

PENGUINS IN THE PEAK DISTRICT 10-14 JUNE 2024

Following last year's amazing adventure to the Yorkshire Dales, the same hapless 7 Penguins journeyed to the delightful hamlet of Ollerton in the Peak District. The directions were sparse, largely consisting of 'keep going but stop before Sheffield, you can't miss it'. We did, then retraced our steps and missed it again. Eventually, having visited most of the Peak District we found it. SATNAV? I don't think so. The postcode covered about 15 square miles. The converted barn we stayed in was excellent – enormous with en suite bar and pool (the kind with 6 pockets). The group learned from last year's folly and brought some food this time: a pint of milk, 2 raw beefburgers and 3 bags of pork scratchings.

After a brief settling in period we adjourned to the Rambler, at the start of the Pennine Way, for a meal and a hotly contested game of dominoes with a set missing 6 pieces. On return to the Barn, Team games began in earnest. The Giants and Hobbits both losing out to the victorious Transients in Trivial Pursuit (1990s version). The Giants performed somewhat better at pool. The evening concluded with a game of Crash Jenga accompanied by several interesting digestifs.



Giants at play with digestif



Crash Jenga

Day 2 saw a very modest breakfast followed by a pleasant gradual ascent of Kinder Scout via Jacob's Ladder. The scenery was beautiful, including the fantastic waterfall from which it gets its name, (*kyndwyr scut* in Old English), as well as an incongruous view over Manchester. It was also remarkable as the scene of the 1932 mass trespass led by the Communist Party of Great Britain. We met numerous younger walkers dressed in an array of striking outfits and, for a change, had a pie lunch at the top. The descent was cheeky. On regaining flattish ground we repaired to the Nag's Head hostelry for some excellent local real ale. We returned to the Barn for an eclectic music mix from Spotify, and of all things, a Boggle tournament, which Tony Wilson won comfortably. There was also some singing of 20th Century anthems, unsurprisingly loud, enthusiastic and of dubious quality.



Halfway up Jacobs Ladder



Kyndwyr Scut

Day 3 took us up Mam Tor, once a great Iron Age hillfort, on a superb ridge walk. We passed many somewhat disgruntled teenagers carrying enormous rucksacks on their Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, with their very grunted teachers, carrying very little, getting out of the classroom for the day. We descended into Castleton (built by William Peverell, the first Sherriff of Nottingham and allegedly the illegitimate son of William the Conqueror) and enjoyed the hospitality of both the Bull's Head and Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese. On regaining the Barn, Dai Evans provided a cameo role on his electric ukelele before producing a variety of his home brewings, including the innocuous tasting, but very energising, 9% 'Brigitte Bardot' cider. The standard of pool play gradually deteriorated, as almost certainly did the quality of singing, although nobody noticed.



Ascending Mam Tor (*Mother Mountain*)



7 Penguins posing at the Top

Day 4 dawned far too early. There was a change of tack with a visit to Ladybower reservoir, scene of the drowning of the villages of Derwent and Ashopton, and also the centre for the training of 617 Squadron in 1943. They subsequently flew to the Ruhr valley on Operation

Chastise and breached the Mohne and Edersee dams with a novel bouncing bomb designed by Barnes Wallace, hence the moniker 'Dambusters.' A brisk walk around the reservoir was punctuated by a packed lunch (of pies obviously), with an interesting discussion regarding the relative merits of Potash (K_2CO_3) versus Polyhalite ($K_2Ca_2Mg(SO_4)_4 \cdot 2H_2O$) as a fertiliser.



Homage at Ladybower

That night there was the eagerly awaited mini darts tournament (mini as the dartboard was only about 4 feet away from the oche). The Transients found this easy. The Giants found it easier; due to their excess height they were able to place the darts into the board from behind the oche without throwing them. The Hobbits tried the old Snow White trick; Dox got on Mick's shoulders and covered both of them with Geraint's enormous macintosh coat, pretending they were a single person, then arrived hoping no one would notice. Acrimony ensued. The Giants were disqualified by the Transients for failure to release. The Hobbits were disqualified by the Giants for ruining Geraint's coat. The Transients were disqualified by both the Giants and the Hobbits for lacking imagination. There was uproar by this stage, which was not quelled by a placatory glass of Ricard.

An outstanding few days of beautiful scenery, great food, endless 20th century anecdotes, buffoonery and questionable singing. Many Thanks to Jem 'Ox' Boothroyd for his organisation, good humour and tolerance.

Next year will see us in the Wye Valley. Dates will be advertised on the PAC website.

The Septet: Jim Boothroyd, Richard Docker, Dave Evans, Mick Martin, Geraint Thomason, Tony Wilson, Charlie Beardmore