

FOOTNOTES

News from Ramblers City of Birmingham Group



Seasons Greetings



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Muddy Meanderings

By David Sutton

In this issue we have two very different articles about walking adventures. The first is another in Ken Waugh's amusing "Tales of the Unexpected". *Footnotes* readers will be familiar with Ken's previous pieces on 'Hadrian's Wall and the unexpected' in issue 62 and 'Scotland and more of the unexpected' in issue 69. This time Ken's adventures—or should we say misadventures—concern him being abandoned on a group ramble!

Readers will also I hope find Kate Chester's interview with Honor Dixon, about her bagging the Monros, a fascinating read and a tremendous achievement. Munros are Scottish peaks over 3,000 feet, and although modest by mountain standards, their latitude, exposure and the often terrible weather conditions, can make walking them treacherous. I believe anyone who bags them all can be called a

“Munroist”, so congratulations to Honor, Birmingham Ramblers’ latest Munroist!

Finally in this issue is Derek Garfield’s ever informative report on our Social events, those that have taken place in the recent past and those to come in the future. ■

Social Scene 2012

From our Social Secretary, Derek Garfield



It seems a long time now since our Group Annual Dinner in March. We all had a good time at The Eaton Hotel where as usual, we were well looked after. Our After Dinner Entertainment was provided by one Andrew Loundes who regaled us with tales of The Titanic and the Birmingham connection. You

will remember The Titanic sank exactly 100 years ago.

Our WALK DAY OUT in May, saw us heading off down the M5 to Weston – super – Sand. This we arranged to fall on the same weekend as the Ramblers’ “Coast for Most” campaign. Weston is probably our nearest spot of coast and an area much enjoyed by Brummies for many years. In the afternoon, we had an optional tour of the town which proved more interesting than one might have thought. Not all took part - a few members couldn’t resist the lure of the donkey rides and candy floss.

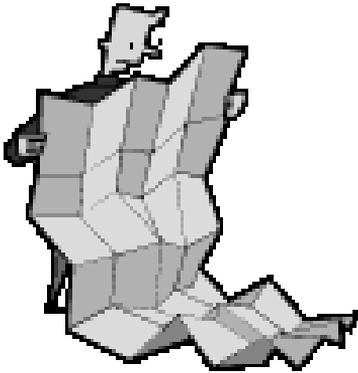
Our ANNUAL DAY OUT in August took us to Chester where we had guided tours followed by the opportunity to explore this fascinating place on our own. We all had an evening buffet in one of the oldest pubs in Chester, reputedly haunted although the noise we made was enough to frighten off any lurking apparitions.

And finally, please put Friday 1st March 2013 in your diary for the Group Annual Dinner at The Eaton Hotel.

Socially yours,
Derek Garfield

Abandoned on a group walk—how unexpected!

By Ken Waugh



When leading walks I have, once only, temporarily lost some of the party. Conversely, I have also been isolated once, briefly, which was not a pleasant experience. I caught up and delivered an earful to the culprit responsible. Otherwise, you remain where abandoned to await recovery, you hope.

This was not the experience I had when out with the group earlier this year. The weather was glorious and superb for a day's walking. The picture changed completely at the coach drop off, when I realised that all three parties had departed without anyone knowing that I was missing! This, arising at the commencement of a walk must, surely, be a unique situation. Abandoned and put out to graze; he's past his sell by date. Thanks.

My brain revolved around the options available. Only having one of the two maps required for that day's walk, I had turned up without the morning map. Therefore, I could not navigate my way to the lunchtime venue nor do a walk locally. Remaining where I was not an option, even though the coach would later return. I could call my son or daughter for collection with either thinking that Dad's had another senior moment.

My brain clicked in; had I recorded the Group's mobile phone number? Would it be switched on? The answer was "yes" to both and what relief to hear Dave Sutton responding. Bless you, Dave. This was the first time I had used my phone in an emergency. He endeavoured to contact the 'B' party leader (as this was the walk I

wanted to join) without success. The option left was joining the 'C' group who were still "in the vicinity". Dave's brother Jim retraced his steps to the start point, to collect a very relieved walker to enjoy the day with the 'C' party.

How did this situation arise? The coach parked on the right hand side but just off the road, with the door opening virtually onto the road. Disembarking was slower than normal as everyone, or so I thought, had to look both ways for vehicles before scuttling off across the road. Suddenly, I saw the 'C' party moving off and was informed, that the 'B' party had mustered and departed from the far side of the parked coach and out of sight from where I stood across the road amongst the 'A' party...

As the latter also moved off I was unaware of how much start the 'B' party had. Obviously, I had missed the leader's rallying call and, as later explained, she had the correct number provided from the coach count. Someone had switched walks to (inadvertently) replace me. I set off in pursuit but as the landscape opened up my worst fears were realised; not a walker in sight...

However, all's well that ends well and I enjoyed my 'C' party walk and noted their conviviality during the pub stop. Has this greater attraction than the walk for them?

Finally, my grateful thanks to the Sutton family, Dave for having the group phone switched on, Jim for returning the short distance to collect me and also to Sandra who cheerfully welcomed me to the 'C' party, despite later suggesting jokily I should pay an extra £10 for that privilege! Thus ended another day of the unexpected! ■

Sign up for the E-Newsletter...

The Birmingham Group's email Newsletter is a popular way to stay in touch. We already have over 100 members who regularly receive news and reminders about forthcoming social events, walk changes and information, and other items of interest to group members direct to their inbox. To sign-up, simply email the editor:
david.sutton986@btinternet.com

(P.S. Your email address will not be divulged to other members)

Honor's Last Munro

An interview conducted by Kate Chester



Congratulations to Honor Dixon who climbed her final Munro in June. Kate Chester asked Honor about her experiences:

KATE: *What is a Munro?*

HONOR: It's a Scottish mountain over 3,000 feet. The first list of Munros was

compiled in 1891 by Sir Hugh Munro. Hence the name.

KATE: *How many are there?*

HONOR: That depends on which list you use. In the list I used there were 284.

KATE: *How long has it taken you to bag all 284?*

HONOR: About 40 years!

KATE: *How did you get started?*

HONOR: I started walking in Scotland in the 1970's with a group of friends from Manchester. We used to spend Whit Week every year exploring the Highlands with Poucher's *Pictorial Guide to the Scottish Peaks*.

KATE: *When did the Munro bagging begin?*

HONOR: Over the years the number of Munros the group had climbed steadily increased and eventually the enthusiasts realized there was the potential for collecting 'the full Bag' and went for it. Most of us, though, didn't want to get that serious.

KATE: *At what stage did you change your mind and why?*

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HONOR: It was many years later! In fact it was only four or five years ago that I decided to try to complete it. I realized then that our 'Scottish holiday' kept returning to the spectacular peaks of the North West Highlands whereas in other areas of Scotland there are great tracts of moorland and the beautiful Angus glens which I had never visited. Also, although I still had about 80 Munros to do, I had done the most difficult ones (with rock scrambling and exposure) in earlier years. And finally, with the recent advent of Walking Festivals at various places up and down Scotland it became possible to join locally organized walks up many of the Munros - which helped with the logistics...

KATE: *Which walk was the most memorable?*

HONOR: In the recent past, it must be the walk from Loch Mullardoch to Alltbeithe youth hostel in Glen Affric over the two wild and remote Munros, Mullach na Dheiragain and Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan. We reached the latter as the sun went down and its last rays lingered on the tops of the peaks of the many series of ridges that surrounded us in all directions. It was magical!

KATE: *And the scariest?*

HONOR: That has to be the Inaccessible Pinnacle on Sgurr Dearg in the Cuillin, but thankfully when I climbed it the precipitous drops on either side of the narrow east ridge were hidden by cloud.

KATE: *Your last Munro was Beinn Mheadhoin. Why was this left to the end?*

HONOR: It wasn't the intention! But Beinn Mheadhoin is a remote hill deep in the Cairngorms and I had to make several visits before conditions allowed me to reach it. On the first visit the obstacle was ice on the steep north side of Cairngorm Mountain which we had to cross; on another it was gale force winds blowing over the Cairngorm plateau. But finally, two years later and thanks to your quiet encouragement and companionship on the successful 'push', we reached the top and I achieved my 284th Munro. Thanks Kate. ■

MERIDIAN BOOKS FOR SALE

With the closure of Meridian Books, Birmingham Group have obtained a selection of titles which we are selling to members for the bargain price of £1.00 a copy. The titles are:

- (1) *Ramblers' Choice. Some Favourite Walks in the Midlands*
- (2) *Waterside Walks in the Midlands*
- (3) *More Waterside Walks in the Midlands*

These were edited by the late Peter Groves and are proving very popular with our members. Copies may be obtained on the Sunday coach, or by post. The price including postage is £3.50 for an individual book, £4.50 for two titles, £6.00 for all three. Cheques should be made payable to C.O.B.R.A. and sent with your order to
Birmingham Ramblers Book Sales,
 194 Station Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7TE.



CONTRIBUTE TO FOOTNOTES!

Your articles, letters, photographs and anecdotes are welcome. Write to the editor, David Sutton at 194 Station Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7TE.

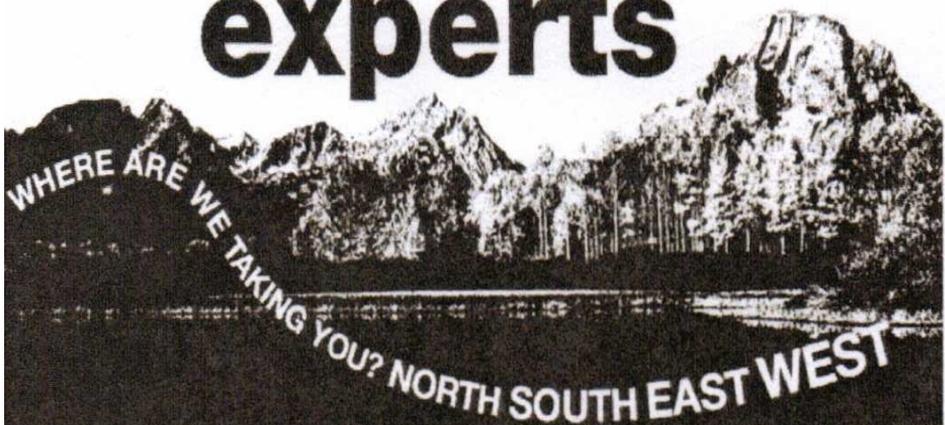
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