

FOOTPRINT

*The (almost) Bi-Monthly Magazine of the
Notts Derby Walking Group (NDWG)*

August 2006

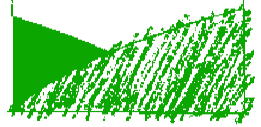
www.ndwg.co.uk

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The Ramblers



The Giant Leaf Girls Enjoying The Sun In Wiltshire!

**NDWG AGM AND THE NEXT EDITION OF
FOOTPRINT**

Phil Storer

Normally, the next edition of Footprint would be issued on the 1st October. However, as you are hopefully aware, the groups AGM is takes place on the 11th October. Obviously we need to cover any breaking news from this glorious event so the next edition of Footprint should be distributed circa mid October 2006.

SATURDAY. This was looking very promising! Not only would I finally be spending a day walking in the Lake District with boots that wouldn't squelch and slosh about with every step, I'd also actually be able to see it too, rather than peering out from under a rain-soaked jacket at clouds and mist. High-spirited we set off from our barn with Don leading the pack and almost immediately deviated from the well-defined path that was the Garburn Pass used by the majority of walkers undertaking the Kentmere Horseshoe, and instead adopted a somewhat unconventional (more interesting – Ed) route to get us up to our first peak of the day. Instead of a gentle uphill ascent using a track that could almost pass for a motorway we steered off to the right and assaulted a clump of crags that would see us reach the top of the valley in a more direct, steep, and interesting way. Everyone scattered, each picking their own way up; some of us sticking to the grassy bits, whilst others took it upon themselves to scramble up the rocks, before all re-emerging at random intervals and directions to regroup for a quick headcount.

It was then a relatively easy trudge along a well manicured track running the length of the ridge that defined the western flank of the valley. Several large shapely mounds of earth stood between us and the lunch stop, namely Yoke, Ill Bell, Froswick, and last but certainly not least, Thornthwaite Crag. Dropping down slightly from the peak to where High Street joint up to our track, we sat down for a much needed refuelling stop whilst taking in the panorama presented before us: looking back south from whence we had come was Lake Windermere and a view down the valley; to the west, St. Sunday's Crag and behind that, just about poking through the haze was Helvellyn; to the north and east, the banana-shaped Lake Haweswater.

Post-lunch we dropped down from the peak of Mardale Ill Bell to Nan Bield where we once again stopped for a while whilst Dave and Gary went for a spot of scrambling on the rocky crags. Once they had got that out of their systems we carried on up to the last significant lump of upwardness, Harter Fell. Turning then southwards, we aimed down the eastern flank of the valley which afforded us great views of where we had been walking earlier that day.

It was then a comfortable run down over three trivial undulations before picking up Sadgill Pass and ultimately repairing to the barn for hot showers, alcohol, charcoaled food stuffs, and all finished off with a melee of Pictionary!

SUNDAY. You could feel the apprehension in the air this morning; it was looking for all the part like the heavens were going to open. A frenzy of activity ensued as people chomped down breakfasts, packed their bags, and swept the previous night's detritus from the barn. Some resorted to climbing the walls, quite literally, to escape the furore of activity.

With John leading, we headed off following the path back the way we had come down on Saturday before deviating off down to the valley adjacent to Kentmere. After careful consideration on how to get to the top of the eastern side we plumped for the most direct route again. Trying to locate ingress to the inappropriately named open-access land proved impossible thanks to stone walls and barb-wire fences, and eventually saw us starting the assault on the hill by means of a farmer's private land.

Steep though crossing the field was, it was nothing in comparison to what greeted us now; ahead lay a small spattering of trees and grassland presented to us at nothing less than a forty-five degree incline, and did so for a good thousand feet. Spurred on by the sound of an angry farmer's quadbike, up we went; different tactics were employed; I personally went for utilising my upper appendages for extra drive and balance, whilst others shot straight up using the forward momentum to stop themselves falling over backwards. Once at the top, and after we had got our breaths back, we were treated briefly to views back across the valley before the sky came falling down.

Heading north towards the aptly named Grey Crag we were blasted on our left-hand sides by horizontal wind, and rain with hint of ice thrown in for good measure. Putting the weather aside, we plodded on across sopping wet tufts of grass, the sort of grass that delivers large quantities of water to the tops of walking boots whilst

threatening to twist your ankle should you divert your attention from it for a split second. Credit is due to our walk leader for his amazing navigational skills, no hunting around for the trig point on top of the crag despite the visibility; we just walked straight up to it. Then covered behind it to get away from the wind and rain, we contemplated it as a lunch spot but despite its substantial size it still didn't offer sufficient coverage for everyone. We decided at this point to cut the walk short and try and work our way down the valley to Sadgill.

Our retreat from the exposed high ground led us down beside a large stone wall that ran parallel to the rain, and therefore offered no reprieve from it; we did however eventually free our heads from the clouds. As we approached the valley floor the rain abated slightly and huddled against the wall we had a late lunch stop. Cold and wet we slogged our way down the valley to meet back up with Sadgill Pass, almost, but never quite, catching up with sunlight ahead of us. A quick up and down across the end of the Kentmere valley saw us return to the barn and a warm shower followed by dry clothes, and sporadic farewells as people headed back to their respective realities. Thanks to Don and John for leading the walks, and Rob for the use of his barbeque.



Mass crag hopping up Ewe Crag and Piked Howes. Much more fun than footpaths.....

I don't know about you but sometimes I wonder what does it all mean and whether there is more to life than the 9 to 5 grind. So when I saw that Andy Holbrook was organising a Pagan, Celtic and Crop Circle Weekend in Wiltshire kipping under the stars, I put my name down straight way.

So the weekend started for me on Friday at 5, and as I shut down my computer I thought what am I letting myself in for. Will I be abducted by the Aliens responsible for the Crop Circles, understand the Meaning of Life or become a Wiltshire Hippie?

All was well when arriving at the campsite nr Oare, Pewsey some 3½ hours later, when I met those familiar faces of my fellow walkers and was presented with a cool beer. The olives were very nice soaked in red wine spillage thanks Karen.

I was pleased that the facilities were excellent at the Camping and Caravan site, and it appeared that our happy commune had quickly established itself in a corner of the field under a fir tree sat at a picnic table. Wine, beer and nibbles a plenty, us happy few settled in and laughed the night away.

Woken by the morning call of hedgerow birds and not so wide awake campers we made ready for the days walk, in what looked like it would be a scorching hot sunny day. After the formalities of the team photo, ably choreographed and taken on timer tripod camera by Andy Holbrook, we were confronted by a quietly spoken local caravan neighbour who wanted to point out that our laughing from the previous evening had disturbed a few from catching a few zzzz's. What made this complaint even more preposterous was the suggestion that we moved ourselves into the corner across the field that night and laugh on someone else's doorstep. You can't please everyone...

Off we went through the village of Oare and eventually began the climb up the hill, glancing a view of the Salisbury Plains over our shoulders. The time seemed to fly by in the morning and we were soon walking through field after field of glorious arable land. We were then to discover Milk Hill the site of the largest Crop Circle ever found and entered into an area of Special Scientific Interest. After lunch we descended to the village below at Stanton St Bernard and saw a lovely thatched Tithe Barn. Behind the Barn on the hillside from where we had descended we could now see the shape of a huge White Horse cut out into the Chalk hillside. After snapping away like Japanese tourists, we eventually continued on and met with the Kennet and Avon Canal and the Barge Inn at the beautiful named village at Honeystreet.

Fortunately we didn't need to 'barge in' at the bar to get a drink as the pubs name suggests, and were quickly able to obtain a well earned drink. This place was definitely the unofficial Crop Circle Tourist Information Centre, as well as purveyor of fine beers. It had a wonderfully painted ceiling in the pool room and aerial photographs of crop circles discovered over the past 5 years adorned on the walls. It was possible to find out where the latest crop circles had appeared and sure enough circles had been discovered nearby in only the last 5 days.

We were soon on our way again down the canal. The sun now was really hot and Sarah Godfrey and Karen Dring aka Victoria Plum girls, had covered their shoulders with large leaves from rhubarb like plants on the banks of the canal to deflect the sun's rays.

It was then back to the campsite through fields of corn, to complete our 16 mile walk.

There was just enough time for a quick shower and change to walk the short distance to the White Hart at Oare for our evening meal. Rather pleased with our days jaunt, we spent a pleasant evening with good food and company.

I have to admit the next day we returned to the White Hart at Oare for a cooked breakfast. Shame on us for not brewing up on our gas stoves! We then enjoyed the walk back to the campsite to pack up.

The Sunday walk started at the car park on the Ridgeway. From there we walked to West Kennet Long Barrow, Silbury Hill and then Avebury Stone Circle. A shorter walk, but one that gave us time to soak up the atmosphere and take it in that our ancestors 5000 years ago had built these structures – quite amazing and humbling!

At West Kennet Long Barrow (a 5000 year old grave mound with mighty big stones at its door), I discovered an outdoor guestbook, in a jam jar in a small hole in the ground, covered by a wreath.

The pyramid like man-made structure of Silbury Hill just nearby was impressive. It amazed me that this had been built at the same time as the Pyramids in Ancient Egypt!

Avebury was worthy of a day exploring, but in the short time we had we managed to get a quick look at the Manor House, the book shop and the Stone Circle itself, which must be on a par with Stonehenge for being impressive. Andy Holbrook was able to find ley lines with his diviners, much to everyone's interest. Although it did meet a bit of scepticism, from the few.

Travelling home and on reflection, I didn't discover the Meaning of Life, see a crop circle in the flesh or become a Wiltshire Hippie, in fact it makes me more confused and at a loss to what it's all about. What I do know is that this area of Wiltshire is a very special place and there is nothing quite like it and it is worthy of more time to explore than just one weekend.

Andy Page – 17th July 2006



Part of Avebury Stone Circle!

Wiltshire Weekend Part Two By Karen Dring

On Friday 14th July we all headed south to Oare in Wiltshire on Andy Holbrook's camping and crop circle weekend. As this was my first camping experience I was pleased to see the sun was shining. On arrival we had Cava and strawberries to toast what turned out to be a fantastic weekend. The warm summer evening enabled us to sit outside our tents chatting and drinking the night away.

Saturday quickly arrived and we were all up bright and early cooking our bacon cobs for breakfast, before heading off on our first walk of the weekend. We started our 16-mile walk from the campsite and headed up Milk Hill to find some stunning views of the surrounding area. We continued across the ridge to see Silbury hill in the distance which is the tallest pre-Christian artificial mound in Europe and was built about 4300 years ago. After lunch we wandered down the Kennet and Avon Canal and stopped at the famous Barge Inn along the canal side for a much welcome cold drink. The owner was obviously a crop circle evangelist as he had a whole room dedicated to crop circles, which was full of posters, pictures, books and postcards. After a short break in the blazing heat we headed off back down the canal where some of us discovered huge rhubarb leaves growing on the waters edge and found them useful for protecting our bright red shoulders from the sun! We then continued across the grounds of Oare House estate before returning to the campsite. We all

then relaxed, outside our tents, until 8pm when we could have our well deserved group meal in the local pub.

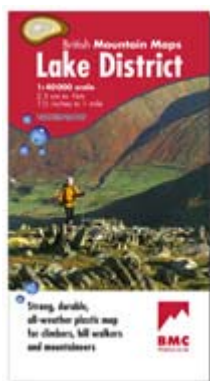
We woke up Sunday morning to find the weather was even hotter and topping 30 degrees!!! We were not deterred but delighted we had another fine day for discovering Wiltshire. There was a shorter walk planned that day, just 6 miles. It was to be a walking and site seeing experience. Our first site was west Kennet Long Barrow, which is an ancient burial ground. This tomb is thought to have been constructed around 3500BC and was in use for about thousand years until 2200BC. Our next place of interest was a much closer look at Silbury Hill, which we had seen from a distance on Saturday. When standing next to it you start to wonder how our predecessors managed to construct such a large mound with such primitive tools. Its purpose still remains a mystery to even the most experienced archaeologists. The last site on our agenda was Avebury Stone Circle, which surrounds the whole of the village of Avebury. The main Avebury Stone Circle is roughly a quarter mile across, enclosing an area of about 28 acres, and it contains two smaller circles within it. It is thought that Avebury probably served as a religious and ceremonial centre, though the beliefs of these people are unknown [Pagans, Ed]. After taking in the sites and sounds of Avebury we headed back towards the cars and on the final accent we spot what looks like some type of ritual offering and in the field below is what seems to be the remains of a crop circle which was quite exciting as this was the whole theme of the weekend. We then reluctantly had to travel back home. I for one could have easily have stayed a few more days.

GEAR! HARVEY'S 1:40,000 COMPLETE LAKE DISTRICT MAP

Phil Storer – Footprint Editor and Harvey Disciple

For those (like me) who are fed up with the idea of needing 4 Ordnance Survey maps to cover the Lake District, map gurus Harvey in association with the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) have come up with the answer. After all, it's...

"...the best Lake District map I have ever seen. The 1:40,000 scale provides clear, detailed information to one of the most popular hill walking areas in Britain." Sir Chris Bonnington



The Lake District's famous mountains and fells on a SINGLE MAP!!

- Printed on plastic - durable, tear-resistant and 100% waterproof.
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- Mountain incident and first aid advice.
- Tips on using your map and compass.
- Useful local phone numbers and websites.

Total genius and the best £12.95 I've ever spent. For more information including the Outdoor Atlas series (yet more genius) visit: <http://www.harveymaps.co.uk> or try your local gear shop...Phil.

FORTHCOMING SOCIALS

Nottingham and Derby

DARLAY PARK CONCERT - Sun 3 Sep 06

Join me for the annual concert and fireworks at Darley Park in Derby. As usual I intend to be there from 3pm onwards, so as to enjoy a picnic and bag a good view. The concert normally starts at either 6pm or 6:30pm. With the fireworks at roughly 8:30pm. Those that join me every year will know where we meet. Any others wishing to come along, if you stand with your back to the stage and look up the back I will be near the top right hand corner of the section on the left of the central walkthrough. Contact Sian Roberts on 07773 619259 or sianroberts48@msn.com. Cheers, Sian

AUGUST:

Friday 4th - Nottingham Riverside Festival - meet up with Diane at The Globe Inn at 7.30pm for a quick drink before heading off for the fair, festivals and fireworks. Diane 07813 654 845

Friday 11th - An evening with Chris Phelan at the Dog Stadium. Further details to follow.

Friday 11th - Shakespeare's Twelfth Night. Outdoor theatre. Kedleston Hall. Bring a picnic and low backed seating. Gates open 6.30pm, performance starts at 7.30pm, tickets £10 book via National Trust website. Email Tracey Collins on tcbritstar10@yahoo.co.uk

Saturday 19th - Doug's tram pub crawl aka "Tramble". Further details to follow.

SEPTEMBER:

Friday 8th - Chris Phelan's night out at The Red Hot Buffet Bar, Hockley. Further details to follow.

NOTE: PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE AND LATEST DIGEST E-MAILS FOR THE LATEST UPDATES TO THE SOCIAL CALENDER

VOLUNTEERS WANTED re: SOCIALS

Diane Hennessy (Social Secretary)

I am looking for more volunteers to lead socials for the summer period. If you have an idea you want to share but are not quite sure how to go about arranging it, you are welcome to contact me so we can get the ball rolling.

The socials we've had recently are largely pub crawls but the group would welcome meals out, trips to the theatre, "go ape" in Sherwood Forest or anything we haven't thought of before.

For those who are not familiar, the procedure is that you come up with an idea and a possible date in mind and then you contact me to confirm there are no clashes with the date, in which case I will offer you another.

I would be happy to support members, new or old, on any social they have in mind. My number is 07813 654 845. This group is only as good as the people that are in it so I look forward to your call!

Forthcoming local and national dates

- 16-24 September – Welcome to Walking Week
- 17 September – National Walking Day
- 22 September – ‘In Town without my Car’ day.

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