

THE WINTERS' SUMMER WALK *March 1983 – "MERCURY" No. 74)*

(Or how to get to the AGM the hard way)

G3TAN/026

General Secretary RSARS

Dick Winters, your Editor, likes to walk! Many of us do of course. We pop of to the paper shop, saunter to the cinema or perambulate to the Post Office. Dick likes to walk to Catterick which is OK, but then he lives at 32 Redwood Avenue, Melton Mowbray which is 137 miles South of Catterick!!

Our Stalwart Editor of Mercury, proud of having served with the Corps intends to walk from the Signals Squadron at Garrats Hay, Loughborough to 8th Signal Regiment, Catterick to attend this year's AGM making a total distance of 150 miles. His effort will be to raise money for the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund. He would appreciate sponsorship from anyone in RSARS and you can show your appreciation by completing the tear-off pro forma below.

To start the ball rolling HQ RSARS on your behalf is pledging £50.00. You can pledge whatever you like. If every Member were to pledge one penny per mile walked then Dick would be able to donate over £2,000.00 to the Fund. I am sure you will support him in his adventure. We will be helping to publicise the event.

Don't whatever you do send him a cheque for what you think he is worth, otherwise HE will probably owe YOU a couple of quid! All pledges will be most gratefully received and acknowledged. You can start NOW if you wish, so that you don't forget. REMEMBER TO SEND YOUH PLEDGE DIRECT TO DICK WINTERS, G3NVK, and NOT TO ME.

This is a tremendous effort for someone who is not in the first flush of youth, and the money will go to a very worthy cause. So help as much as you feel able to and THANK YOU ALL.

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I HEREBY PLEDGE to the ROYAL SIGNALS BENEVOLENT FUND the sum of £ ____ if G3NVK completes his 150 mile walk to the AGM at Catterick in June 1983.

(SIGNED)

ADDRESS

RSARS NUMBER

THE WINTER'S SUMMER WALK

- *the step-by-step story.*

G3NVK/0138

PART ONE

Today (23rd April 1983) has been the best training walk day so far. Already the practice walking has covered some 300 miles, mainly in frost, snow, hail, rain, gale-force winds and all that the worst of British weather can inflict upon us between Christmas and Easter. But today was grand: the sun can at last be felt on one's face, the sky is blue, the hedges thickening and turning green at last, the early crops in the fields are flourishing and there's a true sense of Spring in the air. Seven weeks to go and we shall be on the long hike.

Sitting one cold November morning last year sipping my NAAFI-type hot, thick and very sweet tea which comprises my only intake for breakfast my thoughts idly went to those halcyon days of Summers past, tramping on Dartmoor, perambulating the High Peak of Derbyshire, climbing Scafell Pike and Helvellyn and country walks with the xyl, Jo, most weekends. Suddenly for no apparent reason, the computer between my ears signalled: **Why not walk up to Catterick for the AGM next year?**

Then all the thoughts began. Voicing my idea to Jo as she came down for her better-than-mine breakfast I think she laughed at first but then realised I was serious. And she immediately volunteered to help me as she does in all that I set out to do. My thoughts were those of a youthful soldier of some 35 years ago, covering 5 miles in less than an hour with full pack at basic training, being posted from Catterick to Belsen and cavorting around Luneburg Heath in a Willy's Jeep searching for Centurion tanks of the 5th Royal Tanks (to whom I was attached from Royal Signals) with their radio communications defunct, and mending their wretched 19-sets, high nights spent in Celle etc. etc. The body was 53 years old, non-sportif and desk-bound. Jo easily made me see that training was essential if we were to be successful. The idea mulled around in the brain for a week or two and by Christmas was a determination.

Some extra walking was taken up, some simple exercises commenced and the normal 11 stones 7 pounds were soon down to a level 11 stones, and holding.

I have always received a well balanced nourishing, wholesome and varied diet but decided to cut down slightly on the sugar intake. Apart from that little else except walking seemed to be necessary.

The clothing was already in hand: string vest, wool shirt, ex-RN Submarine pullover, wool trousers, good boots (which had been found to be excellent on Dartmoor and at other places) size 9½ by VANGO of Italy (Cortina style), a cagoule with a certification "as used on the British Everest Expedition", matching over-trousers and a light back pack also by Vango. All of which would render me impervious to the Winter wind and rain.

By early March the walking was in earnest and the first hurdle (could I or could I not now manage to walk 15 - 20 miles in a day and still survive?) was overcome and the question answered. I could! Problems by now had arisen, nothing serious though. Condensation inside the cagoule etc. was quite severe but I preferred to retain this particular garment as it had no vents, no button-holes, no zips and nothing to let in the cold blasts: I could put up with the condensation and sodden inner clothing provided I kept smartly on the move, showered and changed as soon as I got home. In spite of lots of commiserations from sponsors about blistered feet I have never yet had this problem - the boots are well-fitting and I wear nylon inner socks plus terry-towelling oversocks and apart from a bruised toe or two on one particular 2½ mile steep downhill quick march I have had no problems. Dehydration however was a problem the seriousness of which I didn't appreciate until Nurse Melton (xyl of G3WKM/0261) advised me to beware. I weighed myself prior to my long marches and on my return and found I was 3½ pounds lighter!! I was quite thirsty for a full day thereafter and my urine had the appearance of Tate & Lyles' famous treacle. A higher liquid intake whilst on these long treks was the answer which overcame the problem. An IKD (internal knee disorder) of long-standing was a minor problem too. Knee bent and leg angled slightly outwards, the knee would often "go". Locked then and only a painful heave followed by an ominous crack would straighten the offending limb and it would remain painful and stiff for two or three days afterwards. The knee has "gone" twice since Christmas and is due to a runny semi-lunar cartilage.

If I watch what I am doing and continue to ease off on the many "knees bend" exercises I was originally doing daily then with any luck I should be ship-shape for the long journey ahead.

The internal mileometer ticking up steadily I began to think of the actual journey and route. We purchased the necessary five Ordnance Survey Sheets (Landranger Series, 1:50 000) (Sheets 129, 120, 111, 104 and 99) which cover the journey from near home up to Catterick Garrison. We spread them out, drew a straight line from Garrats Hay, Loughborough to Melton Mowbray, then from there to Catterick. Measured it was 150½ miles. Just right. So the straight line is the ideal route and for the large part of course does not coincide with roads, but goes through reservoirs, gas works, coal mines, factories, in one place a nudist colony (a lorry made a hole in the wall of the one locally - the Police are looking into it) etc. We shall keep as near as possible to the straight line when on the trip but will undoubtedly cover more than 150 miles.

At the time of writing I have not sought permission from the CO at Garrats Hay to leave his Guardroom to commence the walk but anticipate no problems in that respect. G3WKM/0261 will transport me on start day over to Garrats Hay and see me off. A couple of Members quite touchingly offered to walk with me on the first stint but unfortunately their free time does not coincide with my leaving so the whole trip will be the solo affair I planned, solo that is apart from Jo who will be in the vicinity every day to transport me to the nearest decent hotel each night and put me on the start line again each morning.

LOWE ELECTRONICS LTD. of Matlock have very kindly and generously through their link-man G4KFN/1548 offered to loan me a TRIO 2300 plus necessary extras for the journey. This way, through repeaters en route or from the hotel bedroom at night, I shall be able to keep in touch with some Members and report progress as I proceed northwards. I am of course most grateful to Messrs. LOWE for this facility and suspect that Dave will talk me in to buying the rig when I return to "up" my VHF score beyond the present 40 confirmed.

Two dummy runs from Garrats Hay to Melton Mowbray have been done as part of the training walks but most of the other walking has been nearer to home passing through or near the large country estates of His Grace the Duke of Rutland at Belvoir Castle and Lord Gretton at Stapleford Park. On both of these estates the pheasant abound and have been good company on many trips, as have the leaping hare, the new-born lambs, the nesting rooks and all the fauna of the unspoiled countryside of Leicestershire.

Sponsorship is coming along very nicely thank you. £375 as at the end of April. We have had the first Overseas sponsorships too: US\$50 from N2DAN and AUS\$20 from VK2NLE. The rest has come from members, work colleagues, clients of our Solicitors firm and relatives. I acknowledge all with many thanks and will print a full list in the next issue. One Member kindly added to his £5 sponsorship - "a further £10 if you walk back home!!"

The training must of course continue and indeed increase now that the warmer weather is here and the nights are lighter. You will learn of my success or failure possibly in the AGM notes to this issue, via the Nets or in the next issue, in which I hope to publish the story of the actual walk.

The main thing is that I am jolly well enjoying it!!

PART TWO

How many miles to Babylon? Threescore miles and ten. Can I get there by candle-light? Yes, and back again.

I had neither intended to walk to that particular city, nor a mere 70 miles and certainly had no intention of walking back again!! To Catterick I would walk and 150+ miles I would go!

By Monday 13th June 1983 I had walked 414 miles in hard training and seldom enjoyed good weather. On the following day I drove the round trip of 112 miles to Matlock and back, there to see Dave, G4KFN/1548 at LOWE ELECTRONICS and pick up the Trio 2300 rig and charger etc. which they kindly loaned me for the trip. Back home I couldn't resist the temptation to get away from my poor VHF location, up a local hill and try out the gear. In so doing I had to walk 6 miles, bringing the final total training mileage to a round figure of 420.

Wednesday dawned, dry, sunny but a bitterly cold wind again. Over breakfast I wondered if Dennis G3HCM/0016 had yet left Coventry *en route* for our rendezvous at the start point. (Dennis had asked permission to accompany me on the first 3

miles since he had at one time been stationed at the Garrats Hay barracks in Leicestershire). I switched on the rig, gave a call through the Leicester Repeater and Dennis replied. He was well and truly on the way and we would meet at 0900 on site. Breakfast over and waiting for my volunteer driver G3WKM/0261 I thought "*This is how they must have felt on D-day!*". Ken arrived like a good soldier, five minutes before the stated time and drove me off in great haste to the starting gate. Dennis, Ken and I paraded at the guardroom and were met by a Royal Signals Sergeant who kindly arranged for the CO and Adjutant to see us off at 0915. Dennis and I set off at a cracking pace and had soon covered the 3 miles where we were to part and from which point I would be on my own. After a couple of lonely miles I decided to put a call out on 2 metres and was glad to be answered by G3HCM, G3WKM and G4MTP all Members and all wishing me well. A long day, then in a biting cold wind and the welcome sight of G3WKM again some 15 miles further on to transport me home for the night.

Only 135 miles to go now I thought, as I left again at 1000 the following morning, and headed for G4HLC at Long Clawson - where I received further good wishes and proceeded another 16 miles to the end of the day. By now I was in the area of Lowdham, Notts.

Nice warm day on Friday 17th June (the anniversary of my joining Royal Signals in 1948) and I pressed on making good time to Sherwood Forest where I spent the afternoon in a warm airstream viewing the Major Oak and the rest of the forest. 16 miles again and going well.

Saturday 18th June saw me in lovely sunshine, the best yet throughout the training and the march so far, 19 miles covered, ending up at Maltby. I had crossed the border into South Yorkshire at 2p.m. and felt this was a milestone. Here, unfortunately we slipped up. Due to the route I had to walk I had sent Jo (the xyl) on ahead in the car to meet me at a certain Church which I pointed out to her on the Ordnance Survey Map I was carrying and on the Motoring Map she had with her. I arrived at the Church but no Jo. An hour went by - surely she should be here by now? Operation Personal Repeater had to begin. I walked back a mile, found a telephone box and rang Joanne, the junior Op. at home all those miles away in Melton Mowbray. Had mummy contacted her yet? No! Well, she will soon, tell her where I am, and I detailed my position. Fifteen minutes later, Jo, having also rang home and found my position, arrived - yes, there were TWO churches in that village, half a mile but out of sight from each other. Jo at one and me at t'other!! To preclude that happening again we found a convenient bookshop and doubled-up on the good scale Ordnance Survey Maps - at least we'd both have one for the rest of the trip and effect rendez-vous by proper map references!!

I shall not forget Maltby. Sunday came and this was the day that a local - Ray, G4PKY, ex RAF Sergeant Medic had said he'd walk the day with me. Yesterday I had done 19 miles (I didn't count the mile back to the 'phone box and back to meet Jo by the way!!). Brother, it was a hot day. Ray and I set off smartly around 0930 intending some 18 or so miles. Now Ray will forgive me for telling you that he had for weeks passed regaled me with tales of long-distance marches in Bahrein, Hong

Kong and elsewhere during his RAF career - tales of burying bottles of water on the outward march marking them with a pile of stones and reclaiming them on the thirsty homeward route. We started off very well, me carrying all the day's food and water, waterproofs, the rig etc. Gradually Ray became more silent and I allowed him to walk in front from time to time when we were met by advancing traffic and I noticed his hips were swaying differently, he was slowing down and I called a halt for lunch after about 10 miles. We holed up in a bird-watching sanctuary near a lake and Ray was quick to get his shoes off. After lunch Ray's distress became more and more apparent until at last, conceding that Royal Signals on this day were much better than RAF he said he could go no further. Could he stop there and would I retrace our steps and fetch the car for him? I did. It was monumentally hot and I was tired but Ray couldn't have walked any further on those two badly blistered feet and with that aching back oh No! 21 miles I did that day but Ray did double his sponsorship when we parted company in the late evening as a gesture of admiration!!

Monday 20th June started off from South Kirkby, hot sun but windy. Got to Leeds and I didn't like it. No offence to the Leeds folk but the coal mines en route, the quarries, the busy city streets and heavy traffic gave me no pleasure at all. We celebrated by staying the night in a rather posh hotel who charged us £22 each for bed and breakfast. We weren't there long enough to enjoy it, arriving late in the evening, grabbing a meal, off to bed and an early start next morning.

Tuesday was a better day - headed towards Harrogate, passed the 100 mile point of the trip and got to the stately home Harewood House. There we spent the afternoon as tourists and ended up in Otley. No sign of a hotel but a kindly old gent directed us to The Black Horse Inn who kindly offered to put us up, give us a fine mixed grille for our evening meal and a farmhouse breakfast for £28 all in all. Nice people too.

The next couple of days passed without event, pressed on during the warm days and went for evening walks!! Got drenched in a thunderstorm near Ripon, stayed the day at Fountains Abbey, wandering round the grounds and countryside. Arrived at Masham with only a few miles to go now to journey's end. Bad day really - I had been supplied by G3WKM and XYL with that commodity known as Quiggins Kendal Mint Cake. For those of you who are not familiar with this stuff let me explain that it contains energy-giving sugar in large proportions, glucose, syrup etc. and is covered in chocolate. It has been a huge success on the British Everest Expedition and numerous other expeditions throughout the world. To my dismay an over indulgence of this valuable stuff cracked one of my lower impacted Wisdom teeth!! (Back at home after the AGM I had to suffer the indignity and anguish of "root treatment" to preserve the offending molar much to my chagrin).

By now I was within 2-metre range of the Garrison and managed to work G4LSL on S21 during the evening.

Friday was the big day. The day I should arrive. And arrive I did. To an extremely warm and friendly welcome from Ray, G3EKL who greeted me on behalf of the Garrison Commander, the President and Chairman, Officers and Members of

RSARS and immediately doubled his sponsorship. Ray had for weeks egged me on that I wouldn't do it, but he knew all along that I would but if I thought that he thought I could not achieve I would be more likely to!! By that trick he has spurred me on to win the 559 Contest several times - he knows any suggestion of failure will have the reverse effect!! 151 miles then all done and a safe and happy arrival at the Guardroom. We were quickly joined by G3TAN and Colonel Noel Moss who added to the welcome. They let me go then to a good rest in our chosen quarters. We had booked into to Scar House up in Arkengarthdale not too far from Richmond - a near stately home in itself built by the late Sopwith (of Pup and Camel aircraft fame) and used for the filming of "*All creatures great and small*" by James Heriot.

More acclaim came the next day, Saturday, the day of the AGM. Photographs by the Press, and Members, newspaper coverage etc. All very enjoyable as was the AGM itself and the next day's Old Comrades' Day with HRH in attendance.

The most satisfying aspect of the whole exercise was, however, unquestionably the sponsorship by members, friends, office colleagues and clients. At the moment of writing (September 1983) the total pledged so far is £650. I am anxious to get this sum away to the ROYAL SIGNALS BENEVOLENT FUND, by Christmas if possible and would therefore urge all who have made pledges but who have not yet sent me their cheques to do so on receipt of this article please.

I am very grateful to the following (listed in the order in which the pledges were received):-

HQ RSARS, G3EKL, VK2NLE, G3ADZ, G3ZFN, G3CWW, G4ICC, G3LAT, G3RFP, G4PKB, G4JII, G3WKM, G4AOE, G4MUD, G3LCN, G3TPN, G3WRY, G6HAK, G3JZP, G3EJF, G3OAZ, G4KFN, DA1FR/G3NKO, G3HCM, G5GH, GW4IFN, G3LGH, G4LIW, G3XUG, G3RFI GI2DZG, G4MUC, G3DVL, DJØSS, G2WQ, G3PPK, G3DBU, G3BGM, ZL1AXM, G3MKR, N2DAN, ON8GM, VE3QE, G4HVA, G3BPB, G4MQN, GM4CBV, GW4JKX, G3CAA, GW3LAD, G3UAA, G4KEM, VE3AX, G4KME, AGM "BOOTS" COLLECTION, G4DBY, G6DUF, G4MTP, G4SQE, G3JFE, G4HLC, GW6HAW, G2BQ, WA8TGA.

I am also very grateful for my grand supporters being my wife Jo, G3WKM and Sylvia, G3HCM, G3EKL, G3TAN for all their help and encouragement during the event, along with Phil Melton for local chauffeuring and LOWE ELECTRONICS via G4KFN for the loan of the gear.



The Start

(Photograph by G3HCM – RSARS 016)



The Finish

with Jo and Colonel Noel Moss (Chairman RSARS)

TTS steps, 8 Signal Regiment, Catterick Garrison

THANK YOU RICHARD WINTERS

When **Richard Winters** decided to attend the Association's 1983 Catterick Reunion, he decided to walk! This involved a trek of some 150 miles from Loughborough to Catterick—preceded, needless to say, by much preliminary training.

It all worked according to plan, starting on 15 June with a steady 15 miles a day. This sponsored walk enabled **Richard** to make a donation of £690 to our Benevolent Fund early in December 1983 and all will wish to applaud his enterprise and endurance.

Richard served with the Corps as a National Serviceman between 1948 and 1950 and as a keen 'ham' has maintained his link with the Corps through the Amateur Radio Society—he currently serves as its Secretary.

It would be wrong to end this brief report without paying tribute to **Richard's** aide, his wife, who was never too far away with the car and refreshments. Some five months after the event, **Richard** tells us 'I thoroughly enjoyed the walk and suffered no ill effects save for a rather badly cracked wisdom tooth due to a surfeit of that well known commodity Kendal Mint Cake when the energy was flagging one day—all is now well thanks to a good dentist.'

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