



'Harvest' at Box Hill

Music in the Surrey Hills

Over the centuries, local sounds, folk tales, sights and historical events have all played their part in the creation of contemporary music – and so it is today in and around the Surrey Hills.

An obvious starting point is probably folk music. On St Georges Day and other occasions, Morris Dancers or Mummers can often be found performing to the sound of traditional tunes and songs. There is still the widely practised art of folk singing – both traditional and new compositions. Historically, many of these songs would have recorded local events at a time when reading and writing were less universal skills and these are now part of our heritage.

Sitting or just standing quietly in the Surrey Hills countryside allows you to hear the sounds of nature. Bird song, insects



Performing at Loseley – part of the Society's 10th anniversary event

buzzing, the sounds of cattle or sheep, the breeze wafting through the trees and grass – all create sounds and rhythms which have been picked up by composers and incorporated into their music. A good example of this is the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams and you can read more about his influence inside this newsletter.

Many famous musicians have based themselves in the area. We have recording studios scattered around and, of course, we have the wonderful Cobbe Collection of musical instruments at Hatchlands Park, East Clandon near Guildford.

Music is clearly part of the local culture. We are fortunate to have the highly professional activities of Grange Park Opera at West Horsley Place, light opera

and classics with amateur groups such as operatic societies, rock choirs, church choirs and music festivals of all sorts. There are also activities such as the Surrey Hills Arts 'Harvest' event and occasional performances at locations such as St Martha's church which have sizeable audiences. And, of course there are all the musicians – be it classical, rock, folk and all the other genres which come between.

Since music, in all its forms, is such a feature of our lives we have taken it as the theme for this newsletter. We hope that you will enjoy learning more about 'Music in the Surrey Hills'.

Ken Bare



At Surrey Hills Wood Fair



Albury Saxon Church

Chairman's Views

People often ask me what the role is of the Board of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (SHAONB). It is timely to write about this as Heather Kerswell, who has been an outstanding Chairman of the Board, is retiring in December. Her successor will be appointed very soon.

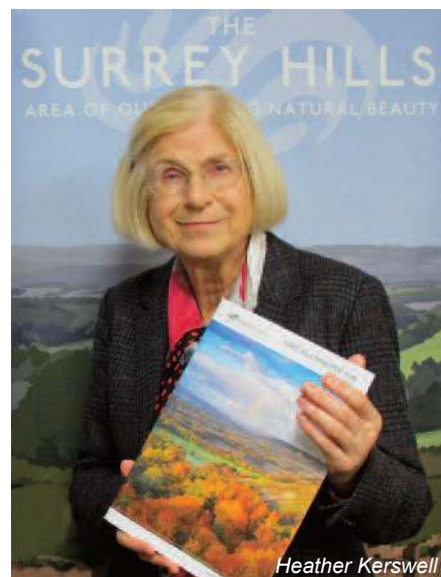
Heather has achieved so much during her time as Chairman. Undoubtedly her greatest success has been to ensure the commencement of the long awaited SHAONB Boundary Review and to lobby for a method of working that will provide for input from local planning officers and AONB Board representatives. However, she has done so much more besides and I would like to extend my personal thanks to her for all the support she has given the Surrey Hills Society.

The SHAONB Board is a Joint Advisory Committee which produces and monitors the AONB 5-year Management Plan. The current Plan is for the period 2020-2025. It focuses on the whole of the AONB and the purpose of AONB designation, which is the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty. Members of the public are welcome to attend the Board's quarterly meetings.

The Board's core funding members are representatives of the 5 local boroughs and districts that cover the SHAONB plus Surrey County Council (SCC), the National Trust and Natural England. The Society, Surrey Hills Trust Fund and Surrey Hills Enterprises are represented as Delivery Partners, and then there are a number of Advisory Members including Surrey Wildlife Trust, Country Land and Business Association, National Farmers Union, Campaign to Protect Rural England and the Surrey Association of Local Councils. Funding for the Board is provided by the Department for Rural Affairs and the local authorities.

The Board has a very small team led by Rob Fairbanks, who is our energetic and extremely experienced Director of the SHAONB. His Communications Lead, Emma Cole, helps to raise awareness of the SHAONB and works with a wide range of partners. She is currently developing a new website for the Surrey Hills which will be launched shortly. Clive Smith is Planning Adviser and monitors and comments upon planning applications that might impact the AONB (see Clive's report on P7). Business and finance support is provided by SCC.

The Society has a key role as a Delivery Partner because it is only by mobilising volunteers that we can make projects happen that support the Management Plan.



Heather Kerswell

Under Heather Kerswell's Chairmanship we have developed strong ties with other members of the Surrey Hills family – Surrey Hills Arts and Surrey Hills Enterprises – and we all work together within the parameters for which we have been established. As a Society our four key aims are to Conserve, Inspire, Educate and Enjoy. I look forward to working with the new Chairman of the Board and our many partners to continue to develop our role around these objectives.

Gordon Jackson

Godalming Operatic and Surrey Hills Society Volunteers

Several of our Surrey Hills Society (SHS) members volunteer with Godalming Operatic Society (GOS). GOS was established nearly 100 years ago, whereas SHS was founded in 2008, some 84 years later. You might think that a theatrical group specialising in Victorian operettas written by WS Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan would have little in common with the outdoor loving SHS, but this is not the case.



GOS members on a walk in the Surrey Hills. Half of those pictured are in both Societies.

Three well-known founder members of SHS are also actively involved in GOS – our President, Chris Howard, Vice-President, Ken Bare and former SHS Events Chairman, Jeff Holiday.

Sall Baring, our current Events Chairman, has been in GOS for over 25 years and Charlotte Choi, creator of our SHS mascot 'Hilly the Hare', is also a member of both Societies, as are several others. Hilly was created as part of our 10th anniversary celebrations and is regularly at the front of our gazebo display. Younger visitors and often their parents are fascinated to discover the many finely painted pictures of flowers and animals of the Surrey Hills that adorn the hare's body.

Many SHS members have discovered the delights of GOS – a traditional opera company, complete with a professional 22 piece orchestra. They enjoy supporting GOS by coming along to their annual

performances held in the Surrey Hills each February at both Godalming Borough Hall and the Leatherhead Theatre. To learn more see www.godalmingoperatic.org

Sall Baring



Charlotte Choi with Hilly the Hare

Rock and Roll in the Surrey Hills

The old Odeon, Guildford



The Surrey Hills and surrounding areas have become home for many of our most famous rockstars.

The Beatles' one and only local performance was at the Odeon in Guildford on 21 June 1963. The Guildford and Godalming Times reported that "The Beatles did their best to sing above the deafening screams of the audience." In the end the National Anthem had to be played so as to silence and disperse the crowd! A poster in decent condition from that 1963 concert could now fetch several thousand pounds!

Surrey's countryside became a firm favourite as a retreat from the Beatles' London lives. John Lennon lived in Weybridge and George Harrison in Esher. Ringo Starr, in particular, had a long association with the Surrey Hills. In the 1960s Ringo moved to Einstead, buying Brookfield from Peter Sellars, while almost forty years later he bought Rydinghurst, a 200-acre estate in Cranleigh.

In 2014 he told Surrey Life:

"When you've grown up around the dusty backstreets of Liverpool, you don't ever expect to end up comfortable and settled in the leafy surrounds of Surrey. It's a world away from everything I knew, but a fantastic world, and a beautiful place."

Shortly after this interview Ringo moved to Los Angeles, but whilst in Cranleigh, he and his wife, Barbara Bach, attended many local community events and were generous philanthropists.

One of the best-known local groups is Genesis. Peter Gabriel went to Charterhouse in September 1963, aged 13. The original Genesis was a combination of two Charterhouse bands and the first demo tapes were recorded in 1966 with four Charterhouse pupils. In 1967 Jonathan King, who was also a Carthusian, heard their music and they signed a contract with King's Jonjo Music. Phil Collins joined in 1970. The band performed at the Civic Centre in Guildford (now G-Live) in 1971. When interviewed by Melody Maker, Peter Gabriel explained:

"This is approximately our home town so we were very pleased at our reception tonight. It's taken a long time, but we've always been optimistic about the band."

Charterhouse School where Genesis was formed



Peter Gabriel left the group in 1975 and enjoyed an extremely successful solo career. Genesis went on to sell over 100 million albums worldwide.

Rated as the third most successful band of all time is Queen. Their fourth album 'A Night at the Opera' was recorded at Ridge Farm near Dorking. This sixteenth century manor house, now a hospitality venue, had a barn that was converted to a recording studio and provided the first residential recording studios in the UK. Attracting not only Queen, but artists such as Roxy Music and Ozzy Osbourne, Ridge Farm provided a welcoming environment in which artists could hide from the spotlight.



Ridge Farm Film Studio 2015

Brian May is now well-known as a keen environmentalist and lives in Windlesham. Last year when his property was endangered by a wildfire on Chobham Common, he publicly thanked the local fire service. Roger Taylor, the drummer of the band has lived at Puttenham Priory for many years and in 2004 he unveiled the village's millennium sign.

Eric Clapton is perhaps one of Surrey's most famous sons. Born in Ripley in 1945, he attended what was then Ripley Church School. His son Conor, who tragically died in New York at the age of only four, is buried in St Mary Magdalen's churchyard. In 2002 Clapton was married in Ripley to Melia McEnery. Eric now owns Hurtwood Edge Estate in Ewhurst. He has been associated with nine groups in all, including Cream, the Yardbirds, Derek and the Dominoes and John Mayall and the Bluesbreakers.

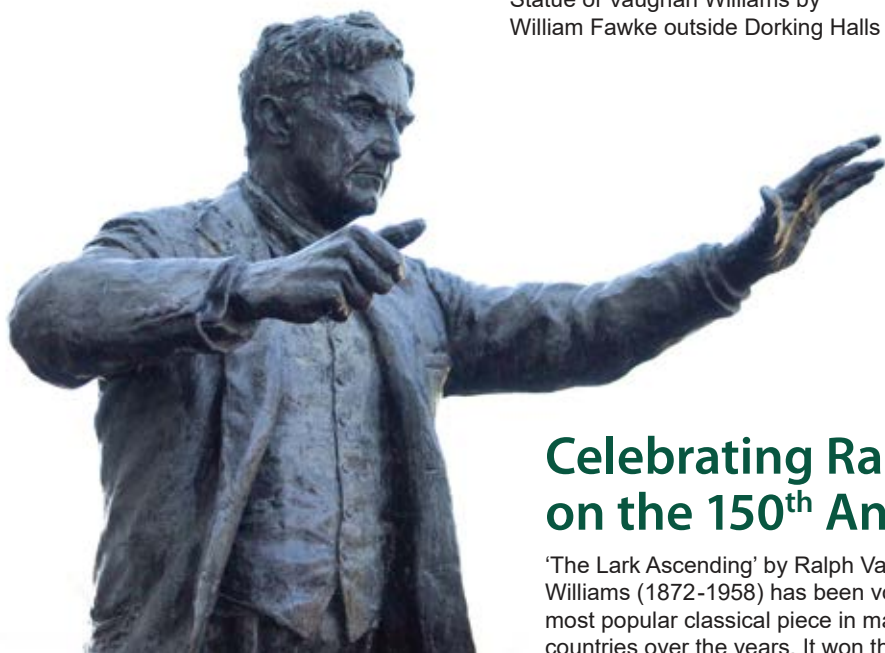
Eric Clapton in 1975



There are so many other well-known Surrey-based rockstars that I might mention and the groups selected are very much my personal choice as they were so important to me in the formative years of my life. If anyone has other musical memories to share, do get in touch as we would love to hear about them.

Gordon Jackson

Photo credits: Eric Clapton by Matt Gibbons, Ridge Farm Studios by Steve Guess through Wikimedia Commons (CC BY 2.0), Odeon photo courtesy of David Rose.



Statue of Vaughan Williams by William Fawke outside Dorking Halls



The view from Box Hill. George Meredith lived nearby

Celebrating Ralph Vaughan Williams on the 150th Anniversary of his birth

'The Lark Ascending' by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) has been voted the most popular classical piece in many countries over the years. It won the British Classic FM 'Hall of Fame' for a record 12th time in 2022. Vaughan Williams is one of the most famous 20th century composers and very much a child of the Surrey Hills.

Although not born here, Vaughan Williams spent most of his boyhood at Leith Hill near Dorking and made the town his home again in later life. Born in Gloucestershire, he was the son of the Reverend Arthur Vaughan Williams and his wife, Margaret, née Wedgwood. She was a great-granddaughter of the potter, Josiah Wedgwood and also the niece of famous scientist Charles Darwin, author of 'Origin of the Species'.

Sadly, Ralph's father died suddenly in February 1875, and Margaret took the children to live in her family home, Leith Hill Place, now owned by the National Trust. Here at the age of five, Vaughan Williams' musical development was encouraged by his aunt, Sophy Wedgwood. It was recognised early on that he was musically gifted. Passing an Edinburgh University correspondence course aged only eight, Vaughan Williams was educated at

Charterhouse. He went on to study at the Royal College of Music, where he was said to have idolised his tutor, Hubert Parry, the famous British composer. In 1892 he went up to study music and history at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he met Adeline Fisher, whom he married in October 1897. They honeymooned for several months in Berlin, whilst Ralph studied with the influential composer, Max Bruch.

In 1905, Ralph helped his sister, Margaret, and Lady Evangeline Farrer set up the Leith Hill Musical Festival, becoming principal conductor, a post he held for nearly 50 years. He was also a prime mover in founding The Dorking Halls, which opened its doors in 1931 and is now the home of the much-loved choral festival that continues to this day (see page 6). A large statue created by William Fawke and unveiled in 2001 now stands outside the Halls to note Ralph Vaughan Williams' huge contribution to Dorking public life.

In 1929, with Adeline becoming increasingly immobilised by arthritis, the family moved to a more manageable home, "The White Gates", Dorking. During WWII, Ralph Vaughan Williams threw himself into various cultural, social and fundraising activities, including



The view South from Leith Hill Place



David McFall Bronze of Ralph Vaughan William (1961)



Leith Hill Place



Ralph Vaughan Williams at White Gates



Skylark

initiating, at the White Horse Hotel in Dorking High Street, a series of Wednesday afternoon instrumental concerts entitled 'An Informal Hour of Music'. He also directed performances by the Leith Hill Musical Festival massed choirs of the Bach 'St. Matthew Passion' as well as other works at St Martin's, Dorking's grand Victorian church. A copy of a 1961 bronze relief portrait of the composer by David McFall can be seen in the church porch.

In 1938 Vaughan Williams met Ursula Wood (1911–2007). Despite their both being married, and a four-decade age-gap, they fell in love almost from their first meeting and maintained a secret love affair for more than a decade. Ursula became the composer's muse, helper and London companion, and later helped him care for his ailing wife. Ursula enjoyed a warm friendship with Adeline and Ralph's devotion to his first wife continued throughout her life until she died in 1951.

In February 1953 Vaughan Williams and Ursula were married. He left the Dorking house and they took a lease of 10 Hanover Terrace, Regent's Park, London. It was the year of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation. Vaughan Williams's contribution was an arrangement of the Old Hundredth psalm tune, and a new setting of 'O Taste and See' from Psalm 34, performed at the service in Westminster Abbey. This latter piece was performed again at Queen Elizabeth II's funeral in September.

Vaughan Williams died suddenly on 26 August 1958 at Hanover Terrace, aged 85. On 19 September, at a crowded memorial service, his ashes were interred near the burial plots of Purcell and Stanford in Westminster Abbey.

It is as a symphonist that Vaughan Williams is best remembered. The composer and academic Elliott Schwartz wrote (1964), "It may be said with truth that Vaughan Williams, Sibelius and Prokofieff are the symphonists of this century". Although Vaughan Williams did not complete the first of them until he was thirty-eight years old, the nine symphonies span nearly half a century of his creative life.

'The Lark Ascending' is based on George Meredith's poem of the same name which was written at Box Hill. Ralph Vaughan Williams wrote that the music came into his head in 1914 while out walking on the cliffs near Margate in Kent and watching troops leave for France. However, he would first have become familiar with the song of the skylark in the Surrey Hills, the place of his childhood. Although much rarer than in his day, thankfully the skylark can still be heard here today.

Christine Howard

Photo credits: White Gates courtesy of Dorking Museum. Leith Hill Place by Martin Bamford, Skylark by Nottsexminer through Wikimedia Commons (CC BY 2.0)



Looking towards Dorking from Ranmore



Wood carving at Leith Hill Place



Dorking from Denbies

Singing together in the Surrey Hills

The Leith Hill Musical Festival was founded in 1905 (see article on Page 4). There are 12 choirs in the group one being the Dorking Choral Society (DCS) which has now reached its 100th anniversary. DCS have worked with many eminent conductors starting with Ralph Vaughan Williams from 1905 to 1953 and William Llewellyn who ran the music department at Charterhouse School in Godalming. In 2014 the festival committee started a singing workshop open to the public which now has its own event held in October of each year.

Excelsis Chamber Choir is a group made up of around 25 people, many of whom have a



Godalming Operatic Society

background in musical training. They are based in Witley and have the honour of being the Choir-in-Residence for Grayshott Concerts which perform world class accessible music throughout the year. The Choir was formed in 2007 and they perform a wide variety of music to a very high standard. In 2015 they performed the world premiere of Karl Jenkins' work 'The Healer – A Cantata for St. Luke'. They have also sung with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales by invitation of Karl Jenkins and have been broadcast on national radio.

Godalming Operatic Society is full of people with an interest in Gilbert & Sullivan (G&S). Whilst most of the members are not professionally trained they enjoy singing the delightful operettas. The Society is one of the oldest G&S Societies in the country having been founded in 1924. The Society has performed most of the G&S operettas including the lesser known 'The Grand Duke' and 'Utopia Limited'. They have been invited and performed at international festivals and continue to perform in Godalming and Leatherhead in February



Guildford Rock Choir

annually and put on summer concerts which attract a different audience.

Rock Choir is now one of the largest choirs in the UK with tens of thousands of members across the country. It was started by Caroline Redman Lusher in Farnham in 2005. She is an award-winning musician and singer who introduced the concept of contemporary singing without the need to read music. There are no auditions and all are made welcome. It is genuinely open to all who enjoy singing. They sing at many events across the county and raise money for a large number of UK charities. Most of the songs performed are in three parts and are accompanied by co-ordinated dance moves.

Sall Baring

Opera in the Woods

Grange Park Opera, founded by Wasfi Kani back in 1998, had its first home in a country estate in Hampshire, but when the lease expired in 2016 a new venue had to be found fast. By chance television presenter and author Bamber Gascoigne had recently inherited West Horsley Place, a Grade 1 medieval manor house, from his Great Aunt, Mary Innes-Ker, Duchess of Roxburghe. Being faced with an enormous tax bill along with a raft of repairs the only viable option was to set up a registered trust.

Timing was perfect and in 2016 part of the 380 acres of land was leased to Wasfi Kani just as a new home for Grange Park Opera was needed. "It didn't take us long to say, 'yes indeed'. It isn't every day that you are invited to have an opera house in your garden", stated the late Bamber Gascoigne.

The Theatre in the Woods was subsequently built in a woodland glade on the estate, the



West Horsley Place



Grange Park Opera House

first new opera house to be built in the UK this century. With an auditorium modelled on La Scala and accommodating an audience of over 700 it is a major step towards West Horsley Places' mission to establish a home for the performing arts.

While many operas staged have been traditional: recently including Puccini's 'La Boheme', Verdi's 'Masked Ball' and Wagner's 'The Valkeries', others have been innovative and experimental. They include the 2021 world premiere of 'The Life and Death of Alexander Litvinenko' and the 2022 'Gods of the Game: A football opera', commissioned by Sky Arts.

Grange Park is one of several country house operas in England, the largest and most famous of course being Glyndebourne. Away from London, operas in tranquil countryside

settings offer quality productions and the chance to socialise, eat and drink in a relaxed atmosphere in the summer, in contrast to the jostling and queues synonymous with London theatres.

In addition to opera, West Horsley Place hosts a variety of other cultural events including theatre, ballet and musical concerts. With wonderful Surrey venues such as this, there really is far less need for Surrey Hills' music lovers to travel to London particularly during the summer months.

Susie Turner

Photo credits: Grange Park Opera House through Wikimedia Commons K71996 (CC BY-SA 4.0)



News from Surrey Hills Arts

'Harvest'



'Seeds of Hope' by Diana Burch

A community celebration of the Surrey Hills landscape through the arts – 'Harvest' – took place on Box Hill on Saturday 17 September at dusk. This year the stunning art installation was made by hundreds of people across Surrey led by Diana Burch. She created 'Seeds of Hope' symbolising our connection with each other and nature with contributions from groups including the Patchworking



Ukrainian Band - Atmosfera

Garden, the Grange Centre, Freewheelers and Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum.

During the 'Harvest' preparations, over 100 Muslim hikers from community hiking group, Active Inclusion Network, met at the bottom of Box Hill for their first hike in Southern England. This 10-mile walk was facilitated by the Surrey Hills National Landscape team and the National Trust to provide an opportunity for all to connect with the beautiful Surrey countryside.

Everyone enjoyed a fabulous evening, gathering around the installation, whilst listening to a vibrant musical set from 5 members of Ukrainian band, 'Atmosfera'. These band members are currently living in Surrey as part of the 'Homes for Ukraine' programme. Four poems were recited, the final being Simon Armitage's 'Floral Bouquet' - a heartfelt rendition by Mole Valley District Council's Councillor, Claire Malcomson, to mark Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's passing. Members from ten local choirs sang out across the landscape and led everyone in a specially written round for the evening entitled 'Seeds of Hope' in line with the theme and installation.

Harvest concluded with a gentle but breathtaking walk down the famous Zig Zag Road, bearing lanterns and creating the perfect conclusion to this community event.

'HABITAT'

'HABITAT' is a Surrey Hills Arts project exploring how artists can positively contribute to increasing biodiversity in urban spaces.

As an experimental project, a built-up space on campus at the University of Surrey was



'HABITAT' at the University of Surrey

selected. Working with the University's Horticultural and Landscape Manager, Surrey Wildlife Trust and four artists, the project transformed the area with planting and sculptures created specially to attract and support local wildlife. The artists worked collectively, as well as independently, researching local declining animal populations. Their final artworks included a tower for slugs and snails and interlocking cells for solitary bees.

Professor Richard Murphy, Director of the Centre for Environment and Sustainability, University of Surrey, who was heavily involved with the project said "It has been a delight and privilege for the University to work in partnership with Surrey Hills Arts and others on this inspiring project creating a community eco-space on our campus. This is a perfect fit with our biodiversity and wellbeing ambitions – both for our communities and more widely in Guildford and Surrey. We will be looking after it carefully and are excited to see its evolution and impact over the coming years."

Alison Clarke

Boundary Review Update

Natural England (NE) and their consultants' technical assessment to extend the Surrey Hills AONB boundary is well under way. They have been assessing which areas have sufficient natural beauty for inclusion in the AONB and that it is desirable to do so.

They have been taking into account the 2117 separate evidence submissions made by the public and other bodies last December and January and the four webinars held. Probably for the first time in the country they have involved the

Chair of the Surrey Hills AONB Board and officers, including from the Borough and District Planning Departments, in regular meetings.

The next steps in 2023 are:

- by the end of April complete the statutory and public consultation on the proposed candidate areas for possible inclusion in the AONB,
- by the end of June complete assessment of the consultations and seek NE's approval of the draft Order.
- by the end of August submit to the

Secretary of State formally to vary the the boundary.

- when the Secretary of State's approval will be given is unknown. The Government is understood to be aware of the problems arising from past delays in approval.

The further the AONB candidate areas progress through the procedures the greater will be the weight that could be attached to AONB protection in making planning decisions.

Clive Smith,
Surrey Hills AONB Planning Adviser

Events programme November 2022 to March 2023

We are still rebuilding our events programme with new activities being added to the list on a regular basis.

Please visit our website for more information and booking details for events below as well as additional events.

Booking is essential – even for free events.

Bookings generally open about six weeks before each event.

For those who don't use email, please ring us on the number shown above for more information and to book.

Sunday 6 November

Explore Norbury Park

Join our chairman Gordon Jackson on a 4 mile walk around this historic parkland situated between Leatherhead and Dorking.

Tuesday 8 November

Horsley Towers with a talk on Ada Lovelace

Join our President Chris Howard on this special day in the historic home of Lord Lovelace, once one of the largest landowners in England. Enjoy a lunch tour and talk on the history of the family and Ada Lovelace, daughter of poet Lord Byron and 'mother of computing'.

Thursday 17 November

Passionate about Glass

An exclusive demonstration by Adam Aaronson, who has been at the heart of British Studio glass for nearly 40 years. Adam will create a special piece for us. Refreshments will follow.

Wednesday 23 November

Surrey Hills Symposium

This year's Symposium at the University of Surrey focuses on how we can make our National Landscape open for all. Book your free ticket through Eventbrite.

Saturday 10 December

Pre-Christmas walk from Belmont School

Our annual event starting from historic Belmont School and walking up to Holmbury Hill fort followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

Sunday 11 December

Christmas wreath making

One of our most popular events, gathering natural materials and then returning to the hall to make your own natural door wreath.

Tuesday 27 December

Walk off your Christmas pudding

There will be two walks this year, one in the west and one in the east of the county.

Sunday 8 January

Explore Blackheath

This is the first free walk of the calendar year and we will be covering the lovely area of Blackheath.

Thursday 26 January

Lecture at The Guildford Institute

We will enjoy a talk and slide show "Then and Now in Surrey" with historian Lorraine Spindler followed by afternoon tea.

Sunday 5 February

Explore Haslemere

Join the President, Chris Howard for a free circular walk around this historic market town.

Wednesday 8 February

What does it mean to be High Sheriff?

Talks and tea with the High Sheriff of Surrey, his Hon Christopher Critchlow DL, and former High Sheriff, Sally Varah MBE of the Michael Varah Memorial Trust at the new headquarters of Surrey County Council in Reigate.

Saturday 11 February

Map Reading Course

A whole day of training and practice in map reading and simple navigation techniques to enable you to explore the Surrey Hills.

Sunday 5 March

Explore Deepdene

Join us for a free guided walk around this fascinating estate with its historic buildings and its connection to the famous cursed Hope Diamond.

Thursday 9 March

Circle 8 Films

Join us in West Horsley for tea and two short films "Tunnel under Hindhead" and "The Life and Times of Lewis Carroll" by this multi-award winning production company.



Dog friendly but kept on a short lead throughout the walk



Family Friendly



Signposting for events where SHS will be present



Easy/flat



Moderate



Challenging



1st Walk of the Month

To join us go to www.surreyhillssociety.org or phone 07530 949302