

The Rambler



October 2014

Very Quiet!

This month as I am sitting putting The Rambler together I thought to myself... where have all our members gone?

Your emails have stopped, I no longer know where our t-shirts go and haven't seen a new photo in a while... where are you all? Please get in touch, this newsletter is for you to share your news. I am looking forward to hearing from you all!

British Dutch Walking
Fellowship

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Coach Tender Questionnaire 2014

We are aware that many of you use /have used the coach in the past and we would like to hear from you. Please complete the short questionnaire form sent out by email

in September to all members. It is important that we hear about the good and not so good experiences so that we can make an informed decision when the Coach tender documents are returned

If you need a new copy of the Questionnaire let me know.

Your Letters

Airbourne March

In the following article I have tried to be accurate, however I am not a historian and therefore apologise for any inaccuracies. I believe a brief background to the events of 1944 is required to put the article into context.

"Not in Vain" Airborne March Oosterbeek (Arnhem) Remembrance Walk

"Not in Vain" the words of Sir Winston Churchill (referring to the 8,000 deaths) repeated several times, and concluding his speech when addressing the House of Commons over Operation Market Garden.

Operation Market Garden was a plan devised by Field Marshal Montgomery, to capture 3 bridges in the Netherlands across canals and the rivers Maas (Mause), Waal and Lower Rhine, to give a quick way into Germany (around the fortified Siegfired Line) and bring an early close to the Second World War. This entailed airborne drops (parachute and glider) in 4 locations Eindhoven, Grave, Nijmegen and Oosterbeek (Arnhem) to capture the bridges, whilst the main part of the army XXX Corps made a mad dash along a single road to relieve the airborne troops. The U.S. 82 and 101 Airborne had the job of capturing the earlier bridges Eindhoven and Nijmegen. The bridge at Arnhem fell to the British 1st Airborne Division (Red Devils), joined later by Polish 1st Independent

Parachute Brigade and Dorset Regt. Opposing the forces at Arnhem were the SS Panzer corps (9th SS and 10th SS Panzer Divisions) under command of General Model.

Between 17 - 25 September 1944 the plan was put into action. There are many reasons why the plan failed to meet all its objectives, the optimistic time scales, single road, greater opposition than anticipated, re-supply, poor communications, but one of the main reasons was the German Panzer (tank) divisions resting in the Arnhem area. The fighting at Arnhem was very intense, tanks versus lightly armored Parachutist is a one sided match, and after capturing and holding the northern side of the bridge at Arnhem the Parachute Regt was forced several days later to withdraw (escape) across the Rhine the remainder surrendered.

XXX Corps advancing along the single road suffered fewer than 1,500 casualties, which stands in stark contrast to the 8,000 casualties suffered by the 1st Airborne Division in the Arnhem area, Dutch civilians less than 500 (unsure but believe this includes the Dutch resistance). After the battle the Dutch were once again re-occupied and with it came further hardships, reprisals, force relocation (Arnhem area became a no go zone), and hunger/starvation as this part of the Netherlands was not liberated until the end of the war, another route into Germany at Remagen (near Bonn) was used.

There are many stories of adversity, bravery, hardship, humour, endurance, co-operation, liberation but the full story will never be known. The two way relationship and mutual respect between the Dutch people around the Oosterbeek and Arnhem area and the Parachute Regt is very special and is still there 70 years on, after reading a few books on personal stories from the battle I thought I knew about this relationship but you have to see it for yourself.

For example the number of Parachute Regt flags on houses (many not even on the route) is quite something, but when you see them for sale for 30 Euros plus the cost of a flag pole. Whilst I am not explaining this very well, and the context is different, I will just pose the question how many of us put £30 in the poppy appeal tin?

The Airborne March is a remembrance walk for the Battle of Arnhem, and is the biggest one day walk in the world 34,000 people. The routes go over the most important places in the battle, landing zones, cemetery, strong points etc, the distances 10km, 15km, 25km and 40km. This year was the 70th anniversary of the battle (first walk in 1947 this year was the 68th walk), therefore there were many extra re-enactment groups, vehicles on the walk and parade. This was our first time on the walk, and before leaving I was advised not to do the 40Km as I would miss the parade, so we registered on the 25Km.

Our group consisted of 2 adult ATC cadets, my son and me. Our plan a quick dash to Arnhem, do the walk; recover over night and return home Sunday. So as soon as possible after school/work on the Friday we set off, leaving Bristol at 17:00hrs for a Folkstone channel tunnel train at 22:19hrs, traffic was okay until the last 50 miles or so, we made it in good time but every traffic jam did cause concern. Once in France, I set the speed to 60mph and switched the cruise control on, we were now in fuel saving mode. Travelling through the night is not the best way to travel, but when you can't get the day off it's the only option, it does save a day's holiday, no hotel fee, and by travelling slowly saves fuel. Remarkably my passengers slept quite a lot on the journey, the snores in the back giving the game away, along the way I stopped a few times to take a cat nap, arriving in Oosterbeek around 05:00hrs, task complete it was my time for a few ZZzzzz's.

The walk start is in a sports field yards from the museum (the walk head quarters building is also located here), several stands were already doing business selling Coffee, breakfast, T-shirts, badges, and later on beer, toilets cost 50 cents and there was a KNBLO stand, but the walk is not IVV. Although the official start time for the 25km was 10:00hrs we were able to start at 08:00hrs no one seemed to mind, so we followed the route back to the cafe Schoonoord very close to the Airborne Museum for breakfast. The café is well known as it has several bits of memorabilia from the battle, they were very busy so breakfast took a long time coming, as we were watching the walkers go by I saw Carol Jones and Adrian Moody. I ran out of the café to say hello, only to be greeted by Adrian saying I was a bad example being thrown out of a pub so early in the morning, he also said the 25km route was 27km by his GPS.

Breakfast over we continued the walk, I have mentioned the number of Parachute Regt flags before, but this is the first impression you get. I would say overall it's a close run thing whether there are more Dutch or Parachute Regt flags. We had not gone far (but far enough) when we were told the parade started at 11:00hrs, something I had not realized, after a discussion we decided to continue. Next year we will start the walk and then wait for the parade and then continue the walk.

We did see some veterans (not walking) their number becoming less and less over the years (and saw others again at the channel tunnel), I think we missed the majority of the military teams who probably did the 40km or were on the parade, there were a few re-enactment groups in period uniform on the walk. Things appear to run like clockwork, not surprising after 68 years, various groups like the scouts, sports clubs offer support along the way, and the Red Cross medical assistance (they were quite frequent, and I didn't notice any queues).

There was one part where the locals took a short cut and us new comers followed the signs, where the route formed a 3 sided square, it was less than 500m longer, however the majority went straight on, there was only about 10 of us who took this route, I can't say I blame them as these dog legs just to make up the distance do annoy. Near the cemetery we encountered an ATC team (in uniform) from Bristol we knew most of them, they all looked in good form, we would meet several times throughout the walk. For most of the cadets it was their first walk abroad, everyone was enjoying the experience and hoping to return next year, the Airborne gets a hold of you it's that kind of walk.

There are a few private collections of memorabilia on route for example a mini museum on the Horsa gliders, even damaged parts from a V1 rocket (I think it missed its target), period vehicles, landmarks and monuments adding another dimension but still on the same theme as the walk. The Dutch are justifiably proud of how they acted throughout this battle, and not just the Dutch resistance fighting alongside the Para's but normal civilians who were caught up in the battle, the welcome, help, support and assistance they gave the Parachute Regt, was a dangerous thing to do with the enemy so close, as the number of civilian deaths show.

I would not say the mood on the walk was somber, but it was reflective, especially after the war cemetery. The walkers did enjoy themselves but it was not the typical full on party you normally expect at Dutch events. There were marching bands and large crowds, but it was not the type of celebration you find at Nijmegen, after all this was a remembrance walk. A large number of small children do the walk especially on the 10km route; the Dutch introduce them to walking young. In my opinion the scenery is the best I have seen on any Dutch walk (although I haven't done that many) with the land generally wooded and flat broken by several short gently rolling hills. The town of Oosterbeek is quite pretty with some grand period properties I suspect property prices higher here than the surrounding area, that said I think Arnhem is quite pretty too.

The "walk in" through Oosterbeek is lined with spectators, and the final stage goes past the war memorial and museum. Handing in our route cards we get our small but treasured medal, it felt strange not getting an IVV or souvenir stamp in my books but it's not that kind of walk. The finish area looks very different from this morning with people everywhere, the souvenir, food and drink stalls are doing brisk business, we walk back to the car and take back roads back to our hotel (thanks to Tom-tom) as the road is closed part way. I should have mentioned this earlier, because of the road closures the normal trams/buses only go half way to Oosterbeek from Arnhem and stops/ends at the business park. This normal bus service is replaced by a special bus running from the train station it goes all the way close to the walk start along the back streets,

I do not have details of where it stops on route only the start and end points, after about 18:00hrs the roads were opened and normal service returned.

A quiet night on the town in Arnhem, and in the morning finishing touches to some school homework brought on the trip, a quick look around Nijmegen (the Wedren looks very different compared to the 4 Daagse), then is homeward bound via the tunnel. We wished we could have stayed longer.

In conclusion did we enjoy the walk, definitely, it is a very good, well organized and supported walk, but more importantly I am so glad I came and experience for myself this special relationship between this small Dutch town and a British regiment.

Chris Pratt

IT'S A GIRL!!!

Since September 3rd, Florian and I are the happy parents of a small, but beautiful little girl called Sterre.

She was born in our house at 18.19 hrs. Mother and child are well :-))

Jaap van den Bos

On behalf of the committee and members we wish you all the best

Forthcoming events

Walks in 2014

There must be walks out there that no one is telling us and we cannot share with our members.

As soon as dates are available for more of the regular walks I shall let you know.

There is also an excellent website detailing walks available in the Netherlands -

<http://www.wandelkalender.nl/2013/meerdaagse.html>

If you know of other walks that our members would be interested in, please let us know - contact details are at the back of this newsletter.

If you are going on your own walk and would like company please let us know and we will put the word out for you.

For Rainy Days...

Last month Herman set a QuizTHREE THREES the answers are:

Awestruck, Spaghetti, Dyspepsia, Fortunate, Awkwardly

This month I am setting you a challenge. Pick up the phone and call someone you met through the BDWF and wouldn't normally speak to again until the following year.

Don't forget... the 99th vierdaagse will take place on the 21st-25th July
2015.....

290 Days!

Happy Birthday!

**Wishing all our members celebrating their Birthday in
October Many Happy Returns!**

1 Phillip Mcgaw; 2 Aaf Snoek; Josey Bertrand; Anija Bemelmans; Hilde Van Noord; Martyn Charity; Victoria Charity; Karen Gray 3 Helen Tuck; Richard Morris; Wilma Ludema; 4 Lenny Goldsmith; Wim Vogels 5 Henny. J Visser; Matthew Perry; Vincent Sherry; 6 Tanya Moody 7 Arie Bruyns; Beverley Goodman; Mike Strong; Beth Simmons 8 Piet Nelis; Edward Hodson 9 Angela Cracknell; Petra Kolen-Rouschop 10 Anne Welburn-Sutton; 11 Ann Kirby; John Stratton; M Stoffels; Thomas Gallagher; Henk ten Kate; William Reddington-smith 12 Geri Jackson;

13 Andre van der Last; 14 Matthew Jepson; Harry Dean; Zane Wozencroft; Imogen Foyle 15 Richard Elliott; J Schreuder; Linda Plomp 16 Frank Tonge; Jacqueline Manintveld; Julie Austin 17 Mark Greenhalgh; Ian Paton 18 Terry Kirby; 19 Truus Mantel de Roij; Joop Ludema; Colin Jackson; Diederique Kemperink; Nienke Jepma 20 Peter Sinclair 21 Stephen Mogg; Edward Smith

23 Charles Coldrey; James Stevens; Peter Armitage 24 Dirk Terlouw; Elsbeth Huffmeijer; Harry Lewis 25 Charlotte Toone; Oliver Thorne 27 Frank Coltman; David Mugford; Morgan Blunt; Joseph Ashley 28 L W De Knijf-Okken; Franklin Schalk; Andrew Bowman; 29 Mo Leach; R S Ringnalda; Graham Darkins; Richard Evers; Lydia Watson 30 Ellise Owen; Phillipa Hambridge; Glen Logan

31 Anja van der Wilk; Bas Graus; Christine Brand

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BA14 8WE

Twitter :BritishDutchWF

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/groups/bdwnijmegen

Don't Forget - We are on the Web too!

www.bdwf.org.uk

The most recent posts on the web include information for support crew registering to do Nijmegen with the BDWF and some Bargains found on line for walkers!

The British Dutch Walking Fellowship (BDWF) was founded out of the BT Nijmegen group in 2003. The club has no political or sectarian interests, and is non – profit seeking. Membership is open to anyone 12 years and over.

As a member, we want to make sure that you get the best from your relationship with us and that means keeping you informed.

Any news items to be included in the next newsletter should be with Kate by Friday 26th September 2014.

Contributions are always welcome. Remember, every member has a voice and this is the ideal medium to have your say

This email was sent to dizzydee_007@hotmail.com

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