



Reflexions

As we appear to be coming out of Covid 19 or beginning to live with the virus it is time to reflect on where we are as a Retiree Association.

Way back in the heady days of the 1960's many of us joined Dow Corning at the same time. As we progressed through the years many things started to happen. Soccer, Rugby, Badminton teams were formed including the famous Gallstone Skittle Tournament. The many meetings away from site also brought us together as a 'family'. That inspired June Brown, Jack Lilley and Tom Williams to start the Retirees Association and ultimately led to the DC Shop.

Those far off days are gone but we continue to believe in the DCRA and its future. Today our group is getting smaller but the hard work that your Committee continue to administer on your behalf requires your support.

We know some of you cannot make the meetings or social occasions but a letter, ideas or comments sent to the committee would be really appreciated. We believe we have a future and look forward to seeing you all at some point. On behalf of the Committee we wish you all the very best as we look forward to the forthcoming Spring and Summer season.

Don Surridge. (Chair)

Brewing/Fermentation Group

During 2021 we set up a brewing/fermentation group for people in the DCRA that are interested in wine or beer making (or anything fermentation).

Our first meeting was on 21st July 2021 to brew a batch of beer on Richards brewing kit. There were 4 people at the meeting, and we brewed a Belgian style Abbey type beer. It is a dark beer about 5.5% alcohol by volume using pale, crystal and chocolate Malts. It was fermented for 6 days before racking it into a pressure barrel and leaving for 2 week before bottling. It was matured in the bottle for a few weeks before testing. It has a definite chocolate malt note with a slight bitter finish.

Paul Brought along some of his recent beer to try as well. It was called Sundon Abbey Porter about 4.5% ABV. Very tasty. We also tried a pale ale that Richard had brewed.

We were also going to have a beer tasting and sale of beer for DCRA funds at our December DCRA meeting but had to cancel due to Covid. We will have the tasting at our next meeting hopefully in March 2022. The group had brewed 2 beers for the event with a base recipe with an original gravity of 1055 (about 5% (ish) ABV), SRM, colour of 12 (around about a best bitter/old ale colour) and an IBU (bitterness) of around 40 (around IPA/best bitter bitterness).



The first recipe was from Paul Hodges, batch size 12 litres, mash (60 minutes), based on 2.4 kg Pale Malt, 0.1 kg light crystal malt, 0.04 kg medium crystal malt 0.04 kg chocolate malt, colour 12 SRM (medium amber), target OG 1055 achieved, target bitterness 40 IBU, colour 12 SRM (medium amber).

The second recipe was by Richard Taylor, batch size 25 litres, mash (90 minutes), based on 5kg Pale Malt, 0.5 kg medium crystal malt, target OG 1050 achieved, bitterness 35 IBU (a little low), colour 10 SRM (medium amber), fermented 6 days at 19°C, matured in a barrel.

For full recipes and instructions, please contact me.

We then visited a couple of breweries in Bristol. The first was Fierce and Nobel Brewery which is an eight-barrel microbrewery. We sampled a few beers, one of which was an unusual black IPA. During the tour the head brewer arrived, and we had a very enjoyable discussion about the brewery and the beers they make. He even gave us some hops to try. He also broke out an experimental Imperial stout they had made. It was about 14% alcohol, very tasty but extremely dangerous!

The second was Wiper and True, a much larger 20-barrel brewery, but they didn't do tours. However, we managed to talk them into giving us a quick look round. We tried a couple of beers before making our way in a somewhat meandering fashion back to the station and on to Cardiff.



The group are organising other events including brewery tours, beer tasting and wine tasting. Anyone wishing to take part in the group should contact Richard at rgtayl01@gmail.com or phone 07814 702589 or 02920 530524

Richard Taylor

Elderflower Champagne

The drink is fizzy and only slightly alcoholic. It's very cheap and easy to make, and a very pleasant drink on a warm spring afternoon.

12 Heads of Elderflowers (dried flowers can be bought on-line.)

1½lb White sugar

1 lemon, juiced and the rind cut up (without the pith)

2 tsp White wine vinegar

1 gallon water

- Put blooms in a bowl with the lemon juice. Add the rind.
- Dissolve the sugar (white is better, brown makes it cloudy) in the water, add the vinegar and the rest of the ingredients.
- Leave this to incubate for 24 hr and then strain-the liquor into screw-top bottles (I find old wine bottle are better than pop bottles.)
- Leave the brew for at least 2 weeks, but drink within 3 weeks (or else it becomes drier and more alcoholic, but still drinkable!)

Val Caple

Captains Log – Shropshire Hills 2021

The Covid pandemic deferred our planned Portugal Minho holiday again to 2022, so we decided that we MUST have a walking holiday in the UK in 2021. Fortunately third Welsh Covid lockdown was removed on 26th April 2021. In our usual democratic manner all submitted our suggestions and, after the ‘proportional representational voting’ Shropshire Hills was selected. Our illustrious walk leader Stuart set to and arranged the walking route, hotel and daily mini-bus transport to and from the start and finish of the planned route.

So on the 22nd June we set off in our own cars and met at the Stokesay Inn, Craven Arms, to walk the southern section of the Shropshire Way. The group comprised of Val Caple, Mike and Anne Dams, Peter Davies, Dave and Julia Fulford, Robert Griffiths and Stuart and Margaret McMillan. Our welcome at the Stokesay Inn was warm, but no meals or bar service were available on a Monday evening so we ordered a take-away and managed the bar ourselves! What an informal scene setter to a memorable holiday.

The mini-bus was arranged to pick us up from the hotel each morning at 09.30 and at the end of the daily walk at 17.00 back to the hotel – it worked just like clockwork!



Bridges to Bishop Castle - 11.5 miles, 585 metres ascent.

We set off to steadily climb up country lanes lined with hedgerows and flower-decked grass verges up onto the ridge leading to the iconic ‘Stiperstones’, an outcrop of jagged tors protruding from heather slopes, which tempted Peter, Mike and Robert to scale their mini summits. Fantastic views were available 360 degrees. After an age walking over uncomfortable rocks the group descended into a valley before whisking up again to Linley Hill, only to descend gently again to Bishops Castle. Some of the walkers ran low on steam so the mini bus picked us up just to the north of the town. A tough but enjoyable walk in sunny, calm weather and good visibility.



Bishops Castle to Clun – 11 miles, 575 metres ascent.

After a fairly strenuous day before, some of the group were looking for a slightly easier walk today. Whilst 5 started the walk in Bishops Castle, 4 travelled to Churchtown to shorten the walk. All of us discovered Offa’s Dyke on top of a

very steep hill with silky green landscapes with delightful pastured valleys hillsides and woods. We walked through many cultivated fields, wheat, barley, rape and hundreds of acres of broad beans. The path was also dominated by hundreds of stiles, especially the last kilometre which seemed to go on for ever! Clun was a delightful little place with a castle, river and picturesque stone bridge, tea shops and pubs.

Later we partook of liquid refreshments and a home cooked evening meal. Our evening however was disturbed at around 23.00 when the fire alarm sounded and we had to muster in PJ's in the car park as a result of a 'gas leak' in the hotel kitchen., which turned out be a mains drain problem that also effected other nearby parts of Craven Arms.

Craven Arms to Ludlow – 11 miles, 340 metres ascent.

We walked from the hotel across the meadows of the River Onny to the historic Stokesay Castle (13th C) and up through woods to the little village of Aldon before reaching two wooded gorges, the Aldon and Brandon gutters. The route again included traversing big flat fields (more broad beans). We had lunch at the riverside bridge in Bromfield alongside two delightful photogenic



old corn mills. The packed lunches provided by the hotel caused some amusement as, with limited choice of fillings (cheese, cooked bacon or sausage), we all gravitated to cheese and pickle for the rest of the week! After walking through woodland, Ludlow Castle soon loomed and, after crossing the river and climbing into the town centre at Buttercross, we weakened and had afternoon tea and cake sheltered from our first drizzle of the holiday.

Ludlow to Wheathill – 10.5 miles, 630 metres ascent

After leaving Ludlow we walked alongside the River Teme before heading out over pastures and climbing to Caynham Iron age fort where we had coffee, accompanied by inquisitive cattle. We set off towards our target was **Titterstone Clee Hill** at 533 metres accessed via a disused quarry tramway. The walk down the gradual northern grassy slope was a dream, before finding the Three Horseshoes pub at Wheathill for a well-earned pint.

Wheathill to Wilderhope Manor – 11.5 miles, 495 metres ascent.

The walk up to the highest point of the Shropshire Way (Brown Clee Hill at 540 metres) started with lanes but eventually we broke out onto typical moorland with heather, bracken and bilberries plus a collection of communication masts that were good landmarks through the mist and low flying cloud. Unfortunately when we arrived at **Brown Clee Hill** peak it was shrouded with thick cloud and lots of people (that had driven up), so we didn't stop long as we wanted our lunch in a quiet and hopefully, dry sunny spot with views, which we found a mile further on. After a steep decline down the hillside, the path took us along lanes,

across fields and along meadows and across streams to Wilderhope Manor, a 16th Century, Grade 1 listed gabled mansion in the care of the National Trust, now used as a youth hostel. Good walking weather again, thanks to our in-house weather-man. We returned to the hotel to enjoy a truly magnificent roast Sunday dinner and the bar run on trust again.

Much Wenlock to Ironbridge – 6 miles, 300 metres ascent.

We shortened the planned walk and started in the very pretty market town of Much Wenlock to allow us more time to explore Ironbridge. Today's walk was fairly level across meadows, along lanes, through ancient woods and for some of the time the Cross Britain Way ran together. After lunch we started descending above Ironbridge Power Station down



to River Severn to cross over the now red-painted Iron Bridge, where we assembled for the 'end of walk' celebratory photographs. Our last evening meal of the holiday was a brought-in Indian, accompanied by self-servings from the hotel bar.

Tuesday 29th June – Homeward bound!

After breakfast and saying goodbye to the staff (we left them a healthy tip as the staff were wonderful and just could not do enough for us) we set off, some to visit nearby Stokesay Castle, others to Ludlow Farmers Market for local delicacies and bargains.

A happy and glorious holiday with good weather overall, good walking (66 miles in total) and scenery and most importantly, good company.

Thank you everybody for your contributions. Here's to Portugal in June 2022.
Stuart McMillan

Short Walks

At the AGM 2021 Stuart was asked whether he could include shorter walks in the DCRA ramblers' programme. Some walks are shorter than others but Diane Baker offered to arrange a series of 'Strolls and chats' to places of interest in the Barry area. She already takes Barry WI members on similar excursions.

If you are interested in joining her please contact her on 07910570231 or dilizbaker@gmail.com

Other local groups organise short walks, for example U3A and Valeways. The Nordic Walkers meet regularly and can be booked via Age Cymru. Barry Healthy Hearts, meet in the Highlight Park Community Centre on Tuesdays at 10.45 - 12.15. There is an adult playground on Barry Waterfront.

Val Caple

Prevention of Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

I left Slough Grammar School aged 16 in 1947 and soon afterwards started my first job as a trainee laboratory assistant in the newly formed quality control analytical laboratory at the Weston Biscuit Company in Slough, earning £1.75 per 5½ day week and continuing to study in the evenings.

In the lab was a small collection of books on food technology and nutrition. This is where my lifelong interest in diet and health started. I spent all my subsequent career in industrial chemistry research and development, retiring from Dow Corning in 1990.

Having spent my working life dealing with the very small scale world of atoms and molecules, I decided on retirement to learn about astronomy and the extremely large scale of the universe. Last month, one evening after I had watched a YouTube lecture on astronomy, I stumbled on a one hour lecture entitled "Nutrition and the prevention of cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's disease" given in 2020 by Professor A. David Smith from the pharmacology department at the university of Oxford. I found this lecture so interesting that I immediately watched it a second time.

I thought that this information should be more widely known and practiced and could be of interest to retirees of all ages, especially as it is never too early nor too late to put it into practice.

Six of my friends have died with Alzheimer's disease in the last 15 years and they were all people with intelligent lively minds which indicates that previous high mental agility is not necessarily an indicator of low probability of later dementia. However this lecture gives the evidence that there is a correlation between dementia and lifestyle and diet.

The lecture can be found by putting the following link on Google <https://youtu.be/unguMlKkc74> and contains a survey of the published papers on the subject over the last 20 years. I find the evidence of the findings convincing and can be summarised as follows:

In 2015 in the UK there were 288,450 new cases of dementia; the predicted future rate of the epidemic will give rise to more the a million total cases by 2025. Alzheimer's is not an inevitable part of ageing but is a truly preventable disease (only 3 very rare genetic causes are known, less than 1% of all cases)

Preventive measures involve specific lifestyle and dietary factors. The perceived wisdom 20 years ago, even amongst the medical profession, was that Alzheimer's disease was an unpreventable consequence of ageing for some people. This lecture demonstrates that the following effective measures can be taken to prevent dementia, Alzheimer's disease and serious cognitive decline:

1. Lifestyle

- Stop smoking
- Exercise, for example at least 30 minutes walk, every day
- Keep mentally and socially active

2. Diet

- Eat 5-a-day fruit and vegetables, add berries (e.g. blueberries, strawberries)
- Take omega-3 fatty acids by eating fish once or more a week (the fish richest in omega-3 fatty acids are sardines, mackerel, salmon, tuna and herring)
- Make sure your diet contains the daily NRV* of vitamins D and B12.
- Limit sugar and carbohydrate intake to avoid diabetes

3. Health Checks

- Check blood pressure and blood glucose at safe levels and avoid diabetes.
- Check blood level of homocysteine at a safe level and, if high, take B vitamins and omega-3 fatty acids
- If in doubt about any of these consult your GP.)

The lifestyle recommendations are similar to those for preventing heart attack and stroke.

The diet items are similar to the Mediterranean diet.

- High intake of vegetables and fruits, legumes, nuts, unrefined cereals, olive oil, fish.
- Moderate to low intake of dairy foods (cheese, yoghurt) and alcohol (less than 1 unit per day).
- Less of meat and poultry.

My own contribution to this is that, for those unable or unwilling to follow the diet items D, E and F, a simple alternative is to take two pills every morning with breakfast:

- One multivitamin pill (e.g. Healthspan “Multivitality Gold” which contains each vitamin at the NRV* level)
- One omega-3 fish oil capsule (e.g. Healthspan “High Strength Omega 3 1000mg fish oil” provides 330mg omega-3 fatty acids in each capsule) (Healthspan products are made from responsibly and sustainably sourced.). (* NRV-Nutrient Reference Value replaces RDA-Recommended Dietary Allowance and has the same meaning.)

Best wishes to all retirees for a long, happy and healthy retirement.

Chris Pearce

Veggie diet

I have been (almost) a pescatarian (non-meat eater) for 40 years, and it is now much easier as pubs, cafes and restaurants usually have a fish and veggie dishes on the menu and supermarkets have a large range of meat free dishes. I do occasionally eat chicken with the family and a meat treat 2 or 3 times a week is not a disaster and may be healthier than an over processed non-meat favourite.!

At home easy options are baked beans, tinned fish, eggs and low fat dairy products on wholemeal toast or in a baked potatoe (cooked in a microwave) served with your favourite fresh, tinned or frozen vegetables.

Italian dishes are also easy to prepare—add a tin of tuna to a bolognaise or tomato sauce to serve with pasta or send out for a pizza with a non-meat topping. Indian and Chinese takeaway menus also include tasty, non-meat options.

Val Caple

Bara Brith

It is claimed that bara brith, or speckled bread, was invented to use up spare dough by adding dried fruit which has been soaked in tea with spices. It can also be made using baking powder instead of yeast and I have read of blackberries used instead of dried fruit.

It is known as *torta negra* ("black cake") in the Chubut valleys, Argentina, where it was brought by the Welsh settlers who started arriving in the country in 1865. They replaced the sugar with molasses and the tea with alcohol!

This recipe is not necessarily healthy, though it does contain fruit, but we need some treats!

Margaret McMillan's recipe

450 gr (1 lb) sultanas or whatever fruit combination you fancy)

325 ml (12 fluid oz) freshly brewed strong milkless tea

450 gr (1 lb) self raising white flour

2 level teaspoons baking powder

2 teaspoons mixed spice

275 gr (10 oz) demerara sugar

2 medium beaten eggs

A little milk

- Soak the sultanas overnight in the tea
- Sift the baking powder, mixed spice and flour. Add the sugar and sultanas
- Mix well and add the eggs and milk to give a soft dropping consistency
- Divide the mixture between two well-greased (butter is best) 1 lb loaf tins and bake for approx 1 ¼ hours gas mark 3 (325°F, 160°C)



Residues

Many thanks to contributors to Distillations over the years—we would not have a Newsletter without you.

Please send articles or photos on recent events, comments, favourite recipes or something on any topic which you think will interest fellow retirees, to Val Caple so we can keep Distillations going.

Please continue to send Midsil or DC-related photos for inclusion on <https://www.flickr.com/photos/dcbarry/> (or via the DCRA website) to 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.



Website:

www.dcretirees.org.uk

Editor: Val Caple, DCRA Membership Secretary,
Milestone, Penllyn, COWBRIDGE, CF71 7RQ.

Tel.: 01446 775794, Email: val.t.caple@care4free.net