

CHAPTER TEN

Next time: As announced in the last news letter, the date and time for the next walk is on 10th May 1989, which is only a few days from receipt of this letter. At 07.30.

Namur to Luxembourg

1989 - 1990

RV: Lux central bus to Chatelet St Germain. Driver: By Sales bus to Chatelet St Germain. Walk to: Neuchâtel, about 30 kilometres to RV with bus. Passports and Money: Needed. Fare about £100. PARTICIPATION: Please contact JOHN OVERSTALL as soon as possible to confirm participation. MOST URGENT.

3. Last walk and dinner

Last walk last July from Neuchâtel to Rumselange. Annual dinner 10th June.

Frank Noble.

Bruce Goodman
Malcolm Turner

Lustin to Houyet

30/09/89 - 01/10/89

The new management showed its mettle a few minutes into the start of the 89/90 campaign. The rendezvous/restauration point two minutes from the Railway-station of Lustin was closed for annual holidays, and 18 thirsty Hares had to make a hard climb to the café des Sept Meuse above Rivière to make the official start.

Lunch-break was taken at the ruins of the Chateau of Poilvache, where the plant-life but not the ruins are protected by the regional administration.

The Hares who did not manage to stay to the end of the guided tour missed an interesting résumé of Rommel's tactics during the crossing of the Meuse, plus the guide's personal opinions of many aspects of local life.

The first day finished in Dinant at the Hotel de la Couronne, from whence 16 Hares proceeded next day to the Railway-station of Gendron-Celles.

A break-away party of 10 walkaholics continued for another two hours after the end of the walk to finally expire in a café at Houyet, passing on the way the junction of G R 126 with G R 577, along which the campaign continued ...

Houyet to Ciney

21/10/89

Twelve Hares plus guard-dog gathered, eager and expectant, at Luxembourg station at 7 am on the 21st October.

At 7.15, a lightning Committee-meeting ascertained that stand-by transport arrangements would be necessary (the reason for which is now happily lost in the mists of time).

The party departed forthwith in four cars, with a breakfast-stop at Ciney, to start the walk from Houyet station.

The day was warm and windy, ideal walking weather, although rather wet underfoot. This latter fact was ably demonstrated by one Hare who failed in an attempt at the club's walking-on-water record while concentrating on leading the party.

By 4.30, the company was assembled at Ciney station for the traditional refreshment, and despite the best efforts of the management, arrived back in Luxembourg at the normal time.

Ciney to Sorée

18/11/90

Thirteen Hares plus man's best friend boarded the coach to Ciney at 7 am on November 18th.

After yet another breakfast-stop at Ciney station, the party set off at 9.15, into a cool but sunny day.

With the management team down to half strength and the trainee slightly unsure about which way up the map should be, the 25 kilometre route was slightly extended, to enter the official record at 27.5 kilometres.

The company coped well, however, and with the usual mountainous terrain completely absent, arrived at Sorée for an early departure at 15.40.

The lunch-stop was taken at a very agreeable Relais at Villy, after having its praises sung by the local population (who joined us for a drink).

The copy-book was somewhat blotted at the end of the day, also, when the company fragmented into different interest-groups (beer-fanciers, bus-hunters, lost souls, mountain-rescue (...), thus delaying the return to Luxembourg slightly beyond our normal return time. This was partly due to the fact that we congregated at a different church to the one chosen by our driver.

Soree to Bois/Borsu

09/12/89

Twelve and a half Hares left Luxembourg at 7 am on the 9th of December for the last walk of 1989.

By 9.15, the company was under way in a cold misty morning, without benefit of the customary Hares' breakfast.

On the outskirts of Evelette, a minor crisis broke out at the suggestion of a coffee-pause as part of the campaign policy, accepted on an earlier walk, to take at least two pauses during the day.

Despite a threatened mutiny, we set off for the elusive café, for a refreshment that seemed to be generally appreciated.

The lunch-stop was taken at a very agreeable Relais at Vyle, after having its praises sung by the local population (who joined us for a drink).

The copy-book was somewhat blotted at the end of the day, alas, when the company fragmented into different interest-groups (beer-fanciers, bus-hunters, lost souls, mountain-rescue ...), thus delaying the return to Luxembourg slightly beyond our normal return time. This was partly due to the fact that we congregated at a different church to the one chosen by our driver.

Bois/Borsu to Sy

20/01/90

Yet again the campaign entered the March Hares record book on January 20th, when 23 walkers, plus a double quantity of faithful hounds, undertook the 24 kilometres from Bois/Borsu to Sy.

The day started clear and cool, with plenty of road-walking to allow us to avoid the soft terrain, but as lunch-hour approached, the clouds descended to shoulder-height.

The management tendered an apology to the huddled mass of Hares abandoned in the rush to the café.

Eventually, the company convened in the café at Houmart, for lunch in tropical undergrowth, complete with fish, fungi, badger, etc.

The afternoon soon brightened up, for a lightning tour of Hamoir, where we left the G R 576 at the River Ourthe and joined the G R 57, to finish the day at the railway-station in the tiny village of Sy.

Sy to Morville

17/02/90

Seventeen Hares plus the canine dynamic duo set off on the 17th of February across la Petite Suisse belge, on a cool clear morning.

From Sy the company took a steep climb towards the Auberge de Logne, where a coffee-pause was taken to prepare us for the rigours ahead.

Two and a half hours later as lunch-hour approached, two obliging Hares took a bee-line into the village of Bomal to reconnoitre for a suitable stopping-place, thus saving the tired company many hungry minutes searching. Either that or they were lost, it was never really ascertained.

Ten minutes from Durbuy, the G R 57 was found to be submerged under the swollen River Ourthe, and the company improvised a path through several barbed wire fences into the town.

The climb out of Durbuy allowed a fine view down into the Place des Foires of this famous tourist-centre, before the final effort towards Morville.

Morville to Hampteau

24/03/90

Fourteen Hares, assisted as ever by Lady & the Tramp, stepped out at 9.10 on the 24th March at Morville for the Historical leg of the campaign, on another cool clear day.

At Weris, the company was interested to see the "quasi" Neolithic settlement, with a similar smaller group of buildings in the adjacent woodland at the Refuge du Brocard. The impression of times long past was only slightly spoiled by the use of modern roofing materials.

After a mid-morning Choccy-break at Erezee, the company found themselves in the Wood of Herboufa, where the gale-damage was still sadly much in evidence.

A deviation from the G R 57 for lunch in Soy was soon followed by another difficult crossing of storm-damaged woodland above Hotton. After a careful traverse of the From Hotton, the company approached Hampteau via the neighbouring quarry which appears to be eating its way towards the Grottes de Hotton.

Hampteau to La Roche

28/04/90

Fourteen Hares, with an ever increasing number of faithful friends, remembered the change of venue and gathered at the Glacis on April 28th.

A fruitless search for refreshments in the vicinity of Werpin caused a later than normal start, with a gentle climb out of the valley of the Ourthe in warm sunshine.

Lunch-time beckoned as the company descended into Marcourt, with the weather so splendid that the liquid part was taken indoors, with the serious part following a climb up to the Chapel St Thibaut. It was agreed that this special effort produced the most picturesque lunch-venue of the whole campaign.

The afternoon's walk made good time until the slopes above the Fond de Poulou, where the gales had destroyed several hectares of pine-forest. After a careful traverse of the slope above the old route of the G R, the way improved again to allow an easy walk into the centre of La Roche.

La Roche to Engreux

19/05/90

Sixteen Hares plus three canine ramblers disembarked at La Roche on the 19th of May in good time for breakfast and departure at 9.05 on a clear hot day.

The G R Topo-Guide allows 3.5 kilometres per hour and it soon became clear why. The terrain is often difficult, both in gradient and standard of footpath, so the total of four stops for refreshment were well-earned.

From La Roche, the first hour was spent crossing woodland, with a pause at Maboge. We passed through more hilly and wooded areas (where yet another café was missing). From then on, the company followed the River Ourthe, with lunch-stop at the Hotel Belvedere at Le Herou.

At this point, the company separated into two groups, namely those who fancied a 45-minute descent/ascent of the valley of the Ourthe, and those who preferred a 15-minute stroll through the village of Ollomont.

After passing the Barrage of Nisramont, and following the path with a fine view overlooking the associated lake for another hour and a half, the company reformed at Engreux, for refreshment and departure at 17.30.

Engreux to Limerlé

09/06/90

Fifteen Hares left Luxembourg on the 9th of June under dark skies and arrived at Engreux at 8.30, fully expecting to get drenched before the end of the day.

The first refreshment was taken at Houffalize, after passing under the motorway to Liège and an easy walk of just under two hours across mostly open and relatively flat country. The only rain of the day fell while in a café there!

The second leg of the day's walk took the company through more hilly and wooded country, with many fallen trees. We passed through Céturu (where yet another café was missing) before stopping for lunch on some tree trunks just east of the village, just as the sun came out.

It was for the last leg that Malcolm's reconnaissance work proved invaluable. To avoid fallen trees that he had found, we took the road towards Moulin de Bastin, where a suggested refreshment pause was over-ruled by the advance-party.

As a result, we arrived at Limerlé at 15.15, and by 17.00 we were back in Luxembourg, where we discovered that it had rained heavily much of the day.

Limerlé to Troisvierges

30/06/90

Three guide-dogs led fourteen Hares out of Limerlé at 9a.m. on June 30th, on the final leg of the campaign. After the cloud-burst of the day before, the humidity was very high, with plenty of dark clouds overhead to threaten another down-pour.

A fine pace was set until 10 o'clock, when the company reached a log-bridge over the Ourthe. At this point, one of the guide-dogs seized up half-way over and had to be carried across.

Undeterred, the company pressed on through Gouvy to the café at Gouvy Gare, famous as the second home of all true Hares, where we indulged in refreshment and plenty of nostalgia.

At this point, the GR57 gave way to the GR572 (GR Salm) for the final few kilometres in Belgium.

A level-crossing on the frontier was clearly marked with the familiar red and white GR sign, but the company was not fooled, and headed off in exactly the opposite direction into Wattermal and thence across the frontier.

Approaching Huldange, a light steady rain brought thoughts of shelter and refreshment to everyone's mind, and the GR was abandoned in a dash to the Hotel Knaufs, just beyond Buurgplaatz, at 559 metres the highest point in the Grand Duchy.

After lunch, an excellent piece of map-reading by Louis soon brought the company back to the GR, and an easy walk to rendez-vous point at Troisvierges Gare.

As is so often necessary in these remoter parts of the country, Sandy ordered drinks in Russian.

We reached Luxembourg at about 17.30 to discover that, once again we had escaped heavy rain which fell there during the day.

Thus ended the more spartan part of the 291 km 1989/90 campaign. The gastronomic part takes place at the Restaurant Steimmetz, Bech, on Friday 6th July.

Your management would like to thank all the Hares whose participation has contributed so much to the enjoyment of this campaign.

Bruce Goodman and Malcolm Turner

On Being A Hare

A Hare is unsuspecting: He goes to a New Year's Eve party which finishes with a walk the following Saturday.

A Hare takes an interest in where he is going: And as a result has to organise the next campaign.

A Hare goes for a walk on a glorious day: The coldest of the year.

A Hare enthuses about all his walks: Even when he has had to strip off in the garage to avoid flooding the house.

A Hare is someone who gets up in the middle of the night to go for a two hour train or car journey: And then he walks back down the line to the previous station and catches the train home again.

A Hare knows where all the cafés are: Although occasionally they are closed.

A Hare is mad: He wants to see parts of the countryside to which a car never penetrates.

A Hare never loses his way: Although on occasion he may take a more scenic route.

David Heal.

Quotes for Hares contributed by Malcolm Turner

He who does not travel does not know the value of men.
Moorish Proverb.

Solvitur ambulando. (It is solved by walking).

It is good to collect things, but it is better to go on walks.

Anatole France.

All things considered there are only two kinds of men in the world - those that stay at home and those that do not.

Kipling.

What can we do? We were born with the Great Unrest. Our father taught us that life is one long journey on which only the unfit are left behind.

Caribou Eskimo to Dr Knud Rossmussen.

Gli offro fame, sete, marcie forzate ... (I offer you hunger, thirst, forced marches ...).

Garibaldi (1882) to his troops.

Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner ...

William Hazlitt - On Criticism.

The merry brown hares came leaping over the crest of the
hill,
Where the clover and corn lay sleeping under the moonlight
still.

Charles Kingsley - The Bad Squire.

A walk for a walk's sake.
Paul Klee - Pedagogical Sketchbook (1925).

As I walked through the wilderness of this world.
Bunyan - Pilgrim's Progress.

... going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down
in it.
Book of Job, 1:6, Satan to the Lord.

"I'm sure nobody walks much faster than I do!"
"He can't do that", said the King, "or else he'd have been
here first."
Lewis Carroll - Alice ...

Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green
turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a
three hours' march to dinner ...
William Hazlitt - On Criticism.