



Affiliated to HF Holidays

**In this issue:**

- **Keep Safe on your walk.**  
If these tips can prevent a single winter injury then they will have served their purpose.
- **Continuing our growth.**  
2017 attendance figures show that we have continued our growth and, after almost 15 years, we are one of the Midland's largest walking groups.
- **Local History Walk.**  
The story of the Dowery Dell viaduct.
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December figures and a health message.

**Why use Trekking poles?**

As bipeds we human beings spend a tremendous amount of energy maintaining our balance using just two points of contact with the ground, our feet. This balancing act can be aided by the use of a trekking pole. Not only is balance and posture improved by using a trekking pole but the knees and lower back experience less strain.

- Poles function as extra legs on uneven terrain preventing injuries.
- Trekking pole users are less likely to lose their balance, reducing stress fractures and sprains.
- Knee strain is reduced significantly, especially when walking downhill.
- By using a trekking pole you improve your overall posture while walking.
- The more upright posture also allows more air into your lungs so breathing is maximized.

## Keep safe on your walk

How often have you seen sights like these in the last few weeks?

OK, sticky and slippery mud on flat ground is a natural hazard at this time of year and for some it adds 'charm' to our walks in the great outdoors whilst making us work a lot harder.

Slippery slopes however can be a real hazard and cause of injury if we are not prepared for them.

Most of us, as experienced walkers, have developed a knowledge of how best to be prepared and we know:

1. You need wellies or walking boots which, with a deep strong, rubber tread, are good for all types of snow, ice, slush and mud. Wellington boots will give you depth of tread and grip but will not stop you twisting your ankle. Wearing waterproof gaiters over a pair of walking boots is usually a good idea although I prefer to wear waterproof trousers which will keep me comfortable if I should slip and sit in the mud.
2. Walking sticks (or 'Poles') are invaluable multi-purpose devices which serve primarily as portable handrails but can also be used to test the depth of water/mud and can reveal uneven ground or potholes hidden by water. Some people prefer not to use poles but I believe it is better to have a stick and not need it than to need it and not have it.



As we are now in January we could also still be faced with ice and snow and so here are some helpful hints from winter-safety experts that will reduce the risk of falling.

Along paths, look for darkened or shiny patches and avoid them. These are ice patches and the most likely spot for walkers to slip.

Walk with short and relatively quick steps along thin, hard snow or ice. Slips happen when you firmly plant your foot on slippery surfaces. Shorter, quicker steps reduces the leverage that enables slips.

In fresh snow, try to walk in someone else's footsteps. Not only will you use up less energy, but their shoes will have left a tread mark which will be easier for your feet to grip. On deeper snow, always walk heel to toe. Applying your heel first will create a hole, which helps prevent your foot slipping forward.

Keep your weight leaning slightly forward. You would much rather fall forward than backward. (This is obviously not an easy thing to do on a downhill slope - a stick will be a great help.)

Be prepared to use your hands to protect your face and head from an unpleasant landing if you are unlucky enough to fall. (No such thing as a bad fall - only bad landings!)

And finally - A major part of staying safe is staying alert. Feeling cold can numb the senses and so we should all be aware that up to 40% of body heat is lost through the head and so a warm hat can be regarded as a safety as well as a comfort aid. Gloves are also important in cold weather, especially for those who have circulation problems. To walk comfortably and with a good posture you should be able to swing your arms freely, so putting your hands in your pockets is not an option.





# 2002 - 2017 and still growing stronger!

After almost 15 years since its start, Kidderminster Stride and Stroll continues as one of the largest walking groups in the Midlands and a study of our 2017 attendance figures has, once again, revealed a pleasing growth in our numbers.

The increase in attendances will be due to a combination of new walkers joining and existing walkers attending more regularly, but the important point to note is that what Stride and Stroll offers to the walking public is obviously very attractive.

During 2017 our walk planners/leaders were able to offer walks from a total of 40 different venues. With the Thursday short walks and the 5 Saturday progression walk group offerings, despite losing two Saturdays to snow, we completed a total of 300 walks.

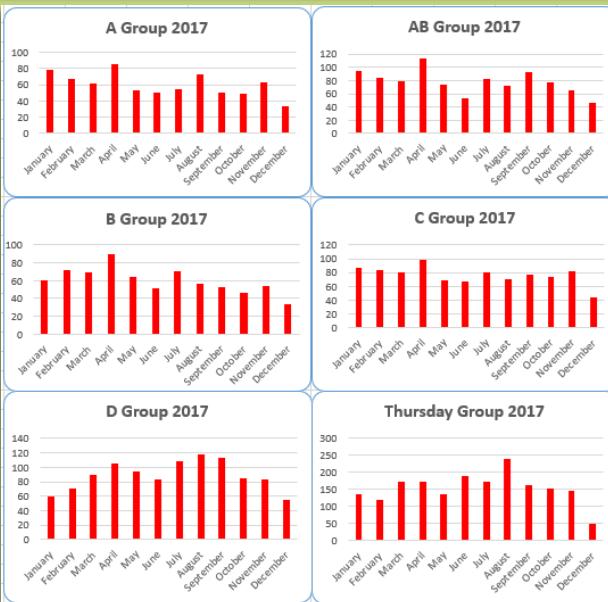
During 2017 our short walk attendances have grown by 9% and the 5 progression walks have shown an average increase of 10%. The massive growth in the D group attendances may be a result of newspaper and other media promoting walking for health.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our team of 33 trained volunteer walk leaders who work so hard to make the walks enjoyable and safe.

2017	A	AB	B	C	D	Short	Totals	Mileage
January	78	95	60	87	60	135	515	1800
February	67	84	72	83	70	121	497	1740
March	62	79	69	80	89	173	552	1743
April	85	114	90	98	105	173	665	2264
May	53	74	64	69	94	137	491	1592
June	50	54	51	67	84	189	495	1412
July	54	83	70	81	108	172	568	1774
August	73	72	57	71	118	239	630	1813
September	50	93	53	77	113	162	548	1710
October	49	77	46	73	85	154	484	1496
November	63	65	54	82	83	147	494	1596
December	33	47	33	44	55	50	262	941
Total	717	937	719	912	1064	1852	6201	19,879

Average month	60	78	60	76	89	154
Group mileage	4661	4217	3236	3648	3192	926
Group mileage share	23%	21%	16%	18%	16%	5%

	A	AB	B	C	D	Thursday
Total for 2016	699	909	674	792	856	1706
Total For 2017	717	937	719	912	1064	1852
Growth since 2016	3%	3%	7%	15%	24%	9%





**stride  
and  
stroll**

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## Dowery Dell viaduct

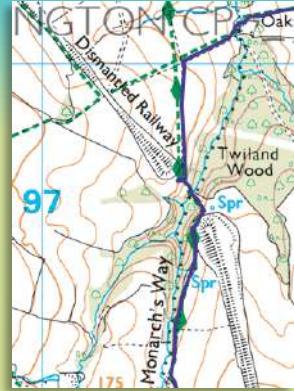
On December 6th 2017 we were pre walking from Waseley Hills Country Park and our route included a section of the Monarchs way near Hunnington. The path passes through Twiland Woods and crosses the route of the now dismantled Halesowen and Northfield railway.

We knew little of the history of the railway and we were surprised to find the remains of several blue brick platforms which would have been the foundations of what must have been an impressive structure.

It was obvious that the structure would have needed to be very high in order to support a railway line across the valley but the surrounding area showed no sign of what had been used as the bridge piers.

We decided to investigate further using the ubiquitous internet and the following is what we were able to discover via the Wikipedia and Geograph websites.

### Halesowen and Northfield Railway.

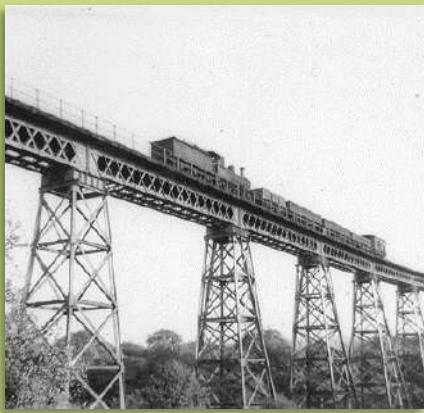


Construction of the line between Halesowen and Northfield started in 1878 and the railway opened as the Halesowen and Northfield Railway on 10 September 1883. It later became the Halesowen Joint Railway - a joint operation between the Great Western and Midland Railways. It became jointly owned by the GWR and the London Midland & Scottish Railway in 1923 and British Railways in 1948. It had a relatively short passenger railway life, the stations on the line being closed in 1919. There were freight trains and workers' special services to the Austin Rover Works up to 1960. The line was closed altogether in 1964. The former station at Hunnington has been converted into a house and the other intermediate station at Rubery has been demolished. A short section of the line remained at the southern end to serve the Longbridge motor plant although there was no traffic after 1995 and that section was lifted during the redevelopment of the Longbridge site subsequent to its closure.

### The Dowery Dell Viaduct. (Grid ref SO 973806)

In Twiland Wood brick pillar bases remain of what was once the impressive, cast iron Dowery Dell viaduct. The viaduct's landmark construction began in 1878 and it was finally dismantled in 1964. It was 660 feet long and 100 feet high, supported by two stone abutments and eight cast-iron piers. Because of its fragility there were strict weight and speed restrictions. It opened in 1883 with a public luncheon at the Shenstone Hotel.

Lord Lyttelton, owner of Hagley Hall, was enthusiastic about the railway opening up hundreds of acres of coal, which would provide work for local people.



All photographs © Flying Stag (cc-by-sa/2.0)

Poster from the archives of Malvern Industrial Archaeology Circle - [MIAC.org.uk](http://MIAC.org.uk)

### Footnote:

We thought that the bridge piers could have been wooden because we found no remains of the structure. We now know that it was cast iron which would have been taken away. The most likely reason for the use of cast iron is because the local area had coal mines and the ground may have been unsuitable for the weight of a brick construction.

An excellent website at: [www.photobydjnorton.com/HalesowenLineVirtualTrip.html](http://www.photobydjnorton.com/HalesowenLineVirtualTrip.html) carries multiple pictures and historical information

HALESOWEN & NORTHFIELD RAILWAY.									
This Railway will be opened for Traffic									
On MONDAY, SEPT. 10th, 1883,									
AND THE FOLLOWING									
SERVICE OF PASSENGER TRAINS									
WILL BE RUN BETWEEN									
Halesowen, Rubery, & Northfield,									
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE:-									
From HALESOWEN.									
WEEKDAYS.									
STATIONS.	8 a.m.								
HALESOWEN.....Dep.	9 5	10 06	1 10	3 41	4 59	7 14	8 5		
HUNNINGTON.....	9 13	10 45	1 18	3 49	5 1	7 21	8 12		
RUBERY.....	9 23	10 51	1 28	3 56	5 11	7 29	8 22		
NORTHFIELD.....Arr.	9 31	.....	1 39	.....	5 19	.....	8 31		
To HALESOWEN.									
STATIONS.	8 a.m.								
NORTHFIELD.....Dep.	8 26	.....	12 35	3 48	.....	7 21	.....		
RUBERY.....	8 34	11 49	12 46	3 59	4 24	7 29	7 44		
HUNNINGTON.....	8 44	11 58	12 56	4 0	4 33	7 39	7 53		
HALESOWEN.....Arr.	8 51	12 4	1 9	4 13	4 39	7 46	7 59		
WEEKDAYS.									
BY ORDER.									
SEPT. 1883.									



## Notice Board

### December Attendances

Saturday walk date	Thursday numbers		December 2017					Saturday Totals	Weekly Totals
			A	AB	B	C	D		
02/12/17	0	Saturday	10	20	11	23	20	84	84
09/12/17	18	Saturday	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
16/12/17	32	Saturday	0	0	0	0	0	0	32
23/12/17	0	Saturday	13	15	11	7	18	64	64
30/12/17	0	Saturday	10	12	11	14	17	64	64
<b>Totals</b>	<b>50</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>262</b>
<b>Average miles per person</b>	0.5		7.0	4.5	4.5	4.0	3.0	<b>Saturday Mileage</b>	<b>932.0</b>
<b>Mileage per Group</b>	<b>25.0</b>		<b>231.0</b>	<b>211.5</b>	<b>148.5</b>	<b>176.0</b>	<b>165.0</b>	<b>Month's total Mileage</b>	<b>957.0</b>

Message received from Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Administration.

#### New NHS 111 campaign launches to help people get the right urgent medical attention

A new campaign has launched to help anyone worried about an urgent medical concern get the right attention fast. When it's not an emergency, people are urged to call the free **NHS 111** service to receive medical attention urgently.

**NHS 111** is much more than a helpline. Depending on the situation, the **NHS 111** team can connect you to a nurse, emergency dentist, or even a GP and if they think you need it, they're able to arrange face-to-face appointments.

The **NHS 111** service, which currently handles 15 million calls a year, is available 24 hours a day. It's recently been enhanced and can now offer clinical advice, assessment and direction to the most appropriate healthcare service.

**NHS 111** is staffed by fully trained advisors who can assess if you need an ambulance, and if you do, one will be sent immediately.

**NHS 111** can also provide advice and support for those struggling with mental health issues, as early identification and support can make all the difference. And what's more, if prescriptions are needed, the service will organise to have these available for pick up at a convenient local location for you.

**NHS 111** ensures that you get the right care, from the right person, in the right place, at the right time.

For more information visit <https://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/Emergencyandurgentcareservices/Pages/NHS-111.aspx>

If you wish to contribute an article for inclusion in the Newsletter then please email:- **Strideandstroll2015@mybtinternet.com**