

Apple pressing, pumpkins and autumnal walks – 16 half term activities for all weathers and budgets across the Stroud District

1. Try your hand at apple pressing

Watch apples being pressed for juice, have a go yourself & enter the carved pumpkin competition at the annual Apple & Pumpkin Day on Sunday 27 October at the Museum in the Park, Stroud. If you have an apple tree, bring along a carrier bag of apples and some clean empty bottles if you'd like to take the juice home. Bring a carved pumpkin for the competition and celebrate the changing colours of autumn in the beautiful walled garden. This event is being run in conjunction with Stroud Valleys Project. Look out for Miss Daisy's pop up cafe for delicious cakes and tempting treats. Free (donations welcome). The museum and garden will be open from 11am until 5.30pm then enjoy a glass of mulled apple juice in the courtyard from 5.30-6.30pm and see the pumpkins lit up. For more info see the website www.museuminthepark.org.uk

2. Take a walk along the canal

Wrap up warm and admire the autumnal colours along the miles of canal towpath. Most of the route between Eastington and Brimscombe is flat and accessible, so ideal for family walks or bike rides. For a different perspective why not book a paddle boarding lesson on the canal? SUP Paddleboarding Stroud runs regular beginners sessions all year round, as well as bespoke launches, and you can even take your dog. Visit www.supstroud.co.uk for details.

3. Join a parkrun

The 5k parkruns in Stroud and Wotton are open to all ages, and take place every Saturday at 9am. Younger runners may want to try a gentler 2k course - the Stonehouse junior parkrun is just for 4-14 year olds, and held every Sunday at 9am at Oldends Lane Playing Fields. Parkruns are free, but you'll need to register before your first visit and take a printed copy of your barcode. Visit www.parkrun.org.uk for details of all events.

4. Get active at the Pulse, Dursley.

Activity days for children aged 5-11 years run throughout half term and include a packed day of sports, team games and a session in the pool. Choose from Pulse Wipe-out, Multi Sports Day, two extra-long days (ideal for working parents) and a Hallowe'en Party Day with mummy wrapping and musical zombies. Check the website for more details and to book www.pulsedursley.co.uk

5. Learn a Hallowe'en dance

The fun-packed 90 minute dance workshop will teach a Hallowe'en themed dance with a final performance for parents and carers on Thursday 31 October. Mini Zombies (aged 4-7 years) 2.15pm - 3.45pm; Junior Zombies (aged 8-12 years) 4pm - 5.30pm. £6 per child. For more details and to book visit www.pulsedursley.co.uk (note this session is held at the Chantry Centre, Dursley).

6. Get your skates on at a Hallowe'en roller disco.

There's a Hallowe'en themed roller disco at Stratford Park Leisure Centre in Stroud with optional fancy dress on Saturday 26 October, 6.30pm - 8.30pm. Or join the regular roller skating sessions on Saturdays, 1.30pm - 3.30pm. Skate hire is available for all sessions. Other half term activities at Stratford Park Leisure Centre include trampolining, Zumba kids, gymnastics and a range of intensive swim courses. For more information phone 01453 3766771.

7. Ride a miniature ghost train

The miniature train runs through a haunted tunnel in Stratford Park, Stroud on Saturday 26 October from 2m till dusk. It costs 50p per person; just turn up. See the Stratford Park Miniature Railway Facebook page for more details https://www.facebook.com/stratfordparkrailway/?tn-str=k*F

8. Explore the Museum in the Park

There are over 4,000 objects on display at Stroud's museum, many with strong connections to the local area. Wander round the free museum, pick up a quiz trail or join a half term workshop:

- **Mini Museums Family Drop in Workshop**, Tues 29 October – Fri 1 November, 11am – 4pm. If you were a Curator, what would you collect? Marvellous machines? Fantastic fossils? Curious costumes? Be inspired by Stroud district's diverse collections and heritage and make your very own mini museum to take home. A family drop in workshop for ages 5+, perfect for the school holidays. £2 per child, pay on the door.
- **Creative Collage Workshop for Children**, Wed 30 October, 10.30am – 12.30pm. Have fun exploring pattern and colour at this playful collage workshop. Make your own abstract art to take home and enjoy. For ages 7+, with artists Sue Rae and Noela Bewry. £5

- ***The Curator's Mini Museum:*** Meet the Curator Q&A Session, Wed 30 October, 2pm – 4pm. Meet our Curator to see which 10 objects she has chosen from our stores to represent the entire 57,000 artefacts in the collections of the Museum. Find out more about how the collections came together, and what we are interested in collecting nowadays. FREE (donations welcome)
- ***Ghost Stories Tales & Songs for Halloween,*** Thurs 31 October, 8pm. In Celtic tradition, Halloween – or Samhain – is a time when the veil between this world and the invisible world becomes thin, and there's a traffic of beings between the two worlds. Anthony Nanson and Chantelle Smith of Fire Springs present stories and songs about the faeries, ghosts and uncanny creatures that may slip through the veil at this liminal time. For adults and children aged 12+. £7.50 (£5 concs) To book call 01453 763394?.
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9. Follow a sculpture trail

The artwork at Dursley Sculpture and Play Trail in Twinberrow Woods has been created by local community groups. It's free, and open access to visit any time. <http://www.valevision.org.uk/information/Trail%20brochure%202009%20v2.pdf>

10. Play outdoors with Gloucestershire's Play Rangers

Free, outdoor community based activities for 7-14 year olds - whole families can join in; children with disabilities and their families are welcome. Join the Play Rangers on Tuesday 29 October, 10am- 4pm at either The Old Common Ground, Bussage or Oldends Lane Playing Field, Stonehouse, and on Thursday 31 October 10am-4pm at Lawnside Play Area, Nailsworth. For more info see www.playgloucestershire.org.uk

11. Explore the creepy cellars at Woodchester Mansion

Explore the unique Grade I listed 'unfinished' Woodchester Mansion complete with decorated cellars and a resident bat colony, and enjoy a spooky treat in the café. Open from 11am – 5pm throughout half term (except Monday). Visit the website for more details and prices www.woodchestermansion.org.uk. Make sure you leave time to explore the surrounding National Trust-owned Woodchester Park, including lakes that are home to giant carp and a woodland play trail. £3 to park. [Www.nationaltrust.org.uk/woodchester-park](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/woodchester-park)

12. Admire the views from a common

Enjoy spectacular views and walks from the district's many commons. There are miles of footpaths across Selsley, Rodborough and Minchinhampton commons,

great for dog walking, kite flying too. Watch out for the resident cows and please pick up after your dog. Free parking.

13. Gaze at a ships graveyard

The Purton Hulks is the largest collection of boat wrecks in maritime Britain. The boats were intentionally beached in an attempt to protect the banks of the River Severn from erosion. Each barge has a plaque indicating its name, build date and the date it was abandoned; one is even said to be haunted. There is parking just off the mini roundabout in Purton. For more information see www.friendsofpurton.org.uk

14. Join an artistic takeover

The artists at Prema arts centre in Uley will be taking over the building with all manner of drawing activities. This year the theme is the deep blue – and the arts centre will be transformed into a world of mermaids, pirates and sea creatures. All ages welcome, free. www.prema.org.uk

15. Create a show at the library

Help stand-up poet Jonny Fluffypunk write poems, songs & shadow puppets for his new show in a workshop at Stroud Library. Age 7+, entry with a ticket from <https://bit.ly/31zW9h0>

16. Watch a firework display

There are a number of organised fireworks displays to enjoy across the district, the best known being Stroud Valley Fireworks which has been lighting up the skies for over 50 years, and has donated almost £250,000 to charities in that time. Monday 28 October, Marling School Playing Field (note, no onsite parking). Tickets bought in advance are discounted, or available on the door www.fivevalleysfireworks.org.uk/#

Dursley Girlguiding will be hosting a firework display on Saturday 2 November at Dursley Recreation Ground. Donations raised will be given to Longfield Hospice www.girlguidingdursley.btck.co.uk/DursleyFireworks.

Pet owners should take extra precautions at this time of year – there's advice on our website www.stroud.gov.uk/environment/environmental-health/animal-welfare/fireworks-and-animal-safety