

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Well here we are again. It hardly seems like yesterday since a voice in my ear said 'you only have one week to get your Chairman's report in for the February newsletter' and the same voice is back again giving me a week before the deadline for the June newsletter. So, quaking in my shoes, I pick up my trusty quill pen and start to write.

On a sad note, since the last newsletter we have lost Denys. There is a tribute to him in this newsletter but I would like to offer my own condolences to Caroline and his family. He will be very much missed on our walks and will be a hard act to follow.

Turning now to Ramblers activities, many of you on email will have received a communication from Central Office inviting you to become a Ramblers Local Organiser. As of writing, I have no further information on this new initiative but if you haven't already deleted it you might like to give it another read. It seems on the face of it to be a good way to get involved with the Ramblers' cause on your own terms. You can make what you want of the role without getting bogged down with Group or Area and it will give you a chance to help Ramblers locally. They will even tell you how to contact your MP!

Moving on, we are still trying to get something going on footpaths. We have a number of people who have volunteered to monitor the footpaths in their parish, but we still need a lot more. We are still being fairly low key on the project but we would really like to hear from you. With Summer rapidly approaching with its longer evenings, what better way to watch the sun go down than from one of your parish footpaths. It's surprising what you can learn about your own back yard.

And the next randomly selected topic is holidays. This time last year I was reporting that Ann was arranging the Spring 2017 break and asking if anybody else would help out. Well, Ann volunteered to arrange the Autumn holiday as well and currently about 18 of us are going to Guernsey. The visit to Sidmouth in April was also most enjoyable, made even more memorable by the South Cots Amateur Dramatic Society. The numbers were a little disappointing particularly given that it was such a good holiday with excellent leaders and walks. Ann is starting to explore other possibilities and on the back page of this newsletter is asking for feedback. If you have any ideas or preferences please contact her. She is coming up with some very good suggestions on holidays but needs to be sure that they will be of interest to members.

Our walks programme seems to be flourishing with more and more people coming out. I am not sure what the way ahead is or whether we should be making any changes. The shorter walks, up to 6 or 7 miles, seem to be the most popular but a couple of longer walks which I have been on recently have attracted quite high numbers.

That will do for now. Just a big thanks to all of you who have helped with our activities whether it is walking, footpaths or other aspects. The website is well and truly up and running with Mike at the helm, aided and abetted by Sally and as always I can't finish without mention of Bob Frewin and his team of footpath volunteers. Keep up the good work everybody.

Richard Davis - Chairman

SOUTH COTSWOLD RAMBLERS' AFFECTIONATE MEMORIES OF DENYS

WHEN HE STARTED WALKING WITH US

One Wednesday morning John Geoghegan & I met in the Walkers Car Park Painswick where I was leading a walk and John was to be Back Marker. However 10am came and went and with no one else there we were deciding whether to do the walk. Then a car drives in quite fast, the driver got out and opened the boot of this car and pulled out a pair of walking boots. We had not seen this person before so John and I said well we must go now and went over and introduced ourselves. It was Denys out for his first walk with the Group. Denys never forgot that first walk and would say how much he enjoyed it. He was always very friendly and would greet you with a smile, a thoroughly nice man. (Bernard)

Betws-y-coed September 2011



Smiling for the camera



Doing a crossword in the cafe at the top of Snowdon

Abingworth May 2012



Wysis Way 3/1/2009



Leading a walk 5/5/2010



On the website Richard has captioned this picture "A fine body of men". Without a ?



The only man brave enough to join the ladies in the open air pool

HOLIDAYS

Aberystwyth September 2010



Isle of Wight September 2012

Sheelagh and Sally drove to the ferry port early and waited to be loaded on. Denys arrived at the very last minute just as the boat was about to leave. His car was put in a prime position for getting off the ferry first. He then looked up at us, gave a genial wave and smiled. He then got to the hotel first and got the best room as they were allocated in order of arrival. Sheelagh and Sally ended up in the hotel up the road with a group of bikers! He also got the best position for a quick getaway on the return ferry! (Sheelagh and Sally)

Haytor May 2013



Shropshire September 2013

Denys wrote his report on this holiday for our newsletter in the style of A.E. Housman's 'The Shropshire Lad'. Who else would have done that!

Derwentwater June 2014



Denys was way out of his comfort zone the day we climbed Blencathra. He was scared, exhausted and really not enjoying the narrow path which dropped away each side as we climbed up. He carried on with some encouragement and was relieved to reach the ridge where he volunteered to look after the bags whilst the rest of us went to "Sharp Edge" before returning to Denys and following the path back to the hotel. (Sue and Pete)

The quizzes at HF Holidays are serious stuff. In our team there were Denys, John G, Peter and Sue, Sally and me. (Apologies if I've missed anyone out). For one of the questions they played a piece of music – "In the summertime" and asked for the singer's name. I instantly said "It's Mungo Jerry". Denys looked at me in amazement and said "WHO's Mungo Jerry?" in an incredulous tone. We all fell about laughing. (Olivia)

Peter remembered the ascent of Sca Fell. Peter was feeling rough and Sally gave him a paracetamol which enabled him to keep going and get to the top. On return to the hotel he went to bed and didn't appear for the evening meal. He remembers Denys going up to see if he was alright and making him drink tea as Denys thought he seemed to be dehydrated.

Denys, unlike most of the S. Cots men, joined in the country dancing but always seemed to be going in the wrong direction. He was quite happy to be manoeuvred into the right position by any of us.

Dunster September 2014

There was no entertainment in the evenings at Dunster so we had to make our own. Frequently this was group crosswords. The first night there was a discussion about the RIGHT way to tackle crosswords. All of us said that once you had solved one clue, you used the letters to help you solve the adjoining clues. Denys insisted that that was too easy and you should tackle them in numerical order. (Alex)

Denys and Bruno decided to teach the two of us how to play Bridge. They kept saying "You have to bid such and such". We kept saying "Why? They kept saying "Because you do". In the end they gave up on us as a lost cause. (Alex and Sally)

Brecon September 2016

Denys organised this holiday for us. During this period he had his bladder cancer operation but recovered and was able to do all the walks with us. He brought his son Dom with him on one of the days. Richard picked this photo which he described as "poignant" as Denys heads up a steep slope on the way to Pen-y-Fan, after a long period without being able to get out walking,



Everyone on the Brecon holiday will remember THE joke he told at the concert on the last night in front of the group of generally fairly elderly ladies who were staying at the same place and had just given us a choral recital!

Sidmouth May 2017

Denys insisted he would be joining us at Sidmouth even though he was undergoing radiotherapy. A fortnight before we went, he was adamant he would be going, even in a wheelchair. He didn't make it.

We came to know Denys better on the S. Cots holidays where we chatted in the evenings over a glass of wine. Denys enjoyed the social side of holidays as much as the walking and was in his element organising the musical evening at Brecon. (Sue)

WALKING THE COAST PATHS



Photo taken on the first stage of Stroud Rambling club coast to coast walk. He never did decide which hat to wear. Nice man, will be missed (Allen)



Steve and Ray sent these photos of the Pembrokeshire coast path walk.

ON WALKS

Ros and I were leading a walk from Tormarton and in single file we were walking beside a dry stone wall inside which was an amazing house and garden. There was a statue in the garden, very Romanesque. I happened to say to the people at the front of the walk near me that I hadn't been able to find out who the statue was of. A voice about 6 back in the line (Denys) said, "It's Cicero, of course". We all ribbed him about this, especially the "of course" and then ribbed him even more when 5 minutes later we sat down to eat lunch and he'd forgotten to bring a picnic! We didn't let him starve! You generally get squashed when the S. Cots are around!! (Sally)

Patrick said "You must mention the handshake"

My recollection of Denys was when we were walking from Newark Park. I tripped and fell flat on my face cutting open my chin. Doctor Denys rushed to the rescue and moved me to higher ground out of the mud. I promptly fainted. When I came round Denys, assisted by Brian, escorted me to a car gallantly giving up their own walks. (Enid)

Denys prodding the sleeping, curled up, sunbathing adder with his stick near Kilkenny Viewpoint

Patrick remembered trying to sort out the technical problems when Denys agreed to do a talk on Penicillin at the S. Cots AGM

Ron says make sure we say that Denys was the other Sunderland supporter....(there are only 2!) They always checked (commiserated) and when he and Ros visited they went down memory lane.

Denys enjoyed cooking for family and friends. He and Sue would chat about what they had cooked recently whilst out on walks and exchange recipes by email. (Pete and Sue), including tarka dhal (Sally)



On Wednesday 7 December 2016 Denys arrived at Fostons Ash to say that he wasn't able to lead the walk that day but that Mike would do it for him. Little did we realise the significance of that occasion - it was the last time he walked with the S. Cots.

24 Ramblers offered him lifts for his radiotherapy.

At least 60 went to his funeral.

There will be a Memorial walk for him next year on the 14th April.

SIDMOUTH HOLIDAY SPRING 2017

On Day 1 we arrived at the Sidholme Hotel, settled into our rooms, and our main leader, Ted, met us and took us on a tour of Sidmouth. Ted lived a few miles away and so was a very useful source of local information. He took us down the River Sid into the town, all along the Esplanade, up Jacob's Ladder. This seemed to be the "sporty" end of the town, with cricket going on (with digital scoreboard), tennis, and more people in white clothes playing bowls than I've ever seen. Back into the town, Ted recommended "A Taste of Sidmouth" as THE best place for ice-cream, knowledge that the majority of the S. Cots managed to retain and make use of. We had the services of 2 other leaders on various days, but Ted was the main man. Margaret joined us after her granny duty ended.

On Day 2 we headed eastwards to our most challenging day, along the Coast path, with 2 (for the shorter walk) and 3 (for the long walk) ascents up huge flights of steps, with the consequence that we all developed stepaphobia. It was quite a nature walk as well, as we came across Meadow Brown butterflies and a lizard. Sue introduced us to Alexander (who turned out to be a rather pungent plant which attracted flies). As it was Di's and Olivia's birthday, they decided to celebrate by lying in the bluebells. Our estimation of Ted went up when he showed no surprise at such behaviour. Our destination was the Donkey Sanctuary – a huge area which is so well supported, Ted said, that they could continue running for 10 years without any further donations. We had lunch, patted a few donkeys then returned, surprisingly rapidly and directly to the hotel, where we could use the indoor swimming pool, or recover.

On Day 2 we walked west from the hotel, past Devon cottages



up a steep hill to Muttersmoor. Some of us decided to ascend High Peak, while others had coffee on a log. We passed a biggish group of walkers coming the other way, one of whom said "Bruno?" in a questioning tone. It turned out to be someone Bruno had worked with years ago. We all stopped and learned that this group came from Cheltenham.

Onwards to Ladram Bay (the 2nd largest holiday centre in Britain, apparently) and the sea stacks precariously standing in the sea, awaiting their destruction.



We walked along the River Otter into Otterton where we had lunch before returning to Sidmouth via a different route across Muttersmoor, or for some, by one of the very frequent buses in this part of the world. Steve and Rosemary joined us for the briefing as they were planning on walking with us the next day, and ate in the restaurant with us. At this point the service, which had been excellent, fell apart! After the meal (late) we were invited to join a group of Methodists who were staying there for a quiz. I think they probably under-estimated how competitive the S. Cots were, as our two teams came out on top. We were invited to stay for "Devotions" afterwards. Those that did regretted it, and the heathens among us went to bed unsaved.

On Day 3 we caught the bus to Seaton Water Tower and headed across the fields to the really pretty Beer where we walked along the coast path. We continued on to Branscombe, a World Heritage Site, famous for the beaching of "The Napoli" in 2007 – a container ship which broke up in bad weather, and was scavenged by people from miles around for motorbikes, car parts etc. (For more information, listen to the folk band Show of Hands' rendition of "The Napoli" on YouTube). Our return after lunch involved returning to Beer (where we encountered the other group eating ice creams, surrounded by Western Power Distribution vans).



Steve thought he would demonstrate the outdoor gym equipment. Nobody thought to read the instructions - it worked better when we had worked out that it was for 2 people and it only worked if you tried to use one's person's ski instead of the two.



It gave us a good laugh and a chance for a rest before we headed uphill. We had to leave the coast path because of a landslip at Seaton Hole and return past some very expensive houses to the depressing concrete of Seaton itself. Ted's timing on this was immaculate as some of us were going to Sidmouth cinema (very art deco) to see the Royal Shakespeare Company's live screening of Julius Caesar and others were going to the concert by Blundell's School in the hotel music room.

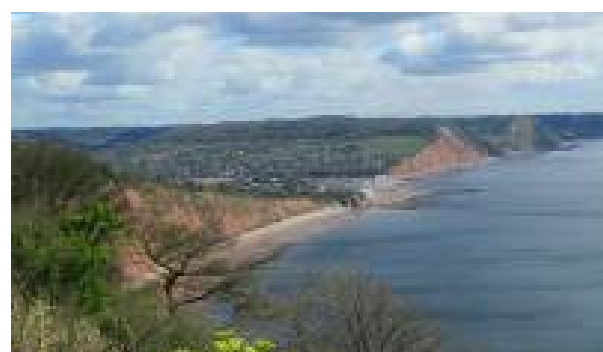
For our final walk we went inland, through lovely woodland via Ottery St. Mary and Tipton St. John to the River Otter, where we saw sand martins, egrets, and the

falling of trees supposedly done by beavers. On our return Di gave us a lovely recital on the amazing organ at the hotel

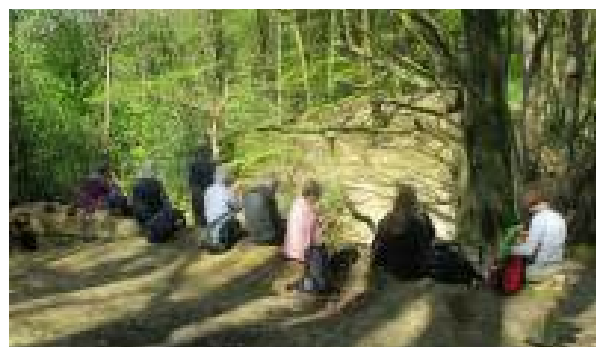


and in the evening our cultural zenith was reached when Ann, Enid, Sue, Mike and I put on a very brief performance of Cinderella, directed by Di, after which we were (surprisingly) invited to join in "Funky Games" with the Methodists!

We enjoyed perfect weather, lovely countryside,



stunning sea views and good food and company.



What more could we want!
Thanks, Ann. Really looking forward to Guernsey.
Sally

WABOG



What is WABOG? I hear you thinking.

Walk Around the Boundary Of Gloucestershire.

Never heard of it? I'm not surprised - neither had I last October, and I created the acronym. I have always enjoyed linear walks: the SW coast path, the Thames Path or the walk across el Hierro in the Canaries.

I've lived in Gloucestershire for over 30 years, and I love this county. I love its diversity: the hills, the commons, the vale, the river and the forest; the hamlets, the villages and the towns; the mills, the old mines, the lanes, the streams and the rivers. I've enjoyed linear walks in Gloucestershire: the Windrush way, the Gloucestershire Way, the Cotswold Ring and the Cotswold Way. But where exactly does this glorious county start and finish?

For a couple of years I've had in my mind that I would like to walk around the boundary of Gloucestershire. It's September 2016. I'm walking and chatting to Alex. 'I don't know what I'll do when I retire' says Alex. 'Oh....how about joining me to walk round the boundary of Gloucestershire?' says I.....and that's what we decided to do. Alex: 'How far is it?'. Me: 'A very long way. I'll see if I can find out'.

So I put on my thinking cap and I think of Radio Gloucestershire. Mark Cummings loves this county too. Maybe someone who listens to his early morning show will know the answer. Or, knowing Mark, maybe he'll find out for me. So I send him an email in November 2016. He asks me to ask the question on air, and, what a coincidence(!), he has someone from the Ordnance Survey office on another line, to tell me that the county boundary is 265 miles long. So' thinks I, 'that'll be about six months if we walk one day a week'.



The next day, 15 November 2016, Alex and I set off. We started where the county boundary comes onto land from the Severn: Hills Flats (they're the

mud flats in the river - shown on the OS map) near Hill, Berkeley. Walking anti-clockwise, 216 miles later (21 days walking) we've got to Tintern and have to do another 19 miles (2 more days walking). Down the Wye to Chepstow, across the Severn Bridge, and back to Hills Flats. We plan to finish on 23rd May.

It's been a wonderful walk. It's been completely beautiful for so much of the route. Also we've been incredibly lucky, so far, with the weather. Only one wet day so far, and just a bit of rain on a couple of other days! Wild flowers have been prolific : daffodils, bluebells, wild garlic, to name but a few! There's been amazing contrasts between building styles and materials, countryside and fabulous views, all in and around our beautiful county. From Daylesford to Didmarton to Dymock; from Lechlade to Mickleton and Swills Brook to Strensham; through the Forest and down the Wye Valley.

Sometimes we have been able to walk exactly along the county boundary, or adjacent to the stream (or river) it often runs along, other times we have been able to see on the map that the boundary is just one or two fields away. It's given me a real feeling for the extent of the county. Now I'm fascinated to discover more about how the county came to exist, and how its boundary developed and moved over the years, to be where it is today.

Some highlights:

Boundary related':

- what is surely a boundary stone (undocumented), on a lane where the boundary crosses it (just south-east of Tom Jollys near Eastleach



- a cottage called 'The Boundary' on a lane in Corse Lawn: reassured us we were on the correct route!



- a car driver, seeing us looking at the map, stopped to see whether we were lost. We were at a junction called 'Pigs Cross' and were trying to decide whether the pigs had been feeling angry, they had been crossing the road there, or had been run over and had a memorial cross erected to them! (Cryptic clues on the map intrigued Alex). After telling us about the origin of the name of the junction, he said he wondered whether we were interested to know that we were standing right on the Gloucestershire/Worcestershire county boundary!

- a notice at Oaks Common, Cliffords Mesne, on the former county boundary, beside an ancient Oak tree, stating that oaks were traditionally used as boundary markers. (From then on we noticed oak trees galore whenever our route coincided with the actual boundary)



- south of Kingham we walked along a dead straight, virtually traffic free byway, following the Fosse Way - also the county boundary - for about 5 miles. A route we had never been aware of, and little used by walkers, presumably because there are virtually no footpaths crossing it - we had to access it by walking along two minor roads, neither of which were very 'walker' friendly.

Sandwich lunch' related:

day 10 - we pass Chastleton House (which was closed) and find two comfortable chairs placed ideally for us to sit and enjoy our lunch.

day 21 - we come to a farm with a campsite where we stop for our sandwiches on a comfortable bench overlooking a lake (planning to buy ice creams to follow) - Alex drops a crumb for a chicken who's come over to say hello..... it's joined by another chicken then, within seconds, about a dozen more chickens are streaming across from the farmyard to pester us for a share of our lunch (they even wanted to share the bench with us!)



River Walks and more

- along the Thames path and around the winding boundary round Lechlade.

- up the Avon and down the Severn north of Tewkesbury (our only circular walk, around a 'peninsula of Gloucestershire with a 'neck ' only a kilometre wide). Then walking west from Tewkesbury, past an beautiful line of ancient dead oaks (we gathered they hold re-enactments of the Civil War here), then on past so many beautiful timbered cottages and houses.

- walking through the forest we suddenly come across a disused mine - gates at the entrance, rails, carriages and equipment everywhere, including an enormous winding wheel in two parts.

- down the beautiful Wye Valley, beside the river.

Walking WABOG has been a great start to 'retirement' for Alex. And I am delighted to have achieved this walk, considering that 11 years ago, following a head injury, I was unable to walk and talk at the same time - and could not begin to find my place on, or read, a map! No comment from Alex regarding the fact that I can now talk while I'm walking. And, although mostly my planning and map reading skills have served us well, there was one day when we found we were back where we'd started after an hour or so's walk!

Overall walking WABOG has been an amazing experience for both Alex and me.

Helen

(Helen and Alex planned to do the final leg on Tuesday 23 May)

Dursley Walking Festival, Thursday 5th – Sunday 8th October

Dursley's Autumn Walking Festival has more than doubled in size since it started, as a Town Council initiative, in 2012. This year there will be a record 25 walks. South Cotswold Ramblers have supported the festival both financially and by leading walks, with members turning out, sometimes in appalling weather (Denys's 2014 walk in Uley saw us sheltering from a particularly spectacular thunderstorm: you could hear the crackling of the lightning directly above us on Uley Bury), to support their leaders and the festival by warmly welcoming members of the public on their walks. This year South Cotswold Ramblers are again leading 2 walks, a leisurely one led by Anne on the Thursday morning and Brian and Sheila's "Would Chester ring again?" on Saturday. Details appear in the Walks Programme for July – October.

The full programme for Dursley Walking Festival is (or soon will be) available at www.dursleywelcomeswalkers.org.uk and printed copies will be available in September. Each day there will be a choice of walks to suit different abilities. Special Interest walks include: Birdwatching, Geology, Art, and Local Heritage. Organised independently from the walking festival, a number of local artists are planning to exhibit their work in Dursley and Cam as part of the Tyndale Art Trail a new venture which is taking place on the same dates. So if you want to relax at the end of your walk why not drop into a local pub or cafe and then explore the Art trail.

Karen D'Amico



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FAINTNESS ON THE HILL

Every now and then a ramblers feels faint after climbing a hill so what should be done and is this important?

Guardsmen on parade faint, distance runners faint, school-children faint in school assemblies (remember them?) and I fainted when a junior doctor on a ward round, coming round on a spare bed between two surprised elderly ladies on the female geriatric ward. So, fit people can faint, but not all people who faint are fit.

Faints, or vaso-vagal attacks, occur when not enough oxygenated blood reaches the brain and then the sufferer looks white, feels light-headed, unwell and often nauseated. Nature's treatment is simple: the sufferer collapses to the ground and the blood supply is restored when the brain is on the same horizontal level as the heart. The collapse itself can cause injury of course so it is best to lay the individual down prior to any fall or at least to get the head well down between the legs. If the person can't collapse to the horizontal - perhaps because they are lodged upright in a crowd or lying head-up on a steep slope - then even a "simple" faint can be dangerous.

The blood supply to our brains, as indeed to the brains of giraffes, is dependant on the pressure in the arteries and this in turn relies on a clever balance between the pumping of the heart and the contraction and elasticity of the blood vessels. This balance can be occasionally lost, for example, on receiving a shock, on standing up suddenly or after prolonged standing when blood can pool in the leg vessels. Other factors such as dehydration, over-heating or salt deficiency may be relevant but these causes are usually only significant on very hot days. Then of course pre-existing medical conditions may be important. Fainting is more common when people are generally unwell perhaps with an infection or bowel disturbance. Drugs which lower the blood pressure (anti-hypertensives) or slow the heart rate (beta-blockers) can play a part and some serious conditions such as a heart attack or sugar deficiency in a diabetic may present with collapse after exercise. It is good for everyone in the group to know who is diabetic and, although sweets or sugar can always be offered if a diabetic feels faint, diabetics known to have hypoglycaemic attacks tend to carry remedies such as the hormone glucagon or a concentrated dextrose gel (Hypostop) with them. All these things may need consideration but the immediate action is straightforward. Get the person horizontal and comfortable. Most of the time, little else is required immediately.

Nevertheless, despite the immediate response usually being straight-forward, fainting provoked by exercise should be taken seriously. In due course medical advice should be sought particularly in the older age-group or if there is irregularity of the pulse. If fainting is accompanied by other features such as blueness, difficulty breathing or any hint of chest pain, then the patient should be made comfortable where they are and an emergency ambulance called.

Brian Witcombe

Welcome to our new members

We now have 408 members and welcome 13 new members, including Adrian, Alex, Bronwen, Jason, Judy, Julie, Martina, Neil, Pam, Patricia, Sarah, Shaun, Stuart and Terry from Berkeley, Brimscombe, Dursley, Gloucester, Malmesbury, Nailsworth, Randwick, Stroud, Swindon, Tetbury, and Woodchester.

Mike Garner - Group Membership Secretary

If you wish to put any items in the next newsletter (which will go out in October), please send them to Sally Davis (newsletter@southcotswoldramblers.org.uk) by **21 September**

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.



ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

The next concert will be on 24th June 2017 at 7.30pm at Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Rd., Stroud, Gloucestershire (next to the General Hospital)

Programme

A Night of Rhapsody

Chabrier	Espana
Butterworth	A Shropshire Lad
Dvorak	Slavonic Rhapsody No.3
Delius	Brigg Fair
Lalo	Violin concerto
Vaughan Williams	Norfolk Rhapsody

Listen to extracts at www.stroudsymphony.org.uk. Please order your tickets from Stroud Tourist Information (01453 760960) or pay on the door.

GROUP VOLUNTEERS 2017

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Footpath Committee Member: Penny Fernando

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Led Walks Collectors for November 2017-February

2018: (dates needed by 25 September)

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Jacqui P 01666 826139 Start the Week walks

Olivia G 01453 751756 Midweek walks

