

Roger Phipps

Born July 1946, brought up in Oldbury-on-Severn, Gloucestershire. Happy childhood, father a farmworker, died at 81, mother now 98. Went to Filton High School at 13, earned his own money to buy school uniform. Loved sports. Had inspirational form teacher Michael Cocks.

Michael Cocks was a disciplinarian and caned regularly but inspired boys to work hard to escape poverty.

He later became MP for Bristol and Labour's whip under James Callaghan, then Lord Cocks of Hartcliffe.

Roger became an engineering apprentice with CEGB, eventually working at Hinkley Point from 1974. His first contact with Halsway was in 1969, when he attended a residential CEGB course; he still has the course notes!

He joined Taunton Deane Morris Men in 1999, through Dave Sutcliffe of TDMM, then learnt to sing from Bonnie Sartin's song books.

He also learnt to play the accordion, first having tips from Alan Corkett, then, after being encouraged by friendly couple Geoff and Carol at a Halsway concert to attend a Yetties' weekend in February 2002 at Halsway, he persuaded Pete Shutler to give him lessons. They continued until Pete's death in September 2014 and they became good friends.

Roger and (wife) Nan came regularly to Halsway after the first Yetties' weekend and became friendly with Alan and Christine Corkett, both very committed supporters/volunteers at Halsway. In 2004, Alan started a folk club which became the Sunday Club and Roger agreed to take it over with Derek Deane, the husband of Anthea, then CEO of Halsway. Derek stopped in 2008 and Roger carried on on his own. It is still going, with regulars Gerry and Sue Mogg, Edwin Spring, Ian Anderson, Hugh who writes poetry and David, who plays piano and mandolin.

Roger has been a member of the Council since 2008.

Roger and Nan have also organised walking weeks since 2011, to extend the use of the Manor midweek and bring in extra income; helped enormously by Judith Taylor and Helen Scott and their partners.

Roger used to organise carol concerts, (until Paul James took over) including a mummings play, in which he played the Turkish Knight; learning lines in Turkish from a Bridgwater kebab shop!

Halsway has some fantastic volunteers; Maureen and Graham Knight, Alan and Christine Corkett in particular.

Roger Phipps singing The Farmer's Lament