

BRECON BEACONS HOLIDAY SEPT 2016

On Monday Sept 12th 21 of us arrived at 11am in the car park of Nythfa House as instructed for our group holiday in the Brecon Beacons.



Several of my friends told me to be careful as people died walking in the Brecon Beacons but as I told them that was in extreme heat and carrying a full army kit bag. Well the weather decided to turn tropical and my rucksack felt like it had full army kit in it at times (mostly rations).

As we could not have our rooms until 2pm Pete and Sue had found a relatively flat and easy walk for us to do to “limber up” for what was to come. Leaving the hotel we wandered along the Honddu valley through the fields and woods stopping in a field of longhorn cattle for lunch including a very big bull. Initially they ignored us but gradually worked their way over to where we were sitting and one cow in particular was giving Richard the evil eye. We eventually arrived in Brecon and had a brief stop at the cathedral before heading through the town to the start of the Brecon to Monmouth canal. We went along the canal for a short way and then back through fields to Brecon from where it was a short walk to the hotel.

Having been allocated our rooms we met at 4pm for the usual tea, cakes and scones, I have to say that when I tell anyone about HF holidays the first thing I mention is the food and ordered our three course evening meal and of course the decision had to be made for sandwich fillings the next day.

On Tuesday both walks started from the same place near Talybont on Usk, one group going with Catherine straight up and over Tor y Foel the rest of us winding our way two thirds of the way up and then around. It started out as a very pleasant walk along part of the canal and through fields in lovely sunshine but gradually the clouds gathered. When we were nearly at our highest point we heard the first clap of thunder and the storm seemed to pass through us rather than over us as the cloud was low and we were high! Jill Stuart had told us a while ago about the Cotswold Wardens lightning policy and we had to follow it to make ourselves as small as possible while the lightning hit the ground around us and the heavens opened. I have to say it's not easy crouching down on tiptoes for what seemed a long time when you reach a certain age. Never having liked being out in storms I decided along with three others to go back down the hill where we eventually hit the canal again and walked back to the pub. The others carried on and both groups returned safely if a bit wet.



On Wednesday the shorter walk started from the Brecon Beacons Mountain Centre. This was a very enjoyable walk across heath land, along an old drovers road with lunch up by the trig point at Cefn Lechid with wonderful views. We saw several red kites on our way and had a pot of tea and a slice of John's lemon drizzle cake on return to the

mountain centre.

On Thursday we did a walk starting reconstructed Crannog on the edge of near the edge of the lake and when had red kites circling above us. We saw a walled garden and were invited to take advantage of. Again we had a welcome cup of tea on return to Llangorse Lake although sadly no lemon drizzle cake.



from Llangorse Lake, first visiting the lake. We had coffee in a churchyard we stopped for lunch a bit higher up we also came across a lovely plant nursery in which we took wonderful views of the Beacons and a

Generally on HF holidays the leaders provide the entertainment in the evenings but as we were leading our own walks we had to amuse ourselves. I have to thank Jane and Al for giving me a refresher course on how to play canasta as I do enjoy a game of cards and we also had a crossword group. The only other group at the hotel were a musical group and Sue Jones who sat next to Charles, their musical director/choir master, happened to mention to him that we had some talented people in our group. As they were going to do a concert for us on the last evening Di was persuaded to play her cornet and do her Pam Ayres impression, Richard recited two ditties found on tea towels !!!!! Sue played the piano and Denys lowered the tone by telling a risqué joke.

On the way home most of us stopped at Crickhowell and while most walked up Table Mountain three of us ladies had coffee with John and then escorted him around the shops. Margaret and I then left to come home leaving him in Sue Clark's capable hands.



As usual the food, service and accommodation were wonderful and I would like to thank Denys for arranging the holiday and all the walk leaders who took the time to sort out the walks. I hope my effort to organize Sidmouth next April turns out as well (still places available, not too late to book).

Ann Adams

LEARNING FROM A LOSER

Two enjoyable visits to European cities this summer were marred by unfortunate events. My wallet was stolen in Paris where, as a geriatric with two distracting grand-children I was an obvious target so I should have been particularly wary in the crowded Metro near the Gare de Lyon. As the train approached a station, a short fat lady squeezed past me in a rude fashion. I realise now that she was the distraction and, as I turned to let her past, I am sure my wallet was lifted by her co-conspirator who was standing behind me. The efficiency of the French police in documenting my loss suggested the event was to them very routine, my bank was also efficient when I called to have my cards cancelled and the travel insurer was helpful and sympathetic. Fortunately, my passport was not stolen, and Sheelagh had a separate bank card which was useful for the rest of our stay.

Most of the lessons are obvious but I also learnt something else. When I tried to have my Senior Rail Card replaced, I was told that it could only be replaced without charge if I had bought on line or, if bought at a station, it could only be replaced on production of the receipt. Of course I had bought it at Stroud station and not retained the receipt so a new rail card will cost.

The second visit was to Verona where, as a treat for Sheelagh, we had booked to go to two operas at the enormous Roman amphitheatre which seats over thirty thousand. The first opera was Aida but, just after the start of the second act, the heavens opened, and the opera had to be abandoned. Sheelagh was disappointed but I was quite relieved when I learnt that the opera usually lasts four hours and knowing that to my ears the March of the Hebrew Slaves is its only decent tune. Two days later Carmen was scheduled to start at 9.00pm but, because of rain, the start was delayed till 10.00pm. The first act was a real spectacle with two hundred performers, two horses and four donkeys on stage in front of Carmen's cigarette factory. Even though we had expensive seats, we couldn't make out facial features so it was sometimes difficult to make out who was singing. But that is beside the point. In the middle of the first act, rain came again and the performance was abandoned.

When we sought a refund at the box office the next day, we learnt that there were no refunds if a first act had been completed and, if had not been completed, there was still no refund. Instead, on offer was a 50% discount on a future performance which could be taken up within a year after the abandoned performance. Needless to say we will not be returning next year to avail ourselves of this generous offer but the point I should like you to consider is this. Operas at the thirty thousand seat amphitheatre in Verona take place almost every night for two months. They may be popular but 30.000 seats are a lot to fill every night. If I were to go again, I would gamble on buying a ticket on the day – but only if there were no chance of rain.

Brian Witcombe

STILE SUCCESS ABOVE BRIMSCOMBE



There were 2 stiles above Brimscombe that were extremely difficult to navigate. After a lot of work by Bernard over a year long period, the two landowners carried out improvements so that they are now easy to cross. The landowners paid for

all the work themselves. Bernard thought that this level of cooperation was so rare that they should be thanked for it, and so a large number of the S. Cots signed a Thank You card which Bernard delivered to them.

GROUP VOLUNTEERS 2016

Chairman:

Richard Davis
chairman@southcotswoldramblers.org.uk

Vice Chairman:

Mike Garner mike@southcotswoldramblers.org.uk

Group Secretary:

Andrew Hawkins 01452 857958
groupsecretary@southcotswoldramblers.org.uk

Group Treasurer:

Brian Witcombe
treasurer@southcotswoldramblers.org.uk

Membership Secretary:

Mike Garner
membership@southcotswoldramblers.org.uk

Publicity Officer: Vacant

Without portfolio: Diana Davis

Website: Mike Garner & Sally Davis

South Cots Newsletter: Sally Davis

Footpath Chairman and Footpath Secretary:

Bob Frewin 01453 545752

footpaths@southcotswoldramblers.org.uk

Footpath Committee Minutes Secretary:

John Corry 01453 845574 john@corry.org.uk

Footpath Clearance

Bob Frewin

Footpath Committee Member:

Penny Fernando

Led Walks Programme Co-ordinator:

Mike Garner 01453 873625

mike@southcotswoldramblers.org.uk

Led Walks Collectors for Mar -June 2017: (dates needed by 31 December)

John G 01452 728760 Weekend Walks

Jacqui P 01666 826139 Start the Week Walks

Ann A 01453 839089 Midweek Walks

Welcome to our new members

Since the last newsletter we have welcomed 8 new members, Anne, Jacquie, Jean, Keith, another Keith, Pauline, Rosalind and Vicky from Brimscombe, Bussage, Cam, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Stonehouse and Saul. Our total membership is now 406 people. We hope they will enjoy being members of the Group.

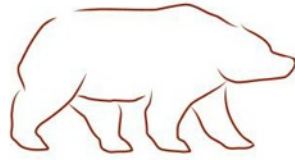
Mike Garner - Group Membership Secretary

If you wish to put any items in the next newsletter (which will go out in February), please send them to Sally Davis (newsletter@southcotswoldramblers.org.uk) by **20th January**

Going away with Ramblers' Holidays?

We have recently received a sum of money for Group Funds from Ramblers Holidays where members taking a holiday with them have nominated South Cotswold Group. If you ever forget to tell them when booking, there is still time if you contact them before you go. By your doing so, they will donate £10, £20 or even £30 per person to our funds to be used to benefit walkers.

For more info, click the link to Walking Partnership on our Messages page.



THE BEAR OF RODBOROUGH HOTEL

Saturday 11 February 2017 12.30 for 1pm

South•Cotswold•Ramblers' Festive Lunch Menu

Starters

Carrot & Coriander Soup with Herb Croutons

~

Chicken Liver Parfait, caramelised Onion Chutney, Onion Bread

~

Salmon Gravalax, Watercress, Crème Fraiche, Beetroot

~

Spinach, Goat's cheese & Cherry tomato tart,
Mixed salad, Tomato Chutney

Mains

Traditional Roast Turkey, Bacon wrapped chipolatas, Roast Potatoes, Apricot
Stuffing, Turkey Jus

~

Roast Loin of Pork, Bubble and Squeak mash, Apple compote,
Pork Jus

~

Pan Fried Hake fillet, New potatoes, Prawn Butter Sauce

~

Four Cheese Raviolis, Tomato Sauce, Rocket and Parmesan

Desserts

Lemon Tart, Fruit Coulis, Raspberry Sorbet

~

Traditional Christmas pudding, Brandy Sauce

~

Apple and Blueberry Crumble, Custard

~

To conclude

~

Mince Pies & Tea or Coffee

~

£21.50 3 Course

ANNUAL LUNCH - MENU ON PREVIOUS PAGE

VENUE: The Bear at Rodborough.

There is a limit on numbers, so book early!

CLOSING DATE: 10 December 2016

ACTION:

1) Please return the booking slip together with a cheque for the full amount, payable to SOUTH COTSWOLD RAMBLERS, to:
Sally Davis, 23 Bownham Park, Rodborough Common, Stroud, GL5 5BY (01453 872729) by the closing date – 10 December

2) Please send me your choices from the menu either by post or email by 15 December to sally@southcotswoldramblers.org.uk

LUNCH BOOKING SLIP (by 10 December)

Please book places(s) at the Annual lunch @ £21.50 per person.
I enclose a cheque for £ payable to South Cotswold Ramblers in full payment.

Signed

Contact details: Name:.....

Address:.....

Email:.....

Tel no.....



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- * *Dogs Are Very Welcome*
- * *Food Served: Tuesday ~ Thursday : 12:00 until 2:45 & 6:00 until 9:00*
Friday & Saturday : 12:00 until 2:45 & 6:00 until 9:30
Sunday : 12:00 until 8:00

*** 10% Discount Off Food With This Advert ***

CAKES FOR THE AGM

We have several members to thank for very nice cakes on some of our walks.

Once again we ask any one who would like to offer to make a cake for consumption by eager appreciative Ramblers at the AGM to please let Heather know on 01453 873625 as soon as possible. Thank you !

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

ALL INFORMATION THAT YOU NEED ABOUT THE SOUTH COTSWOLD RAMBLERS AGM ON SATURDAY 12 NOVEMBER APPEARS AT THE BACK OF THIS NEWSLETTER.

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ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS



The next concert will be on 26 November 2016 at 7.30pm at Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Rd., Stroud, Gloucestershire (next to the General Hospital)

Programme

Trim	Heart of the Five Valleys
Brahms	Piano concerto No 2 (Soloist: Poom Prommachart)
Tchaikovsky	Symphony No 4

Listen to extracts at www.stroudsymphony.org.uk Please order your tickets on the form below or from Stroud Tourist Information (01453 760960) or ask me on a walk or just come along on the night. Mike G 01453 873625

Concert Tickets

Tickets £11.00 (concessions £9.00)

(This includes a £1.00 reduction if purchased prior to the evening of the concert)

Sat 26 Nov 7:30 pm at Holy Trinity Church, Stroud (next to the hospital with parking opposite)

To Mike, Southcot, The Headlands, North Woodchester, Stroud GL5 5PS. Please send me the following tickets: @ £11 / concessions @ £9/ accompanied children under 14 free.

I enclose a cheque for £.....payable to Stroud Symphony Orchestra and a Stamped Addressed Envelope for the despatch of tickets.

Signed

Please print your name, phone number and, if possible, email address below.

Name.....

Tel no:.....

Email address:.....



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www.ramblersholidays.co.uk



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Invitation to our Annual General Meeting

September 2016

Dear Members,

We warmly invite you to the **South Cotswold Ramblers' Group ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** on Saturday 12 November 2016 to arrive at any time after 12:30 pm for the meeting at 1:30 pm at Rodborough Tabernacle, Tabernacle Walk, Rodborough, Stroud GL5 3UJ, Grid Reference SO 846039, (turn right off road leading up towards Rodborough Fort signed United Reformed Church and go downhill along Tabernacle Walk for 500 yards). <http://tinyurl.com/mapRodboroughTab>

If you'd like a morning walk, Ros and Ron are leading a 4.1 mile walk from there at 10:00 am.

At 12:30 pm you could bring a packed lunch and there will be tea or coffee and homemade cakes kindly provided by members also an opportunity to have a chat with other members. All of you are most welcome.

At the meeting Reports and Plans are discussed. Then all committee members stand down and are eligible to seek re-election as officers or committee members. We look forward to welcoming new people too, and we will ask for nominations during the meeting. Posts will be as shown in last year's minutes overleaf.

After any other business at the end of the meeting there will be an open discussion, a chance for questions.

Please do come. We look forward to seeing you.
Yours sincerely

Andrew Hawkins
Group Secretary (01452 857958)

SOUTH COTSWOLD RAMBLERS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 12 NOV 2016 @ 13:30

AGENDA

1. Welcome by the Group Chairman, Richard Davis.
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Approval of the minutes of the 2015 AGM (see next page).
4. Matters arising not likely to be covered in reports below.
5. Consideration and adoption of the 2015 – 2016 Reports:
 - a) Chairman's Report
 - b) Footpath Chairman's Report
 - c) Treasurer's Report
6. Election of Officers and Committee Members (posts as last year, PTO)
7. Appointment of Honorary Auditor
8. Motions of which notice has been received by 31 August 2016
9. Any other business notice of which has been given in writing to the secretary prior to the meeting.

Following the formal meeting there will a discussion open to all members.

Finally there will follow a short talk given by a mystery guest speaker. The speaker has been obtained after much careful negotiation and we hope it will be further encouragement for as many members as possible to attend the AGM.

SOUTH COTSWOLD RAMBLERS CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2015/16

Nothing much happened.

Except we once more put on in excess of 160 walks, organised two highly successful holidays, produced a highly acclaimed new website and, under the auspices of our Footpath Committee, continued to monitor the condition of and changes to our footpaths carrying out clearance work where possible. Oh and we also had an enjoyable Christmas Lunch at a new venue of The Bear at Rodborough and continued our support of Stroud Symphony Orchestra.

So its thanks again to our Walks Leaders, to our Walks Collectors and to Mike for pulling the whole programme together. Thanks to Mike for organising the Spring Holiday in Dovedale, to Denys for organising the recent holiday in Brecon and to the walks leaders who stepped in when he was unable to arrange the walks. Next year the Spring holiday is being organised by Anne Adams who has very kindly agreed to give it a try following Mike's retirement from the holiday scene. I am sure she will produce a very enjoyable holiday at Sidmouth and having paid my deposit I am looking forward to trying out the South Devon walks. She is already very much involved in Group activities leading walks and helping Bernard out with some of his footpath work.

Special thanks must also be given to Mike and Sally for their work on the new website. The site has been designed by Mark at Bookmark Computers and we are very pleased with his efforts, but it has required a considerable amount of painstaking and routine work downloading and transferring information from the old website as well as a very steep learning curve to get used to the new system. Thanks also to Tim for his involvement in the process. If you haven't already done so please have a look at the new site. There are lots of new features and hopefully you will find it to be much more up to date and user friendly, an important thing in this day and age.

Our Footpath Committee continues to look after our network of paths ably guided by Bob Frewin. Bearing in mind that there are only five of them they do a tremendous amount of work and by and large keep on top of what is a very heavy workload given the area which we cover as a Group.

However there is a big world outside of South Cots and at the moment there is quite a bit of upheaval going on. You will have seen from the message board that following the resignation of the CEO at the last General Council and that we will shortly have a new CEO of the Ramblers organisation in place. At our own Area level we continue to have problems. Ray Chaney, the Chairman, was forced to resign due to ill health and efforts to obtain nominations for a new Chair have so far been fruitless. Mike Bailey of Cirencester has spent much of the last year carrying out an in depth survey of the relationship between Area and Groups in Gloucestershire and looking at ways things can be improved. He has produced a report which has been considered by Area Council. A working party is being set up to decide the way ahead.

Finally Bernard Smith has decided to resign from the Group Committee. He has been a stalwart of the Group for many years leading walks, carrying out footpath work and being a knowledgeable member of both the main committee and the footpath committee. He organised our kissing gate programme which has lead to the installation of over 20 gates in our Group's area. Unfortunately transport problems have curtailed his activities, although he is still up for the odd short walk if anybody is able to give him a lift to the start. Our thanks go to him for all his work over the years.

Richard Davis Chairman

FOOTPATH COMMITTEE REPORT

Over the past year the Footpath Committee has investigated over 60 footpath issues. These have either been reported to us by walkers, including Ramblers' members, or identified during survey work and from our own walks. A wide variety of problems have been encountered: overgrown paths, stiles and bridges; damaged and dangerous stiles; locked gates; barbed wire and electric fences; aggressive cattle and horses; crop obstructions; lack of way-marking and missing or damaged roadside signposts. Most of the overgrowth problems we were able to address ourselves, carrying out clearance work at 17 different locations. The remaining problems were reported to Gloucestershire County Council for action. These are then monitored at our quarterly meetings.

Our other main activity is to check out proposed changes to the footpath network. These could be paths affected by planning applications, particularly those concerning housing developments, or modifications requested directly by land-owners who are unhappy with the existing route of a path. Security and privacy are the reasons often cited for the latter. Our aim is to ensure such changes are not detrimental to the walking public. We investigated 19 such changes, a considerable increase from the previous year. With the increasing demand for housing it seems likely that this upward trend will continue in the future.

If you wish to know more about our work or are interested in getting involved in some of our activities you can contact us via the South Cotswold Ramblers website.

Bob Frewin

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT 2015-2016

Again it is a pleasure to report that our two accounts are in fine fettle:

Holiday Account: The income and expenditure for the Brecon Holiday (£6482) matched exactly and £100 has been paid to the Bear Inn, Rodborough as a deposit for our 2017 Christmas/Spring lunch next year. This leaves £160.51 in the Holiday Account at present. This is ideal for it is good to keep one to two hundred pounds here to meet contingencies and to provide deposits for future events.

General Account: A much larger sum of just under £5000 is on deposit in the General Account and almost all of this has accrued from the sale of walks books. It is intended over time to prudently use much of these monies to fund the upgrading of local pathways but the Charities Commissioners do not like to see excess capital on deposit. In view of their increasing pressure, your committee has decided to relinquish the central allocation of about £475 for one year. It is hoped that during this time suitable suggestions will emerge for spending some of this capital on local projects. An excess of capital is useful but it must be remembered that walks books are no longer a source of significant income and a long-term view must be taken when considering the best use for this money.

Our financial year ends on September 31st and the details of the year's income and expenditure will be presented at the AGM in November. In the interim, I should like to give my thanks to Richard, Denys and Sally who have arranged holidays or other events this year and to Mike who has not only arranged a holiday but also managed our website and arranged distribution of the Newsletter etc. All these people have been very efficient in the way they have dealt with financial matters making my task very straightforward.

Brian Witcombe
Group Treasurer