

Crewe & Nantwich Rambling Club – 1946 – 2006
60th Anniversary Celebrations

Our Memories - Peter & Marilyn Norbury

The Beginning

We moved to Crewe, from Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, in 1971. We had seen an advert for local CHA & HF clubs on the London Underground and had written to the St Albans group just prior to moving, but had not actually been on a ramble with them.

After moving we posted our letter to Jenny Tilston, Secretary, (now Jenny Hall) on the way to Rail House to work, and when we came home at tea time, the programme was through the door! It transpired that Malcolm Hall, Jenny's fiancé lived in Sunnybank Road, just across the main road from us, and Malcolm had carried out his orders (as we believe he is still happy to do today!) and delivered a ramble card to us. What service - and that became the beginning of the next part of our lives in Crewe, as members of Crewe & Nantwich CHA & HF Rambling Club.

Between us we have been President, Chairman, Ramble Organiser, Minute Secretary & general committee members. We have developed some wonderful longstanding friendships with like minded people including Kathleen Conroy & Philip Clarke, Godparents to our son, Ian. Also Liz & Shaun Horrocks, Peter planned rambles with Shaun and I with Liz, and we continued to walk during our pregnancies and spent many a happy weekday lunchtime together with 'babes in arms' - and they grew - Ian being the youngest member of the club for quite a few years – until it was too embarrassing to walk with Mum & Dad!

Our first ramble was '3½ miles long'. It was near Welshpool and lead by Reg Partridge and on this walk we recall that the call went out – 'we have lost Norm' (Norman Davies). We came to understand that 3½ was the only distance that Reg knew. The walk was 3½ miles long, we had completed 3½ miles and we had 3½ miles to go! We also accepted as time went on, 'loosing Norm' was nothing to panic about – it became a regular occurrence. What a funny bunch of people – we fitted in very well and 35 years later we are still here and have loved every minute of it!

Friendships

Every member, past and present, has become our friend, that is the nature of the club but inevitably some people drift together and along with those mentioned above there have been Margaret & Paul Harvey, Mike Jackson, Frances Sealey, and Howard Gibson.

Howard remembers us joining almost at the same time as himself and he became fascinated with the accent of the girl from Yorkshire via Hertfordshire!!

One of our early memories is the wedding of Margaret Bint (daughter of the then Chairman, Ernie Bint and his wife Mary) celebrated at the Fox Inn Haslington.

Mike Jackson, Treasurer for many years, was responsible for patenting the 'Jackson' (to the uninformed this was simply a common Addis type washing-up brush) but to the elite members of C&N CHA&HF RC it was a very fashionable, not to be seen without, tool for cleaning ones

boots at the end of a ramble – any river, stream, puddle or trickle of water would do to assist with the use of your 'Jackson'. Mike became close friends with Frances a delightful and very knowledgeable lady on matters botanical. Numerous questions on floral identification were answered by Frances until her departure from our ranks many, many years before she should have and she is still very much missed.

Our dear friend 'Norm' died at his brother's funeral party. 'Full stop' – he had left us – shocked but with many wonderful memories – he was often lost but found again 'full stop'. He spoke with conviction on many matters and to emphasise his point finished all his statements with an emphatic 'full stop!' Norm's rucksack was used on one occasion to carry Ian when we forgot his papoose.

Philip Clarke – now he 'always knew' what had taken place on a Sunday ramble when you spoke to him on a Monday – even though he had not been out, as he was probably attending to matters biblical at St Peter's church where he became a lay reader. In later years some of us were present at his ordination in Chester Cathedral and still continue to see him in his current parish of Glyn Ceriog, North Wales - he must have had a 'hot line' even at lay reader rank!

The Tennis/Badminton sub section has given me untold pleasure and exercise –through the club link, four of us, Kath, Hilary, Marie and myself (+ one or two others) have played tennis and badminton at varying venues – all thanks to the club forming the links.

Rambles

We have masses memories of incidents actually on Sunday Rambles

- The day the coach broke down on M6 in sight of a pub – we must have been there a good two hours – desperate for for a drink and eventually the toilet as well!
- We would often play rounders with any bit of tree branch we came across and someone always seemed to have a tennis ball (this was just to use up some energy at a tea or coffee stop!) and one day, near to World's End, Llangollen, one very hard and profound hit, unfortunately caught Grace in the mouth, she was very brave and has never held it against he or she who was batting!
- We were by the river Lune, Lancaste5, I think it was one of Mike Jackson's walks and some people approaching had a young and energetic dog, they were throwing a stick for it, the stick landed at my feet, so being unable to resist I picked it up and threw it, seconds later the dog lay stunned on the path – fortunately it soon recovered and trotted off. I don't throw sticks for dogs anymore.
- And there's Tom our driver, what more can I say, he's a legend in himself, he even seems to have followed us between coach firms and by all accounts actually asks to drive for us, even to Scotland and back, we certainly have a bond.
- Early Hot Pot Suppers at the Swan at New Mills – concluding with the local Brass band playing – such memories and one particular year Philip Clarke announced he'd lost his anorack during the walk, after we left the Swan and were heading home, it was spotted, from the coach, sitting on a wall just awaiting collection.

- Liz Horrocks and I planned many a ramble with Eugene Peet as our driver, ever faithful he was there to meet us at the end and deposited us back home, where Shaun and Peter had our meals ready and we were reunited with our little off-springs.
- Dennis Pinches – our “pub knocker-upper” – he could get landlords in Cardington to open up on hot summer’s afternoons just to quench the thirsts of a party of ramblers.
- In the middle of negotiating Malham Cove, the running water was just too much for our young, recently ‘potty trained’ son and he had to be swiftly lifted out of the papoose on Peter’s back!
- When we first joined, Doreen & Laurie McKenna were regular ramble leaders and when we think back, one visit to Hawkestone Park, amongst the Rhododendrons stands out – they just could not agree which was the right way (I suppose we witnessed a matrimonial!) – I guess they must have sorted it in the end!
- Everybody knows Peter’s passion for the amber nectar – well on one of his Birthdays, which happened to fall on a ramble Sunday, at Jenkin Chapel, – Julie Colclough and Barbara Waters sang to him and presented him with a bottle of real ale with his lunch – he was ‘quite overcome’.
- Peter and Philip Clarke are well known for their successes in ramble leading, either as a team or individually but on one occasion they went seriously wrong looking for Marjorie Hill, near Derwent Reservoir, South Yorkshire, and the phrase ‘Oops wrong hill’ was born. Along with Hill, Hill, Hill when we were with Hilary Clowes on Pendle Hill (‘pen’ meaning hill)!
- Sheila Evans and David Luxford were ‘a couple’ and members in our early days, we recall one occasion when we sheltered from a storm under some rocks on the Arrans – probably a waste of time - I seem to remember getting pretty wet anyway!
- When we first joined there was only ever one party and the leader had to arrange a coffee stop on the way out. We used to stop in Castleton at Judith’s café, and also at cafes in Corwen, Llangollen. There were usually about 15 in the party.
- Boxing Day walks all began at the Star at Acton – when everyone went in afterwards to enjoy large plates of sandwiches and sausage rolls etc. including blackpudding! All prepared for us by the Landlady Mrs Pulfer.

Holidays & Club Weekends

There have always been Club weekends and then the holidays followed.

In the 1970’s CHA/HF weekends were held at Conway, Derwent Bank, Hope and Ambleside. Other clubs we met commented that we were a young club – the majority of us then would have been between 25 – 35 so I guess we were, and are all still members today.

We branched out and did the Pennine Way (twice!), South/North and then North South, first in 1978 and again in 1988. The first time Peter and I walked alternate days, looking after Ian with the company of Norman Davies and Kath Conroy respectively on our off days. Norman

supported Peter so well as he was beginning to suffer with his duodenal ulcer problems. On the second occasion Ian had to keep Kath and I going at times – he was 15 by then and left us standing! It was us that needed the Smarties then!

During one of these Pennine Way epics we came across an enormous drain pipe awaiting its part in motorway construction and with a quick look over our shoulders the whole party crawled into it and sat having our afternoon tea out of the rain – we often recollect ‘The Drain Party’!

I shall never, never, never waive at a helicopter again – on the one occasion that I did the whole Pennine Way group had me believing that my wave was the reason it was landing, it is a wonder they did not have to resuscitate me I was so scared. It transpired it contained soldiers, who were not the least bit interested in me, on an exercise, and all was well!

We had many Easter weeks away and, on one occasion, we watched Trevor Clowes’ tea cosy (sorry I think it was meant to be a hat!) take off, in the Isle of Arran winds – it swirled away – never to be seen again – so if you ever see a pink ‘thing’ with tassels, you know whose it is!

The Chamois weekends have always been part of the annual cycle of club events and they themselves hold many memories but there was one particular one, when we did the Nantle Ridge and it was so windy Hilary Clowes (possibly then Edwards?) was actually lifted off her feet.

The team that completed the Lyke Wake Walk – a continuous 40 miler, accomplished overnight, covering Yorkshire moorland conditions - ate rice pudding cold, out of the tin, for their breakfast and then nearly drove back to Cheshire leaving Dennis Pinches locked in the overnight accommodation!

The West Highland Way was another wonderful trip – we all acquired Scottish names for this one I can recall Philip Clarke ‘McVicar’, Kath Conroy (nee Maxon) ‘McSon’, Gordon Fleet ‘McFishery’, Mike Jackson ‘McSpoon’ (this takes too much explaining for here!), Frances Sealey ‘McFlower’, Ian Norbury (McGuinness), Peter ‘McEwan’ and I was ‘McLoud’ (can’t imagine why).

Sillies

Everyone will agree that we are a bit of a ‘daft bunch’ (well some of us will own up to that anyway!) and so some memorable sillies for us are:

The Treasurer’s new anorak – Even after all the years Mike Jackson held the position of Treasurer he never did ‘make enough on the side’ to get that new anorak he always talked to getting!!

Dogs used to be allowed on coaches – and when they were, Sheila Judge brought along dinner for the dog, and sadly left their own lunch in the fridge at home!

Man on the Moon – Yes, man landed on the moon and Freddie Phillips, sporting his flat cap, demonstrated his understanding of the difficulties of weightlessness when he bounced around on the rocky boulder moonlike surface of the Berwyns with his walking stick held high (no walking poles in those days).

A Gentleman's Trousers – Most of you will be familiar with Ken Willington's knees (whoops sorry Ken! – well you know what I mean) as he only wears long trousers when absolutely essential – but a sensible walker is always prepared, long trousers being carried in his rucksack – on one occasion he was perplexed to find them ahead of him on the path, neatly folded over the foot of the bed – well someone's bed that was anyway! How did they get there?

Only the alert walker can be sure of carrying a lightweight rucksack – Those who are prone to leaving their bags unattended can find themselves carrying half the mountain with them after the coffee stop!

So many of us remember '*Nancy stop that orange Humphries*' - what she was up to we may never know but there is a vivid recollection of her looking backwards through her legs, watching her orange disappear downhill never to be seen again.

Look after the pennies and the £s will look after themselves - Brian Winstanley had to be commended for his determination where this old adage was concerned but, really Brian – '*Peas may be cheaper than strawberries*' but not nearly as enjoyable for Ken Willington to eat straight from the tin on a Sunday afternoon – Yes, Ken always had his tin opener too!

Events

FFF's – First Friday at the Fox – The first Friday in every month saw a gathering of those who enjoyed a 'pint' at the Fox at Haslington – since the original days in the early 1970's this ritual has been held at almost every pub surrounding Crewe – not so frequent these days but still occasionally a meet takes place.

New Years Eve – The parties commenced at 77 Hungerford Road, thanks to the hospitality offered by Mr & Mrs Bint – bring a dish, play silly games, do a bit of country dancing and see the New Year in. They moved to various venues over the years – great evenings.

Weddings – We remember the following but I am sure I have missed some (apologies to those people who have strayed from memory - Margaret Bint to Paul Harvey, Jenny Tilston to Malcolm Hall, John Colclough to Julie Queen, Barbara to Geoff Vaughan, Hilary Edwards to Trevor Clowes, Richard Beech to Ruth ? and Sylvia Goodwin to Ken Elkins – I am sure someone can tell us of more!

Yorkshire's Three Peaks – this epic has been undertaken many times – In the log that all walkers sign at the Penyghent Café, Houghton in Ribblesdale, we had, inevitably to make the entry 'Lost Norm' and some years later on another visit we found some like minded people had inserted 'Norm found' – walking even creates empathy with people we have never met!

Dinner Dances – These were annual events at one time, held at Alvaston Hall and Crewe Arms quite often, then they gave way to Barn Dances at the Memorial Hall and Masonic Hall.

For the Queens Silver Jubilee we held a party at Wistaston Memorial Hall and then the 50th Anniversary at Cedars in Nantwich and here we are 10 years on from there – looking forward to the memory that the 60th Anniversary will give us.

Fantastic club, fantastic people and fantastic fun and walking – long may it continue.