

Coventry C.H.A Rambling Club

Newsletter March 2018



Devon Holiday 21-26 January.

The holiday in Devon was based at the excellent Langstone Cliff Hotel in Dawlish Warren. Two single decker coaches from the Swift Valley company provided transport and supported all activities during the week. Members were very happy with the hotel, finding spacious lounge facilities; excellent menus for all meals; and well appointed bedrooms.

A full programme of the usual three walks each day had been arranged by Brian Keates; with the sole exception of Wednesday when because of a poor weather forecast our coaches supported an excursion to Exeter.

On Monday the three walks all started near Easton Bridge. The 'A' walk of 7 miles (Richard Satchwell), the 'B' walk of 5 miles (Julian Denney), and the 'C' walk of 3½ miles (Ben Matthias & Mike Ledbrook) each followed a different path to the little market town of Chagford in Dartmoor.

After the evening meal entertainment was provided by Matthew Rock, who played the keyboard and sang in the voice of popular artistes. Including, perhaps surprisingly, that of Tina Turner.

On Tuesday the 'A' walk of 8 miles (Julian Denney) started from Budleigh Salterton, while the 'B' walk of 6 miles (Richard Satchwell) and the 'C' walk of 4 miles (Brian Keates) started from East Budleigh. All three walks successfully survived the mud to convene in Sidmouth.

After the evening meal Terry Quinney struggled with a saxophone, to general bemusement. Wednesday was a free day with most members visiting the historic and commercial sites of Exeter. After dinner we were entertained by songs from the vivacious and talented Victoria Starr.

On Thursday the three parties started together from Malborough but took different routes to Salcombe. The 'A' walk of 8 miles (George Henderson), the 'B' walk of 6 miles (Richard Satchwell) and the 'C' walk of 3½ miles (Mike Ledbrook) managed the heavy ground conditions with reasonable success.

Les Martin provided the later evening entertainment on guitar, singing songs from the 60s and 70s, and releasing the line dancers.

*Brian Keates
Alan Whitcroft*



Approaching Chagford on the Devon Holiday, 22 January 2018 [Photo: Richard Boyce]

Christmas Party 16 December 2017

The weather on the day was wet and miserable but the many brave souls who attended this glittering function received a warm welcome from Santa Claus, or Ben Matthias, playing carols on his accordion.

As is customary, the many donations towards the festive refreshments provided a colourful and enticing buffet table. Mike Ledbrook acted as MC and opened the frolics with a round of Irish Bingo.

This year the programme had changed, with a return to the days when members provided entertainment in the form of cameo performances of surprisingly high standard.

Joe Connell opened with a song 'The Wild Rover' (remembering most of the words), being ably supported by Ben Matthias on his accordion.

Angela Cottrell, memorably costumed, recited a self composed poetic monologue that graphically described the problems of being a Big Girl.

Sandra Jones sang the poignant song 'My Bill' from the musical Showboat; assisted by the very dapper appearance of Bill himself, in the form of Dave Thomas.

Neville Russell reprised his star performance of a love struck yokel in the monologue 'Wot Fur Do Ee Luv I?'

Dave Thomas completed the concert with an agile presentation of the Frank Sinatra song 'Walking My Baby Back Home'.

At the end of the festive frolics any remaining food was auctioned with money raised being donated to the three club charities.

Neville Russell

Annual Lunch Sunday 8 April

The annual Sunday lunch this year is again being held at the West Midland Golf Club, better known perhaps as The Lake at Barston. The cost of the 4-course meal will be £19 each, including a deposit of £5 which must be received by Sunday 1 April.

The coach will depart from its usual stand in Fairfax Street at 0900 hours and travel to the golf club which is near Hampton in Arden [B92 0LQ].

Three walks have been arranged. Alan Whitcroft will lead his intrepid 'A' walkers on a 5 miles gallop along a circular route. Members of a more genteel disposition may enjoy a leisurely 'B' walk of 3 miles circular.

Walkers more in tune with the philosophy of the poet Henry Davies may care to bumble around the lake at their own pace, covering a distance of one mile each time.

Facilities are available for changing footwear and clothing at the golf club prior to the meal, should the weather be unkind.

Numbers attending the luncheon are not limited by available seats on the coach - once all seats have been reserved then members are welcome to use their own transport and join us.

Alan Whitcroft

Saturday Walkers 2 December 2017

Many thanks to everyone who joined us on our walk around Potters' Green and who helped to raise the sum of £50 for the *Children in Need* charity appeal.

Rita Heal



*Christmas Party 2017 - finalists in the 'CHA's Got Talent' contest
Composite Photo: Brian Keates*



The hardy souls of 'B' party, approaching Snitterfield on 17 December. [Photo: Brian Keates]

Croatia Holiday 30 September - 7 October 2018

Bookings for our Croatian holiday are being received at a steady rate and we now have 60 confirmations. Any member who is interested should obtain further details from me without delay, as airline bookings must soon be finalised in order to hold the quoted costs.

Since this is the most expensive holiday we have yet arranged we can show comparative quotes from external companies to demonstrate the inherent value of our offering.

The CHA cost is £685 per person shared, with a single supplement of £145.

The Carrick Travel cost is £777 per person shared, with a single supplement of £495. This excludes the cost of any tours.

The Travelsphere cost is £999 per person shared, with a single supplement of £500.

The Brightwater Group cost is £1,495 per person shared, no single supplement quoted.

*Alan Whitcroft
079 0899 9180*

*"The Trossachs"
Parrotts Grove
Aldermans Green
Coventry CV2 1NR*

Chips & Skittles 27 April 2018

An evening of skittles has been arranged for Friday 27 April at the Barnacle Village Hall starting at 1930 hours. Members will be familiar with this venue since it has previously hosted our barn dances. Ample car parking is available [CV7 9LD] and any further details can be obtained from a committee member.

Tickets are available at the very reasonable price of £10 and this includes the cost of a supper of either fish or chicken with chips, although there is also a vegetarian option. And of course, a licensed bar is provided.

Any profits from the evening will be distributed as usual among our three chosen charities: Zoë's Place, the Air Ambulance Service, and Myton Hospice.

Players are advised to arrive in good time to facilitate team selection and seating arrangements.

*Terry Stamper
079 4054 4606*

Guidance for New Leaders

It is advisable to appoint a back-marker. Please also bear in mind that (particularly in woodland) paths may dart off in all directions, so do remind everyone to keep the person behind in view.

The leader has the right to refuse anyone who is not suitably clad and does not comply with the CHA safety etiquette. Please also count the number of walkers before setting off.

A mobile phone and first aid kit should be carried, and the leader is responsible for his/her own choice of maps, compass and any GPS devices. You should also carry a whistle to attract attention.

There may be occasions where some road walking is required. It is essential that, where there is no pavement, walkers walk on the right in single file, facing oncoming traffic, but crossing to the other side well before sharp right-hand bends. They should follow the specific instructions of you, the leader, in all such cases.

The club strongly recommends that where the route involves dangerous lengths of road walking then the leader should consider the use of high visibility jackets by the leader and the designated back marker.

Walkers must ensure they have clean footwear before boarding public transport or entering a pub. This does not mean that footwear can be cleaned on people's drives, gardens, or any other private property, leaving a mess on a residential road or pavement. They should show consideration when outside other people's properties.

You should ensure that any closed gates are closed again after the party has passed through, whilst gates that were already open should remain so.

Committee

Email

The use of email to disseminate information to members has many advantages. It is regrettable that with a total membership of almost 300, only 5% have registered their email address with the club. These 16 members saved the club £36 in postage last year.

Not only can any news about walk cancellations and changes of time or venue be immediately passed to members, but also on request they can receive monthly copies of committee minutes.

If you have this facility available to you, then please seriously consider registering your address with the secretary.

Brian Keates

Apropos of Nothing ...

He was the original life and soul of the party. When any group of friends and family got together, I would be sent to make an immediate instrumental booking. ('Away you to 36 and see if Alf is in'). For any formal street party or function, Alf would have been booked early to ensure availability.

Alf was elderly, one-legged, and legendary; but more importantly he was our neighbourhood accordion man. I'm not sure where they have all disappeared to, but the accordion was a mobile piano, strapped to the chest of the performer and operated by a system of bellows.

Practically every street seemed to have its own local accordionist. Like some large mammals they could on occasion be found in groups at local water holes, all squeezing and bobbing away like demented Panasonic bunnies.

They supported the singsongs. No sheet music was needed; Alf seemed to know every song requested. As an instrument, the accordion required undoubted skill and dexterity; so perhaps this is why it is now a rarity. Today people prefer music on tap, with the added advantage that the skill level is lower.

Somehow the atmosphere was better when the group itself created the music. Singsongs were mainly choral; any solo performances would come at the end of the evening when the artist was suitably emotional. Every male soloist seemed to have left a girl behind in Ireland at some time.

Other instruments could be brought into play. I'm sure that the army considered skill in spoon playing to be mandatory during the first war, as almost every old soldier could rattle a rhythm. Children were also welcome participants, banging with great enthusiasm on anything that resembled a drum.

An older child would be despatched with a ten bob note, to tap discreetly on the back door of the local off-licence and return with change and a large jug of dark liquid.

A regular booking for Alf was the Thursday afternoon old-time dancing in the Community Centre. Since most of the eligible males were away fighting, the ladies all dressed up and danced with each other or with the handful of enthusiastic older gentlemen. We sat on the floor and watched - ah, that heavy smell of lavender and the swish of taffeta.

There were of course other types of accordion. A smaller version clipped to each hand and sagged in the middle like an over ripe Christmas decoration. Its sound range was however quite limited and the instrument was only favoured by whiskered sailors and nostalgic folk singers.

(With acknowledgements to Ben)