

Sign Post

The Newsletter of the Walking Club—May 2005



A Commemorative Addendum to Issue 100

A Potted History

This commemorative supplement to the 100th edition of the Walking Club newsletter, takes a look at the history of the newsletter and republishes some of the noteworthy extracts from previous editions. One of the founders of the Club, Mick Chapman was the editor from the initial birth of the newsletter in the 1990s. Early editions varied in presentation and it was not until 1995 that the first logo "Stanley" was introduced. It was initially called the "News Sheet" and there was another publication called "Up Country" which gave information on special events. The name of the newsletter changed to "Sign Post" with issue 46 and another supplement called "Sign Post-its" was introduced to publicise news from committee meetings. The three-column format was adopted for the initial issues of the newsletter and has been retained throughout. The "Sign Post-its" format has changed between a two and single column format. Alan took over as editor in 1998 with issue 61 and all the publications were consolidated into a single newsletter. Traditionally the newsletter has included reports on walks and events, but this ceased at the beginning of 2001 (issue 75) when the website was set up. In January 2002, "Sign Post-its" was reintroduced as a one-page reminder for notice boards. January 2003 brought the introduction of the new logo at issue 86.

Jeremy Orbell, a long serving club member, has been the designer of the logos and of the cartoons that have appeared from time to time.

Recent years has seen the demise of walk and event reports, which is a shame as there is no doubt considerable entertainment to be had in re-reading some of the more literary versions, some of which are include here. Walk reports were contributed by club members and in fact there was a prize for the best one each year. Colour pictures were included in newsletters between issues 64 and 74 since when they have been published on the website. A few examples are included.

The first logo was called "Stanley"



How much for a male escort?

This was the start of a walk report on 14th June 1998: "How much is it?" said Ann and Jane as we registered at Crowden Youth Hostel. 'You need to give me £15 each' I respond. Ann, seeing the chance to wind up the warden, says 'That's not bad for a male escort.' The warden in best hotel receptionist manner keeps his eyes on the register and doesn't react."

Like an oasis in a desert!

Sometimes, the reports even had some literary merit as demonstrated by this extract from a report by Chris Hawke on the 23rd February 1997 walk: "Like an oasis in a desert, we sat huddled behind a haystack for shelter

from the wind, which was whipping round at a rate of knots—dirt and straw littered the air—getting in our eyes, drinks and butties, ugh! (And to think I volunteered to join this walk!)"

New member refuses to get her kit off!

The report for the 2nd November 1997 walk nearly had an interesting headline as described below: "As we conquered the first few inclines, we started to warm up and shed layers; except Sonja who was still wearing a very thick woollen jumper which she refused to discard. As steam came out of her ears, headlines for the walk report such as "New member refuses to get her kit off!" were contemplated."

What Stepping Stones?

This is a report from a walk which was made memorable because there had been a lot of rain and the river level was high. It was a particular eye opener for some first time walkers.

Walk 2000/06

5th March 2000

*Deep Dale and Chee Gorge from
Topley Pike*

A dramatic and surprising walk, contrasting the Saxon-founded old upland mining communities with impressive concealed Dales. Chee Dale's rocky gorge is guaranteed to confound any doubters of The Park's grand scenery.



I'm sure there are some stepping stones somewhere. Alan - Chee Gorge - 5th March

There was another large turn out for this walk - 12. Things went much as usual to start with. Soup stop, pub stop, lunch stop. Then we dropped down to the Monsall Trail for the return leg to the car park. The sign said the path was liable to flooding. But the River Wye did not seem particularly high so we decided to carry on. Along the Chee Valley the river has



The stepping stones re-emerge
Chee Gorge - 5th March

cut itself into a gorge with rock faces rising vertically above. In one place, stepping stones have been set to take the path along one of these canyon faces. Only one problem. The water was about 4 to 10 inches above the stones. The rest can be summed up by the experiences of the various individuals.

Alan - Ah, at last a chance to use my towel. Off with the boots, roll up the socks. No problem. Boy this water's cold.

Ben, the dog - if you think I'm walking across there, you must be joking. My legs are only 6 inches long and that water's freezing.

Stuart - I'll have to put Ben in my rucksack to carry him round the corner.

Ben - the sucker fell for that one. I wonder if he'll carry me the rest of the way.

Ann - (having clambered along the side of the gorge, takes her boots off to tackle the stones) - this is an absolute nightmare.

Sue (H) - this is great. Never done anything like this before.

Richard (on his first walk) - if this is a moderate walk, what

are the strenuous ones like?

Alan - you need full scuba gear for them! Fortunately it wasn't far back to the car to walk with wet feet (except Alan who had remembered his towel).

All in all, I think most people enjoyed it. Certainly they will remember it.

Split Crotch!

This extract came from the 20th October 1996 walk—apologies to Mick for republishing!

"After completing lunch, we all donned our wet weather gear ready to face the rain. It was at this stage that Mick modelled his rapidly disintegrating split-crotch over-trousers; said to have resulted from being over-endowed or so he said - but he always did like a joke!"

It is interesting to make comparisons between these trousers and similarly

Canoe swim?

This was a cartoon drawn after one of our members got rather nervous on a canoe trip on the River Wye in Monmouthshire.



named panties:

-they are both about as effective at keeping the rain out.

-neither look very elegant on Mick (allegedly).

*-they both accommodate a complete p****! (only joking Mick)*

While we are on this subject we would like to correct a misapprehension caused by a recent typing error. Standard walking kit consists of leather boots, socks and gaiters not leather boots, stockings and garters!"

Right hand man?

This report was written by Ann after her first experience of map reading.

Walk 97/11

18 May 1997

Windmill Teas

Having arrived at Wymondham watermill car park feminism tried to rule as Chris desperately instructed Alan on the merits of parking the car correctly. Much to the despair of Chris and Ann, masculinity won.

A unique experience then began as by a majority of 3:1 Ann was put in charge of the map: was this a wise move? Being a complete novice the first obstacle was locating the pond and amidst much mirth and laughter it was pointed out that there was one to the left of us and we were still in the car park. The practical joke being over we set off but does right mean left and left mean right. Would it be better with the map held the right way up? Panic stricken, Alan decided to become first mate to the navigator.

Cartoons

The cartoons on this page relate to a visit to the Lake District at Easter 1999

Confidence then returned to Mick and Chris and we managed to leave the village, the weather being overcast, misty and humid, As we progressed the ugly question of left and right again kept everyone amused. The weather improved as did Ann's map reading skills but was it her fault that Blur Point Farm, had changed its name to Crown Point, that the streams no longer existed because of the drought? Again, amidst the laughter, the first mate came to the rescue and we eventually passed the stable yard whose owner was audibly informed by a precocious sounding child 'Mum there are walkers!!' After the stile the

What do you mean dangerous?

When we tackled the Old Man of Coniston, it was covered in cloud and we had to be careful clambering over the summit.



path was found to be blocked by a barbed wire fence, much to Mick's disgust. The morning break was taken sitting in a luscious grassy field overlooking very pleasant countryside. By this time Ann had run out of water, possibly due to the humidity or the nervousness of being in charge of such a prodigious group of walkers(!). She was kindly replenished by the use of other members, having declined the use of the water troughs passed earlier and also offered the use of a lethal looking serrated knife in case she needed to perform a DIY amputation of her troublesome toe. Passing a small uninspiring industrial estate with the thought of liquid refreshment at the Black Bull spurring us onwards we continued towards

Market Overton. In glorious sunshine we sat outside the pub enjoying the drinks while Mick and Alan, discussed the merits of passing female attire, especially an attractive model in white jeans (Well it did have good body work!! Ed) All this being too much for Alan he paid a visit to the smallest room and returned with an amusing account of a notice he had seen.

1.SYMPTOM: Strip light on the tiled wall opposite

CAUSE : You are lying flat on the floor.

REMEDY : Revert to Vertical Position and continue drinking

2.SYMPTOM: The bar looks blurred.

CAUSE : You are looking at the bar through an empty glass, REMEDY : Re-fill your empty glass and continue drinking!and so it continued.

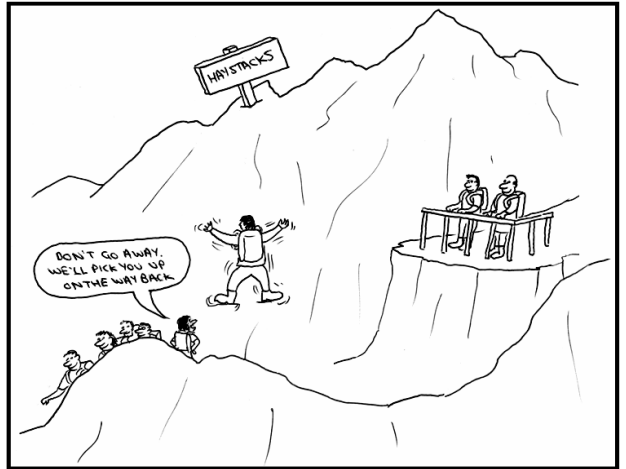
We left the pub and turning down Church Lane we passed an interesting church and the track eventually brought us to a

spectacular view of the Wolds. By this time the first mate had relinquished some of his duties, as Ann was becoming more confident. Although there was a slight hiccup when the starting point of the route through the woods was unclear. Obviously Ann was still providing the 'In Walk' entertainment but the lefts and rights really, really were improving!

The peace and tranquillity of the woods had a calming effect upon the group but it wasn't to last as we arrived at Edmonthorpe. The old water pump outside the social club brought forth more

Don't Look Down

One of the party was scared of heights, but we managed to get her up and down Haystacks but not without some nervous moments.



jokes at Ann's expense before continuing through the sleepy, picturesque village with its beautiful cottages.

Confidence ever growing, Ann led the intrepid group along a path between two hedges, the path being overgrown with blackthorn bushes, nettles etc. and Mick began to doubt his decision to wear shorts. Not totally convinced with Ann's navigation he overcame his nervousness of the threat of impending permanent injury and proceeded to give us all a botany lecture (If you know Mick well enough you would know his botanical knowledge is nil, some people are easily led up the garden...Ed.)

Successfully arriving back at Wymondham, we walked through the churchyard via the kissing gate (No jokes please.. Ed) and decided to take the alternative route back to the wind-

Who says we don't know where we are?

This also relates to the low cloud we found ourselves in whilst climbing the Old Man of Coniston.



mill through the fields and along the disused railway line as opposed to the road. Alan and Mick stopped to admire the converted station, whilst Ann and Chris strode on towards the cream teas. Thinking that she could now relax Ann was now confronted with a hissing goose (known as SID maybe... Ed) protecting her young.

At last — cream teas! The cat who obviously lived off fresh cream was removed from the table and the refreshments were enjoyed sitting outside in the sunshine. Alan was the only one who had a cream tea whilst Chris and Ann substituted tea with



Looking back over Buttermere - 3 April 1999

lemonade, how uncouth!! Ducks very bravely nibbled at Mick's bare toes. The windmill which was being restored to its former glory was open for exploration and Alan, Chris and Mick climbed to the top but Ann only made it to the first level - the 'in walk' entertainment continuing!

After a really enjoyable day we returned to Stamford by the scenic route but thankfully Ann was no longer in charge of the map- PHEW!!!

Ann

Does size matter?

This contribution to issue 48 came in the form of a letter from the Chairman.

"Dear Ed,
I am disappointed that nobody appeared to understand my after dinner joke at the Christmas dinner. So here's another chance to think about it:

'Bev and Stuart having recently become engaged, have bought a house and are busy decorating before moving in together. Well, Bev was a bit worried about this and she asked me if size mattered. I said 'No as long as you don't mind your wallpaper falling off!'

If you still don't get it you had better get the dictionary out."

Oh which format to use?

The Sign Post-its with issue 47 of the newsletter contained the following guidelines for preparing walk reports:

"Walk Reports for *Sign Posts Foot-steps* column guidelines are as follows:

i) *Word count* — a minimum of 50 words but know more that 500 words.

ii) *Content* — a humorous recap of events that happened along the way, not a list of directions.

iii) *Formats* - either DOS 720k (Edit/ascii/ Protex*, Mac (ascii), Acorn 800k (Edit), fomats or on paper, for inclusion.

*Protex is a piece of Public Domain Dos software that will run under Windows 3.xx and Windows 95™. A copy of Protex can he supplied free of charge."

A coxless pair!

Here are a couple of extracts from a walk around Ely on 1st December 1996. It is pretty flat an uninspiring scenery so we had to think of something to make it interesting. The walk was entitled the "Fenland Figure of Eight".

"The first points of interest were provided by a team of female rowers from Ely (well, we were all men together on this walk so you can't expect a non-sexist write-up! Ed.). It was, we decided, in technical terms, a coxed eight and this must be why the walk was called the Fenland Figure—of eight! This led to other comments such as 'Look there's a coxless pair!' and 'That's enough of this sculduggary!' Having got a cold shoulder we moved on to

Chainsaw Massacre!

This cartoon appeared after Mick got his Swiss Army knife out to start cutting down vegetation on a walk near Sheringham on 16th June 1996



Mick goes 'crazy ape bonkers' with his Swiss Army Chainsaw!

the Beam Engine House at Stretham which was closed. However we did find a convenient wall to sit behind out of the wind for the first soup stop of the day. Whilst here a quip about coxed pairs and 'oars led Mick to do an impression of a donkey (note this was an oral impression of a donkey not a physical one—his ears aren't that big!)"

"Whilst in Ely we took the opportunity to seek out a tasty pint of Abbot before going back onto the bank of the Great Ouse. The weather had warmed up during the day and it was now not so chilly. Along this stretch, Mick demonstrated his all-round knowledge by identifying a rare species of bird called a swan. Further along we saw a crooked tree. What do you call a bent tree? A homosapien! (another sexist joke but lesbisapien doesn't seem to work)"



Haystacks looms in the distance as we skirt Buttermere - 3 April 1999

And so, let it be written that on or about June 15, 1997, nine intrepid explorers did not set out from Teggs Nose car park, but that eight mad disciples, led by their insane, and probably mad, leader, the fearless(?) Mick, And let it thus be recorded that they did turn in the direction of left out of ye car park to descend into Teggs Nose Country Park. And the weather was but a picture of a June day in the noble country of England, being of a damp and dull variety, and so in the conditions so mentioned above did the walk begin to commence.

And let it also be known that the path did lead around a quarry of small proportions, and to one (hallucinating) member of the group it did look not unlike a U.F.O. mooring facility, much to the amusement of the others who commented that it was obviously too small for such activities. And thus the walk continued in a light-hearted manner and soon it was that the first of the three reservoirs (or the third if we were walking the wrong way round, which is always a distinct possibility) was reached. After passing the reservoir known as Teggs Nose we shortly came to the second dubbed 'Bottoms' and, after another turn in the direction of left, onto a wide black way for the use of automobiles. And let it be known that this surface was hard and not greeted with large portions of happiness.

And so it was that the road was followed to a fork (or a knife?) where upon the direction taken was to the right and along the side of reservoir three (or one?) named Ridgegate, into a large area containing many large wooden, brown and green things, known to the educated as trees. This was the fabled place called Macclesfield Forest.

And so it was that shortly after a bend to the left a small picnic type area was to be found, and at ye little picnic spot we did stop for a small time during which edible items were seen to be consumed. And let it be written (or typed or printed) that during this stop the presence of anything wasp-like was not to be seen and that after this stop a resumption was then made along a track towards the mighty peak of Shutlingsloe. At this stage of the chronicles let it be forgotten that two (that being not one, nor three but the

Ye Olde Walk Report

One of the more inventive walk reports was for a walk up Shutlingsloe in June 1997 reproduced here in its entirety. The decorative surround has been used on posters and in the Club leaflet.

number in between) members of the party did walk far too quickly, leaving the rest of the group behind. And let it be forgotten that these two, whose names shall not be related, did not stop till the mighty peak had been conquered. And let it not be known that Stuart and Lee (Doh!) did receive ye yellow card for bad discipline when the other disciples who tackled the mighty peak arrived. For it had been decided at the bottom that a two fronted assault would be made, one going over and the other skirting the base and thus they did meet at the other side having conquered the mightiest peak, in the near vicinity of Macclesfield!!

And for those who did not climb this peak of peaks, let it be recorded that the view was unrivalled by any thing this disciple has ever had the misfortune to look at in the boredom stakes, being of a very large amount of grey.

And so the disciples and their great leader (muffled laughter) did join another hard causeway and after resisting the pull of the local ale house, a river was crossed and it was wondered why only parts of the bridge had needed to be rebuilt after a flood had washed it away and why the rebuilt parts seemed to fit the kind of shape say a family sized automobile would have made? And the road was followed up a hill where a track was joined which did cross ye olde A54. And the track did continue over hill and vale (?) to a river confluence named in ye olde guide as the Three Shire (Shires) Heads (Head) and it was here that more consuming of edible delights did again occur. And along the river valley we did then continue before rising steeply to cross ye olde A54 again. The path did then cross moor like countryside, and a large black cloud did loom, and so with a quickening of the pace the pub was soon reached. At the inn of the fiddling cat we did drink and read amusing signs which hung on the walls. It was here that those known as the Parsons family did hit problems as Parsons Junior did snap a lace and senior did break a gaiter. And so the walk did continue down ye olde A537 and then down a track across ye arable type fields and here it was that the sphere of legends did make a brief, shining appearance. Then we did return to a hardened wayfare and we did again start to climb up hill and in the usual tradition of all such occasions the map bearer did get confused. And we did continue by forking (or spooning?) to the left back again into that most fabled of places, Macclesfield Forest.

We then did descend into the next little valley by the via of a stream (who needeth of a path?) before the final ascent back to the country park car park. And yea it did nearly finish the group, but they were toughened, by listening to so many of Mick's jokes, that they came through and survived.

And so ends the tale of the mighty legend of the scaling of Shutlingsloe.

Alas, ye olde pack-horse bridge - it must be time to consume for edible delights!

