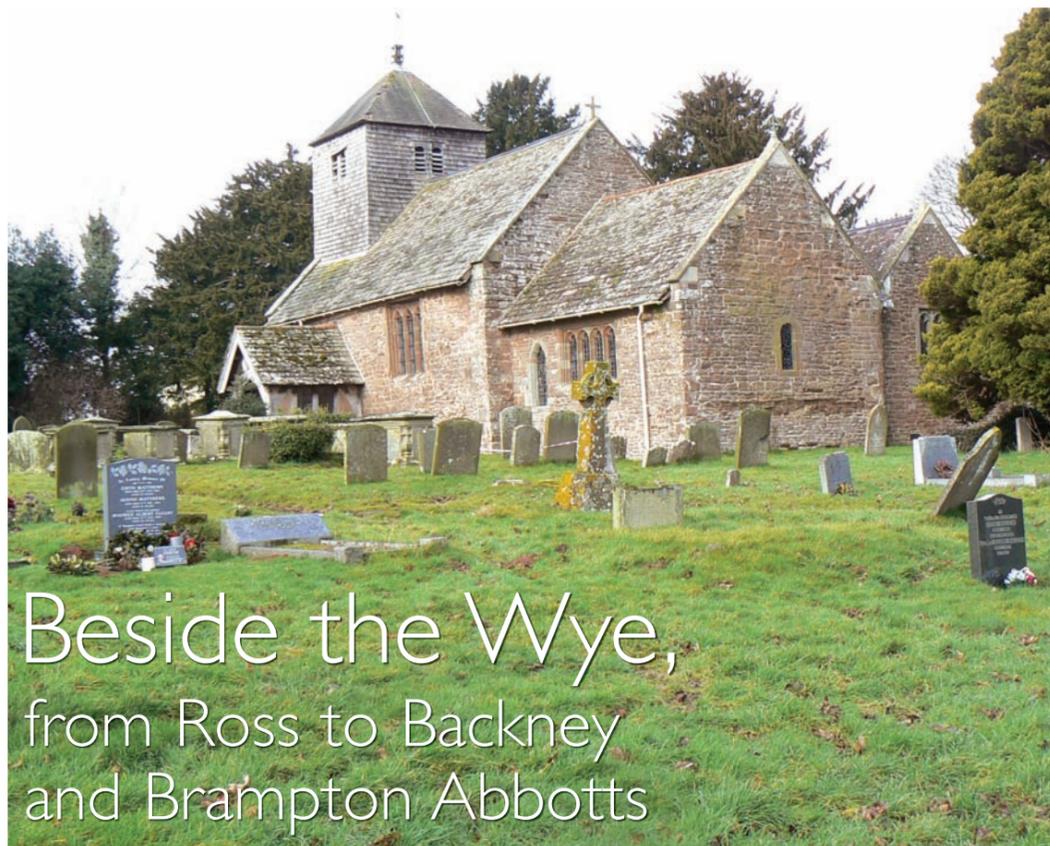
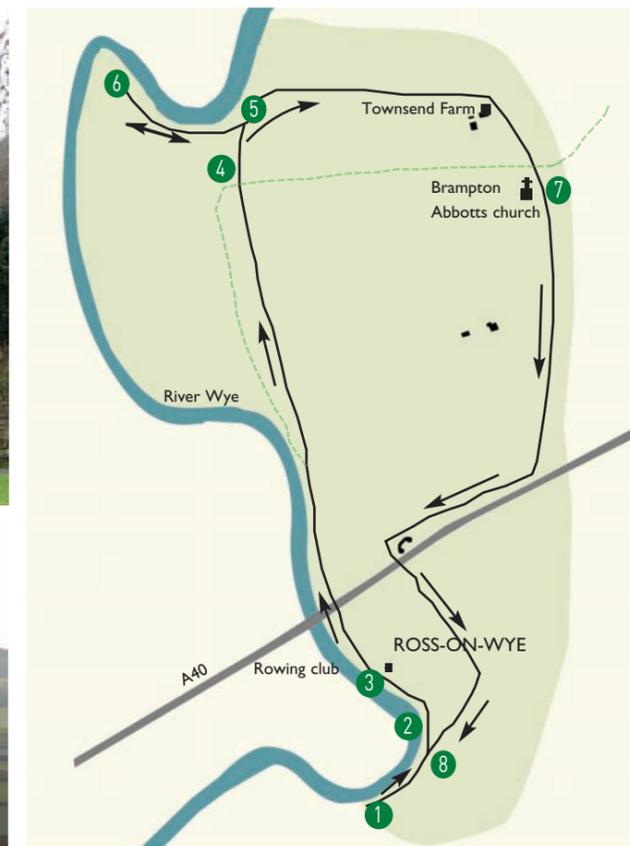


Sam Phillips of Ross Ramblers takes a five-mile circular walk starting in Ross-on-Wye. The route is mostly flat, with one gentle climb and one short sharp climb. It follows the river Wye through pleasant riverside meadows, using a section of the Wye Valley Walk, and returns through Brampton Abbots. There are fine views over Ross and towards May Hill

Start/Parking: The bandstand, Wye Street, Ross-on-Wye. Grid Ref; SO 596240. Park in the road at start
Maps: OS map; Explorer 189
Distance: 5 miles.
Grade: Easy/moderate.
Stiles: One
Refreshments: Various cafés and pubs in Ross.
Public Toilets: In Wye Street near the start. (Disabled toilet needs a radar key)
Public Transport: There is a regular bus service to Ross from Hereford and Gloucester. Tel: 0871 2002233.



Beside the Wye, from Ross to Backney and Brampton Abbots



1 The walk starts from the Bandstand on the riverside, in Wye Street in Ross. Originally Wye Street was the main route into Ross from Hereford before the current road that passes below the Gazebo Tower was built in the 1820s; it used to be called Dock Street, reflecting the navigable state of the river in years gone by.

The Bandstand is a much more recent arrival. Ross-on-Wye Lions Club raised the funds to build it, and presented it to Ross Town Council on Bank Holiday Monday in May 2005. There are band concerts almost every weekend during the summer.

Cross Wye Street, opposite the Bandstand, and walk along the tarmac path towards the river. On reaching the river bank turn right and follow it upstream along the tarmac path, noting the "Invisible" Riverside Inn with its mural of trees and bushes. This section of the walk is part of the Ross Buggy route. Devised by Ross Ramblers, this is a circular route around Ross that will be accessible to users of wheelchairs, electrically powered invalid vehicles, pushchairs and buggies. When complete, it will be about four miles in length with numerous entry and exit points. Go past the Hope and Anchor Inn.

2 On reaching a large grassy area known as The Ropewalk you will see a superb metal sculpture. This was made by the internationally renowned local sculptor, Walenty Pytel, and is entitled "Swans in Flight". It is one of a pair of riverside sculptures, the other one being downstream towards Wilton Bridge. The path eventually bears right and meets the road leading into the grounds of Ross-on-Wye Rowing Club.

3 Ross Rowing Club is the oldest sporting club in the town. It is currently thriving and enjoying success in regattas all over the country. The junior section is particularly



successful. Every August Bank Holiday the club organises one of the biggest rowing regattas in the country.

Cross the road and continue over the bridge that crosses the Rudhall Brook. Bear left, round the perimeter of the rowing club, following the direction markers for the Wye Valley Walk. Shortly after re-crossing the Rudhall Brook, the path bears half-right and rejoins the river bank. As you head towards the bridge that takes the main A40 dual carriageway across the Wye, don't forget to look back to see the world famous view of Ross. Across the river, to the left, the recently restored ruins of Wilton Castle can be seen.

Pass beneath the bridge and continue alongside the river, enjoying the views to the left towards Wyelea and Ashe Ingen Court. About half a mile beyond the bridge follow the Wye Valley Walk markers as the path bears right, away from the river, and then left onto the path of the dismantled Hereford to Ross railway line.

4 Continue along the old railway line for about half a mile, then look for a stile down a short flight of steps on your right. Go down the steps, cross the stile and walk along the edge of a field until you reach the river bank once again at a point where the path meets a farm track. The route of the walk follows this track to the right but it is worthwhile walking a short "Out and home" deviation to the left.

5 If you do so you will see a memorial on the right, made of cast iron, which commemorates the Reverend Helier Evans, vicar of nearby Brampton Abbots, who died tragically in 1904 having just saved the life of his son who got into difficulties while swimming.

6 A little further on the still splendid pillars of Backney Railway Bridge set off the riverside scenery. There is a

possibility that Sustrans, the sustainable transport charity, will build a light bridge for cyclists and walkers, using the old pillars. This will provide a circular link from Ross to the Backney side of the river and will be a major benefit.

Return to the junction of the path and continue along the track. The Wye Valley Walk goes off to the left but we go straight on along the track towards a small group of farm buildings known as "The Cott". The track rises gently until it reaches Townsend Farm. Turn left and walk between the farm buildings until you reach a lane. Turn right and follow the lane past several cottages and a very old orchard. After passing the orchard, the lane turns sharply to the left, but continue straight on to a gravelled drive and alongside a high brick wall.

7 Go around the end of a wooden five bar gate and continue towards St Michael's Church. From the front porch of the church it is 1.49 miles to St Mary's Church in Ross. St Michael's was closed in September 2008 as the roof is unsafe. After the final service the Bishop of Hereford led a procession taking the precious items to Bridstow Church for safe keeping. The event ended 800 years of worship on this site.

Walk down the path from the porch and go through a gate into a field. There are lovely views across to May Hill in the east, Ross to the south and down the Wye Valley to the south west. Follow the path straight down across the next two fields towards Netherton. At the end of the field go through a gate down onto a narrow lane and continue straight on.

The lane drops down into a small valley, known locally as "The Dingle". In the bottom of the valley a small lake on the right is a haven for wildlife and swans can be seen. Continue along the lane and up the short, steep

Above left to right: Brampton Abbots Church. Thrushes Nest. Views over May Hill from Brampton Abbots Church. Bottom left: Swans in flight. Cygnets on pond in The Dingle.

THE RAMBLERS

The Ramblers is the UK's largest walking charity. It promotes walking in the countryside, improves access to it, and protects the beauty of the countryside. In the UK the The Ramblers has over 130,000 members organised in 54 areas and 450 local groups. In the Herefordshire area we have four groups: Hereford, Ross, Mortimer and Leadon Vale. We run a combined walks programme with about four walks every week. All are very welcome on our walks.
For more information about Herefordshire Ramblers ring Tom Fisher on tel: 01886 821544 or email tom.fisher@virgin.net

climb to reach a slightly wider lane, Brampton Road. Take the high level pavement on the right and walk in front of the houses to reach the bridge over the main A40 dual carriageway.

Do not cross the bridge but turn right to walk downhill, parallel to the dual carriageway. This area of the town is known as Greytrees. Pass a succession of roads to your right, named First Avenue to Sixth Avenue, and pass beneath the dual carriageway. Carry on until you reach the entrance to a car park, on your right. Go into the car park and cross slightly towards the left to a bridge over the brook. As you cross the bridge on your right you will see a large grating that is part of the recently installed Ross flood alleviation scheme.

You have now arrived back on the The Ropewalk on the opposite side to the swans sculpture. This is where ropes used to be made, and wicker baskets were woven using willows from the withy beds that could once be found in this area.

8 Keep to the left hand tarmac path and you will pass a house perched high on the bank to your left, marked with a circular blue plaque. This is Thrushes Nest, the home of Sir Frederick Burroughs, a native of Ross who started work as a porter at Ross railway station and rose to become the last British Governor of Bengal. He was reported as saying at the time of his investiture: "I know more about shunting and tooting than hunting and shooting".

As you continue along the path, remains of the old town wall can be seen on your left. At the end of The Ropewalk swing right back towards the river to join the tarmac path; turn left and walk downstream to your start point at the Bandstand. ■