

# Newsletter No 15

May 2005

## LORD OF THE ONION RINGS: A KNOBBLY STICK BLOCKBUSTER

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### PART 1: The Fellowship of the Onion Ring

As the weather improves, all the signs are that we're in for a great summer and autumn.

If you fancied joining us on our "Walking the Easy Way" holiday in June, or the Dales Country House break in August, we're sorry, but both holidays are now full.

However, there is still plenty to think about. For a start, there's another Dales Country House break from 18 to 22 July. And don't forget that this is more than just a walking holiday—there are so many things of interest to look out for—industrial archaeology, geology, bird life, all set in fantastic scenery.

Wasdale is another "must-visit" place, and we're there for a week from 30 July: loads of walks off the beaten track, as well as the possibility of getting to the top of some of our best-loved fells—Great Gable and Scafell Pike for example. If you've never been to Wasdale, it really is the one place that sums up the Lakes perfectly.

And how about an autumn break? In September, we're at Keswick, Ullswater, Wasdale and, our top tip, Grasmere, from where there are just so many delightful walks at all levels of difficulty—from a lakeside stroll to the summit of the "mighty Helvellyn". It's all here...

### PART 2: The One Pub

This being the Greyhound at Shap, which is fast becoming one of our "brand leaders". See, we can do all that fancy commercial jargon. It certainly encapsulates all that we want people to find on a KS holiday—a friendly atmosphere, great food and drink and, of course, some terrific walking—from the well-known, such as the High Street fells around Haweswater to the quiet and unfrequented, well away from the crowds.

One of the things that attracts people is that it is so easy to reach - just 5 minutes from the M6.

Because of its popularity, we're planning to run weekend breaks that aren't advertised in the brochure.

The dates are:-

- 20 to 22 May;
- 10 to 12 June;
- 22 to 24 July;
- 12 to 14 August;
- 19 to 21 August;
- 16 to 18 September;
- 30 Sept to 2 Oct;

and 7 to 9 October.

The breaks run from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, so you get 2 nights at the hotel, one full day's walk and a "good half-day" on the Sunday—all for £175 a head.

If you're interested, please let us know as soon as possible—if only to prevent John running off to listen to folk music and to save Pete being forced to get his implements out to do some gardening.

### PART 3: The Return of Les Anglais...

...to La Belle France.

The Alps holiday from 2 to 16 July is nearly full, although we might still be able to find a couple of spaces for you. The Giffre valley is a wonderful place and the walking is just superb—and we emphasise it **is** walking...not climbing, mountaineering, or something even worse—like yodelling, or alpenhorn playing.

We're also running our northern France holiday on the Opal Coast from 15 to 22 October. This will be our third venture to this increasingly popular area and it's a bit different from our "normal" (?) holidays, in that the walking is fairly flat, and we do plenty of sight-seeing and general chilling out as well. The place is full of fascinating towns and villages to explore and there is some excellent golf to be had—we're told the courses here such as St Omer and Le Touquet are first class.

The whole area has a friendly, almost familiar, feel to it but it is gloriously and undeniably French, and we think this is a perfect break for anyone wanting to experience a relatively little-known part of France, with all the hassle taken away. If you can get to a point near the M6; M1; M25 corridor, we'll collect you in our transport, so you won't even have to worry about ferries, flights and all that gubbins!!

## HOW DO YOU GET UP STEEP HILLS?

One solution is to be fantastically fit, but somehow, we never seem to get round to that. We blame the hotels, which all provide far too much delicious food, and our own prowess in the kitchen—what we can't do with a pound of mince and a few chilli peppers isn't worth talking about.

Secondly, you could just take it all nice and slowly. The higher you get, the wider the view, so why not take frequent breaks to admire it? After all, without a hill to have them looked at from, views would be somewhat futile we always think.

Third, find some kind of displacement activity to take your mind off the fact that your body may be trying to suggest it's all a bit steep. You could try thinking of 10 songs with fish in the title: eg "There's a Plaice"; "With Cod on Our Side".

Or you could start a deep, philosophical discussion on some of the pressing issues of the day: is human nature essentially good or evil, are the play-offs a fair way of deciding promotion and relegation, will Manchester Tart be on the menu this evening?

Best of all, just enjoy it! That's what

you're here for. After all, you could be working...or lying on a crowded beach somewhere getting bored...or listening to Tony Blair / Michael Howard / Charles Kennedy / Robert Kilroy or, for our US readers George Dubya or John Kerry.

### That's Amazing!!

French composer Maurice Ravel used to be a bus driver in Penrith, and came up with the idea for ice-dancing anthem *Bolero* while stuck in traffic on the A6. You know... drumming his fingers on the steering wheel...dum-diddy-dum-dum etc

## Right to Roam?

After years of argy-bargy, the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act comes into force in the Lakes and Dales on 28 May this year. Essentially, it means that walkers will have access to all areas of open, uncultivated countryside. Excluded are private gardens, parks, buildings, working quarries and arable land. There are safeguards to protect the environment and livestock and this new "access land" can be closed for up to 28 days a year.

We're very fortunate in the Lake District in that access has rarely been a problem and, only once, has a KS party been challenged by a farmer—and we'd found his dog for him!

But from the end of May, we will all have access to a wider area, representing over 500 square miles of mountain, moor, heath and common in the Lake District National Park.

Understandably, landowners are keen to point out that the CRoW Act does not confer a blanket "right to roam". Walkers have to be responsible and have respect for the needs of the people whose land they cross. KS walkers know that we like to do our bit for keeping the countryside tidy and that we're keen to leave as little evidence of our presence as possible. It will be interesting to see what effect the Act will have on our activities.

We don't expect any of our usual routes to be restricted in any way, but we all have to bear in mind that we still just can't go off anywhere we like.

The Country Code has been amended to contain just 5 points:

- 1) Be safe—plan ahead and follow any signs;
- 2) Leave gates and property as you find them;
- 3) Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home;
- 4) Keep dogs under close control;
- 5) Consider other people.

For further info on the CRoW Act, please visit [www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk).

## Test Drivers Wanted

As part of our continued expansion into France, we are planning to introduce a range of self-guided walks to complement our guided "discovery" holidays there.

Many of you will be aware of the network of "Grande Randonnée (GR)" (literally "big hike") routes that the French have, and we aim to take the best bits of some of them to produce unforgettable

walks through some very varied terrain. Our first such venture is a splendid route through Flanders near the Franco-Belgian border to the Opal Coast at Cap Blanc Nez, passing close to the town of St Omer on the way.

The route will suit walkers of all levels of experience, as it uses field tracks, forest and little-used lanes. Amblers and ramblers will be fine as

there are no towering spires of rock to conquer!

We are in the process of putting our detailed route notes and accommodation guide together and are looking for a volunteer to do an introductory "at cost" test walk for us. This is a one-off, first-come, first-served offer so, if there are any adventurous souls out there...please get in touch for a chat and further information.