

Newsletter No 10

May 2004



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THERE AIN'T NO CURE...

...for the Summertime Blues.

Well, actually there is. Exercise the body and mind with Knobbly Stick. Get out into the fresh air, and follow new government guidelines about the value of physical exertion.

(Now, loyal subjects as we are, we do take issue with HM Govt here. They talk about walking to work—but if you live in an atmosphere loaded with carbon monoxide, it's not going to do you a fat lot of good, is it? You need to get out into unspoiled countryside, and give the lungs a chance. They also talk about hoovering being good for you, but what really happens here is that you get dust up your nose and a bad back.

So, summertime blues in May can be dispelled, if you're quick, by a week in Keswick (16th to 23rd). But hurry, time is short for this prestigious international event. (To find out why it's international, you'll have to be on the trip).

Summertime blues in June? No way! Grasmere figures large here, and also Ullswater. Both at great hotels. Grasmere is right in the middle of things and we can walk straight from the hotel door on most days. The Glenridding Hotel on Ullswater is in a stunning location and we start at least one day with a ride on the steamer. An ideal

way to start a walking day, and dinner in the restaurant overlooking the lake is a great way to finish it. The walking in between isn't bad either!

What about July? No need for the blues there either. If you don't fancy the Lakes, what about the Dales? Our new venue there, the Trad-dock, has impressed customers so far. Is it the countryside, is it the food, or is it the decanter of sherry in every bedroom?

In August, we'll get away from the crowds in the Lakes and Dales—Knobbly Stick can do this because we know where they'll be, and we'll avoid them. We'll do the popular walks if that's what you want, but we think that some of our lesser-known routes are just as good, and we often get them more or less to ourselves. Our guests seem to agree with us.

We're also booking now for September, so if you're thinking that far ahead, get in touch with us to see what's on.

C'mon Everybody!

We spend a lot of time telling you how good our holidays are, but we would say that wouldn't we? If you've been on a KS holiday, we'd love to hear from you and print some impressions of your experience.

Come on...the chance of writing fame at last.

Something else...

you get on a Knobbly Stick holiday: the personalised Knobbly Stick after-care service.

Is this why so many Knobbly Stickers come back for more?

You all get a log of your holiday—details of routes, including stats on distance travelled and feet of ascent, together with a note of any amusing or interesting events that have taken place. We also include some background information on many of the places we have visited.

But the most important document is the famous personalised Knobbly Stick Certificate which, we understand, is now appearing, framed, in halls and front rooms all across the land and beyond. As a recent improvement we are now trying to include in the certificate a photo of a place visited during the holiday.

We can send you photos of the holiday, too...where we have them, and where the results are acceptable and printable.

Finally, while stocks last, Knobbly Stickers now receive a unique sew-on badge (or patch) - a **must-have fashion accessory**, not on sale anywhere.

We want you to remember your Knobbly Stick holiday, so why not have a record of it, and something to remember us by?

What's Been Talked and What's Been Walked

Well, if you haven't joined us during the spring, sorry but you've missed a treat.

Our trip to France was a triumph, in spite of some blustery weather. We did manage to avoid getting seriously rained on, and were duly braced by some coastal walking along beach and cliff top. And some of us were intellectually improved (!) by our visits to Ypres, Agincourt and Amiens. Our international party, with quite a wide age range, had a great time, and we were really well looked after by the Château des Tourelles in Le Wast. Do drop in there next time you're passing, even if you're not with Knobbly Stick.

Wasdale in April was breathtaking. The beauty of a glass-like Wast Water early in the morning literally brought tears to the eyes of one of our guests, and even grnarled old Knobbly Stick operators had to admit it was something special. Some great walking, culminating in an ascent of Scafell Pike, which we had practically to ourselves, due, we think, to the weather people getting it wrong again, as they had done all week. They kept forecasting rain, and we kept getting sunshine. Once again, the whole experience was enhanced by the hospitality of Adrian and Sharon, at the Low Wood Hall, who really looked after us well.

Our short break at the Crooklands was also a good one. We did three walks, the first in the Yorkshire Dales where, apart from a little flurry of folk as we used a short stretch of a popular path, we saw 2 people all day (and this on a Bank Holiday Monday). We also spent a day on a quiet part of the Dales Way in the Howgills area and the last walk was in the southern Lakes. We felt this gave our guests a taste of the variety of scenery on offer around here.

We've also had one or two "specials" for individuals or groups, so if you don't see what you want in our brochure, please give us a call, and we'll see what we can fix up.

So, that's what's been walked. What's been talked? We've reformed the NHS, solved Britain's energy problems, with reference to BNFL and windpower, blind tasted wines, tested beers for their medicinal effects, tried different lolling techniques, discussed whether this is the end for Gerard Houllier, whether we should wear gaiters or not and whether there was a lion in the Rupert the Bear stories. We've also fretted on the efficacy of thermal underwear and what species of guillemot we saw at St Bees Head, wondered about all the military encounters in northern France, and been far too amused by some strange shop signs over there. What more could anybody want?

Knobbly Stick's Ten Laws of Fell Walking (Continued...)

Well, would you believe it? We had a response to our request in Newsletter No 9 for suggested additions to our 10 laws. And they weren't from a Mrs Trellis of North Wales, but from a real person, so there.

This lady proposes:

12) Just when you've passed the tricky bit, you fall over. (A metaphor for life, here, surely); and 13) If you're leading and you're not **absolutely** certain that the route you're taking to the pub is the most direct one, it's best to keep it to yourself.

(This refers to an incident when a KS guide was actually threatened with physical violence — and this from one of our most charming and, we thought, peace-loving friends).

It was his own fault though.

This leads us to:

14) The KS leader always knows the way to the pub (and to most other places as well).

15) Never assault, or threaten to assault, a KS leader. It's never pleasant to see a grown man cry.

16) On arrival at the pub, show your gratitude to your leader for impeccable route finding in the usual way.

It would be nice to have 20 eternal truths, so please let us have some more.

STOP PRESS!!!!!!

The ospreys are back in the Lake District—2 eggs waiting to hatch. Why not join us in July for a viewing??

PROBLEM CORNER—with your old friend Glen Ridding

Dear Glen: I was a promising agony aunt until I missed the Knobbly Stick holiday in Wasdale when my goldfish died. What can I do? Penny Ghent, Knobblyland

Dear Penny

Don't worry! There are plenty of holidays to go on. There's another Wasdale one at the beginning of August. The walking, the scenery, the food and the company will have you back on your feet again in no time.

And, no, you can't have your old job back!

Dear Glen: Why should I bother with a guided walking holiday? Can't I just buy a map and arrange it all myself? Ms B. Myownboss, Tufftown

Dear Ms B.

Of course you can, and many do. It's just that with a guided holiday, you can relax entirely (no routes to work out etc), and your KS guides know the areas so well that they know where to go in what weather and at what time of year. And safety is paramount. All accommodation is pre-booked and transport is taken care of, so you only have to make one booking. And that applies to their self-guided walks as well. Why not give it a whirl?

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