



DISTILLATIONS

January 2017

Lunch at Crickhowell

The coach left Dow Corning with a fog hanging around as we made our way to the various pick ups. As we got to the A470 at Taffs Well the fog had lifted and we had a clear Autumn day all the way. We saw the massive road works that is still going on the Heads of the Valleys road, but admired the Autumn colours of the leaves on the trees and saw the Brecon Beacons in all its glory as we eventually arrived in the quaint place of Crickhowell and the Bear Hotel.

This old coaching Inn has been around since the 1400's and you felt welcomed the moment you stepped inside. The Restaurant upstairs was laid out in five tables with ten on each table, it was well organized and once the lunch started the tables were served very quickly with delicious meals.

About 14.30 nearly everybody was ready to explore the quaint short streets for about an hour. We boarded the coach again at 15.30 and made our way back admiring the sunset amongst the Brecon Beacons, saying farewell to friends we have not seen for a long time as we arrived back at Dow Corning.

Brian Rich, photos by Brian Rich and Mike Dams



A Returning Day Trip To Sidmouth

The Poet Laureate, John Betjeman, described Sidmouth as 'A town caught still in timeless charm'. His words were also echoed by 46 members and guests who made a return trip on July 13th. Sidmouth, for those who have never visited, it is a town situated on the English Channel on the



Jurassic coast in Devon, being 14 miles east of Exeter. It has beautiful gardens and leisurely walks, abounding Regency history and fine hotels, clean beaches and independent friendly shops. For visitors and people who retire to the area, it's all here in this lovely seaside town nestling beneath majestic red cliffs and the green hills of the glorious Sid Valley.

Ron Durose can be seen in the photo enjoying an ice cream on the sea front. Ron would warn visitors to watch out for seagulls because seconds after this picture was taken one swooped down and took it away.

Meanwhile, Brian Rich will remember the visit for his own reasons: Brian and his daughter Gillian (seen in the photograph) ordered Scampi and Chips for their lunch from one of the eateries near the front and Brian lost a filling from a tooth.



The weather on the day was kind allowing our members to shop, eat and walk through some of the lovely gardens in Sidmouth or just enjoying strolling along the seafront as can be seen by this group consisting of Mary Currie,



(front left) Nora Lindop's guest talking to Brian Currie, Nora Lindop (front right) and Ron Durose strolling behind Mary Currie and Nora's guest.

Journeying home, several members said they would like to have stayed spending a couple of days exploring Sidmouth.

Rob Wardle, photographs supplied by Brian Rich.

Midsil Memory Joggers

No prizes, if you think you know the answers you can send them to me and I will check the person who wishes to be anonymous

1. What was the factory's name before Midsil? What did it produce?
2. Who occupied the New Dock Hotel?
3. M.B.E., O.B.E., C.B.E., the factory had two of these, who were they ? (We now have a third, though non-Midsil—Margaret Matthews received an M.B.E. in the new Years Honours list)
4. What was G1 and its associated famous film star?
5. Who remembers Lee (not John) Francis?
6. Two employees captained their respective Welsh national team during their sporting career. Who were they?
7. T Acid, a non silicone product, was produced in Midsil's earlier days, where was that used.?
8. Phase 1- do you remember it? - followed by Phase 2, then Phase 3 but that had a different name. What was it?
9. How about Moby Dick, what is 'his' story?
10. D.C.'s packages are teal blue, what was Midsil's colour?

There is a piece by Dr Michael J Owen on Midsil Memories at <http://link.springer.com>. Search Midsil

Taking a Trip to Crete

In June 2017 nine hearty souls comprising Val Caple, Bob Connell, Peter Davies, Sue Taylor, Bob Griffiths, Anne and Mike Dams, Margaret and Stuart McMillan, jumped on a plane in Bristol bound for a long awaited walking adventure in the warmth of



sunny Crete. Our first hotel in Paleochora in the south west of the island was ideal for coastal footpath walking and some inland walks, but the 2000 metre high mountains forming the backdrop were quite daunting and non-welcoming. We walked UP one of the gorges to be confronted by a 4 metre high water shoot that offered easy passage if you slid DOWN it, but climbing UP it was nigh impossible, so we cunningly found a bypass around some huge boulders. One of the joys of walking is that you often come across little gems of civilisation (a café or a restaurant) hidden in a valley just when you need a well-earned drink or a toilet stop. Mind, any excuse to stop and rest in the heat of the day is always very welcome. The local food and drink was exceptionally tasty and varied.



On our second full day we took the ferry to Agia Roumeli and walked back along the coastal path. On our way we walked through a narrow gorge with overhanging cliffs, the ruins of the Roman town of and a long deserted path which wound up and down. We were relieved when, in the distance, we could see Paleochora, but it was took a lot more scrambling, and a swim for many of us, before we reached the hotel.

The next day we took a taxi inland to a spot on the map. From here we took a scenic, if poorly marked, route along a ridge overlooking a river valley bright with flowering Oleander before following the valley back to the coast.

We took a ferry to our second hotel in Loutro, since there is no

road and you can only arrive by ferry or foot. This hotel was very laid back with only a narrow pavement between the hotel and the sea, ideal for the swimmers in the group. Breakfast was taken on the terrace overlooking the bay in a leisurely manner, but the food was superb. The range of walks from this location were exceptional, with coastal walks over tracks, beaches and rocks, around peninsulas. On



day three of our ladies decided to set out on their own on a gentler walk. Unfortunately having missed a turning they re-joined the main group at a road side coffee stop, at the top of a steep hill before setting off back down the hill to find their missed track to the beach. They eventually found the track and continued down and along a steep, rocky path to the planned meeting point where they enjoyed a late lunch whilst waiting for the main group to finish their gorge walk, having walked almost as far as the main group.

The main group enjoyed a walk across country prior to a plunge into a gorge, down past trees, vegetation, flowers, boulders the size of houses wedged in by the sheer sided cliffs along the path leading down to the beach right into a strategically placed restaurant for a snack with the ladies before taking the water taxi back to civilisation.

One walk was along a shingle and sand beach with fresh water springs, grass and luxuriant palm trees providing shelter for a campsite and a nudist colony. We just walked straight on by, unabashed by tanned cheeky bottoms and bare breasts, so that we could climb up the cliff face and walk the precipitous, narrow path high above the waves crashing into the base of the cliff, with some trepidation. The sea was a stunning azure blue and the weather warm

and sunny. We finished by boarding walking to Sfakia and boarding the ferry back to our hotel in Loutro.

All good things come to an end and after five days of excellent walking in good company, we caught the water taxi to Sfakia, where our private executive mini-bus whisked us up the multi-zig-zag road to the airport in Chania for the afternoon flight back to Blighty.

Another good trip! Roll on 2017 summer walking holiday. (We are going to Gozo)

Stuart McMillan, photographs by ramblers

Cadoxton Ponds

I am going to be setting up a volunteer work group for the Cadoxton Ponds. We will meet once a month, 9.30am until 2.30pm which fits in with school run. The potential name for group would be something like 'Friends of 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.

The first session will be early February. If anyone is interested in helping please contact

Catherine Lewis, Education Officer, Dow Corning Limited.

Working in conjunction with the Wildlife Trust

Eco Centre: 01446 723173, Mobile: 0797 2176963

Wildlife Trust: 01656 724100



Pond Dipping 2016

Friendship Group Volunteer Service

– Functioning Well But Needs More Volunteers.

In 2016 we saw volunteer availability within the DCRA Friendship Group Volunteer Service (which provides members “in need” with hospital transportation) reduce to such a level that on several occasions a service could not be offered. This situation was inevitable with no new volunteers coming forward since the initial call for volunteers three years ago.

The take-up by members “in need” of the service in 2016 was relatively low but this could easily change and to be able to provide an acceptable standard of service with increased or even current levels of take-up, more volunteer availability is essential. Again, we are asking members if they are prepared to be a volunteer for the service and provide typically a trip a month to/from a local hospital (the Heath and Llandough have been the most popular). If we cannot increase the volunteer availability following this campaign, we shall have to consider suspending the service.

The group is also looking for a new Coordinator to organise the trips by communicating with members “in-need” via the telephone and with the volunteers via email.

I’d like to take the opportunity also to thank the current volunteers for their efforts to-date on maintaining a high level of service until the last few months when availability started to fall off.

If you are prepared to become a volunteer or Coordinator please contact the group’s current Coordinator, Richard Thomas, on 01446 737218 or rjthomas@maintop.co.uk.

Gardens in the Vale of Glamorgan

Many of you know of my involvement with local historic gardens, and 2016 was a very successful year for them.

Dyffryn Gardens celebrated its 110th anniversary and saw a big increase in the number of visitors. It was voted top in the Special Places in Wales’s award for the 2nd year, beating, among others, Caerphilly Castle and Snowdon National Park. This spring you will see a fantastic display of snowdrops as the gardeners are hoping to add 10,000 bulbs each year for the next 3 years

I attended the Green Flag Award ceremony on Barry Island

representing the Cowbridge Physic Garden (CPG). The scheme was launched in 1996 to recognise the best green spaces in the UK. The awards were presented by Dr Rhys Jones, who remembered Barry Island as a child. The Vale of Glamorgan



(VOG) Council were celebrating the first award for the Promenade, joining 7 other VOG Parks: Alexandra Park, Windsor Gardens, Belle Vue Park, Central Park, Romilly Park, Victoria Park and the Knap.

The Community Award is given to Green spaces managed by volunteer groups. There were 4 new locations: Barry Community Garden, Birch Grove Woodlands, Old Hall Gardens, Cowbridge and Elizabethan Orchard and they join Upper Orchard Field, Wenvoe Community Orchard, CPG and Cwm Talwg local nature reserve.

We all watched as the flag was raised on the Promenade. The buffet, by Whitmore and Jackson, was very moreish, and even all the VOG garden staff could not make a dent in the supplies.

Why not visit a green space near you. If you do not live in the VOG or want to know more visit <http://www.greenflagaward.org/>
Val Caple

Residues

Many thanks to all contributors to Distillations—we would not have a Newsletter without you. Please send articles or photos to Val for the next issue.

Please continue to send Midsil or DC-related photos for inclusion on flickr (which is linked via

<http://www.dcretirees.org.uk>) to Robin Pitcher on 02920-514051 or robin.pitcher@talktalk.net. If you do not have a computer you can get go to your local library where staff can help you get online.



Waste Control Crew, 19??



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www.dcretirees.org.uk

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