



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

N o v e m b e r 2 0 1 5

Chairman's Fraction

The association is seeking to appoint a new Chair to succeed Bob Connell who has relocated to Scotland. This vacancy provides a rewarding opportunity to play a key role in building on the associations recent successes and positioning the organisation for future strategic development.

For further information, including how to apply, please contact either Richard Thomas 01446 737218 or Rob Wardle 07762 126533.

Bob's last message was: Many thanks to everyone for being so supportive in my, albeit short, time in office. Maybe I'll catch up on the bus trips or get down for next year's meal. Crete with the walkers is still on the calendar.

Cheers Bob

Day Trips/Short Tours

Gloucester/Warwick Stream Train. April 21st

Members plus their guests and friends enjoyed a good day out, the sun shone and was warm.

We travelled to Toddington north Cotswolds climbing aboard a steam train. The trains and stations along this line are run by enthusiasts of the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Railway

Company who keep the stations and trains well maintained and clean. This brought back many happy memories for John Jackson. John spent all his working life on the Railway starting in 1945 as an Engine Cleaner, then Fireman and progressed to Engine Driver until his Retirement in 1993.



Our journey ended at Cheltenham racecourse before travelling into Cheltenham enjoying lunch and shopping. Several members had spotted the female living statue performer in the town centre being most impressed by her concentration to sit for so long before moving and startling passers by.



Henley on Thames. June 17th

Thirty-six members and their guests travelled to Marlow and joined a Salters cruise boat travelling to Henley on Thames. The ferryboat captain was keen to point out to us a house on the riverside. It could be yours since it is on the market for four million pounds. The river cruise boat was open on the sides on what turned out to be very breezy. Adjacent to the River Thames, Henley is overlooked by a beautiful Chiltern landscape of wooded hills and green fields. Its historic church, Town Hall, market square, many local shops, plus its own theatre/cinema, mean Henley is a delightful place for mooching about.

Morecambe and the Lake District. 12th to 16th October 2015

Monday morning, 9:00 sharp, saw 42 retirees and their guests, depart for the Auckland Hotel on the seafront of Morecambe.

On Tuesday morning we had a short coach trip to Lancaster and during the afternoon we were set free to invade Morecambe. Some visited the statue of Morecambe's famous son, Eric Bartholomew (Eric Morecambe) whilst others



visited the wonderful Art Deco hotel, The Midland.

The next day we went up the M6 (an excellent scenic section of motorway) just short of Penrith, to Pooley Bridge, which is at the north end of Ullswater, where we transferred to one of the Ullswater steamers and travelled down the lake (approx. 7 miles) for an hour. Back on the coach, we stopped at Kendal for lunch and a walkabout.



In the evening, we went to Blackpool, just to see the lights, before arriving back at our hotel at 9:30.

Thursday we travelled to Skipton and on our return we saw the Ribblehead Viaduct before we stopped in Settle (where we had rain for the only time).

Friday we left Morecambe. The only downside of our trip – on the second day, one of our female members whilst helping her husband down the hotel steps, sprained her ankle, but we found out later, that she had broken her fifth metatarsal on her left foot, so she and her husband spent the rest of the week visiting the Morecambe or Lancaster hospitals. We all wish her a speedy recovery.

Ken Doble, Rob Wardle and Mavis Crockett

Friendship Group Volunteer Service – Functioning Well But Needs More Volunteers.

2015 saw the Friendship Group Volunteer Service actually start helping DCRA members “in need” with services such as:

- Hospital Transportation
- Hospital visits
- Home visits

The actions taken to improve visibility of the service made an impact and since February, the group has carried out over 30

return hospital trips and several home visits. Members using the service have fed back a high level of satisfaction with the service provided.

The Friendship Group does not provide DIY, Building, Cleaning or Gardening Services, if such help is needed we recommend that members contact “Care & Repair in the Vale”, this is an organization that supports older people to repair, adapt and maintain their homes. Several DCRA members have used them in the past with good results, they can be contacted on 01446 704308.

The main aim of the Friendship Group Volunteer Service is to help DCRA members get to hospital appointments or to visit a partner/spouse in hospital when other support (family and friends) is not available. To-date we have been very successful in doing this with out-of town hospitals such as the Heath and Llandough. If the trip is a local one, say a 5 mile round trip, we would not expect those who do not live in that area to volunteer.. This means that volunteer availability is reduced for local trips and we may not always be able to provide a service.

Additional volunteers would be a great help, especially in the Barry area, where the highest number of members live, but the local volunteer availability is low. If anyone would like to become a volunteer, please contact Richard Thomas on 01446 737218, send an email to rjthomas@maintop.co.uk, or tick the relevant box on your 2016 membership renewal form. All volunteers do need to go through a “Criminal Records Check” because they would be in contact with vulnerable adults on a one on one basis, this is simply a matter of filling in a form and showing some identification documents to the Coordinator, we have not had any problems with the process to-date.

If you are a DCRA member and in need of the services provided by the Friendship Group Volunteer Service, please contact

Richard Thomas on 01446 737218.

Pond Dipping

Rhys and I enjoyed our day at the Education Centre. We made discs from wood to go around our necks. Rhys drew a picture of a rabbit on his. I didn't draw a dinosaur because I can't draw that good. The other children were very friendly as were our Big Kids who attended. After a little talk informally from Catherine we made our way outside for a little walk.

We did pond dipping and found many interesting creatures such as boatmen, larvae and pond skaters and snails. We had our lunch inside and afterwards we did a 'big butterfly count' where we had to stay in one place for 15 minutes and record how many of each species we could see. We identified lots of Gatekeepers, Meadow Brown, Speckled Wood and some saw a Comma and others. This information will be on

www.bigbutterflycount.org.

Then we gathered lots of flowers, leaves, blackberries etc and took them back to press them with a rolling pin on cloth to be printed out or laminated. Thanks to Catherine for a lovely day out with my grandson.

Diane Baker.



Annual Dinner

Around 60 retirees attended our 2015 Annual Dinner at Barry Masonic Hall on a crisp but dry Friday night in October. It was great to see so many familiar faces, who enjoyed the opportunity to chat with former colleagues and friends. Everyone agreed the food and wine was excellent.

This was followed by a free raffle and we were then entertained by a fabulous band "Jelly Roll Jones" featuring a former DC stalwart Tony Cresci with a varied selection of music. They were that good that we even got some up dancing!!!

We were pleased to welcome some new members and some from overseas we hadn't seen for a while. We felt they were looking forward to coming back again next year. A great night to catch up.

Thanks to Chair Bob Connell, who unfortunately was unable to attend himself and Derek Butler for the organisation of the event.



Nordic Walking

Our regulars continue to meet on Monday mornings at 10:00 a.m. 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. We hope additional members therefore become involved in Nordic Walking during 2016.

Robert Wardle 07762-126533 or robert.n.wardle@tesco.net



Wales Coastal Path – the Race is on !

The footpath is a long-distance footpath which follows and runs close to the coastline of Wales. It was opened on 5th May 2012 and is ca 870 miles long but will change as planned realignments come into effect. The route is from Chepstow in the south to Queensferry in the north.

From Chepstow to Pembrokeshire on the coast path is 236 miles. The Pembrokeshire Coast Path (*Llwybr Arfordir Sir Benfro*) was established in 1970, and is 186 miles long, mostly at cliff-top level. Its highest point is Pen yr afr at 574 feet, and its lowest is Sandy Haven crossing – just 6

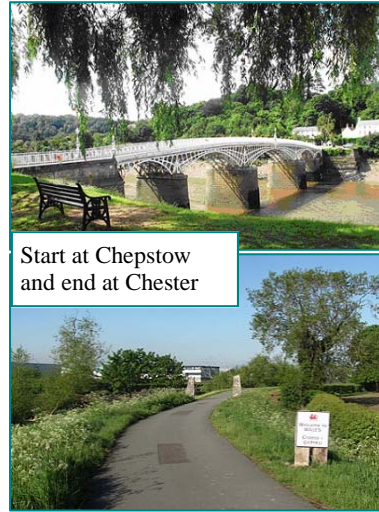


feet above low water. The southern end is at Amroth and the northern end is often regarded as being at Poppit Sands where the official plaque was originally sited. The path now continues to St. Dogmaels, where a new marker was unveiled in July 2009. Here the path links with the Ceredigion Coast Path.

The Ceredigion Coast Path (65 miles) runs along Cardigan Bay from Cardigan to Ynyslas. From the Ceredigion/Pembrokeshire border here to Gwynedd is 72 miles and it is a further 180 miles to Conway. Finally Conway to Chester is 68 miles and the Anglesey coast path is a further 132 miles.

The DCRA Walking Group as a group have completed various sections of the coastal path on the monthly walks but a number of the group have now set their targets on completing the whole path. These intrepid walkers are Stuart & Margaret McMillan (and Bella), Bob Griffiths and Mike & Anne Dams. All have completed the 186 miles of the Pembrokeshire coast path and, but for 1 or 2 sections, the path from Chepstow to Borth or Machynlleth ie around 500 miles.

We all have to complete the North Wales and Anglesey sections although Mike and Anne Dams have completed from Chester to Abergele. There is still much to do and the race is on as to who will complete first! **Let us know if you beat us!**
Mike Dams, Dec 2015



Excerpts from the Captain's Log – Guernsey

Trekkers. Val Caple, Bob Connell, Mike & Anne Dams, Peter & Anne Davies, Dave & Julia Fulford, Bob Griffiths, Viv & Val John,



Margaret & Stuart McMillan, Sue Taylor, Richard & Jennie Thomas.

This year we walked the coast paths on 3 of the Channel Islands. We were based in the very comfortable Hotel Pandora in Hauteville above St Peter Port harbour. Fortunately for some there were 2 real ale pubs close by.

Travel to St Peter Port and hotel. Twelve of the group travelled by Condor's new fast catamaran service from Poole to St Peter Port, whilst four flew from Bristol. A friendly mini bus driver was waiting to transfer us to the hotel

Hotel to Petit Bot Bay. We started our trek round the harbour past hundreds of expensive yachts into the wooded area with occasional relics of WW2 tucked away. The network of paths were in good condition with adequate 'waymarks'. There were many ups and downs, but the views were rewarding and constantly changing, cliffs, woods, coves, sea, boats. In the pretty cove at Fermain Bay we rested with coffee and refreshments. After rounding rocky Jerborg Point we lunched at a small restaurant at Moulin Huet Bay which was overwhelmed! "Sorry we have run out of that" was countered by "well, what do you have then? We continued to



the pretty Petit Bot Bay with its distinctive ‘pepper pot’ stone tower. While some ate cake or ice cream, a few hardy types decided to brave the briny, 2 actually swimming for all of 1 minute – it was 12°C! Back to the hotel for dinner overlooking the lovely terraced gardens..

Petit Bot Bay to Portelet Harbour We took the mini-bus back to Petit Pot Bay for an adventurous walk along the cliff tops via some very twisty, zigzag, up and down multi-stepped paths westward towards Pleinmont Point. It was tough walking and some caught a local bus back to town whilst others choose short cuts across peninsulas to avoid the many steps. After an alfresco lunch and arrived at Portelet Harbour early, so caught a local bus back to ‘town’. Bob C bought a bright purple rucksack, with socks to match—he looked like a rambling Scottish thistle! He may have bought various hats too! More later.

Portelet Harbour to le Grande Havre Back to Portelet Harbour where 4 started to walk 15 miles, but in light of dull, windy weather, the remaining walkers were dropped off in Vazon Bay reducing the walk to 8 miles. Tidal conditions prevented the crossing of the causeway to Lihou Island, but the west coast is very pretty and dotted with small sandy beaches inside rocky headlands and whitewashed houses. The near gale force wind picked up the sand and sandblasted our bare legs as we walked across a variety of bays before meeting up with the others at the Peninsular Hotel at Le Grande Havre. On checking Mike’s Acu – pedometer, we found we had walked less than 12 miles—maybe the ‘lost’ 3 miles were for the walk to Lihou Island. After lunch we had a few beers in the posh 5 star Peninsula hotel lounge, looking a little out of place in our shorts and walking boots.

Le Grande Harve to St Peter Point The strong wind was behind us as we walked across Ladies Bay, past Choet headland and the nearby rubbish tip, across Pembroke and L’Ancresse Bays before stopping for coffee at a very exposed outdoor café where much sport was enjoyed trying to keep cups etc from blowing away. After passing 2 more stone towers we went out on the northernmost headland to Fort le Marchant before walking

across more bays and marinas and harbours. Fresh fruit and berries were on sale at a roadside trust stall—irresistible. We eventually found another exposed café to eat. The last walk back to the hotel was along roadside pavements, passing docks and commerce. We had completed the Guernsey coast path walk of 40 miles, so a celebratory drink was enjoyed by all. Cheers! Bob C appeared wearing a sou'wester hat – rough seas tomorrow?

Boat Trip to and walk around Herm. From the inter-island pontoon we boarded the ferry for the 3 mile crossing to Herm (1½ miles long and ½ mile wide.) The weather was kind, although cold, and the sea calm as we passed 2 cruise liners anchored off discharging passengers into tenders. From the harbour we circumnavigated Herm, passing pristine beaches with names like Bear's, Fisherman's and Shell beaches, flocks of seabirds and plenty of butterflies. The scenery and natural beauty ranged from woodlands to open fields, gentle hills to rocky cliffs tumbling down to secluded sandy beaches. We visited the snack bar on Shell beach for coffee and after our walk we made for the Mermaid Inn for lunch and a real ale/cider/champagne festival.

Boat Trip to and walk around Sark. The ferry trip to Sark took 50 minutes through lumpy seas and poor visibility. We arrived at Port a le Jument and walked up to the central area. We split up, some finding a damp smelling café while others fared better on the coffee front. We walked a traffic free road towards Little Sark and the La Coupee causeway, our photos thwarted by rain and low flying cloud. We then took a coastal footpath up the east of the island around Dixcart Bay and back in search of lunch. Some took a horse drawn carriage ride whilst others paddled up the track to Le Seigneurie to find the gardens closed but the restaurant open. We went like drowned rats and had a delightful lunch but eventually had to leave the shelter



and make our way back to the ferry.

Sight seeing and travel home. Some took the opportunity to visit Castle Cornet or the Museum, walk around the Marinas or shop before the journey home.

We completed 88km (53 miles) and 2450m of ascent. The cold, windy weather was a damper. Here's to the next trip in Crete – it should be warmer.

Stuart McMillan

Punography (Thanks to Lynn & Roger Bennett)

- When chemists die, they barium.
- I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I can't put it down.
- When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble
- Broken pencils are pointless
- I took the job at a bakery because I kneaded dough.
- Velcro - what a rip off!
- Cartoonist found dead in home. Details are sketchy.
- They told me I had type A blood, but it was a type-O

Residues

Many thanks to all contributors to Distillations—we would not have a Newsletter without you. Please send articles or photos on recent events to Val.



1954 Midsil TS&D Christmas Lunch

Please continue to send Midsil or DC-related photos for inclusion on flickr, linked via our website at <http://www.dcretirees.org.uk>. Please contact Robin Pitcher 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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