



Stoke Lodge Ramblers

Newsletter, June 2020

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Update from your committee

David McGregor

Dear Members

We have every hope that you are all keeping well and are amused and informed by the roughly weekly morale raiser emailed by Sue Hazelden. We all owe her a debt of gratitude for this message that does a great deal to keep our spirits up. This newsletter will be posted to those who don't receive these emails, and added to the website for those with online access.

Your Committee met on Thursday 21st May via Zoom and this up-date comes from that meeting.

I seem to have 'bumped into' some 20 members over the last 10 weeks, walking around Westbury, in Blaise Woods, on the Downs and elsewhere. In those socially distanced meetings it seems most are keeping fit through regular walks and some are even joining in Joe Wicks YouTube sessions daily. With the easing of travel to allow greater distances and meeting with one other person [now six! but only from two households] this seems a good time to be planning walks ready for resumption of normal life. If you are able to do some planning the focus on local walks with less travel seems sensible in the short term. If you have found a good walk and would be willing to lead it in the future do let Margaret Ruse know.

From Margaret: "While we are under restrictions and until we are able to walk as a group again, I hope you are all managing to keep fit and sane by walking regularly with a friend or as a household. As David says, it would be good if we could look ahead to planning some local walks for a future group programme. Please bear in mind that social distancing is likely to be with us for the foreseeable future and, therefore, car-sharing outside one's own household, may be inadvisable. This will mean taking more cars to the start of walks and a requirement for more parking spaces. It may also be the case that those travelling alone may be reluctant to drive longer distances. So, it would seem to make sense to try to have more very local walks eg setting off on foot direct from Cross Elms Lane or the Downs. Please think about 'donating' one or more of your local 'meanderings' (discovered or revisited during the restrictions). In addition, I would hope that we can re-schedule some of the walks which have been cancelled since 26th March. Please be in touch to pass on your ideas for future walks."

After cancelling the Spring Social in April, we then had to postpone the planned visit to **Highgrove** on 1st June. Hopefully this can be re-arranged next year.

The next event we had hoped to hold was the **Summer Outing on 20th June** but this is also cancelled. Andy has provided a separate update on this, but we hope the planning that Andy has done can be transferred to another time.

We have been in contact with Alan of Secret Hills to seek his advice on the **Away Weekend in Swanage** planned for 27-30 September and for which 22 members have paid a deposit. The

complications include: restrictions on sharing lifts and travel when down there; the Hotel's preparations for serving food and allowing socially distanced briefing meetings; as well as the complications of those sharing rooms who are not from the same household. Alan is pursuing the Pines Hotel for answers and we have put a deadline of 6th August for information to make a decision, after which we will be in touch to confirm the arrangements.

The AGM is planned for 31st October 2020. We will make a decision nearer the time as to whether this can go ahead, depending on the Government's restrictions on travel and socialising. We will need to elect the committee and Officers and encourage all to consider if they would like to be more active in the shared leadership of our club. To this end we will propose three minor adjustments to the constitution at the AGM

- 4b. says there should be 4 officers and not more than 5 other members. We propose the 4 officers remain the same but that the number of other members be raised to 6 to legitimise the current arrangement
- Under 4f we propose that officers elected at the General meeting shall be elected for 4 years and not elected annually.
- Under 4g we propose the 6 committee members will be elected for a similar period of 4 years and that they be eligible for a second term of 4 years, but then must be furloughed for a year. It would be good to include a sentence to the effect that elections will be manged so that the changes are staggered over the four year period.

Keep Safe and Be Alert

Tell us of local walks you have been doing

If you are able to drive 25 miles there is a 5 mile walk on the Mendips starting at the NT car park on the A38 where the Winscombe Hill road leaves the main road, just past the petrol station. To walk due west on from Kings Wood and then over Wavering Down and Crook Peak rewards you with magnificent views. The return can be heading SE from Crook Peak into Compton Bishop and then return to Wavering Down on the ridge that leads due north from Compton Bishop, before turning east to get back to the car park.

Another good walk is the Sculpture Trail near Speech House in the Forest of Dean. If you download the Forestry Commission leaflet you will see it starts at Beechenhurst car park (Forestry Commission payment required) and wanders through the magnificent mature trees before returning to the car park. The bonus is that the café is open for take away snacks and there are open toilets that are regularly cleaned. You do have to be aware of restrictions on travel in Wales and try to avoid driving more than 5 miles in Wales.

SLR Summer Outing 2020

Andy Renshaw

This year the proposed summer outing was planned to go to Torbay, where there are numerous opportunities for rambling or otherwise, or a bit of both. The outing was being planned to provide a day out for non-walkers and short and longer walks.

The trip was going to take advantage of the direct trains from Bristol to Paignton, which includes the fabulous sections of railway along the Exe estuary and along the sea wall at Dawlish.

The idea was to take the Dartmouth Steam railway train from Paignton to Kingswear, with the intention of alighting at Greenway Halt, named after Agatha Christie's nearby house. From here there were three potential options:

- A short walk would take you to 'Greenway', Agatha Christie's house and garden by the river Dart. If desired the train ticket permits a further ride on the railway to Kingswear for a look round or to take the ferry to Dartmouth.
- Two walks starting from Greenway were to be tested out – a short walk along the Dart Valley trail to Kingswear (about 3 miles) and a longer walk to Kingswear and thence a further 3.5 miles along part of the South West coast path.

The short walk would also give the opportunity to take the ferry across to Dartmouth and back. The return journey from Kingswear late afternoon was designed to connect with the evening train back to Bristol, arriving back around 20.00.

We hope that members like the idea of the outing. Unfortunately the fine tuning of these ideas could not be undertaken before the coronavirus lockdown. There is a chance – should it not be possible for the weekend in Swanage to take place and dependent on the state of the pandemic situation – the outing could be organised to take place later in the year. Otherwise we shall have to defer it until summer 2021.

SLR tree



Paul and Sue Hazelden

Many will have visited the site beside the Trym in Sea Mills and been sad to see 'our' tree, planted in December, looking lifeless. At the start of March we thought we could see shoots, but nothing developed, despite regular pep talks. As April turned to May and the hot weather arrived, we definitely feared the worst, with pressure on council staff preventing the regular watering which had been promised.

However, Paul wandered over one evening with a watering can. A few days later, I went with him, and spotted actual green shoots near the base! Paul has continued his visits, and the growth is definitely increasing, although the top still looks dead!

Paul has also cleared the nettles. The good news is that the Council will keep an eye on it, and if it does not survive then it will be replaced in the new year tree planting programme.

Cyril Crepin

We are sorry to announce the death of Cyril Crepin, a longstanding member of the club, at the end of May 2020. Davina was in touch with those we believe knew him, if you would like to see what she wrote or to attend the wake which it is hoped will take place at a later date, please contact her.

'Coping with Isolation' – the emails

Sue Hazelden

We started sending emails entitled "Corona Virus Coping with Isolation" early in lockdown. Having sent two quite depressing emails in quick succession saying what we would NOT be able to do, I wanted us to send something more cheerful. I seemed to be receiving snippets of useful information and suggestions about how to preserve good mental and physical health, plus learning about various Fun Things To Do (FTTD), so I offered to pull these together.

The emails are not 'all my own work' and other contributions have been important. A few days after sending one out, it's added to the website. I realise that some of you don't have easy access to

emails and the website, so we hope this newsletter will fill the gap to a small extent. And if you have found your way into the digital world in order to keep in touch with friends and family, and would now like to receive information from us by email, please let [Lorna Renshaw](#) know.

So here are a few highlights, concentrating on what I believe is available on YouTube, since you may well be able to access that through your TV.

As walkers, we don't need to be told that getting out into the open air and especially into nature is very good for us, so it is frustrating if we are cooped up at home. Research confirms that if we can't get out, then the next best thing is looking at pictures of trees or landscapes, and listening to recordings of nature and birdsong etc. Nature and gardening programmes can meet this need.

A big feature has been culture: the National and Globe Theatres, various ballet and opera companies and several local arts venues have been screening pre-recorded performances – search for what takes your fancy, by venue or title. There is even a Quarantine Choir you can join. (Ironically, the screening of musicals under the banner 'The Shows Must Go On' has now ended: it was good while it lasted!)

Joe Wicks, 'the nation's PE teacher', makes regular appearances. For those who can't keep up with his half-hour sessions for primary-aged schoolchildren, 9 am each weekday, look for his 10 minute sessions for seniors – some even chair-based!

I wondered what sports fans were doing, which led me to share that if you subscribe to sports TV channels, refunds should be available – that tip courtesy of Martin Lewis of Money Saving Expert fame. I also shared hairdressing and gardening tips, although I won't be giving up the day job any time soon.

Book recommendations included several titles by Robert Macfarlane, Philip Marsden and Kate Atkinson, and poetry – Max Boyce reading his poem *When Just the Tide Went Out* is amazing, and on YouTube. Was it balanced by Pam Ayres? I leave you to decide.

One week, there may have been some bad jokes. And to fill a need for sport, laughter and nature all at the same time, search for Andrew Cotter.

I also shared a map of local shops offering delivery services. This is becoming less critical, but the Welcome Coop on Druid Hill was recommended, as was Max Minerva's bookshop in North View, and shops in Westbury on Trym: Pins and Needles for knitting and haberdashery, Cindy Jane for anti-bacterial handcream and accessories, and Mogfords for hardware and gardening.

Many faith communities are now meeting online and welcome 'visitors', but this is no use to those who don't 'do' online. For you, there is [Daily Hope](#), a free phone line for worship and prayer from Canterbury Cathedral – phone 0800 804 8044, available 24/7. If anyone would like similar details for other faiths, let me know and I'll see what I can find out.

Finally, I always remind readers that support is available for shopping and necessary errands, and any member can [contact a committee member](#) for practical help or a friendly phone call. It's also worth knowing that Bristol City Council offers a dedicated Covid 19 helpline: 0800 694 0184 (freephone), 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday, 10am to 2pm Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays.

I hope you enjoy this quick tour of the last few weeks. It will be clear to you that my ability to produce a stylish print newsletter falls far short of our previous editors: that position remains open! Meanwhile, for as long as it's needed, I shall continue to send out something to cheer us up on a roughly weekly basis.