



D I S T I L L A T I O N S

J a n u a r y 2 0 2 1

DCRA's Future

Very sadly our Chairman, Trevor Rees, died during 2020. He will be much missed. This also puts added pressure on the Committee, which is now reduced to 4 members.

Because of the Covid-19 restrictions we could not hold any quarterly meetings or an AGM. Also no events were held during 2020. We have therefore decided to use this issue to remember past events

If you would like to join the DCRA Committee, and especially if you would like to help with planning social events, please contact Richard Taylor on 07814 702589 or rgtaylor1@gmail.com rgtaylor1@gmail.com.

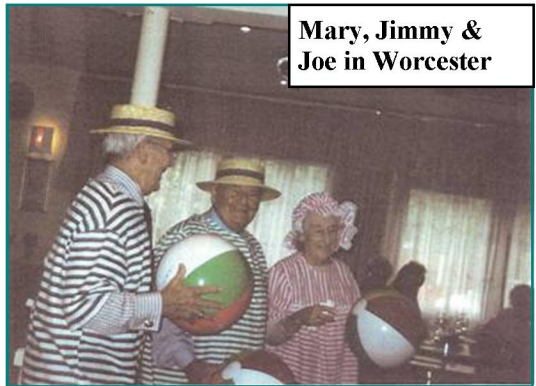
Social Calendar 2007

This year we kicked off with a 5-day short break holiday at the recently refurbished Grand Hotel, Llandudno on May Day. During the stay visits were arranged to Llechwedd Slate Quarry (including a ride underground to get an idea of the working conditions the slate workers endured). This was followed by a short drive to Blaenau Ffestiniog and a journey to Porthmadoc aboard the steam train.

August brought what has become an annual 'mystery trip'. This year we repeated one made 10 years ago to the Tiverton Canal. We had a couple of stops en route, at Burnham and Taunton and then boarded the horse-drawn canal boat for a 2½ hour trip complete with commentary, a couple of songs about the canal folk and a bar

October saw a change from the usual local pub lunch – this year we went to Bridges Entertainment Venue just outside Worcester. We enjoyed a carvery meal followed by 'Old Time Music Hall' entertainment. Of particular note was an impromptu performance by Mary Swannell, Jimmy Madge and Joe Norton dressed in 1920's style beachwear. On the way home some 'retail therapy' was available at Labels outlet store near Ross-on-Wye.

Barry Masonic Hall was the venue for our annual Dinner & Dance on 17 November. This year was well supported with 103 members enjoying another



Mary, Jimmy & Joe in Worcester

great night and it was good to welcome some new faces. Our thanks have been extended to Dow Corning for their continued financial support, both for the dinner and the Association as a whole – without the financial input from the site we would not be able to continue.

Our final adventure this year took place at 5.00 am on Sunday, 26 November, when 38 of us set off for the St. Michaels Hotel, Morbach in Germany. The hotel



The group in Germany

and food were very good, best we've had to date, and day trips to Trier, Rudesheim and Bernkastel-Kues were very enjoyable. The driver's Sat-Nav didn't seem to cater for coaches, however, as it constantly tried to send us under tunnels forbidden to coaches/lorries and along roads that didn't seem to lead to where we intended going – however the detours enabled us to watch a fir tree being felled! During the stay we enjoyed our fill of glühwein, applestrudel with ice cream and cream, crepes with chocolate sauce, bratwurst, Asbach brandy and hot chocolate etc. On the last evening we were treated to an unexpected 5-course dinner complete with smoked salmon, soup, sorbet, pork dinner and dessert.

One 'highlight' of the hotel was their weirdly shaped skittle alley – something to behold – a cross between skittles and 10-pin bowling with 9 pins. We held 2 skittle nights, both won by ladies who both had a nine-and-a-spare.

On behalf of all the passengers I would like to say thanks to Mary and Bert for acting as 'trolley-dollies' during the journey and to all those who also supplied biscuits etc.

Because of the closure of the DC Social Club we now meet at the Barry Rugby Club. But this has not dampened the enthusiasm of the skittlers. Thanks to Jim and Sue for organising the evenings and for providing the sandwiches and raffle prizes. *Brenda Dowdell, Photos by Mary Currie and the Dowdells*

Spring Dinner 2014

Forty eight guests dined on a very wet Saturday evening. Several guests cancelled because of illness, also an injury that prevented two members travelling plus a member who had reserved four places had been hospitalised several days before and remained in hospital on the night.



Feed back was that the dinner was excellent, as was the entertainment and the evening as a whole. My thanks to Ruth Beasley who took on the task of organising the raffle prizes which was more than appreciated.

Derek Butler

Cadoxton Ponds 2016

I am going to be setting up a volunteer work group for the Cadoxton Ponds. The mini projects for 2017 could include;

Bramble/Reed control – there will be lots of this!!!!

Maintenance of benches and path edging.

Painting sheds.

Building a super bug hotel as a demonstration model for visiting schools.

The Trust has found that volunteer work parties not only benefit the organisation but also the individuals coming along, helping people make new friends and get outdoors etc.

Catherine Lewis, Education Officer.

Working in conjunction with the Wildlife Trust.

Eco Centre: 01446 723173, Mobile: 0797 2176963. Wildlife Trust: 01656 724100



Pond Dipping



DCRA Christmas Carol Concert 2019

It has become an annual event for Catherine Lewis of the Dow Environment Centre to invite members to the centre for an evening of Christmas Carols with the Barry Brass Band. Catherine supplied Mince Pies and fruit punch to help us along. The Band was very entertaining, supplying us with the words to the carols so that we could sing along. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the evening and were sorry when the band announced its last song. We're very fortunate that the band makes time to play for us as December



is a particularly busy month for them. They play every day, sometimes twice a day, at different venues in Barry and the Vale, leading up to the big day. They are doing this because they enjoy playing and also wish to raise money for charity. The night after our concert they were due to play for two hours in Victoria Park, aiming to raise £1000 for Macmillan Nurses.

Margaret McMillan

Olympics News 2012

I can never get enough of the Olympics. I'm a huge fan. That has applied to all the Olympics I've watched over the years, but the London ones were something special.

That's not just because I was there, both working as a volunteer (Games Maker!)

and as a spectator for a day. Nor is it because the GB Team did so well, (third in the International medal table, and not that far behind the US!). I think the main reason is that the whole games (especially at the Eton Dorney Rowing and Canoeing centre) went without a hitch, the London transport system did not become grid-locked and I didn't hear of any athletes suffering food poisoning! It also stirred my patriotic pride to see the wonderful backdrop of London and other spectacular sights of Britain.

This was especially true of the marathon races, which passed such iconic landmarks as Buckingham Palace, Trafalgar Square, the South Bank, St Paul's Cathedral and Tower Bridge, but the road cycling races and triathlons also featured some wonderful tourist spots.

I was working at Eton Dorney, 20 miles west of London, where the rowing and canoe sprint events took place. The backdrop there is Windsor Castle and one of the loveliest stretches of the River Thames. The racing was on a splendid, custom-built rowing centre on a lake next to the Thames at Eton. I spent one day there as a spectator, unfortunately not on a finals day and I did see some spectacular Rowing races, and was part of the 'Dorney Roar' that all the competitors remark about (the GB ones at least!).

I also managed to sneak out while working there to see two of the Gold medals won by GB. I managed as well to watch a third race on a guy's mobile phone as I rode from the car park on the site 'shuttle bus' at the start of my shift. As we dismounted from the bus we heard the roar from the crowd as GB won their first gold medal!

I worked for ten days over the four weeks of athlete training and then racing in the VCC (Venue Communications Centre) at Dorney. This means I didn't see much of the racing but heard it over the radio (and could watch it on TV with the sound off!). I didn't have to deal with anything more serious than a couple of lost (and found!) children.

There were some amusing stories, like the one about the disabled spectator who didn't like any of the wide range of mobility scooters/buggies etc. we had on offer so he decided to walk! There was also the radio call I received from one of the stewards in the spectator area informing me that the knob had fallen from the top of the Canadian flagpole – what should he do with it? We had several ideas, none of which were suitable for radio transmission, so we asked him to bring 'the Canadian knob' with him next time he was passing our way. We had a lot of



laughs with it that afternoon!

It was a tiring experience. Long days, a lot of travelling (Cardiff is 150 miles from Dorney) and disruption of your daily routine takes its toll (on body and pocket!), but I wouldn't have missed it for anything.

As always I was glued to the television or radio whenever I could so not to miss any of the action. The BBC coverage was superb, new digital technology meant I could watch whichever sport I chose. For example I was able to watch water polo for the first time – now there's an extreme sport! I also watched some of the sailing, and for the first time was able to understand who had won each race and why! Driving home from Dorney on the first Saturday of the athletics I listened on the radio, as GB won 3 athletics gold medals in a single hour, making it six golds for GB in total that day!

Tim Hellis.

Nordic Walking 2015

Our regulars continue to meet on Monday mornings usually in Cosmeston Country Park. Some have also decided to join the Age Cymru instructor on a Wednesday morning with a separate group who meet at Porthkerry Park at 10:00 am.

Age Cymru invited DCRA members on October 1st to meet Mark Drakeford the Welsh minister for health and social services. Age Cymru were holding a Nordic Walking Celebration on the day at Roald Dahl Plas Cardiff Bay. It gave members a chance to meet other Nordic walking groups from South Wales. Age is no barrier to getting involved.

Robert Wardle



Volunteers needed for new “Friendship Group” 2015.

The association launched a “Friendship Group” on 1st January 2014 with the aim of providing assistance to members “in need”. The type of assistance provided may include Hospital visits, Home visits, Short transport journeys such as hospital appointments, running errands etc.

(Unfortunately, because of lack of support we were unable to continue the group.)

DCRA Website 2013

The committee members have now set up an association website. Here you will find drop down menus which include Robin's photographs, copies of past Newsletters and meeting minutes etc. We also include booking forms for forthcoming trips and short breaks, information on forthcoming walks and skittle evenings plus many other interesting topics.

The website can be found at www.dcretirees.org.uk

Val Caple

DCRA Walking Group 2003-2018

This very successful and active group was officially set up in 2003. Credit goes to several people - Mostyn Thomas who had the original idea, Stuart McMillan and Robin Pitcher who met up with Mostyn while walking Fan y Big in the Brecon Beacons. They decided to walk together on a monthly basis and then to extend it to DCRA members. Stuart put forward a formal proposal to Don Surridge (then DCRA Chair) to set up the group so the now thriving walking group was formed.

The inaugural official walk took place in July 2003. This was a 7 mile walk from Cosmeston Lakes to Sully Island with 9 walkers with St. Uart (unofficial Patron Saint

of walkers) taking the role of leader. The walk included crossing the causeway to Sully. I am reliably informed that the walk started at 10.45 and this gave 1 hour to get back to the mainland before the causeway flooded. One walker had serious problems walking and talking at the same time so St. Uart was left to escort the lady back, which involved some paddling. However all walkers made it safely back, some with wet feet!

Since July 2003 we have walked every first Wednesday of the month and new walkers are always made very welcome.

Some interesting facts - the most walkers on a walk was for the Christmas walk 2007 at Llanccarfan when 28 turned up and the least number was 4 at Llanwanno when the hardy Stuart, Bob, Anne & Mike braved atrocious weather but the pub was warm and cosy!

2007 saw the first summer holiday trip when 11 members walked the complete coast of the Isle of Wight, some 70 miles. The weather was mixed and at times fairly wet but all 11 walkers made the circuit except 1 who missed a section as she had a fall and broke her elbow. The service at Newport, IOW, hospital was so good that she could rejoin us later in the pub and continue the journey.

Since then we have taken a 1 week walking holiday each year in the UK and abroad including visits to The Channel Islands, The Canary islands, The Azores, Malta, Slovenia, Greece, France and Spain

Mike Dams



Crickhowell—St David's Day



Shanklin, IOW June

The Favelas of Brazil 2006

It was in April 2000 that I retired from Dow Corning, people told me that I would not have time to work and they were right. I am really enjoying this retirement phase of my life. My time spent gardening has had to be reduced as holidays have taken over.

I have been on a journey of a life time to Belo Horizonte in Brazil where I spent time with a missionary working in the Favelas (slums). Belo Horizonte is a city of immense contrasts with the unbelievably rich living in luxury overlooking favelas where families of five or more live in two rooms, each the size of a bathroom. The hospitality of the people in the favelas was amazing; everyone was so warm and welcoming. I went into the house of an old lady where there was no electricity or running water and bottled gas was used for cooking, the poverty is just unbelievable. The missionary friend that I stayed with also runs a school, in the centre of the favela, this is where I saw hope for the future, as the children were so keen to learn, especially as most of their parents cannot read or write.

David Townsend



Favela Friends

Jokes. These I particularly enjoyed

Eating in the UK in the Fifties

- Olive oil was kept in the medicine cabinet
- Bananas and oranges only appeared at Christmas time.
- The only vegetables were spuds, peas, carrots and cabbage, anything else was regarded as being a bit suspicious.
- Coke was something that we mixed with coal to make it last longer.
- Rice was a milk pudding, and never, ever part of our dinner.
- We bought milk and cream at the same time in the same bottle.
- Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves, not bags.
- Coffee was only drunk when we had no tea - and then it was Camp in a bottle.
- Coconuts only appeared when the fair came to town.
- Leftovers went in the dog; special food for dogs and cats was unheard of.
- Fish and chips was wrapped in old newspapers, and tasted better that way.
- Eating out was called a picnic, cooking outside was called camping.
- Water came out of the tap. Anyone suggesting bottling it and charging treble would have become a laughing stock.
- Campylobacter, Salmonella, E.coli, Listeria, and Botulism were all called "food poisoning".
- However, the one thing that we never ever had on our table in the fifties
ELBOWS

Thanks to Lynn & Roger Bennett

God's Plan for Aging 2018

Most seniors never get enough exercise.

In His wisdom God decreed that seniors become forgetful so they would have to search for their glasses, keys and other things thus doing more walking. And God looked down and saw that it was good. Then God in His wisdom made seniors lose coordination so they would drop things requiring them to bend, reach & stretch. And God looked down and saw that it was good. Then God considered the function of bladders and decided seniors would have additional calls of nature requiring more trips to the bathroom, thus providing more exercise. God looked down and saw that it was good.

So if you find as you age, you are getting up and down more, remember it is God's will. It is all in your best interest.

Quarterly Meetings

Blood Bikes Wales 2020.

Blood Bikes Wales is a free out-of-hours courier service covering the whole of Wales manned by volunteers covering weekends and bank holidays. Apart from blood products they transport samples for testing, x-rays, patients' notes, medication (chemo etc.), other medical equipment as well as breast milk for premature babies.

They are a charity funded through public donations and business sponsorship. The first meeting was in 2011 and all health boards are covered except Cardiff/Heath. Jobs in the charity include:-Riders, Coordinators, Fundraisers, and PR.

Liveried blood bikes can get through faster than taxis and free up emergency services. Health services paid £25,000 on taxis on 2011-2012. An example of the mileage covered on a typical job for premature baby breast milk collections would be, collection of milk donation in Wales and transfer to Birmingham where it is screened/treated its then returned back to Wales for delivery. A typical mileage is 290 miles. Running costs are £240 per month on tyres, £450 insurance costs, £12500 bike cost and £450 in Hi-Vis.

For more information about blood bikes go to www.bloodbikes.wales

Richard Taylor



Residues

Many thanks to this year's contributors to Distillations over the years—we would not have a Newsletter without you. Please send articles or photos on recent events to Val Caple so we can keep it going.

Please continue to send Midsil or DC-related photos for inclusion at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/dcbarry/> to Robin Pitcher.

Contact him on 02920-514051 or robin.pitcher@talktalk.net If you do not have a computer please check your local library where staff can help you get online.



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