

Newsletter No 8

January 2004



HAPPY NEW YEAR !!!!

Yes, indeed. Happy New Year to one and all. Whether you're an existing Knobbly Sticker, or someone who's still thinking about it, we at KSGHQ (Knobbly Stick Global Headquarters) hope you have a wonderful year and that you get plenty of great walking—with Knobbly Stick or not.

What's New in Knobbly Stick Land?

We know what you're wondering...what has Knobbly Stick got to offer in 2004? When are we going on our next Knobbly Stick expedition? (Or, when are we going to take the plunge and go on our first Knobbly Stick trip?)

You should all have had your 2004 brochures by now—the Knobbly Stick elves worked long into the night sticking stamps on envelopes and we hope they (the brochures, that is, not the elves) all got through the Christmas rush. Please let us know if you haven't received your copy and we'll pop one in the post for you straight away.

We've two new holidays in 2004, one based at the Austwick Traddock in the Yorkshire Dales, and one at Grasmere in the Lakes. We had a sort of "trial run" at the Traddock in December, and a great time was had by all. The weather was kind—not a single drop of rain—and Bruce and Jane, our hosts at the Traddock, did us proud—log fires, sofas, decanters

of sherry—just what an English country house holiday should be!

And, as if all that were not enough, part of the Knobbly Stick party formed a team which beat the locals in a pub quiz round the corner. You're not just pretty faces, after all!

Don't forget, though, that we're still going back to our previous Dales Hotel—the Falcon Manor at Settle, which remains a great place to spend a few days. Both hotels are excellent centres for lots of interesting walking and places to visit, so why not join us there? (Anybody expecting to see nude Calendar Girls may be disappointed, though).

Our other new holiday is based at the Red Lion Hotel in the centre of Grasmere, back in our "homeland" of the Lake District. Grasmere is in the very heart of Lakeland, and combines an ideal situation for walking (hiking for our US friends) with the attractions of a fairly sizeable village.

As usual, we'll try to match the walks we offer with the level of exertion you want to put in—from low level walks around nearby Rydal Water to more strenuous days on Helvellyn or Fairfield. Come for a lazy few days, or to explore some of the finest walking in England. The choice, as always with Knobbly Stick, is yours. Easedale Tarn, Silver Howe, Grisedale Tarn, Pavey Ark, Lingmoor Fell—magical names for magical places. Come and see them for yourself!

Knobbly Stick Pet Rescue Drama!

There we were, minding our own business—a party of four Knobbly Stickers together with Pete and John – just leaving the top of a fell overlooking Windermere in November when, on climbing a stile, John noticed a dog lying on the ground near to the path. Conscious - just - but not doing any of the things dogs normally do when they see you, like barking, or trying to bite your hand, Harry - for it was he - was obviously in a bad way and just about ready to throw in his paw in the game of doggy poker that is life. But KS saved the day! Some of the party fed Harry with Mars Bars and tuna sandwiches while others contacted the owners and made arrangements to meet at the not very accessible spot we found ourselves in. By the time Harry's owner had arrived, the dog had revived considerably but was still in poor shape. One of our number offered his walking pole—a stout 6-foot wooden affair—and his waterproof, from which was fashioned a makeshift stretcher / sling and we carried Harry off the fell to the relative comfort of the owner's car. We were pleased to learn later that Harry survived and did not have, as was suspected, a broken leg. He had, however, been missing for 3 days and nights in cold and wet weather. We'd like to thank Karen, Val, Chris and Don for their efforts. All receive the KS Be Kind to Doggies Badge. And Harry says "Woof, woof!"

In this Issue!

- GASP - at what we have new for you in 2004!
- THRILL—to our tale of Pet Rescue!
- SAY OUI—to our French experience!
- BE ASTOUNDED—at our high tech start to the year!
- MARVEL—at our range of self-guided walks!
- HELP—Knobbly Stick celebrate its birthday



It is Not the Sea to Drink!

Or, as the French say, "Ce n'est pas la mer à boire". This means, to you and me, "It is very easy" which is exactly what it is to come on a Knobbly Stick holiday to France.

We were there last April and, because the trip was such a good one, we're running it again at the same time of year - April 3rd to the 10th, the week before the Easter weekend. We already have some bookings lined up for this break, but not enough yet to make it viable.

Here are 10 good reasons for joining us:-

- Great coastal walking
- Romping round the ramparts
- Enjoy the hospitality of the Château des Tourelles
- Great French cuisine
- The cathedral at Amiens - a true Gothic masterpiece
- Learn some French, or brush up what you already have!
- The visits to Agincourt and Ypres
- French wine
- The great Knobbly Stick choose your own déjeuner en pique-nique
- And, most importantly, stop John and Pete blowing the entire Knobbly Stick fortune at the casino in Le Touquet

Come on, it's great. And would we tiring your jambe?

Knobbly Stick Tries to Go All Technical - Let us Reach You via the Net

Our newsletters are now available online as an "attachment" to our web-site. If you can access the newsletter this way, it obviously saves us having to buy stamps and organise the elves. If we've sent this newsletter to you through the post, it means we don't have your e-mail address. If you'd be happy to be contacted by email, please let us know and we'll update our records. It would also be helpful if you'd tell us if you've had any problem receiving the electronic version of this newsletter.

The Price of Your Knobbly Stick Holiday

You may have noticed that we have put up some prices for 2004 compared with 2003. We have tried, in all cases, to minimise our price rises, but we must, of course, reflect any increase in hotel prices, and some overhead costs have continued to rise. We still think, though, that our holidays offer great value for money, in that we try to maintain a high level of customer care while treating every guest as an individual and attempting to provide, as far as possible, a tailor-made holiday for all. We realise that you can find cheaper holidays than ours, but we believe we can always beat the larger concerns when it comes to personalised customer care.

Coming Soon...

Early Spring Break at Grasmere
Dream awhile of more spacious days; the cry of the buzzard, a tuft of grass blowing in the breeze, the rowan growing out of a crack in the rough, grey rock, the patient Herdwick ewes getting ready to deliver this year's black lambs and, of course, the ever-present backdrop of the Lakeland fells.

Can there be a better way to shake off the winter blues? We certainly can't think of one. So come and join us at the Red Lion in Grasmere for what promises to be a great walking break—5 nights at a brilliant hotel and 4 days' walking in one of Lakeland's best-loved areas, at a time of year when the lanes and ridges should be quiet and the views at their best. We meet on Sunday 22 February with the walking starting on the Monday. Further details are on pages 14 and 15 of the brochure but, please, do get in touch if you have any queries. And don't worry about snow, ice-axes, crampons and all that palaver. Should the weather be wintry, we'll tailor the walks accordingly.

Second Anniversary Bash

May sees the second anniversary of our first ever holiday, and we'd be delighted to see as many of you as possible at the Chaucer House in Keswick to help us celebrate—we'll probably do something special during each of the 2 May holidays in Keswick, so do come along.

Self Guided Walks With (out) Knobbly Stick

Last year saw the first takers for our self-guided walks and it was gratifying to see somebody make use of the time and effort which had gone into the preparation of what we think is a first-class walking package. Unlike with some companies, every route is walked by at least one of us and every route is written up and described by us. In this way, we ensure, as far as possible, that the information is up to date and we are able to point out areas of special interest as well as those potentially tricky sections of a walk where route-finding may not always be straightforward.

Currently we have detailed notes available on the Cumbria Way and a package based on Keswick in

the Lake District. We do, though, have information on many more walks than this so, if you fancy the idea of a walk around the Lake District or the Dales, tailored to your own requirements, just contact us for a chat and we'll see what we can do. Here are some ideas—the Lakes from west to east, the Lakeland 3000-footers, the Three Peaks of Yorkshire the Interesting Way, and the Ullswater skyline. And, we're still working on the famous—or infamous—Knobbly Way!

Finally, remember that if you do a linear walk, we can look after baggage transfers if you wish, as well as book all your accommodation. Just let us know what you want, and we'll quote you happier than certain insurance firms!

Knobbly Stick can be contacted on 01539 737576 or by email at info@knobblystick.com