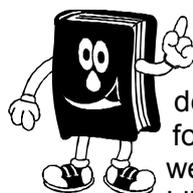


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Muddy Meanderings

David Sutton



The Easter YHA weekend this year saw the group faithful decamp to Portland and Weymouth for a varied selection of walks and weather! At the end of the weekend Libby Hunt read out a poem by Michael Bird, which I thought would be good to publish, so here it is. ■

ISLE OF PORTLAND By Michael Bird (1988)

Island of sea-spray, treeless and windswept,
Riven with quarries of convict-hewn rock.
Watery anchorage, snug behind breakwater,
Lobster-pot fishermen — deafened by pop!
England's Gibraltar, lonely peninsula,
Accessible only by pebble-strewn road.
Jutting out Channel-wise, festooned on cliff top
With Naval antenna for top secret code.
Island of Portland, bastion of England,
Source of the rock for Sir Christopher's dome.
Stonemasons' treasure-house, girded by water,
Timeless and fearless — a sermon in stone!

Social Scene 2010

From our Social Secretary, Derek Garfield

Our Group Annual Dinner took place on Friday 5th March at The Eaton Hotel and was very well supported. Everyone looked well turned out, some scarcely recognisable from their ultra casual rambling look.

The food was good and well presented and our After Dinner Speaker, (Graham Fisher MBE) regaled us with tales of Black Country industry, far more entertaining than it sounds.

Saturday 17th April saw us setting out on our first WALK DAY OUT of the year on some old rolling stock from Snow Hill Station – but not as old as some of the old puffers we saw at The Severn Valley Railway. I personally felt very much at home with the old puffers. We were blessed with a lovely day, the sun shining on the righteous as well as me. We had a sumptuous (well, ok) lunch at The Crown, lola demonstrating her prowess



as a waitress. We then did a lightning tour of Bridgnorth including a trip on the Cliff Railway (the steepest of its kind in inland Britain) before rejoining our train back to Kidderminster. An appropriate amount of wine and ale was

consumed by the participants.

Our ANNUAL DAY OUT this year (3rd July) sees us off in our Executive coach to the fair city of Salisbury, home of the wonderful cathedral. After a guided (or not guided as you wish) tour of the city we will have lunch and then pay a visit to surely one of the most iconic sites in the country, Stonehenge.

And finally, a date for your diary Saturday 18th September when we will be having a WALK DAY OUT to The National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas. ■

Socially yours
Derek Garfield

Hadrian's Wall and the unexpected!

By Ken Waugh

Newcastle is a city seven bridges too far for a Derek Garfield outing, so I decided to spend a few days myself in that area and all that it offers.

My accommodation was in what originally had been the stables of the adjacent pub and formerly a coaching inn, built in 1752. It lies on the Military Road built over the Wall, and the official walking route here and for many miles lies alongside the road on the mounds and ditches remaining. Corbridge, a very pleasant village, was five miles away.

I drove west to Housesteads and enjoyed a strenuous walk east and west of the fort, dropping down onto the "barbarian" and boggy side to link up. It is walk no.12 in the RA book *Walk Britain*. This must be one of the most attractive stretches of the Wall and the weather was excellent. For the afternoon I walked on to Vindolanda and the excellent Museum with its Roman exhibits and the site ruins. Too weary to cope with the climb

back from this valley location I was grateful for the offer of a lift back to my car. There is a limited bus service which links all points along the Wall.

Next day I used my bus pass to Newcastle, and further connections there, and also over to Gateshead. On foot I walked the riverside, crossed the Millennium Bridge, and visited the Sage Gateshead. I returned to the city centre via the steep steps leading up to the Castle and visited the Cathedral. I popped into BHS for refreshment before my return to Corbridge.

I had finished my snack when I had a nose bleed. I was quickly attended to by two young lady First Aiders. The charming young Geordie lass who sat with me before summoning an ambulance had me wishing I was sixty years younger! Of course, the bleeding ceased when in the vehicle but it was two hours later when I left A&E to catch my return bus.

After the previous day's drizzle the sun had returned and,

having left my car in the extensive and free car park at Corbridge, I set off along the riverside and up through the woods before dropping down into Hexham. I toured this pleasant market town and then found a small cafe for sustenance. Disaster again! I had lost my jacket which had been loosely tucked into my rucksack. My car keys and mobile phone were within. Fortunately, my wallet and accommodation keys were in my trouser pockets. With my coffee drunk and my uneaten jacket spud in a plastic doggie bank I set off to retrace my extensive town tour. As expected, no luck, so where is the Police Station? My first enquiry brought forth, "I don't know". Perhaps, not too surprising these days. Next, in a branch of my bank their enquiry to the police resulted in nothing being handed in.

Hopefully, but not optimistically, I set off to retrace my route

up and back to Corbridge, with my brain questioning how to deal with the three missing car keys; ignition, steering wheel and petrol cap locks. My cold jacket spud provided little comfort.

Back in Corbridge and past my isolated vehicle, I crossed the splendid arched bridge over the

Tyne completed in the late 17th century and back to the Tourist Office. The very helpful staff contacted Hexham police and when speaking to them what joy. All had been handed in. The next important question was what hours were they open, as it was now approaching 4pm. My luck was holding; a 24-hour office. With my bus pass still with me I returned to Hexham and collected all. I

asked for and was given the name and address of my Samaritan and set off to find him. This entailed another one mile walk from west to east Hexham, and having located his road, he found me! I was bewildered by the road



layout and house numbering system, for which even the locals couldn't enlighten me. He had found the jacket on a narrow track leading down into the town. His first inclination was to leave it, until he found the keys and phone. My thanks were supported with the reward I donated. Then, back on the bus feeling both shattered but very relieved.

What next? Yesterday I had finished up in Hospital and today in a Police Station. Do these situations come in threes?

After walking about thirteen miles on the previous day I decided to have my final day in Corbridge and visit its historical buildings. However, as my feet were beginning to complain, I took up the suggestion from the tourist office to visit Carlisle. Excellent idea. My bus pass covered me for the return trip

and with the continuing sunny weather I did my tour of this very pleasant town. On entering the Market Hall for refreshments and, after my previous experiences when dining, I did wonder what may now befall me. Nowt. I enjoyed my bus trip back through the scenic countryside and to my base on the non-existent Wall.

Having overcome my problems I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to the North East, including the helpful and friendly natives I had encountered. I had given my bus pass some "Welly" and, if the weather had deteriorated, would have visited Durham. That's for the future. Finally, as discussed with a driver, my cross-country journeys between Newcastle and Carlisle (125 miles return) and elsewhere, make the best of your pass before the bubble bursts. ■

**THE MIDLAND AREA OF THE RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION 1930-1987
BY MICHAEL BIRD**

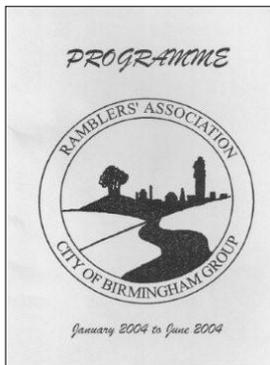
Published in celebration of the Ramblers 75th anniversary in 2010, this 83-page chapbook is a detailed history of the area and includes many photographs, plus historical documents and maps. In the Foreword Kate Ashbrook says: "The story of the Ramblers is scattered across countless local archives, spare bedrooms and people's heads. Michael Bird has done a valuable job in pulling together the history of Midland Area."

This publication is available as a downloadable pdf file from:

www.warwickshireramblers.org.uk

Group history

Roger Gibbs scours the archives.



The 2000's...

35. 2001 - Foot & Mouth outbreak – walks continued every week to a revised programme

using public transport.

36. 2005 - Walks for the Public organised by Pat Holmes.

37. 2009 coach fare £9.

38. Chairmen:

2000-2003 Bob Hunt

2003-2006 Michael Bird

2006-2009 John Penny

39. Long Distance Paths

Welsh Coast to Coast Challenge – “A+” walk 2000

Heart of England Way 2000

Staffordshire Way 2000-2002

Birmingham Coast to Coast 2002

Worcestershire Way 2003

Donnington Way 2003

Elan Valley Way 2003 – 2004

Monarch’s Way Part 1: 2005–2007

Geopark Way 2009

40. Holidays:

2000 - Austria (Telfes)

2002 - Pitlochry

2004 - Pyrenees

2006 – Austrian Lake District

2008 - Sicily

The 2010's:

Where now? Any offers? ■

Saying “Thank you” - a little job for you!

As previously mentioned, we would like to recognise the important role that our volunteers play in making our Group so special, by creating an Annual Award for the “**Rambler of the Year**” to be presented at the A.G.M. in November 2010.

This is your chance to reward a fellow member for their efforts. Please could you play your part by nominating the volunteer who you think deserves the award this year?

Give your nominations in writing, to a Committee member before October, so that the winner can be announced in November.

30th Anniversary Walk— The Birmingham Greenway

You were warned not to go on holiday in August as, once more, and probably for the last time, the Birmingham Greenway is being organised and led by members. Yes, you can do it by yourself, book clutched firmly in your hand and looking at points of interest, but how much more interesting to bring friends and family (and your personal recollections) and join in the Anniversary Walk.

The 25 mile route has been divided up into 3 shortish stretches, as you will see, to make it more possible for more people to do the entire walk. We have several leaders for each section so

can split up into smaller units if necessary.

Details of meeting places and times, and the route to be followed, are in the main programme of the new Programme of Walks booklet as this event is for the membership as well as the public. Should anyone wish to purchase one of Fred Willits excellent descriptions of the Greenway I have copies on the coach on Sundays. There is no need to register but if you know you want to attend it would be helpful if you would let me know. ■

Pat Holmes, Greenway
co-ordinator.

BOOKS FOR SALE From City of Birmingham Ramblers

Birmingham Group have recently purchased a selection of titles from John Roberts' Warwickshire *Walkways* publishing, with a significant discount on the retail price. These are offered to purchase at cost price to our members, plus postage & packing. Stocks are limited. Titles available are: **Warwickshire's Centenary Way, The North Worcestershire Path & Midland Link, The Heart of England Way, Exploring Cannock Chase, Railway Walks from Stratford, Exploring Wyre Forest & Severn Valley, The Birmingham & Aberywyth Walk, Strolls & Walks from Picnic Places.** Each book is illustrated with map routes and photographs. All titles are £3.50 each, including postage. Cheques should be made payable to "The Ramblers' Association City of Birmingham Group" and sent with your order to: David Sutton, Secretary Birmingham Ramblers, 194 Station Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7TE. If you want further information on any of the titles email david.sutton986@btinternet.com or phone 0121 444 6188.

City of Birmingham Group

WALK FOR ALL

Designed for the disabled, including wheelchair users,
but everybody welcome.

WEDNESDAY 16th JUNE 2010

10.30am START

A circular 4-mile walk from Severn Valley Country Park Alveley, to
Hampton Loade, along the river & Severn Valley Railway.

Refreshments available at Alveley & lunch at the Unicorn Inn,
Hampton Loade, or take your own picnic.

Leader Horace Marsh

Further details from Steve Brittain 0121 749 1227

Sign up for the e-newsletter...

The Birmingham Group now have an occasional email
Newsletter. News and reminders about forthcoming social events, walk
changes and information, and other items of interest to group members direct
to your inbox. To sign-up, simply email the editor:
david.sutton986@btinternet.com

Contribute to Footnotes:

Your walking experiences, general articles associated with walking and the
countryside are welcome: David Sutton, 194 Station Road, Kings Heath,
Birmingham, B14 7TE. (Phone: 0121 444 6188).
Email at: david.sutton986@btinternet.com.

Please Note: Any discounts shown in this publication are wholly at the discretion
of the retailer and are not an entitlement to Ramblers members.



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