



# Newsletter No 6

May 2003

## Fame at Last!!

### Knobblies Hit National Headlines

The headline on our website says it all...As some of you will know, Knobbly Stick were asked to show Stephen McClarence, travel writer for the Times (yes, indeed), around the Western Lakes.

He was bowled over with what he saw, and wrote a glowing account of his three days with us, which saw the light of day on Saturday 26th April. Modesty ought to prevent us from reproducing some of the things he said, but...

"...you couldn't hope for better guides than Nicholls and Jackson..."

"Knobbly Stick loses no points."

"It has been a magnificent day...", and so on.

We had a great time with Stephen and his wife, and it was even more gratifying that he now shares our enthusiasm for our local patch. If you want to read the whole article, you can do so by visiting our website or by going to [www.timesonline.co.uk/travel](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/travel).

In all modesty, it wasn't just Knobbly Stick that made his stay so enjoyable. The weather was brilliant and our hosts at the Low Wood Hall Hotel in Wasdale and at Fleatham House in St

Bees were fantastic too.

And, of course, Western Lakeland is a wonderful part of the world. Many of you who have contacted us have told us that it is the idea of the peace and remoteness of this side of the Lakes that you find so appealing. It's also ideal for bird-watchers and lovers of places just a bit off the beaten track. We're there on 14th June for a week and again in September. We may also try running a break there in August. So, what are you waiting for? Don't be shy. Come and join us!

### Swallows...but no Amazons

The swallows are here, there's a bright golden haze on the meadow and the char will soon be a-jumpin'. Yep, it's summertime...and the livin' is easy! Perfection.

We happen to think the Lakes and Dales are amongst the finest landscapes in England. But then we would say that, wouldn't we...come and find out for yourselves!

Call us on **01539 737576** or email us at [info@knobblystick.com](mailto:info@knobblystick.com) and we'd be delighted to discuss any ideas you may have for walking holidays in Britain or France and we'll do all we can to tailor the holidays to your individual needs.

### Not Your Average Walking Holiday Company

Because there's no such thing as an average walker and each one of you is unique...which is why we try to ensure that you are all treated as individuals. There are two of us, so it's often possible to split the group into two parties for some or all of the day. If you want a gentle walk, we can provide it...if you want something more challenging, we can do that, too. So long as it's walking...we don't do bungee jumping, white-water rafting, ab-seiling or, in fact, anything that involves complicated equipment that only a Houdini can understand.

### Fire...and how to Prevent it

If, after a few days in our company, you don't agree with us that Knobbly Stick Country is fantastic walking territory, we'll be really disappointed. In fact we'll probably get so depressed, we'll set fire to our own boots. With our feet still in them! Please don't let this happen!

If you want to avoid the summer, there are still places on most of our autumn breaks - the season of mellow fruitfulness when the sight of the bracken turning red and the trees to gold can be unforgettable.

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# Knobbly Stick Goes Abroad—Ooh La La

We'd worked hard on it, but we never thought it would go as well as it did.

April saw our first foray into foreign parts, when we took seven guests to the Pas-de-Calais in northern France for a week. Admittedly, it is only a few miles over the English Channel but, once you get past Dover, things are nonetheless very different with a piquancy all of their own.

This break was never intended to be a walking holiday pure and simple, although there are plenty of good walks to be had in the region. We strolled along cliff tops and beaches, getting plenty of good sea air into our lungs, and meandered around the ramparts of some of the fascinating fortified towns of this part of Europe—Boulogne, Ypres and Montreuil all provide excellent opportunities for an appetite-inducing and relaxing wander.

Some of the places we visited are internationally famous—such as the Menin Gate at Ypres and the mighty Gothic cathedral at Amiens

which, apparently has the largest nave in the world. It also possesses the most fantastic organist...he was playing whilst we were there, presumably practising for the Easter services, and the sound was just wonderful...made the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end. You know!

Seeing the Menin Gate is a tremendously moving experience—it lists the names and regiments of the 55,000 British and Empire soldiers lost in the First World War whose bodies were never found. It is virtually impossible, when faced with several huge walls filled with names, to comprehend the scale of this devastating loss of life. And this only lists British Empire losses. Presumably, there'd be a similar number of French, German and Belgian casualties.

On a more cheerful note, we went to some less well-known corners as well—the twisted spire at Verchin, the pebbly beach at Ambletouse, the street market at Etaples and, most memorably for one of our party, the tiny chocolate factory at Beussent.

It was a pity, with international events casting a shadow over things at the time, that our French friends though we might be anti them, and our three American guests were worried that they might not be welcomed by the French. But everyone got on famously and gave the lie to some regrettable press coverage and comment.

Our thanks are due to our hosts at the Château des Tourelles in Le West for a truly great welcome... they really went out of their way for us.

If you fancy the Knobbly Stick French Experience, we're booked there again from 19th to 26th July.

Come and help us solve the mystery of the village bar and while you're at it discover a little of the real France.

Allez, mes braves!

PS How about Normandy next year? Or the Loire Valley—walking through the vineyards. How does that sound? Please let us know.

## They Keep Coming Back.... Thank Goodness !

In previous newsletters we've said how much we've enjoyed meeting our guests, and we've yet to have an awkward customer. It is very pleasing that almost all those who've been on holiday with us do come back for more!

We've been busy in the Dales and Lakes over the last few weeks and have developed some relatively low level routes to go alongside our "getting to the top of somewhere" walks. This gives us valuable flexibility when it comes to less than perfect weather, or if some or all of the party fancy a less demanding day—waterfalls, woodland, lakesides... even a lime kiln the size of a small cathedral...all waiting to be explored by you.

We believe walking is all about enjoyment rather than challenges. For more homespun philosophy on the Knobbly Stick style of walking, the latest issue of "Yorkshire Signpost" magazine carries an article by John, entitled "There's Nowt Clever About Walking Fast".

## What They Said About Their Knobbly Stick Holiday.....Well Not Really !

"Nothing's better than a walk, a pint and a look at the daffodils."...Mr W.W., Grasmere.

"Your walks have given me a great idea for a series of guidebooks."...Mr A.W., Kendal

"Castlerigg stone circle would be an excellent place for some sort of sacrifice"...Thorsfinn the Skullsplitter, Iceland

"Sacré bleu! Magnifique! Formidable."...Gen C de G, France

"You showed me 2 ways up Helvellyn, but I believe there is a third way"...Mr T.B., Downing Street

"Enjoyed the railway"...The Fat Controller, Sodor

"Liked the hedgehogs, but who was that blasted rabbit I kept seeing?"...Mrs B.P., Sawrey

"The wind at Hardknott Roman fort blew right up my toga"...Biggus Stickus, Rome.