

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I was going to do a piece on the role of Area as we recently hosted the Area AGM and most of you missed it. But looking back I found that this time last year I also devoted my report to Area. Before I move on to other matters I am happy to report that the Area AGM was relatively successful, at least we found a new Chair in Brian Payne from Cleeve and hopefully he will be able to get things moving. We have a Treasurer, a membership secretary and a Footpath Secretary and Bernard Gill was elected vice Chair and is currently picking up some of the other bits and pieces.

A number of points were raised at the meeting. We were asked if we had a mechanism in place to tackle and monitor lost footpaths. The Footpath Secretary confirmed that this was under control. Mavis Rear handed out pamphlets relating to the Cotswold Way Society and explained what was happening with this organisation, which is being set up to keep a watch on the long distance path. The pamphlets included a form seeking members.

Our guest speaker was Kate Ashbrook, former President of Ramblers and a well known campaigner for both Ramblers and the Open Spaces Society. She gave an inspiring talk on the work of Ramblers and the part we have to play. After the meeting she accompanied us on a short walk round Rodborough Common.



With Kate Ashbrook on Rodborough Common

Another largely ignored aspect of Ramblers is the work of Central Office. They are made up of a team, mainly employed by Ramblers, who run the day to day workings of our organisation under the control of the Board of Trustees, who themselves are appointed by us at General Council. As well as providing an administrative back up of financial and membership services they also provide help in developing volunteers which is available to all members and volunteers.

They recently circulated a number of Group and Area Officers asking their views so that Central Office can improve help and support for Groups and Areas. To develop the responses to this survey they are now holding a series of discussion groups round the country to obtain a more detailed picture.

In another exercise Central Office run road shows in which they hold workshops covering all aspects of volunteering. These include Basics of Rights of Way, Retaining Members, Supporting the Volunteer Journey, How to run successful short Walks and managing the challenges on Group Walks. There is one of these road show events taking place at Keynsham on the 26th February. If anybody is interested in going please let me know or have a look at the Ramblers website.

Group Holiday September 2017 - from Ann Adams

I have provisionally booked a holiday with Ramblers Worldwide Holidays for Sept 16th – Sept 23rd in Guernsey. I've booked 8 single rooms and 6 twin which I'll allocate on a first come first serve basis but there is scope for more rooms including singles.

The cost for the week will be £779 per person with no single supplement which includes flights from Bristol. There is a possibility that the price will rise slightly depending on the flight prices when we confirm our bookings.

If you want to arrange your own transport, joining at the hotel, the price will be £664.

If 16 people book (with or without using Ramblers travel arrangements) we all get 5% discount.

You can view the holiday details on the Ramblers Holidays website but, for those who can't, we will be staying at the Hotel Pandora above St Peter Port, half board. The holiday grade is 5 moderate but as this is not one of their scheduled holidays I'm sure we can do it at our own pace.

Flights from Bristol are at 1220 outward, arriving in Guernsey at 1315, and 1055 on return arriving in Bristol at 1150.

If you book but have to cancel for any reason Ramblers are pretty good at giving you your deposit back but if you book the holiday with the flight this may not be the case as they have to pay for them up front.

The completed forms and deposits need to be sent to me initially .

Ramblers booking form (which is on page 4 of this newsletter) asks for Passport details. Although you don't need a passport for Guernsey, the airline you fly with will want to see some form of photographic identification. You need to check with the carrier you are using to see what form of identification is acceptable if you do not have a passport.

Ramblers booking form also mentions insurance. Guernsey is not covered by the UK NHS system nor by European Health Cards (EHIC).

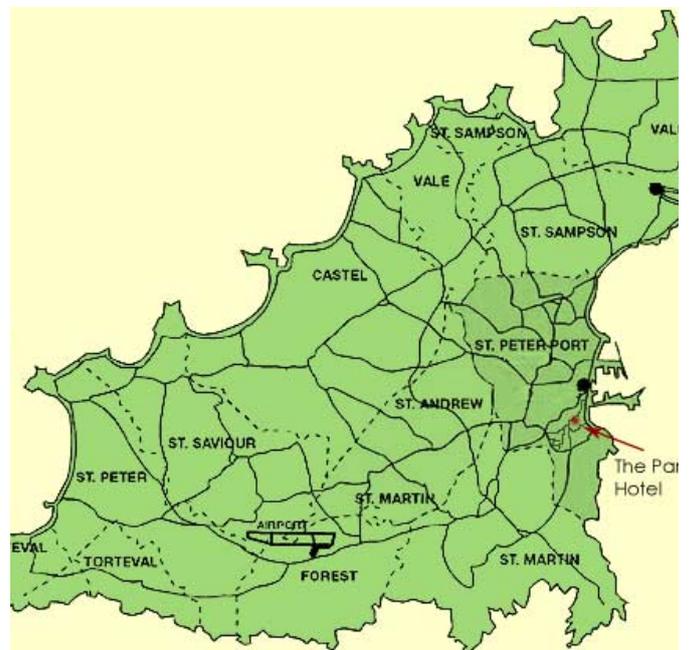
This information can be seen on <http://www.visitguernsey.com/useful-information>



Hotel Pandora

My details for return of the forms ;

Ann Adams
2 Churchill Close
Nailsworth
Stroud
Glos
GL6 0DW





St Peter Port

Ann would also like people to suggest where they would like to go for group holidays, otherwise she will quite happily keep choosing where she wants to go !!!!!

There are still single and twin rooms available for our holiday in Sidmouth in April. If you are interested, the details and booking form are in the June 2016 newsletter. (Choose Our Group from the menu on our website, then click Our Group Newsletters. Download Older Editions is at the bottom of the page.)

Stonehenge has changed!

No, not the ancient stone circle which was raised about 4500 years ago, though there have been several alterations to them over the years. No, the National Trust has taken over the landscape of Stonehenge which means that this English Heritage monument can now be visited free of charge by National Trust members (you will probably need to pre-book tickets and car park in advance – it was fairly busy on a cold January Saturday). There is a new visitors' centre, a free shuttle bus between the entrance and the stones, automatic flushing loos, a museum, audio tours, Neolithic houses and, of course, a shop. (On the day we went there were as many people in the shop as visiting the stones – most were foreign tourists, so good for our economy). It's about a mile and a half walk across grassland from the entrance to the stones, but you can also deviate to visit round barrows and long barrows.

When I visited our most popular monument many years ago, there was a small, nasty car park which was full. It was not a pleasant experience. Now more than a million visitors come to Stonehenge each year.

Sally



Founder member of our Group Joyce Longhurst dies, aged 99.

A few of you will remember Joyce Longhurst, who greeted me along with Margaret Taylor and Ruth Cook when I attended my first group AGM in 1987. The trio of charming ladies persuaded me to join the Committee there and then, and the rest is history (writes Mike Garner).

Penny Fernando writes, "Sadly, Joyce Longhurst died aged 99, just before Christmas in Horsfall House (Minchinhampton). Joyce was passionate about footpaths and worked with Tony Drake on the Definitive Map and on Footpath Maintenance work parties with the unemployed, but I'm not sure how many current members of S Cots Ramblers would have known her."

There was a public meeting in Stroud in 1973 which resolved to set up a group to improve Public Rights of Way in the district. In 1975 the first General Meeting of the Stroud and District Footpath Group was held. One of the first jobs they undertook was to copy every single right of way onto large 6 inch to the mile maps from the Definitive Maps in Shire Hall. There were NO OS maps in existence with public rights of way shown. When I met Joyce in 1987 she was in full swing dealing with footpath problems and queries, along with the other members of the committee.

See the latest GR Area News for a photo taken in 1995 on Selsley Common, where Joyce looked very happy!

OUR FOOTPATHS – A CHANCE TO HELP OUR VOLUNTEERS

Don't panic. We are not asking for too much. We would like to launch a pilot project to help our small band of volunteers on the Footpath Support Group. They are Bob Frewin, John Corry, Penny Fernando, John Clayton and Richard Davis.

As we have frequently stressed Bob Frewin and his team do a brilliant job looking after the footpath network in the South Cots Group Area. Don't forget there are no fewer than 60 parishes. However they could do with a little practical help in keeping a regular check on footpaths. Our idea is that:-

1) You make a point of walking over every right of way in your parish or another of your choice at least once a year. Several members may live in the same parish, but we have many parishes that are sparsely populated. See the list at <http://www.southcotswoldramblers.org.uk/wp/our->

parishes/ You may be a dog walker or walk regularly on your own or with your family or you may be one of our regular group walkers. You could take some secateurs and with a few snips keep the stiles and gates accessible.

2) You are available, at the request of our footpath team, to report to them on ongoing problems to save them too much travelling. There are unlikely to be large numbers of these requests.

We are still developing our ideas but to help us to consider the matter further we would be grateful if you could give us some indication of your interest in becoming involved in this important project. Please let Richard Davis or Mike Garner know when out on a group walk or by email to info@southcotswoldramblers.org.uk and we will then let you have more details of our proposals.

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GROUP VOLUNTEERS 2017

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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 mike@southcotswoldramblers.org.uk

Led Walks Collectors for July-October 2016:

(dates needed by 30 April)

John G 01452 728760 Weekend Walks

Denys T 01453 751581 Evening Walks

Anne E 01453 842551 Start the Week Walks

Enid S 01242 863283 Midweek Walks

Walks with a Pub Meal at the end

At our recent AGM we discussed Pub Meals. After a healthy debate it was generally thought that our evening walks would continue with a start time of 18:30 (as last year) but would be best limited to a maximum of 3.5 miles if a pub meal was involved. When planning an evening walk, the leader should check for the latest time of serving food.

On all walks, if people wanted to eat at the pub after the walk then they should be asked on the programme to pre-book the meal just before the walk if the pub found this helpful (leaders to check when planning their walk).

Welcome to our new members

Since the last newsletter we have welcomed 17 new members, Alan, Fiona, Frank, Heather, Eddie, Isobel, David, Jeffrey, Julia, Liz, Pauline, Philip, Christine, Ray, Simon, Thomas and Hannah from Badminton, Bourne, Brimscombe, Cam, Dursley, Inglestone Common, Nailsworth, Stonehouse, Tetbury and Wickwar. Our total membership is now 408 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 June), please send them to Sally Davis newsletter@southcotswoldramblers.org.uk by 20th May

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.

Supporters of the Stroud Symphony Orchestra might be interested to learn of a project to create a film and classical music production celebrating the Five Valleys.

On a January Saturday afternoon 70 members of the Stroud Symphony Orchestra gathered at Holy Trinity Church to record a piece of classical music titled 'Heart of the Five Valleys', composed by conductor Jonathan Trim from Chalford. He wrote this in 2004 to celebrate the 700th anniversary of the town's conception.

The composition evokes the sights, sounds, history, character and people of the district and reflects the natural beauty and vibrancy of Stroud – from its bustling farmers market and artistic creativity to its rolling green hills and industrial heritage. The recording was the first step in a massive six month project to create a film celebrating the beauty of the Five Valleys.

Local film producer Dave Harries, who plays French Horn in the orchestra, plans to make a short film which documents the emotion and landscapes which inspired the composition, using this music. One of the aims is to raise money for local charity Stroud Valleys Project.

“Heart of the Five Valleys” is going to be the soundtrack to this film.

Jonathan and Dave decided to use the skills of the amateur and semi-professional musicians of the Stroud Symphony Orchestra – for whom the music had originally been written - to make a professional recording of this soundtrack.

So keep your eyes and ears open for the film and the soundtrack..

ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS



The next concert will be on 25th March 2017 at 7.30pm at Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Rd., Stroud, Gloucestershire (next to the General Hospital)

Programme

Rimsky Korsakov	Russian Easter Overture	
Schumann	Piano Concerto	Soloist: Katya Apekisheva
Vaughan Williams	Symphony No 2 (The London Symphony)	

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 Garner 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 25 March 7:30 pm at Holy Trinity Church, Stroud (next to the hospital with parking opposite)

To Mike Garner, 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:.....

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AN INSPIRATIONAL MAYOR

I was chuffed if embarrassed when the Mayor of Gloucester introduced me as his hero to Rachel, the Bishop of Gloucester at a hospital carol concert. By chance, the mayor remembered working with me when he had been an impressionable young student radiographer in the eighties. I probably delegated more than I should but he appreciated my having trust in him and remembered helping me with a femoral angioplasty, a radiological procedure used to open up a narrowed or blocked artery in the thigh. Surprisingly the mayor left junior school without being able to read or write. His marked astigmatism and dyslexia were not diagnosed till his early teens but he then managed to get the minimum number of GCE "O" levels to become a student radiographer. The job didn't suit him and he left to work for Walls acquiring a number of diplomas in the design and manufacture of ice-cream products over the next ten. He then turned to nursing at a time when nurse training was mainly an apprentice-type process and there were only a dozen or so degree places for potential high-flyers. His "ice-

cream" diplomas were regarded as equivalent to "A" levels and he managed to get a place and finish a degree in nursing. He went on to become a district nurse and then a university lecturer and picked up a MA. He became Mayor of Gloucester after having been a city counsellor for just two years and is just starting a timely PhD on methods of social care in different countries. He has five children all of whom have done well and his seventeen year old daughter is the youngest Mayoress of Gloucester since the twelfth century.

This is all impressive for someone who could not read or write till his early teens but what has it to do with walking? Well, the Mayor can walk, the Bishop can walk and fortunately so could the patient after his femoral angioplasty.

Brian Witcombe

Wysis Way

For those of you who like Long Distance walks, Richard and Mike are going to lead us on the Wysis Way, Westwards. The first two legs are on 15 April and 6 May with further legs in July, August and October. Details are in the Walks programme in the usual way.