

DISTILLATIONS

September 2010

Dear Member,

I would like to welcome our new members—4 since the last issue. However we desperately need new members on the Committee too!

The current officers have done a fantastic job for many years—and they want a rest! At the AGM, Robert, who took over from Annie as secretary last year, resigned as secretary and Mavis Crockett stepped in to fill the position. Ruth Beasley was elected to the Social Committee

We do need more of the younger members to play an active part in organising the social events, perhaps with new ideas. If we do not get new blood, then the organisation will fold! Please could we have volunteers in time for the 2011 AGM.
Val Caple (Membership Secretary)

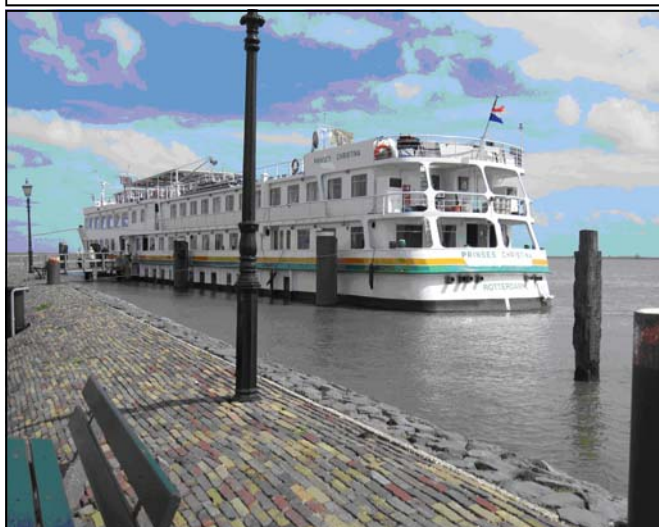
Update on the Travel Group

Following the 2009 AGM the September trip was a re-visit to Aberglasney House and Gardens. When we originally visited some 10 years ago the house was derelict and work on restoring the gardens had barely started. Today the house is slowly being brought back to life and the gardens are almost unrecognisable. Even the weather behaved and most people started the visit with tea/coffee and cakes seated outside on the terrace in glorious sunshine. After a few hours we carried on to Carmarthen where we enjoyed lunch and the usual 'retail therapy' session.

The 'end of year' outing was to the Lincoln Christmas Market and for this trip we were based at the Royal Renaissance Hotel in Skegness. Unfortunately Bert was unable to join the trip due to complications following his second knee-replacement operation so I was joined by one of my grandsons, Jason, (he used to be 'sticker-up' when skittles were held at the old Dow Corning Club) and has since declared himself 'available at short-notice, work permitting' for any future 'jollies'. As to be expected in December the weather was mixed but I don't think we got too wet any day. Visiting the market was a hectic experience, it was a case of going with the crowd as it was difficult to get out of the crush. One highlight was dropping in at a local church, en route to the coach pick-up, where we enjoyed a hot drink and then joined in with the carol singing. Sunday was spent travelling to see the 'Dambusters Memorial' before continuing to Boston for a couple of hours.

5.00am on 3rd May 35 of us set off for Amsterdam and a cruise on the 'Princess Christina'. We reached the boat around 4.00pm and settled into our cabins - as it was a river boat these were quite small and even in the top price ones space was at a premium. There was time for a quick look around before dinner - meals were on a 'full board' basis and we certainly had more than enough to eat. Edwards had taken over the whole ship for this trip and the other group provided the evening bingo prior to the entertainer taking over. Day 2 we set off during lunch to travel to Volendam, it was a bit strange looking out of the window to find the water was virtually at eye level and, once we sailed through the lock gates, the waves were covering most of the window. Several hours were spent wandering around Volendam, trying out the pancakes, Dutch beer and other tasty morsels. Lots of retail therapy was undertaken before returning to the ship for, yes, more food. Next morning we sailed for Hoorn where we spent some time before picking up the coach for a trip to Medemblick, an interesting village which was unfortunately closed due to a local festival!

'Princes Christina' at Volendam



Barbara Baker, Joyce Wilson, Mary Swannell and friends at Hoorn



Our last day in Holland was spent at Keukenhof Gardens - a feast of colour with beautifully kept floral displays both outdoor and indoor. Reluctantly we left to return to Amsterdam and join the boat which had travelled back while we were at Keukenhof. Some of the group went off into Amsterdam to buy supplies for the return coach journey, others to inspect the 'red light district' and some went sightseeing. All in all it was a great trip although we would like a better indication of cabin sizes before we ventured on a river cruise again.

The group paid a visit to Laycock Abbey, Fox Talbot Museum and Laycock village during June. Another interesting venue where we were able to walk along the cloisters used in 'Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets' etc. The Abbey and village have been used as sets for quite a few costume dramas/films and wandering around the village it is easy to see why. The July trip was a 2 ½ hr. cruise along the Brecon and Monmouth canal commencing at Brecon and taking in a lock and a trip over the aqueduct over the River Usk.

A cream tea was served on the return journey on the 'Dragonfly' narrow boat.

The last trip of the season will be to Salisbury Cathedral at the end of September before we enjoy our annual dinner at the Masonic Hall on 29th October.

Holidays for 2011 are:

- 7th February, 5 days at the Palace Hotel, Paignton
- 5th June, 6 days based at the Thistle Hotel, Newcastle, with visits to Beamish, Holy Island - tide permitting (or Berwick on Tweed), Alnwick Castle and coastal guided tour. 6-8 places still available for this one.

Brenda Dowdell, brenda_dowdell@msn.com or 410437.



The 'Dragonfly' on the Brecon & Monmouth canal

Recycling Paper

For a number of years after retiring from Dow Coning I joined my brother-in-law at a recycling company as their safety consultant. The recycling company has their main offices and a site located in South Wales near Bridgend with two further sites in Manchester and Sheffield. All their three sites are situated near paper mills where the bulk of their distribution to surrounding farm land takes place. The following is an insight into just one line of business they deal with every day.

If you, like me, never really think about the paper we put into council skips or leave on the kerbside for collection here are some interesting facts of what the paper waste is turned into.

Paper is made from cellulose fibre, the source of which can be pulped wood. The company and paper mills where I operated dealt only with paper which had already been printed on and is known as 'post-consumer waste'. Paper cannot be recycled indefinitely—it can only be recycled up to six times as the fibres get shorter and weaker each time. Approximately 20% of the waste paper you put out is lost as ink or because the fibres are too weak. The paper mills have to introduce some 'virgin pulp' into the process to maintain the strength and quality of the fibre. No matter how much we all recycle we will never eradicate the need for virgin fibre.

So what happens to the waste pulp with weak fibres which is now called sludge? This is removed from site by the recycling company who are paid to dispose of it. They pass the sludge on to farmers as a fertiliser (it is or was after all originally wood) after sending detailed ordnance survey field plans to DEFRA. The recycling company are instructed on how much tonnage of waste sludge they are allowed to plough into the field on behalf of the farmer after samples sent to the laboratory have been examined. The process of reaching agreement with DEFRA can take many months so occasionally the waste sludge is piled up in the fields. The farmer doesn't get paid until completion of the contract between all concerned parties.

The paper mills use one of two processes to remove the ink from recycled paper. Both processes are called de-inking. Method one is called washing where chemicals are added as the paper is pulped. This separates the ink from the paper and allows it to be washed away in the large amounts of water used. The water then goes through a cleaning process to be reused. After several washes the water is no longer fit for purpose and is again removed by the recycling company in bulk tankers and passed on again as a weaker fertiliser to farmers who inject it from a tractor pulling a hosepipe and cutting blades approximately 2 inches into the ground. The second method used for de-inking is called flotation where air is passed through the pulp producing a foam which will hold at least half of the ink and can be skimmed off. Although this process of de-inking uses water and chemicals it is still less harmful to the environment than the manufacturing process of virgin paper.

So the next time you pass a field with a stockpile of what looks like bluish / grey mounds you will know that this mass is actually sludge from nearby paper mills which no longer can be turned into paper. They will nourish the ground that will grow wheat or barley for the next five years.

Disposal problems are reduced by using waste paper to produce new paper. For every tonne of paper used in recycling the savings are at least 30,000 litres of water, 3000 - 4000 Kwh of electricity (enough for an average 3 bedroom house for one year) and 95% of air pollution. At least 60% more energy is used to manufacture virgin paper because most of the energy used is in the pulping process needed to turn wood into paper.

One final thought why it really is worth recycling paper is—it is a biodegradable material. This means if it goes to landfill with your weekly refuse collection it rots it produces methane which is a potent greenhouse gas (20 times more potent than carbon dioxide).

Oh, and for the record, the paper mills I dealt with manufacture ton after ton of toilet tissue, kitchen roll and hospital grade paper, such as the type of paper you lie down on for your medical examination.

Robert Wardle

Thank you

As many of you know in April I spent 10 days in Morriston Hospital as the result of an encounter with a suckling cow near Cowbridge. I have recovered from my injuries (damaged main artery, 7 cracked ribs and a broken collar bone) and Sheena (my dog) is recovering from the fright. What have I learnt from my experience?

- ◆ Despite spending most of my life living in or regularly walking in the countryside I underestimated how unpredictable farm animals can be, despite being domesticated for thousands of years. Sheena had more sense than I and disappeared as soon as I dropped her lead!
- ◆ All of the National Health Service staff were fantastic - the paramedic who mended my glasses, the doctor who spotted a vascular problem and traveled with me in the flashing ambulance to Swansea and especially the intensive care nurses who put me together again and got me back on my feet.
- ◆ Expect the unexpected. Luckily I did not lose consciousness so could tell the farm worker who found me where I lived. I did have the phone numbers of my next-of-kin in my diary, on my mobile (In Case of Emergency or ICE numbers) and on my home phone so my step-daughter was quickly contacted. Perhaps I should also be microchipped like Sheena!
- ◆ I have more friends than I ever realised. Thank you all for the cards and good wishes which I received, especially the following note from Angus and Mavis Crockett:

Imagine these headlines?

- PENLLYN HERALD (Well-known local paper)

The Penllyn Beagle Pack celebrated its first outing of the year, led by Val Caple – Mistress of the hounds- with a successful hunt on Easter Sunday. The first Ox-roast of the year is expected to take place shortly

- SOUTH WALES ECHO (Lesser known local paper).

South Wales Police are investigating reports of cattle rustling in the Cowbridge area.

- DISTILLATIONS A nationally known newsletter.

At the June quarterly meeting, the guest speaker was Val Caple, who gave an interesting and exciting talk on her new venture 'Bullfighting'. She hopes to encourage Members to form a new group as part of the Retirees' Association.

- COWBRIDGE GEM...(The local rag)

Penllyn was the venue for the first 'cow-dog' trials in Wales. The organiser, Val Caple said 'I'm on the horns of a dilemma. It's a big change from sheep, but I think it will catch on. All it wanted was a bit of a push'.

Val Caple, 01446 775794

Zakynthos – June 2010.

After a model example of democratic selection of our 2010 destination, ten members of the DC Retirees' Walking group assembled at Cardiff Airport on the 3rd June for a seven-day walking holiday on the Greek island of Zakynthos.

We had arranged to stay at the small family run Clear Horizon Hotel in the coastal resort of Amoudi (near Alikanas on the north east coast) and to use the hotel mini-bus to transport us to and from the start and end of our daily walks. We had been given suggested routes and maps for various walks around the island that would allow us to explore and experience the varied terrain, villages, hillsides, coast and many points of interest on each route.

We were met at Zakynthos airport by Andreas Mouzakis, the hotel owner and it was fairly obvious straightaway that this was going to be a wonderful holiday and that Andreas was a real character and would do everything he could to make sure we would have a memorable holiday and enjoy ourselves.

The hotel was located in a quiet, beautiful situation above a small sandy beach overlooking Kefalonia across the Ionian sea, with the warm, crystal clear waters a few metres below, but the hotel had a small fresh water swimming pool to lounge around and cool off in. We were welcomed with a cold drink and allocated our rooms – some of us had to have a head for heights to negotiate the overhanging steel spiral staircase to the penthouse rooms, but all were nicely appointed with balconies and sea views.

For a small hotel the food and service was exemplary. The menu was extensive, even if the local wines were not to everybody's taste, even those who drank one 'kilo' of wine a night. We all settled for Greek mezes for starters each evening and were able to try traditional Greek dishes like lamb keftika, yemisto (stuffed chicken), stifado

Ready for our first walk



Are we going in?





Where are we—again

and the mandatory Greek salad. The deserts were something to die for, like mandolato (nougat with almonds) or pasteli (caramelised sesame seeds with honey).

Breakfasts too were a delight - plenty of fresh fruit, Greek yoghurt and honey, as well as your more usual cereals, toast and jams, or a cooked selection. Andreas's daughter, who was home from the USA on holiday, was our waitress and looked after us well.

As the weather was generally good with daytime temperatures of about 25-28°C we chose to walk at a more leisurely pace, stopping for coffee and lunch on the way in tavernas. Again we found the food and service excellent – nothing was too much trouble. The walks were generally about 8 miles long, with plenty to see and many points of interest for photographic stops. Nevertheless we planned to finish our walks before the heat and humidity of the afternoon, making our way to the coast for a cooling swim and a beer, wine or iced frappe and a piece of cake. Idyllic! During the walks we had a few memorable situations, like two members getting lost on the first day as they walked and talked and dawdled at the back and took a wrong turning down hill from Ano Gerakari, or the navigator trying to decide which one out of five roads at a junction we needed to take (this gave rise to notable abbreviations like “HBM” meaning “hang back moment”), or having a swim off a pebble beach at Marathia and some of the group having to crawl out on hands and knees as the pebbles hurt their feet so much – humbling for them but a laugh for the others.

We took a day off walking for a boat trip around to the west coast to see the iconic shipwreck at Navagio Bay under the high limestone cliffs. We had a leisurely swim before the sandy beach was overwhelmed by hordes of other visitors off the big boats, returning to the east coast to explore the “blue caves”, where the boat actually enters the caves with only inches to spare.; truly spectacular with all the different blue and green colours of the sea.

One of our walks took us to the south of the island overlooking Laganas Gulf the renowned but heavily protected loggerhead turtle breeding area. We did see some turtles swimming along from the cliff-tops, but the views across the bay with the two islets of Marathonisi and Pelouzo were absolutely stunning.

Our overall impression of Zakynthos and the people we met was very favourable. The only complaint was we should have booked two weeks not just one. Some of the group pledged to return to Zakynthos at some time, but in the meantime the group decided to visit north west Majorca in June 2011 for another walking holiday together.

Stuart McMillan

N.B.

I would like to give special thanks to Stuart for mastering the GPS equipment which helped us find our way despite the written instructions supplied by the walking holiday organisers, way2go4! Also to Mike Dams for measuring every step of the thirty odd miles we covered. But most of all my friends who made everything such fun; Margaret & Stuart McMillan, Julie & David Fulford, Ann & Peter Davies, Anne & Mike Dams and Bob Griffiths.

Val Caple

Walking in Cardiff.

The Pont Y Werin footpath and cycle bridge spanning the River Ely close to Penarth Haven Tesco Store opened on 14th July. This bridge provides a valuable link from Penarth to Cardiff and Cardiff Bay for leisure walkers and cyclists. It is now possible to walk around Cardiff Bay on a 6 mile, (10km) footpath, incorporating Cardiff Bay, Mermaid Quay, the Barrage itself, the sea locks and fish ladder, Penarth marina, Pont Y Werin bridge, International Sports Village including the Cardiff White Water Rafting and kayak centre (worth a visit). The Cardiff Bay trail, as it is becoming known, is all on all-weather paths and pedestrian only areas, with no road walking as previously. It is a good, level walk with numerous points of interest and facilities, including Techniquet, cafes, restaurants, toilets, play parks etc. Water buses provide regular daytime services from Mermaid Quay to Penarth and right up into Cardiff City. The water buses also provide a quick and easy route back to your car/ start point.

I would encourage and recommend walking or cycling in Cardiff Bay. It is a must over the winter period, when access elsewhere may be limited by weather, mud etc.

Stuart McMillan

Also a good way to visit Techniquet with the grandchildren, followed by an ice cream or sandwich! **Val Caple**

Residues

Please remember to continue to send photos to Robin Pitcher for the inclusion on the website at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/dcbarry/collections> where photographs of Midland Silicones and Dow Corning can be viewed. If you do not have a computer—go to your local library and ask for help.

Please send photographs for inclusion in future issues of Distillations to Val Caple or for the website to Robin Pitcher [robin.pitcher@talktalk.net]. These could include historic photographs or those from recent DC Retirees' Events.

Prints or .jpeg files are OK, prints and CD's will be returned



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