

# Newsletter No 16

August 2005

## HELLO SUMMER: AND HERE COMES AUTUMN

### *In this Issue!*

- Summer...was that it?
- Autumn—a packed schedule with Knobbly Stick.
- Jane's Fashion Tips—sorry, due to pressure on space, this exciting, new feature has had to be held over until the next issue. Bet you can't wait.
- Plans for 2006.
- What are the Knobblymen really like?



### **The Summer So Far**

We're sure you're all dying to know what we've been up to since our last Newsletter, so here goes. We had a great few days at the Glenridding Hotel on the shores of Ullswater in May, and discovered a couple of new routes to add to our stock of walks in this area.

Then we had our first visit to the Highfield Hotel in Keswick. Despite some very moderate weather during the first part of the week, the party enjoyed their holiday and the hotel did us proud with the exceptional cuisine being a particular highlight. Some of the group were so impressed that they have been back to the hotel "under their own steam", and we're heading off there again with a group in September (see "Autumn Specials"). We were also happy to recommend the Highfield to a couple who wanted a "Self Guided" KS holiday and they, too, were delighted with the hotel. At the end of June, we had a few days at the Netherwood in Grange over Sands. This time the weather was much kinder and, once again, the group loved the hotel—and the walking. A bit more on this in our "Plans for 2006" article. We've also been to the Traddock in the Dales, where we enjoyed the usual comfort and hospitality offered here. Oh, and the Alps...

### **Autumn Specials**

Everyone should have heard about our summer wine offer which, miraculously, has now become our Autumn Wine Offer. (How can we be so adaptable? We don't know. It's a miracle). Autumn weather is often nice and settled, the colours are beginning to show and the school hols are over, so fewer crowds—not that we don't know how to avoid the crowds anyway.

There are four holidays in September to consider, three of which are wine offer specials (ie one bottle of wine for each day you spend walking with us).

First, the Highfield at Keswick, from Sept 3rd to the 10th. The Highfield has been one of our discoveries of the year. Fantastic food, a great view down Derwent Water, plus the lively town of Keswick if you fancy a stroll after dinner. But the hotel is just far enough from the town centre to remain quiet and peaceful.

Then, we're at the Glenridding from the 11th to the 16th, and the Red Lion in Grasmere from the 18th to the 23rd. Both old favourites of ours now, these two venues offer first class walking, as well as high quality food and accommodation.

The fourth September holiday (no wine offer on this one, we're afraid) is the Wasdale holiday at the Low Wood Hall from the 24th to the 1st of October. Many people believe the

walking at Wasdale to be tough and rugged and, while some of it can be, there is a wide choice of more leisurely walks to be had in the valley and in the neighbouring valley of Eskdale and along the coast at St Bees. Variety is the keynote here: why not come and try it out?

The final wine offer holiday is "Discovering the Opal Coast" in northern France—from 15th to 22nd October. We've had a great time here in 2003 and 2004, and are looking forward to renewing acquaintance with some old friends...such as the staff at the Hostellerie du Château des Tourelles (our hotel), the visitor centre at Agincourt, where we discover the origin of the two-fingered salute, and some of the walled towns—"romping round the ramparts". The amount of walking on this holiday has been less than we normally do in the Lakes and Dales—mainly because there's just so much else to see and do but there's plenty of walking to be had for those who want it. As we keep saying, because there are two leaders, we can be flexible enough to offer as close to a tailor-made holiday as we believe it's possible to get. There's also the August Bank Holiday break at the Greyhound, Shap, where you can enjoy Lake District walking away from the crowds. Full details on the above holidays are in our brochure and on our website.

## PLANS FOR 2006

Already??? Well, we have to start thinking about it, so ...

We plan to continue with our Lakes and Dales favourites, both guided and self-guided. However, we feel we ought to make it clearer in our brochure exactly what kind of walking is on offer for each holiday. So, for example, we might run two holidays at, say, Glenridding, one being aimed at relative newcomers to hill-walking, and the other at the more experienced walker looking for something a little more demanding. One option is to run both holidays concurrently so that, for example, a couple who have different ideas as to what makes a good walking break can still have a holiday together, even though they may walk separately. Because there are two of us, we can do this.

We also plan to expand our busi-

ness in France, with a self-guided option in northern France. We have devised a route, using some of the best bits of the local footpath network, to walk from Steenvoorde near the Belgian border to just south of Calais—"Real France Real Close" as the advertising slogan has it. This would make an ideal spring or autumn walk, and full details will be in our next brochure.

The Loire valley will be a new venture for us in 2006 and we've already taken provisional bookings for a guided holiday there for 2007! We also have a holiday in Normandy and we've had enquiries about Brittany... and even Spain.

If you want to do a particular holiday at a particular time of year, do please get in touch: our calendar is almost a blank sheet of paper at the moment so it could just be that we can sort

something out for you now. That's one of the reasons for booking with Knobbly Stick—the individual really does matter to us, and we enjoy being able to tailor our holidays to suit particular needs and requests.

Another new idea for next year is "Walking the Really Easy Way", where we will offer almost level walks through some spectacular Lake District scenery. This holiday will be especially for people who have done little or no hill-walking before but want to see the Lakes without worrying about too much exertion. We're doing this partly in response to comments made to us about what "Easy" really means, and partly in response to requests to do Lake District "Tea Shop" walks.

Look out for these in our 2006 brochure.

## Biographical Note

One of our regular visitors has pointed out that our brochure should include some information on the two Knobblymen, John and Pete. There is a bit of info on the website but we have to be honest and say we didn't really think people would be interested, and our natural modesty has prevented us from saying too much. However, we're very grateful for the suggestion, so will include something in the 2006 brochure.

And for those who want to know a little now, here you are...both of us are in our middle 50's, and have been keen walkers for over 30 years. We've walked mainly in the Lakes and Dales, but also extensively in Scotland, Wales and

France. And in 1997, Pete completed an "off-road" route from Land's End to John o'Groats. Pete has 2 children and 2 grandchildren, and John has 2 grown-up children but no grandchildren. Pete used to work in the office of the local electricity company, while John was a languages teacher at a comprehensive school in Kendal.

Pete's main interests are his grandchildren (he is an expert at making funny faces at small children, who seem to love his peculiar grimaces), walking (of course) and attempting not to lose interest in modern football.

John's main interest, apart from walking, is live music (mainly, to

Pete's disgust, folk music) and he is a keen armchair cricketer. He played cricket with great enthusiasm but little personal success. Both of us have been married to delightful, supportive wives for over 30 years, and we set up Knobbly Stick in 2002. The real bonus has been not so much the walking—which we knew we'd enjoy—but the people we've met. All those who have been on our holidays have been interesting, the vast majority have been charming and many have become personal friends. We like to think we are sociable, friendly and amusing. Most people agree with the first two, but we're not convinced about the last one...

## A Sad Footnote—Elaine Lister

Many of our regular walkers will be saddened to learn of the death of Elaine Lister who took part in no fewer than 10 Knobbly Stick holidays. Elaine was taken ill with a

stroke while away in Switzerland in January, and never recovered, finally passing away in the middle of July. Those who knew Elaine will remember her as a vivacious and charming

lady. She will be greatly missed, and our sympathies go out to her sons, Colin and Paul, of whom she often spoke with great pride and affection.