

January - June 2026/Issue 54

**FREE**

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# COTSWOLD LION

The magazine of the Cotswolds National Landscape



**Cotswolds  
National  
Landscape**

**Celebrating CNL at 60  
60 Years of Nature  
Field & Folk  
Connecting with the Cotswolds  
Lovely Limestone**



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## Welcome

Welcome to Cotswold Lion issue 54 – and the 60th year of the Cotswolds as a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The designation can feel a bit abstract to our everyday lives, so this issue, as well as our plans for 2026, hope to offer ways for people to connect with the landscape. Throughout many thousands of years in the Cotswolds, people have shaped this landscape, and the landscape has shaped people... and so this year, we'd like everyone to consider their own connection to the Cotswolds.

What does this landscape mean to you? What do you hold precious here? Is it nature and wildlife, perhaps? Or communities and heritage? Do you feel that the Cotswolds is a part of your identity? And looking to the next sixty years, how can we all work together to help tackle climate change in the Cotswolds, to make sure everyone feels welcome in the countryside, to help recover nature and increase biodiversity?

Lots to think about and lots to celebrate!



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The Cotswolds National Landscape is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), managed and looked after by the Cotswolds Conservation Board. The two key purposes of the Board are to:

- conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds AONB
- increase understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB

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If you are interested in sponsoring the Cotswold Lion, please contact alana.hopkins@cotswolds-nl.org.uk

Front cover: Farmers featured in Cotswolds: Field & Folk chatting behind the scenes and between takes. Image by Tea Smart/Leaping Fox Films.

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# Bulletin

Top stories from the Cotswolds National Landscape team

## Blooming marvellous

Following their first summer using a fleet of seed harvesters to collect wildflower seed simultaneously across multiple sites, the Glorious Cotswold Grasslands team announced a 2025 seed harvest weighing in at a whopping 3,349kg. Over 3 tonnes of seed in just one summer: an absolutely superb effort by the team, and their trusted band of programme volunteers.



Tia Smart/Leaping Fox Films

## Corporate volunteering

Last autumn, we have welcomed several groups from Rapid Rail and Amwins to take part in our volunteering days. These are very social days, great for team building, wellbeing and giving back to nature. The groups got stuck into woodland management, including building a “dead hedge”, which is now over 100 meters long! It’s a great wildlife habitat and because it’s linear, small mammals, amphibians and reptiles can traverse the length of it. Volunteering days like this are a great way for corporate groups to experience the Cotswolds whilst also helping to contribute to nature recovery.

## A boost for Caring for the Cotswolds

The Caring for the Cotswolds scheme has received a significant boost in funds from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, making £130,000 available to be awarded as community grants over the next three years. We are pleased to welcome Rebecca Foster (Bec) to the team as the new Grants Coordinator. Bec will be working on this new phase of Caring for the Cotswolds, which will also support opportunities for young people to join a youth panel, as well as paid placements.



## A new role

Rowan Wynne-Jones has successfully moved from the Everyone’s Evenlode team into a new role as Water Restoration Officer. The Everyone’s Evenlode project has concluded, but this new role is part of the overall Evenlode Catchment Partnership legacy, and we’re delighted to retain Rowan as a valued member of the CNL team.



Russell Sach

## Exploring the Cotswolds

Do look out for the full range of guided routes and self-guided routes around the Cotswolds, offered by the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens. As well as long and challenging hikes, the Wardens now offer Shorter and Steadier routes, easy routes for beginners, and Riders and Striders routes. All these, and a range of special themed walks to celebrate our 60th year, and the annual walking festival calendar – the Cotswolds is just waiting to be explored! Find out more in the Walking and Exploring section of [cotswolds-nl.org.uk](http://cotswolds-nl.org.uk) and on pages 12 – 17.





# Celebrating CNL at 60



Nicole Daw

Throughout 2026 we are celebrating the 60th anniversary of the designation of the Cotswolds National Landscape as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and what makes it so special: from the dramatic escarpment and flower-rich grasslands to vernacular limestone villages and quirky cheese-rolling. Siân Ellis digs deeper.

Unfurling across 787sq miles (2,038sq km) of thrilling scenic diversity, the Cotswolds was officially designated in 1966, and acknowledged as one of the country's finest landscapes – and a place to be looked after for future generations.

Shape-shift for a moment into a bird for a soaring overview of distinctive landscape features that make the Cotswolds special: the exhilarating western escarpment with its panoramic vistas across the Severn and Avon Vales; ancient broadleaved woodlands including internationally important beech woods; the high wolds with big skies; river valleys forming the headwaters of the Thames; and rare, flower-rich limestone grasslands.

Back with feet back on *terra firma*, explore Cleeve Common, the Cotswolds' largest common at around 1,000 acres (400ha). Climb Cleeve Cloud, at 1,083ft (330m) the loftiest point in the Cotswolds; or wander beside

the whispering River Windrush; relax under ancient summer shade in Lineover Wood near Dowdeswell.

There is an old Cotswold saying that "a man may do anything with Cotswold stone but eat it": a nod to the ubiquity of the famous, notably Jurassic local limestone that has influenced everything, the forming of hills and valleys, the prevalence of precious flora and fauna, and human activities.

Over 4,000 miles (6,440km) of manmade dry stone walls run through the Cotswolds, providing corridors and shelter for wildlife including the UK's only population of the endangered little snail *Lauria sempronii*. While most walls derive from the 18th/19th-century enclosures, some date right back to Neolithic times including the long barrow tomb of Belas Knap near Winchcombe. Varying in hue from silver-grey to gold, Cotswold limestone has





ensured a rich surviving array of archaeology and historic buildings.

Morphing now into a time-traveller, zip through more than 6,000 years of human interactions that have both shaped and been shaped by the landscape: from Neolithic woodland clearances to Iron Age hillforts like Uley Bury with its commanding views from the scarp; Roman roads and villas like Chedworth; the medieval heyday of Cotswold Lion sheep grazing thin-soiled limestone grasslands and the wool trade whose wealth endowed magnificent churches like St James' at Chipping Campden. Cloth mills and textile industry hugged rivers and streams particularly around Stroud; great country estates and parks sprang up – Blenheim Palace boasting World Heritage Site status, as does the City of Bath looking up to the Cotswolds' skyline.

William Morris declared Bibury "the most beautiful village in England" and along with other Arts & Crafts Movement pioneers, was inspired by the Cotswolds' vernacular town and village charms that to this day are considered quintessential rural England at its most beguiling. Artists, composers and writers still come, festivals thrive, wacky traditions

like cheese-rolling down Cooper's Hill catch headlines: all adding to a unique sense of place and community.

If you are feeling energetic, you can reprise the diversity of the Cotswolds by walking the 102-mile (164km) Cotswold Way, one of many superb recreational routes. Or take a breath and relax – tranquillity is another distinctive feature of the landscape – meandering along a canal or savouring dark skies and stargazing from the ancient Rollright Stones near Chipping Norton.

Celebration is never just about looking back of course, and the dynamic story of the Cotswolds continues, with farming and management of this landscape playing vital roles in meeting 21st-century challenges, from the climate crisis to nature recovery. A landscape to cherish for all time.

### Safeguarding the Cotswolds

The Cotswolds National Landscape Board has two statutory purposes: to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape; to increase understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. The Board also has a duty to foster the economic and social wellbeing of those who live here, find out more: [cotswolds-nl.org.uk](http://cotswolds-nl.org.uk)



# Field & Folk

Tea Smart is bubbling with enthusiasm. Together with fellow filmmakers Ben Arthur and Joe Morgan she has just finished shooting footage which follows the story of the Cotswolds through the experiences of those who work in and care for the landscape. She tells Siân Ellis more.



Abby Cook.

Filming has been up-close and personal, eavesdropping on farmers' lives, explains Tea, who wrote about the project in *Cotswold Lion*, issue 53. Passion, raw honesty and fervent opinions; extremes of unremitting rain, unseasonal snow and an arid summer; curious livestock and a nearly crushed camera: the crew encountered it all. Now the film's editor, Callum Read, is crystallising 140 hours of scenes with some 19 different protagonists into the final feature-length documentary, *Cotswolds: Field & Folk*, which has its premiere in July.

For Lucy Robbins, a fourth-generation farmer on the family's mixed farm at Bredon Hill, taking part in the film prompted her to talk candidly to her mother and grandmother about their experiences, opening her eyes to the changing status of women in farming, she says. "Granny would only officially have been seen as the farmer's wife, even though hugely involved in



Abby's flock of Herdwicks.

work on the farm. My mum had to fight to be taken seriously on the farm, to be equal – in the younger generation, that is much more accepted."

Conversations around regenerative agriculture also produced revelations. "There are lots of things I can talk to granny about and she'll say: 'Yes, we used to do that.' There wasn't a reliance on chemicals; it was about looking to natural rhythms, pairing animals and plants. So, it's like looking back to techniques from the past and applying them to now. Lots of people in the Cotswolds are trying different things and sharing knowledge."


Lucy, 28, had a spell working in London, but reconnected with farming when she came home to help with lambing and was drawn by "an opportunity to farm in a way that works with the environment and connects with ecological and climate issues". She is involved in "some amazing groups" – The Landworkers' Alliance, Emergent Generation – encouraging grassroots and young people to engage with food and farming, and she hopes *Field & Folk* will help to highlight the diversity of faces in farming today.

Another film participant, Gloucestershire-based Abby Cook, is also passionate about bringing a wider range of people, including second careerists with useful skills, into farming,



Behind the scenes with Tea.





and she provides farm business consultancy and agricultural training.

The daughter of farmers, Abby also does contract shepherding and runs her own flock of grass-fed Herdwicks, sold as hogget. She is keen to alter perceptions around the value of wool – the irony is not lost on her that the medieval wealth of the Cotswolds was built on wool, leaving a legacy of iconic architecture, yet today fleece is too often considered near-worthless.

“Wool from Herdwicks is quite coarse but it is great for things like carpets and insulation, and there are companies that use it in making peat-free compost and mattresses,” she says. She has begun to sell whole fleeces to gardeners and allotmenters, as well as small packs of fleece to insulate pot plants or to protect grow-bags “because slugs hate climbing on wool”. She provides little packs to put into fat-ball feeders – “birds absolutely love it for lining nests”.

The recent extremes of weather – Tea and co. visited Abby during a November snowstorm (2024), and there have been alternate very wet and very dry summers – lead Abby to wonder if there will be a resurgence of native farm breeds “because they are a little more adaptable – my Herdwick girls have coped really well. I run low stock rates, helping to keep grass in front of them, rotating and mob grazing a little bit, to rest areas.”

There are so many more conversations to eavesdrop and scenes to witness in the film – do watch it, if you can. “It has been wonderful for us to put our stories across, to show how passionate we are about what we do,” Abby says.

*My mum had to fight to be taken seriously on the farm, to be equal – in the younger generation, that is much more accepted.*

Lucy on the family farm.



# 60 Years of Nature

The official designation of the Cotswolds champions its remarkable landscape and nature. Matt Brierley reflects on challenges and victories across seven decades.

May 1960. Across the limestone grasslands of the Cotswolds, sky-blue wings of male Adonis blue butterflies catch spring sunlight. They're emerging from underground thanks to myrmecophily – a funky friendship with ants, protecting them as caterpillars in return for sugary secretions. But, despite tiny guardians, by the end of the decade they'll be gone. In 1962, war time food scarcity still in Europe's collective memory, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) incentivised farming of precious habitats. But the final straw was myxomatosis in rabbits. Adonis blue caterpillars are thermophilic, requiring warm open patches in grasslands

Dormice.



Simon Smith



Adonis blue butterfly.

1-4 cm tall – without rabbits and their essential nibbling, the caterpillars' days were numbered.

They weren't the only butterflies to vanish. Britain's rarest blue butterfly, the large blue – with broad dusky azure wings – bid the Cotswolds farewell in 1964, shortly before the AONB designation. Its decline was more complex. In 1972 Jeremy Thomas set out to solve the mystery. His breakthrough came with a dark twist: its caterpillar, after munching wild thyme, feasts overwinter on the babies of the red ant, *Myrmica sabuleti*. Jeremy realised the ant – not the caterpillar – needed short grass. But that discovery, published in 1980, came too late. In 1979 large blue blinked out of existence in the UK.

It wasn't just the grasslands in a pickle. Things weren't looking great for the Cotswolds' iconic hedgerows either. That was seriously bad news for hazel dormice. For these sleepy ginger fluffballs, hedges are genetic highways between woodland populations. Fragmented colonies become inbred, heightening extinction risk.

In 1980, debating the Wildlife and Countryside Bill, Lord Melchett stated: "140,000 miles of (British) hedge lost so far, and the current rate of loss approximately 4,500 miles a year." Although this debate preceded 1981's Wildlife and Countryside Act – still safeguarding precious species today – it didn't protect hedgerows. Between 1984 and 1990, England lost 18.9% more.

Change, however, was stirring. In 1988, the UK Set-aside scheme began paying farmers to take land out of production. In 1991 the Countryside



*Looking to the future, the Cotswolds National Landscape team is setting ambitious nature recovery targets.*

Stewardship Scheme rewarded hedge management and restoration. Europe followed suit, reforming the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in 1992. By 1997, UK hedgerow regulations had arrived.

As things stabilised for dormice, water voles became the UK's fastest declining mammal. In 2000 the Fur Farming Prohibition Act resulted in the illegal release of predatory American mink, boosting a population of escapees. In 2002, the Cotswold Waterpark Society (now Cotswold Lakes Trust) commenced its Water Vole Recovery Project along 140 kms of rivers. Today this stands as one of the UK's most successful water vole recovery projects.

There's also cause to celebrate in our grasslands. In 2003, likely aided by a hot summer, adonis blue recolonised Rodborough and Minchinhampton Commons. Large blue fortunes improved there too when 1,100 larvae were reintroduced in 2019 as part of Back from the Brink's Limestone Living Legacies Project. A kaleidoscope of 750 butterflies emerged in 2020. Rugged oil beetles also saw good news, discovered at 12 new Cotswold sites, raising the total to 20.

Looking to the future, the Cotswolds National Landscape team is setting ambitious nature recovery targets. In partnership with farmers and land managers, they aim to transform over



Water Vole.

34,000 hectares – rising to 103,000 ha when arable fields are included. Their vision includes a 385% increase in limestone grassland by 2050. Things are also looking up for dormice, with a predicted 10% increase in hedgerow highways. Though not out of the woods yet, that habitat is set to increase by 17% too.

And what of probably the most easily spotted, and recognisable revival? The red kite. Extinct in England since the 1900s, a release in the neighbouring Chilterns National Landscape in the late 1980s has led to a steady growth in the Cotswolds. Anna Field, of the Gloucestershire Raptor Monitoring Group notes that there are now around 200 nesting pairs – a joy to spot as they soar effortlessly high above.

Sixty years in, the Cotswolds, with its AONB designation stands as a vibrant testament to the concept of protecting landscapes for everyone – including nature. And nature's resilience is championed in a place where species once lost to history have returned, and the promise of flourishing wildlife shines bright.

Red kite.



*Sixty years in, the Cotswolds, with its AONB designation stands as a vibrant testament to the concept of protecting landscapes for everyone – including nature.*



# Building Community

**Siân Ellis speaks to entrepreneurs Sarah O'Neill and Jacqueline Randall about building the Cotswold Collective – a new community supporting local business and enterprise.**

Both times that Sarah was on a career break following the births of her two young sons she found herself at home during pandemic lockdowns, feeling rather isolated in her new home on the edge of the Cotswolds.

"I felt that when I did return to work, I wanted to do something that brought people together and supported the community," she recalls. "I was also thinking about how I've always loved shopping locally and exploring where I live. All these ideas were bubbling away."

While many people's dream-bubbles burst, Sarah turned hers into reality by founding Cotswold Collective. Launched in April 2023,

it provides a platform that showcases local businesses, growers, producers and services, with each one offering exclusive perks and discounts to the Collective's consumer membership group. It's a win-win that increases footfall or orders, perhaps at quieter times for a business, while members receive rewards. One member, Jacqueline, liked the concept so much that she has since joined Sarah as co-founder.

Already over 400 brands – from food and drink to retail, activities, professional services, health and wellbeing – have partnered with the Collective, including both well-known and lesser-known brands like family-run The Cotswold Eco Company, which curates eco-essentials and zero-waste goodies; or family business Merry May Honey, passionate about bees, the environment, making local honeys and natural beeswax products.

More than 1,000 local members have joined, but it's about more than 'money off' and 'freebies', Sarah says; it's about encouraging members to discover Cotswold producers and creators they might not know about.

"The Cotswolds generally has such a wealth of wonderful local businesses, producers and makers, and it is so important to support them," Sarah says, highlighting the variety with examples like: classic cutlery designer Robert Welch, its story rooted in the arts and crafts heritage of Chipping Campden; Five Valleys Hamper Co based near Stroud that gathers together tasty artisan products from around



Sarah and Jacqueline – from the Cotswold Collective.

*"When you shop locally, you are enriching where you live. Financially you are supporting local businesses and the money is more likely to stay in the local area, so you are having a positive impact in that way."*





the area; Cotswold Hipster that handcrafts leather dog collars and leads – perfect for taking your best friend on an adventure (maybe pausing en route for a complimentary hot drink in a café in the Collective!).

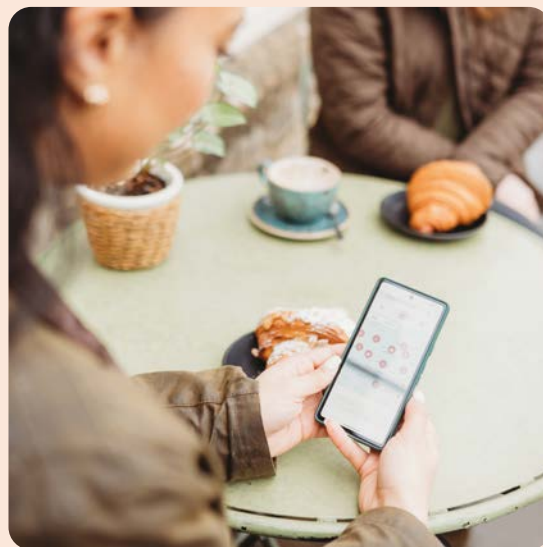
"When you shop locally, you are enriching where you live," Sarah continues. "Financially you are supporting local businesses and the money is more likely to stay in the local area, so you are having a positive impact in that way. But it's also about community, the added value of interactions, meeting and talking with each other, supporting each other, building up that ecosystem that makes a place thrive.

"There is also the sustainability angle: by buying from artisans who make things locally, rather than ordering something that is flown in from somewhere else, you are reducing carbon footprints."

In keeping with its community ethos, the Collective hosts occasional events that promote networking among businesses and consumers, including a seasonal Grow and Gather event celebrating local brands and featuring workshops.

"My career background is in events and marketing, so I love bringing people together to do interesting things," Sarah says. Activities have included flower arranging, calligraphy, journaling, Reiki and reflexology. "People come with family or friends, and lots come by themselves – it's much easier to meet other people when there is an activity involved."

Sarah smiles reflectively, concluding: "The Cotswolds isn't all chocolate-box villages and things can be tough for businesses,



Claire Westaw

particularly in quieter times when tourists aren't here. For me, it's about exploring and discovering all these local businesses and being a conscious shopper – more environmentally conscious about where things come from and how you are shopping. It's about being part of your community."

## Cotswold Collective

Find out more about Cotswold Collective, annual membership fees, and some of the fantastic businesses around the Cotswolds at [cotswoldcollective.co](http://cotswoldcollective.co)

A new Cotswold Collective App allows members to set their location and browse a map highlighting partner businesses nearby, as well as save their membership card in their digital wallet.

*All images courtesy of Cotswold Collective.*



# Connecting with the Cotswolds

Join the celebration for the 60th year of the AONB designation for the Cotswolds... Our Cotswold Voluntary Wardens are running a series of themed guided routes throughout 2026 to offer people hands-on opportunities to explore and understand special features of the Cotswolds landscape, which are integral to its protected status.

From early settlers, to geological fascinations, to the heritage of sheep farming and the wool trade, to nature in all its glory – not forgetting the epic views the Cotswolds is famous for... these celebratory routes are a super way to connect with the Cotswolds landscape in this special year.

Visit the Guided Routes section of the website at [cotswolds-nl.org.uk](https://cotswolds-nl.org.uk) for full details on each walk, including difficulty levels, start points, and general information for each route. Please check the website before attending a guided route to check walk details, and for any weather-related cancellations.

In addition to the CNL60 walks, do remember the Wardens also offer guided Shorter and Steadier walks, regular town walks in Chipping Campden, and new Riders and Striders routes (see the following pages!). A wealth of opportunities to breathe in the fresh air throughout 2026!

**Saturday 10 January • 10:00am**

## **CNL60 – Wonderful Wool**

Difficulty: Basic fitness

Duration: 2 hours

Distance: 3.5 miles

**Weekend  
walk**

Celebrate the start of the new year, with an easy, varied walk, starting in Chipping Norton and exploring the surrounding countryside. Dig deeper into the rich heritage of the Cotswold wool trade on this charming route. Beginning in the historic market town of Chipping Norton, the route will head out into the surrounding countryside, once a hot spot for medieval sheep farming. The wool medieval wool trade put the Cotswolds on the map, and its legacy can be seen all around in the architecture of Chipping Norton: from the medieval Guildhall and the impressive St. Mary's Church in the town; to Bliss Mill on its outskirts. These enduring symbols of the historic wool trade and the textile industry offer glimpses into the past, and the industries which brought prosperity to the town.

## **JANUARY**

**Friday 2 January • 10:00am**

## **CNL60 – Around Minchinhampton Commons**

Difficulty: Basic fitness

Duration: 3 – 3.5 hours

Distance: 5 miles

Join us for a bracing morning walk across signature Cotswold upland commons. Fairly flat terrain and no stiles on this walk across characteristic commons, with glorious views of surrounding valleys and beyond (weather permitting). Suitable for families, but not buggies or pushchairs.



*Bliss Mill, Chipping Norton.*





Blockley.

**Thursday 22 January • 10:00am**

## **CNL60 – Hidden Valley**

Difficulty: Moderate fitness

Duration: 5.5 hours

Distance: 10 miles

Starting and finishing in the village of Blockley, and taking in the beautiful and little-explored Hinchwick Valley. A moderate walk with a few gentle climbs. We will stop en route for an outdoor picnic (please bring lunch with you). This route is mostly on good farm tracks with very little road walking. Expect some mud but nothing significant, also no stiles.

## **FEBRUARY**

**Thursday 12 February • 9:30am**

## **CNL60 – Early Invaders!**

Difficulty: Basic fitness

Duration: 5 hours

Distance: 10 miles

Join this easy, almost level, walk to see how early invaders – from Romans to Saxons – left their mark in the Cotswolds! A great walk for winter with good paths and some road walking. The figure of eight route passes through beautiful woodland as it winds from Leafield towards Ramsden. We tread a Roman Road and a Saxon boundary giving an opportunity to find out about Roman activity in this part of the Cotswolds. Please bring refreshments for a coffee stop and lunch.

**All guided walks are free, but we welcome small donations to cover costs.**

*From early settlers, to geological fascinations, to the heritage of sheep farming and the wool trade, to nature in all its glory – not forgetting the epic views the Cotswolds is famous for... these celebratory routes are a super way to connect with the Cotswolds landscape in this special year.*





## MARCH

Wednesday 18 March • 10:00am

### CNL60 – Geology

Difficulty: Basic fitness

Duration: 2 hours

Distance: 4.5 miles

Churchill is tucked away in the far west of Oxfordshire. The village was home to two people who left their mark in very different ways. A lovely interesting walk, the far-reaching views are a bonus. The route has varied terrains with woodland, field paths and firm tracks with gentle inclines. Lunch options afterwards – bring a picnic to enjoy (there are plenty of benches near the church). The Chequers serves good food and nearby Chipping Norton not only has plenty of cafés, but also free car parking.

Saturday 14 February • 11:00am

### CNL60 – Splendid Snowdrops

Difficulty: Basic fitness

Duration: 1 – 1.5 hours

Distance: 2 miles

**Weekend  
walk**

A Valentine's Day walk along a short section of the Windrush Valley. Here, the snowdrops flourish – just waiting to be admired. There are other points of interest too in this quiet corner of the Cotswolds, just a stone's throw from bustling Burford. There is some unavoidable road walking and also parts which might be damp or muddy. Please wear appropriate footwear. The Fox sells good food and drink so why not arrive early for a coffee and perhaps even a lunch afterwards.

**All guided walks are free, but we welcome small donations to cover costs.**



*Churchill's monument to William Smith.*





## MAY

Thursday 7 May • 10:00am

### CNL60 – Beautiful Bluebells

Difficulty: Basic fitness  
Duration: 1.5 hours  
Distance: 5 miles

The bluebells on this walk never fail to delight, a truly magical carpet of blue. What's more, there's a café half way round. Woodland, open fields, and quiet lanes form our route on the Gloucestershire/Oxfordshire borders. The woodland sections may be muddy after prolonged wet spells, so stout footwear advised.



## JUNE

Thursday 4 June • 10:00am

### CNL60 – A Roman Route

Difficulty: Moderate fitness  
Duration: 5 hours  
Distance: 9 miles

A circular route from Stonesfield that offers glimpses of Roman life in the Evenlode valley. This very pretty walk in the Evenlode valley goes from Stonesfield along the Akeman Street, a Roman road, and returns via the Roman Villa at North Leigh, passing through Blenheim Park on the way. There are a few ups and downs, but we'll walk at a leisurely pace, so don't be put off. We'll stop at the villa, where you can see a mosaic tile floor. Bring refreshments for a mid-morning stop and a picnic lunch. Please bring £1 for parking.

*This very pretty walk in the Evenlode valley goes from Stonesfield along the Akeman Street, a Roman road.*

*The Roman Villa at North Leigh.*

**Don't forget!  
Corsham  
Walking  
Festival:  
12 – 14 June**



# Riders and Striders...

## moving into mixed modes

**Former Cotswold Head Warden John Shaw speaks to us about devising, developing and delivering a new range of guided routes which welcome everyone.**

John Shaw has been a Cotswolds Voluntary Warden for many years, including a successful term as Head Warden. An enthusiastic walker, and walk leader, John has recently returned to health after being laid low with cancer and kidney failure in 2022. Whilst unwell, John found himself less able to enjoy the great outdoors, and the walking, he loves so much.

Not to be defeated, he explains, "as I started to get my strength back, I was provided with camera equipment by the CNL team, funded by the 'Access for All: Removing Barriers' programme". Using a mobility scooter, he began to record videos of self-guided routes along accessible trails, "assessing their accessibility,

and offering advice on improving them where necessary and possible".

"Pavement mobility scooters aren't designed for off-roading though", John continues, and as his project developed, along with

*John has been assessing and recording accessible routes as an ongoing project.*



Nicole Daw



Nicole Daw



his working relationship with the Disabled Ramblers group, who were unconvinced that John's scooter would cope with the challenge of the great outdoors. They took action and generously loaned a Trampler scooter to help John progress the project. With an all-terrain scooter to take him out and about, the result is a growing collection of videos following John along routes. Showing all the lumps, bumps, and access features along the way, the videos help other all-terrain scooter users to review the appeal and the challenges of these many and varied offerings – before they embark on any adventures. Prior preparation in action.

The videos are gradually being matched to routes on the CNL website and uploaded. They include a wide range of routes explored by John – from the heights of Cleeve Common and Leckhampton Hill, to the waterways of Bath.

### A return to route leading

John led an experimental route last September, taking a group, including 21 walkers and two Trampler users, on a ramble. "It was a great success" notes John, "a super turn-out and plenty of enthusiasm from everyone". John is now officially back as a route leader – using his wheels to lead further Riders and Striders walks up and down the Cotswolds to celebrate CNL at 60.

Riders and Striders routes are still being planned as we go to print, but please see the outline plan opposite, and keep looking on the CNL website for more details as the season progresses. Routes will require an all-terrain scooter for those riding not striding. Please share the news of this new offering with friends or family!

\* Please pre-book with Disabled Ramblers for this event. As a bonus in April, Disabled Ramblers invite people to join three further DR hilltop rambles – *Five miles on Cleeve Common* (20 April), *Eight miles from Sudeley Castle up towards Hawling* (23 April), and *Six miles from Overbury to Bredon Hill* (24 April).

Please see:

<https://disabledramblers.co.uk/calendar/> for more info and booking for all four of these events. There will be a small fee for scooter riders as a contribution to DR funds.



John will be leading more Riders and Striders routes throughout 2026.

*"as I started to get my strength back, I was provided with camera equipment by the CNL team, funded by the 'Access for All: Removing Barriers' programme".*

#### February

### CNL60 – A town and country walk

Cirencester, 7 miles.

#### March

### CNL60 – A historic manor and park

Woodchester Park (NT), 6 miles.

#### 21 April

### Cotswold Commons and Beechwoods – A DR Ramble\*

Ebworth/Fostons Ash, 6 miles.

#### May

### CNL60 – Farming in Protected Landscapes – a success story

East Leach, 4 miles.

#### June

### CNL60 – Removing Barriers

Crickley – Leckhampton, 6 miles.



# A feast of the seasons

Global connectivity means that for decades, we've enjoyed the freedom to delight in a rich variety of food produce all year round. But at what cost? The United Nations reports that one third of all human induced greenhouse gas emissions are linked to food. Here, CNL's Climate Action Coordinator, Alice Whitehead, looks at how we can be more climate positive by looking at the decisions we make around food and diet.

Tempting though it may be, when we consume food that is out of season in the UK, often it has been grown across the world, chilled, and then imported from overseas. This is a costly process, both environmentally and financially. Traditionally seasonal foods like juicy strawberries and fresh asparagus in the summer, or apples and chestnuts in the autumn, are now readily available all year round. We've lost the anticipation of certain foods only being available for a short time, and the skill sets needed to preserve these pleasures across the year.

Be it plane, train or by boat, when food has

to travel a long distance to get to our stores, it has a large associated carbon footprint. Seasonal vegetables here in the UK don't have to travel as far to reach us, so their footprint is lower. And in the Cotswolds, we're fortunate to have a great variety of local farm shops and independent producers all around us!

In the Cotswolds National Landscape, 24% of all our greenhouse gas emissions are attributed to food and drink. Each of us playing our part in reducing our own greenhouse gas emissions will be key to meeting our net zero goal.



Squashed Robot Films



Squashed Robot Films





## Alice's top tips to make an impact!

- **Check where your food is from, and how it's been grown:**  
often out of season produce is imported, or grown in artificially heated greenhouses – which require additional energy to heat.
- **Reduce highly perishable and imported out of season produce:**  
fragile and out of season soft fruit (e.g. berries) or exotic fruit (e.g. passion fruit) and out of season vegetables are often transported by air because they spoil faster. Less fragile fruits (e.g. bananas) may have a lower carbon footprint as they have travelled by boat.
- **When possible, avoid pre-prepared produce:**  
this includes chopped produce like salad bags and pre-cut fruit and vegetables (e.g. cut mango). Compared to whole fruit and vegetables, these usually involve additional energy from washing, preparation, refrigeration, and packaging.
- **Consider preserving:**  
make the most of seasonal bounties by freezing fresh produce, choosing tinned goods, or enjoying in-season jam making, chutney making, and pickling.
- **Understand local seasonal fruit and vegetables:**  
try creating your own seasonal food calendar to give you an idea of what to look out for and when, and then finding out what's available in your nearest farm shop.

**Check out some delicious year-round seasonal foods on the next page!**

*In the Cotswolds National Landscape,  
24% of all our greenhouse gas emissions are  
attributed to food and drink.*

### **More information:**

Find out more about CNL's pathway to net zero:  
[cotswolds-nl.org.uk](https://cotswolds-nl.org.uk)  
Search online for UK seasonal produce and  
recipes to find inspiration.



# A feast of the seasons

Here are a few highlights for what's available through the year – why not see what else can be harvested in each month near you?

## January

Brussels sprouts  
Beetroot  
Cabbage  
Cauliflower  
Kale  
Root veg  
(carrot, parsnip, swede)



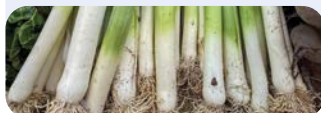
## February

Brussel sprouts  
Cauliflower  
Leeks  
Parsnips  
Purple sprouting broccoli  
Savoy cabbage



## March

Cauliflower  
Kale  
Leeks  
Purple sprouting broccoli  
Savoy cabbage



## April

Asparagus  
Rhubarb  
Purple sprouting broccoli  
Spring cabbage  
Spring onions



## May

Asparagus  
Lettuces  
Radishes  
Rhubarb  
Spinach  
Spring cabbages  
Spring onions



## June

Baby carrots	Spinach
Broad beans	Spring cabbage
Courgettes	Spring onions
Lettuce	Strawberries
Parsley	
Radish	
Rocket	



## July

Beetroot	Cucumbers	Radish
Blueberries	French beans	Raspberries
Cabbage	Lettuce	Runner beans
Carrots	New potatoes	Spinach
Cherries	Peas and mangetout	Spring onions
Courgettes		Tomatoes



## August

Aubergines	Cucumbers	Runner beans
Beetroot	French beans	Spring onions
Blackberries	Lettuce	Sweetcorn
Blueberries	Peas and mangetout	Tomatoes
Broccoli	Peppers and chilies	
Cabbage	Plums	
Cauliflower	Potatoes	
Carrots	Raspberries	
Celery		
Courgettes		



## September

Aubergines	squash	Raspberries
Beetroot	Cucumbers	Runner beans
Blackberries	French beans	Spring onions
Blueberries	Lettuce	Sweetcorn
Broccoli	Peas and mangetout	Tomatoes
Cabbage	Peppers and chilies	
Cauliflower	Plums	
Carrots	Potatoes	
Celery		
Courgettes		



## October

Apples	Kale	Swede and turnip
Beetroot	Leeks	Winter squash and pumpkins
Broccoli	Onions and shallots	
Cabbage	Pak choi	
Carrots	Parsnips	
Cauliflower	Pears	
Celery	Potatoes	
Chillies	Rocket	
Jerusalem artichokes	Spinach	



## November

Apples	Leeks
Carrots	Parsnips
Cabbages	Pears
Cauliflower	Potatoes
Kale	



## December

Brussel sprouts  
Carrots  
Cauliflower  
Kale  
Leeks  
Potatoes  
Savoy cabbage







**Cotswolds**  
National  
Landscape

## Glorious Cotswold Grasslands

**Our Glorious Cotswold Grasslands team is on a mission to restore as much wildflower grassland as possible, right across the Cotswolds!**

This vital work is improving biodiversity, and helping wildlife – from beetles and butterflies, to birds and bats. It's great for livestock too!

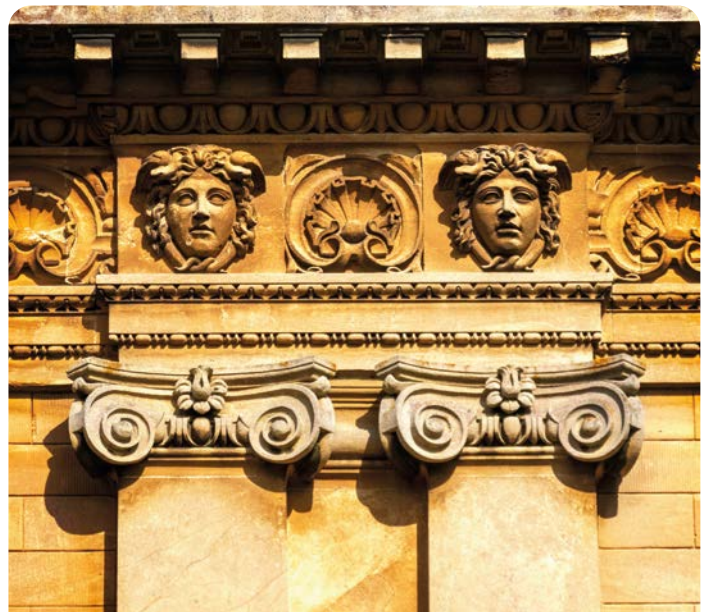
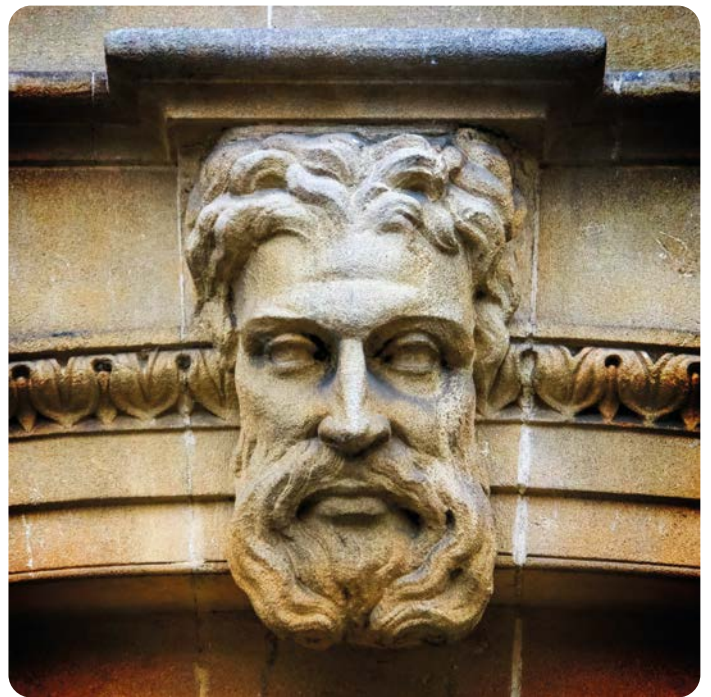
If you are a landowner, land manager, parish or town council, school, farm, or conservation project, and you're interested to know how the GCG team could work with you, take a look online to find out more, or email: [grasslands@cotswolds-nl.org.uk](mailto:grasslands@cotswolds-nl.org.uk)





# Lovely Limestone

The Cotswolds is famous for its limestone geology – and for the use of this fantastic stone as a building material. From Bath to Broadway, Cotswolds limestone has left us with an ever-present visible legacy. Photographer and architectural elevation artist, Adrian Pack, celebrates this wonderful vernacular in his photography. To shine a light on this rich built heritage, here he showcases just some of his favourite doors, windows, chimney pots, gargoyles, memorials, facades and more... proving, were it needed, that the Cotswolds is a treasure trove of traditional stonemasonry and architectural design.







## Images

Opposite page (top – bottom).

First column:  
War Memorial, Lacock.

Second column:  
Cheltenham Ladies College,  
Cheltenham.  
Cirencester Corn Hall, Cirencester.  
Westonbirt House, Westonbirt.

Above (top – bottom).

First column:  
St. Peter's, Winchcombe.  
Broadway.  
Stroud Congregational Church,  
Stroud.

Second column:  
Winchcombe.  
The Swan Hotel, Bibury.  
Kingston Street, Bradford-on Avon.

## More information:

Follow Adrian on Instagram @jauntylemonpress





**Cotswolds**  
National  
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# HELP SHAPE

## THE FUTURE OF THE COTSWOLDS

The **Caring for the Cotswolds** grants scheme is a way for businesses and their customers to give something back to the environment in the Cotswolds.

For the 2025-28 scheme, we are being supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, as well as by our generous business members and their customers. Grants of up to £5,000 are available to grassroots projects which seek to benefit climate, nature, and communities.

The more contributions we receive, the more we can do. Want to get involved? Being a business member boosts green credentials with customers, and shows that your organisation cares for the environment. Donating as a customer is a great way of helping us look after the Cotswolds National Landscape now – and into the future.

**Funding applications now open!**  
**Submission deadlines: 18 January,**  
**12 April, 31 May, and 4 October 2026.**

For more information, please see  
the Grants & Funding pages online at  
[cotswolds-nl.org.uk](https://cotswolds-nl.org.uk)