

Newsletter

Stourbridge Group

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ramblers

at the heart of walking

2013 Coach Holiday to Tenby

7.45 am Monday April 29th

On a fine sunny day with a slightly chilly breeze Rick was at the Sedgley Co-op car park with a 2012 Hills Coach. After collecting the Stourbridge contingent we drove to Hay on Wye for our coffee and toilet stop with Barry and Jane being served teacakes the size of frying pans! After a pleasant journey we arrived at the Giltar Hotel in Tenby bang on 2pm our due time. Following a lovely evening meal served on immaculate tables most people went for a walk around town.

Tuesday

Setting off at 9.30 all the members for both the long and short walks were taken to Amroth and with the exception of non-walkers who stayed with the coach the rest of the party walked to Saundersfoot, a delightful walk with splendid views after a steep climb out of Amroth with the latter half of the walk including tunnels. After about three quarters of an hour rest and refreshment the long walkers tackled the steep hill past St. Bride's Hotel and along a very twisting path through woodlands for a short stop before tackling a long up and down with long flights of steps before finally arriving in Tenby and re-joining the short walkers who had come back by coach.

That evening we were entertained downstairs in the basement area by a representative of the Lifeboat Station where the latest class of lifeboat is based and uses three gallons of diesel to go one mile. He played some great songs which our group joined in.

John Gilmer

Wednesday 1st May - St. David's

At around 9.15 am our coach set off for St. David's, some 36 miles away, and upon arrival at the Oriel Visitor Centre



our two leaders, Bill and Meryl, assembled their respective groups. The four mile group, led by Bill, were doing the St. Non's Chapel and Porth Clais route while the nine milers, with Meryl, were taking the coastal path route via St. Justinians and on to Caerfai Bay with the intention of meeting up at the Visitor Centre around 4 o'clock for the route 'home'. The nine milers soon got cracking and it wasn't long before we were re-grouping behind the 'Bishop's Palace' ready to resume our route to join the coastal path adjacent to the St. Justinian's Lifeboat Station. The Station houses a 'Tanar' glass lifeboat equipped with the state of the art rescue aids and a top speed of 23 knots. You are free to visit but you do have to descend a considerable number of steps. Two of us went down to take a quick look before having to catch up with the rest of the group - our driver Rick was waiting to ensure we went the right way (it must be said so long as you start in the right direction coastal path walking enabled individuals to make progress without fear of straying and getting lost) editor's note. This works until you have a multitude of paths going in all directions.

Although a longer walk than the previous day's event the terrain was generally easier and more walker friendly which was just as well as looking down at the sunlit blue sea of Ramsay Sound, pond like except for patches of white water breaking over submerged rocks (a small group is known as 'the

New Members

Ms S Hill

Ms Sara Leaker

Miss Sally Stephenson

bitches'). The tranquility of the place made it difficult to make progress as one just wanted to look and then look some more.

As we left the lee of Ramsay Island and rounded the headland into St. Bride's Bay the wind make its presence felt but only for a short while and before long we were enjoying lunch sat in warm sunshine and overlooking the twists and turns of the coast line and a green/blue sea. Perfect!

Our next destination was Porth Clais (the refreshment outlet was unfortunately closed). A delightful inlet with the harbour bring reminiscent in the shape of Boscastle in Cornwall and so the group rambled on towards Caerfai Bay making time out to visit a Chapel of our Lady and St. Non. The Chapel is an active place of worship in the Roman tradition and dedicated to the Saint who was the mother of St. David, it is said that when St. Non gave birth to David a well sprang up near the spot - you can access the well easily and also see 'Our Lady's Shine' nearby.

Soon we were leaving behind the glorious colours of the wild flowers which, in their abundance, had so enhanced the footpaths, cliff edges and hedgerows of our walk and joined the long metalled road which took us back to the Visitor Centre where we somewhat belatedly re-joined the other group.

Thursday 2nd May, Bosherton Lily Ponds

A shorter coach drive took us to the site of the famous 'Lily Ponds'. Here the long walk group (6.5 miles) left the coach while Bill's short walk group (2.5 miles) continued on to Pembroke before returning in the afternoon to do their walk round the ponds via Broadhaven Beach.

Another sunny day saw Meryl's group of 44 tramping well laid pathways along the 'western arm' of the ponds crossing bridges surrounded by lily pads below the water and on to the 'eastern arm' where we left the path in order to visit the site housing the remains of Stackpole Court.

For 800 years Stackpole had been the site of a 'grand house' and over time a spectacular landscape with lakes and woodlands was created. Unfortunately, in 1963 the owners ordered the house to be pulled down and the estate was pulled down.

The National Trust now plays a major part in managing the estate and Merly's marauders were lucky enough to grab the attention of one of one of their Rangers who was mowing a vast lawn which covered the floor area of the ruin. This larger than life character gave us a potted history of the place and encouraged us to visit the nearby gardens which the Trust is now resurrecting. Close by is Lodge Park, a wooded area, with many pathways. In fact, overall there are more than 18 miles of foot-paths around Stackpole making it a ramblers delight.

Re-tracing our steps we crossed the 8 arch bridge and descended on 'Boat-house' at Stackpole Quay for lunch. How pleasant it was to sit in the gardens warmed by the sun and eating cream teas.



However, more pleasures were to come especially for 'paddlers' as our party walked over the headland and down the many steps to the delightful Barafundle

Beach, which is only accessible by foot. Some brave souls were soon up to their knees in the invitingly clear water and soon out again when the sea's temperature was realised!

Climbing up a steep slope from the beach we proceeded to stroll the lush green sward of Stackpole Head, high cliffs looking like wooden jigsaw pieces, came into view bearing such names as, 'Moving Ward, Raming Hole, Saddle Point and Church Rock' and occasionally we would espy rock climbers on the sheer cliff faces, their ropes secured by spikes by the path's edge.

All too soon we assembled on the edge of the dunes before taking the picturesque pathway alongside the lily ponds and western arm route where we would re-join the others. Lining our way were banks of primroses yellow in colour and often pink as well. Wild flowers have been a feature of these walks - violets - campion - celandine - cowslips - garlic - sea thrift - bluebells and gorse, all have contributed to the beauty of the pathways we have rambled on. The Editor's GPS clocked 7.5 miles and he was rather glad to see the coach and disappointed that only having had sandwiches for lunch missed out suitable refreshments at Bosherton. B.Furness.

Friday

Bang on 9.30 we reluctantly said goodbye to the Giltar and Tenby and travelled to the National Botanical Gardens of Wales which has the world's largest single span glasshouse with the best display of Mediterranean plants in the Northern Hemisphere!! Many were glad to reach the glasshouse as it was warmer, the weather having turned cooler and cloudy after having a fantastic three days of glorious sunny walking weather.

In no time at all we were back in the

Midlands having experienced one of the best if not the best RA Holiday. Many, many thanks to Meryl and Bill.
John Gilmer



Dudley maintained the Honour of The Male Walkers

Caldy Island

Well, what a day our girls had from start to finish, we set off in lovely sunshine which lasted all day. The boat took across the sea which was full of families with small children and pet dogs. The first thing we saw was the Monastery building which was really something but they didn't let us in ha! ha! never mind! I think we did everything that was in our leaflet from walking along the coastal path which in itself was lovely to all the things on the way. We did stop and look at the old Priory and call into the chocolate factory (of course we got little treats) but it was primroses and bluebells which had just started to open which took our eyes. The lighthouse was very quiet as there was no traffic. On the way back we called at the Post Office and I got my pension out (was that to pay for all the chocolates you bought) (Editor's note). We had time for lunch English style on the lawn with ducks at our feet, great! And then saw videos and looked into St. David's Church and the Abbey Church before completing the little circular walk to see views across to the Gower coast. On the way to the boat we called in to see Caldey Calvery and Watchtower and ended our trip with a very pleasant ten minutes on the beach whilst waiting for the boat. A day to remember for a long time with joy and laughter, what more could one ask.
Eileen and Friends.

Walk Leaders Needed.

Unfortunately age and ill health has depleted our list of Walk Leaders. Can we please ask for some more volunteers to lead walks. Training and assistance will be given. We hope there are some competent Walkers on the Group List who chose not to walk with the Group normally but could give us one Sunday per Quarter?