



GET THE OUTDOOR HABIT IN 2004

HI DI HI CYRIL, CAN'T HEAR YOU!

By Dave Fereday

So we went at the end of January not to Maplins, or Butlins even, but at least to Minehead. Though we didn't have Cyril the Swan with us this was the first joint Hostel Trip we made with the Swansea Group, so we had Mike and his Angels for company. The weather on the way down was really grim and as we arrived at the lane leading to the Hostel we met Mike and his Angels making their way down to the pub. Fortunately Martin had been left in charge of the hostel to greet the steady procession of NOGS arriving throughout the evening. So we all unpacked and made our way to the local hostelry, but no sign of the SOGS as they had ventured further into Minehead to participate in a karaoke evening.

So we all made our way back at shut tap to find that we couldn't open the Hostel Door. Unfortunately the Warden was away in the Peak District on a course. Fortunately one of the NOGS on the weekend was



Dunkery Beacon

Solicitor Dave from Cardiff, who had obviously picked up some tips from his numerous criminal clients, as he was able to break into the Hostel in double quick time.

On the Saturday there were two walks available, both from the Hostel which is set in the countryside just south of Minehead. The low level walk went to Dunster and the high level walk went to climb the highest point on Exmoor, Dunkery Beacon (*photo on left reproduced with kind permission from <http://walkingbritain.co.uk>*).

It is probable that a new NOGS record was set by this group as we stopped at a coffee shop after just one hours walking, the excuse being that they kicked some locals out to make way for our large group. Still the caffeine injection did the trick as we all made the climb to the top of the Beacon no sweat. During the walk we saw a real benefit of being a member of a Youth Hostel Group as opposed to say a Ramblers Group. From the Beacon we were able to look across the Channel to the Glamorgan Coast and then two weeks later, on Ian Kerr's walk, we able to look back across from Dunraven Bay to Dunkery Beacon.

Then back to the Hostel for the George Blizzard Memorial Meal, prepared by Del and Jackie. Following the meal we were then able to witness the first public performance of George's Bibbly Bobbly Hat poem and his coming out of the closet. Just what our friends from Swansea thought I dread to think, though Mike was heard to mutter, "Well it is George!".

On the Sunday we decided as we were by the coast we would take a coastal walk. So we drove to the village of Horner, on the edge of Exmoor and did a circular walk taking in Porlock, the climb of Bossington Hill and the National Trust village of Selworthy. We then finished the weekend with a pint and/or afternoon tea in the historic village of Dunster.

So all in all an excellent weekend and a great baptism to what we hope will be a long lasting relationship with our friends from Swansea – now don't take that too literally, Ian!



CAP THAT!

By Norman Roberts

A little interesting snippet of information - Jamie Roberts was presented with his Welsh under 18's cap at Neath Rugby Football club earlier in the

year. A former group member who no longer participates (he is now a little large to climb in through windows!) he has played since the age of 7 and well deserves credit for reaching this level of achievement.

YHA – CHANGES TO BOOKING TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By Dave Green

If you read the latest issue of the YHA's, Triangle Magazine, you may have noticed that the YHA have changed the hostel booking Terms and Conditions, with regard to cancellations. The new cancellation charges are as follows:

0 to 14 days – 100%
14 to 27 days – 90%
28 to 41 days – 60%
42 to 56 days – 30%

.....plus a £5 administration charge!

In simple terms if we cancel a hostel booking due to illness or any other reason you are unlikely to get any of your money back.

Unfortunately, the NOGs cannot offer any refunds from group funds. Therefore the only way members can protect themselves against cancellation due to illness or any other reason is by taking out a Travel Insurance policy. Annual policies are now relatively cheap, particularly if you also take a couple of overseas holidays a year.

A MOMENTO OF OUR TRIP TO CASTLETON (Mam Tor in Background)

Photo by Norman Roberts



UNEXPECTED HEADLINES

Miners Refuse To Work After Death