



GET THE OUTDOOR HABIT IN 2005

A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE

That George Blizzard was a man of character, there is no doubt.

A Valleys man through and through, here was an individual who enjoyed his own Memorial Meal with friends when the opportunity presented itself. And again and again. Eight times in fact.



George was a man who took a very broad view of life, with strong opinions on a wide range of subjects, not least politics and the NOGS's Committee. He was never afraid to challenge anyone who he thought was getting a bit too big for their boots, particularly guest speakers whom he felt did not explain themselves adequately, often waiting until the very last minute when everybody else thought the topic was closed. Consider yourself unlucky if you weren't on his hit list!

Underneath all his bluster he was a very kind sensitive man who did listen to people. And he also cared about what people thought of him. His sister Betty recounted several incidents when he was a child, not least his tendency to dawdle and wander off on his own. Barry Island was a favourite spot to lose him.

He never lost that trait, and he loved nothing better than to roam in the countryside with friends putting the world to rights. Never concerned if left behind, he knew he could always make his whereabouts known. After all he carried the right equipment.

He was a willing participant in group activities from 1987 onwards, and liked nothing better than to be with a group of friends whatever the occasion.

His achievement of climbing the Three Peaks in five days in July 2003 was one of the high points of his life. Among his last words before passing away peacefully, were very fond memories of his final ascent of Snowdon.

He will be greatly missed by family and friends.

BRIDGES 8th-10th

APRIL 2005

By Angela Bengur

Before leaving on our trip Phil, Ray, Martin, Dawn and I visited George, who instructed us to put our best foot forward for him.

We arrived - Martin, Phil, Ray, Dawn and I in convoy through snow flurries and sunshine. We had travelled through Church Stretton and over the Long Mynd, whose spectacular views beckoned to us. Charlie made the long journey from Utoxita and joined us about 7ish. At the hostel we settled in and trundled down to the pub where we met up with the entrenched Dai, Chris and Molly plus bone.

The first day was an invigorating 10 mile walk over the Long Mynd (see photo below) to Church Stretton, led by Phil. A welcome tea shop awaited us very kindly checked out by

Chris and Dai the previous day. No cream teas, but good home baked cakes none the less.

Leaving every-one to have a well deserved rest, Dawn and I left and procured a present and cakes for Chris. Off we went on our way, and half way up a hill Chris realized her rucksack was still at the tea room!

Back at the hostel we had a birthday tea for Chris, candle and all. That evening we all had another satisfying meal at the pub enjoying the delights of a table procured and protected by Dai, who complained vociferously whilst awaiting his female companions!

Leaving the pub in the pitch blackness several of the NOGS got lost on their way home - they will remain anonymous - so much for navigation skills and kit checks (torches maybe). Phil again led the second day's walk where we followed the ridge of the Stipenstones and climbed in a gusty wind (reminiscent of Dartmoor for those on that trip) The Shepherds Rock, The Devil's Chair and Manstone Tor amongst others.

**The Long Mynd Plateaux - image courtesy of
Walking Britain - www.walkingbritain.co.uk**



We continued on our way to the Secret Hills Discovery Centre and enjoyed a sun bathing session whilst a few energetic members strolled down to the lake. We all solved the volcanic maze and an enjoyable weekend was had by all.

A MESSAGE FROM MANORBIER

By Anon

*There was a man from Abercarn
whose back was suffering harm
When he was able
he climbed on the table
to provide his body with calm.*

*He always wants to be cool
and being a fan of pool
although he was jaded
was eventually persuaded
to lose again, how cruel.*

*Although he declined to disrobe
his masseuse determinedly strove
to ease the tension.*

*But please don't mention
her personal chaperone, by jove !!*

STRATFORD UPON AVON

FEB 2005

By Dawn Bishop

There were only four of us on this trip Martin, Ray, Ulu and myself, there was also a chance of meeting up with Sally, Martin, Danielle and the kids on Saturday.

Martin and Ray set off at a sensible time and arrived fairly early while us girls set off a bit later and caused Martin to have to beg the manager in the restaurant in Alveston, a very quaint village just outside Stratford, not to close his kitchen until we arrived. A very anxious Martin rushed us along with plenty of phone calls. The food in the restaurant was excellent and well worth rushing for. Then it was back to the hostel to sign in and get an early night.

On the Saturday morning we decided to go straight into Stratford after breakfast and see if we could get any last minute tickets to see a play. After some negotiation we managed to get the last four seats in the house for that evening's performance. That job done, we spent the rest of the morning looking around Stratford.

In the afternoon I led a short walk from a local view point called Temple Hill which boasted a huge obelisk. The walk took us through a golf course and a fruit farm and was very pleasant until it started to rain heavily just before we finished the walk. Anyway, we had plenty of time to get dried and dressed up for the evening's performance.

The Swan theatre was brilliant. It is like being in a real



medieval theatre. Martin and Ray had seats on the balcony while Ulu and I were sat about 2 rows from the front. The play we saw was the Two Gentlemen of Verona, which was set in the 1920's. It was a brilliant performance and afterwards we went to the Dirty Duck pub across the road from the theatre, where we found most of the cast already in the snug. After a few Baillies we headed off back to the hostel.

Sunday we went into town and met up with Charlie who had decided to join us for the day. We had dinner in Wetherspoons, before joining a Guided tour of the town. This was very interesting, but also very cold.

By the time it came to an end we were all only too happy to pop into the coffee shop that our guide assured us that Will Shakespeare himself had frequented, and thaw out in front of a real fire while eating cream cakes and drinking coffee, by far the best way to end NOG'S trip.

MOVING TO PASTURES NEW

Two of our long standing members are moving on after accepting jobs outside the Newport area. **Ian Kerr** has started

a new job working for Intel in Swindon; Intel manufacture chips, that is chips for your PC rather than the ones we like to eat. Ian has been in the group around 10 years and was our Treasurer for 2 years. **Phil Anderson** is also moving on after accepting a new job at Aberporth, near Cardigan in West Wales, this should give Phil plenty of opportunities to put his Welsh language skills into practice. Phil has kindly agreed to carry on as group Treasurer until the next AGM, however we will be looking for a new Treasurer at the AGM in October; volunteers welcome. Both Ian and Phil intend to stay active in the group and will be around at the weekends, for the time being they still have their houses in Newport and Cwmbran respectively. We wish Ian and Phil well in their new jobs and thank them for their significant contribution to the group.

DONATION IN MEMORY OF GEORGE

As most of you will be aware we had a collection from members in memory of George Blizzard. From this collection a donation of over £130 has been made to the English Baptist Church in Abercarn (this was at the request of the family). In addition to this donation many members made a donation at the funeral. Thanks to all members who contributed. The group funds also purchased a funeral Wreath. We are thinking of other ways of remembering George, ideas being considered are an annual memorial walk, possibly up Twmbarlwm and planting a tree.

BMR 2005

This year we had a very successful BMR (Black Mountains Roundabout) challenge walk, despite poor weather on the day. We had the second highest ever entry and a record donation of £2100 will be given to the Brecon Mountain Rescue team. Thanks to all who helped with the event, particularly Martyn. Congratulations to Jinny and Dave Fereday who completed the 25 mile, 7000 feet walk. It is always good to see a few of our members completing the walk, particularly those who are doing their first BMR.

WHEELIE GOOD

Congratulations to Dawn, Ian Reese, Jinny and her boys on completing the London to Brighton cycle ride. Along with 27,000 other cyclists they completed the 54 mile route on the hottest June day on record, in fact so hot it was melting the tarmac. Ken was unable to take part but he and Deanna did an excellent job as the back-up team. Hopefully we will get a priority entry form for next years event, so let's have even more NOGS completing the ride.

NON YHA MEMBERS WELCOME

In March 2005 the YHA changed it's policy with regard to membership. Under the new "Open Access" policy you no longer need to be a YHA member to stay in a hostel. However, if you are not a YHA member you have to pay a £3 a night supplement. It is essential you have either photo ID/utility bill as identification. YHA members simply use their membership card as ID. If NOG members want to take advantage they should pay the booking officer the extra £3 a night when they book. If you do 2 weekends or more a year, it is advantageous to join the YHA, you also get other benefits such as discounts at outdoor equipment stores, tourist attractions. As the YHA is a members organisation you get the Triangle magazine and some say in how the YHA is run.

We want to encourage all NOGS to become YHA members.