

Gloucestershire live

IN THE STYLE OF A 'PHONE-IN

We enter halfway through a call

“That last email you read out, utter twaddle. I bet he hasn't lived here long or explored the area at all. He can't have, if he's saying all that. He makes me sick, people like him. This is a brilliant place, not what he said it was, what was it, 'dullsville', like watching grass grow.” **Slams 'phone down.**

Host - Dave (*mid-late 30s*): You can't please all of the people all of the time. But that's what we like to hear on Talk Local. Views, opinions, rants... let's have yours. Today, we're talking about being out and about around Gloucestershire. From arboretums and mountain biking to adventure weekends and Stately Homes, is it a good place to live, or is it 'dullsville' as that last caller said? Is it the marmite of the Midlands? What do you do with your spare time? Keep those texts and emails coming in. Let's hear from Ellie.

Ellie: Shall I tell you what I like about living round here?

Dave: Go on.

Ellie: It's being able to get to other places. Like Bristol and Birmingham. Nights out, clubs. London, Oxford. Gloucestershire's okay, but it's hardly the centre of the civilised world is it?

Dave: But that's the point, surely? That's why people want to live here, isn't it? To get away from cities. To experience something a little more... well, a little different. I want to hear what's different, I want to hear about your experiences and thoughts. But speaking of the country, let's get the travel with Susie Parker. Hi Susie...

SFX: Helicopter background noise

Susie (*bubbly, early 20s*): All's good with the travel today Dave. If you're thinking of taking the train, then Cheltenham Spa is a mainline station on the Great Western line, with good links to and from Bristol, Cardiff, Gloucester, Birmingham and, of course, London Paddington. There's no problem on the roads either. Cheltenham's just 43 miles north of Bristol and 47 miles south of Birmingham, and just a few miles off the M5. And, if you're travelling from Oxford or London, then the A40's looking good too. There's a great local bus network and for those high fliers out there, we're only 50 miles from Birmingham airport. It's looking good out there.

Dave: Chris is calling in from somewhere out there. Chris. Can you hear me?

Chris: (angry) I don't get these callers who're slagging off Gloucester. It's got loads. Get off your backsides and get exploring. Open your eyes. It's not a backwater.

Dave: So what do you do then Chris? How do you spend your weekends?

Chris: I just love the countryside. I go mountain biking, canoeing. You haven't lived till you've been wakeboarding down the River Wye. You haven't lived till you've tried canoeing or mountain biking. Or surfed the River Severn...

Dave: On the bore?

Chris: It's not a bore. That's my point. It's an interesting place to be.

Dave: No, I meant the Severn Bore. It's a water feature Chris. Never mind. Let's try Rhiannon. Hi Rhiannon. What does Gloucestershire do for you?

Rhiannon: I'd just like to point out that tourism is one of the largest employers in the country, and that it brings in over £700million to the local economy every year.

Dave: Do you work for the Tourist board?

Rhiannon. No, but I'm interested in my county.

Dave: And do you know what the most popular tourist attractions are?

Rhiannon: Well, there's the horse racing festival I guess. Hard to say. I'd imagine Gloucester cathedral and Slimbridge would be high on the list. But it's probably the Cotswolds that most people know the area for. At almost 800 square miles, it's the country's largest officially designated 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty', and visited by people from all over the world. River valleys, water meadows, beech woods, sleepy ancient limestone villages...

Dave: You do work for the tourist board. Thanks for your call Rhiannon. Mary?

Mary: (*Timid voice*) Oh hello Dave, how are you?

Dave: Very well. (silence). Your point.

Mary: Am I on? Am I on the radio?

Dave: Yes Mary, you're on Talk Local. What did you call in about?

Mary: I've never been on the radio before. Can you hear me?

Dave: We can hear you loud and clear. Your point, Mary?

Mary: Well, Gloucestershire's a very interesting place.

Dave: Yes?

Mary: For example, did you know that 'Cider with Rosie' by Laurie Lee was set in and around the Cotswolds?

Dave: Was it really, that gentle tale of bucolic bliss...

Mary: And that the man who wrote 'Star Spangled Banner' – that's the American National Anthem – is buried in Gloucester Cathedral?

Dave: Fascinating.

Mary: Or that the world's first lawnmower was invented and demonstrated in Stroud by Edwin Budding? Or that...

Dave: Clearly, we live in a fascinating area. Thanks Mary. Now come on everyone out there, tell me about your personal experiences... bore, or score? Hate or great? Tell me something interesting. No lawnmowers, please. We're a lawnmower free zone. Let's get the debate going. Dianne, rescue me...

Dianne: I can smell freshly cut grass as we speak. My point though, is that we're not a Lake District or Scottish Highlands, we're not a coastal town with dramatic seas and marinas, we're not a major urban centre... we just happen to live in a nice part of the country, surrounded by nice things... towns, country, the Cotswolds, the Forest of Dean, the Malvern Hills, the Wye Valley...

Dave: So you're saying it's 'nice'? That there's nothing special here? That it's just a 'nice' place to use as a base?

Dianne: No, what I'm saying is, that's all what makes being here so special.

Dave: That's a fair point. It's not about any one thing, it's about everything. But, I still want to know what your 'thing' is. I'm just looking here at a list of things going on in the Cotswolds. There's a Randwick Wap, whatever that is, river football – now what's all that about? – not to mention a Scuttlebrook Wake, a Pig Face day and Crop Fertility Rituals... Let's read out a few emails from listeners. From Jo in Stow-on-the-Wold, hi Jo from Stow, who says she thinks the museums are great, and what about the rambling? Pete from Stroud loves the wildfowl and wetlands Trust in Slimbridge, and Sandeep in Tewksbury goes a bundle on the Rococo garden at Painswick. Lyle in Upton St Leonards isn't so glowing, however, who says living in the area's 'dullsville' and it's like watching grass grow.

F/X jingle and Loop.