

Bob (Robert) Ransome

Harvey Lloyd

Sadly, I have to report another death amongst our members in 2019. Bob Ransome, a long-time friend of mine, who lived in Ombersley, Worcestershire. A quietly spoken person, Bob did not sing his own praises very much. But he had many qualities.

Being keen on walking and mountaineering he knew Snowdonia from an early age, one of his early jobs was working a summer season in the Pen y Gwryd Hotel as a general assistant under Chris and Jo Briggs.

After leaving school Bob started his catering career training at the Birmingham College of Food. His search for wider horizons led him to travel and gain experience in many places including Switzerland and Scilly isles, and of course his early love for the hills drew him to the PyG. He moved to Ombersley to take over the Crown Hotel a prominent establishment in the centre of the village, where he took out a thirty-year lease with Jenny at the beginning of 1970 but with retirement in sight they left in September 1999; the new inflated cost of the lease meant it was time for them to retire early.

I first met him through leading annual walks for the Snowdonia National Park Society in the mid-1980s and from his involvement in these his enthusiasm for the hills drew him into the Gorphwysfa. He became a regular visitor to Pen y Pass and came on some of the mountaineering course weekend that I used to organise. He also supported Rosie when she ran Bed & Breakfast at Hafod y Gwynt.

When the Gorphwysfa set out to organise a trip to the mountains in Morocco in the year 2000, he jumped at a place on it. The main aim was to climb Mount Toubkal, (4127m) the highest mountain in north Africa. It turned out to be a total success, with the whole group, including my young stepdaughter Tanya, exploring the area and getting to the top. I was keen to extend the visit, and although the main group had to return to the UK, Bob and I went on, by train, to the middle Atlas Mountains on a mini trek, an experience that was very special for both of us! He also joined us on a club trip to Nepal, where we set out to climb Mera Peak, (about 21, 247ft, 6461metres) at that time the highest of the mountains (entitled Trekking Peaks) that the authorities allowed groups to climb. Over three weeks the weather was rather unkind, and except for three members (Christopher, Tash and Simon Kerr) the others failed to achieve the summit.

He attended many meets, but I could mention a couple that I found memorable. In August 2006 John Wright, myself and Bob set out to do the Ridgeway; with the support of others. In 2008, early December it was Harvey's 70 birthday weekend at Hafod y Gwynt, to celebrate this great happening I decided that an attempt would be made on the Snowdon Horseshoe on the Saturday in the snow! Bob, I think for the first time set off with us up Crib Coch in the snow; it was a great day but we ran out of time so a hasty retreat was called.

He was a keen environmental supporter and I persuaded him into membership of the newly set up charity the Friends of St Julitta's Church Capel Curig as an early member in the late 1990s. He was a staunch supporter until his death, his catering skills came to

the forefront when we started holding a medieval dinner in support of our volunteers, the church, when he cooked on of the dinners.

He was very active as a volunteer in his village community. He was a member of the Ombersley Parish Council, probably for ten years, and also five or so years as footpath officer. He was also a school governor for the local primary school and became a member of the Village Memorial hall committee, where he was chairman and involved in 2010 when £75000 was raised for the new Kitchen and other improvements.

A memorial service was on January 11th which several members of the Gorphwysfa attended. I thought it would be a nice idea to remember Bob by organising a walk on his home ground. Jenifer, Bobs wife, and some of his family and friends joined in on Wednesday 17th April and a grand time was held by all. The below is an account of the walk that I wrote at the time, 'Six of us enjoyed a lovely day yesterday, the weather behaved itself 100%, Bob would have lapped it up, it was such a positive occasion for everyone. Jenny had laid everything in place wonderfully, including Libby, Bob's lower teenage granddaughter to guide us.

Ombersley is an attractive village and Grafton House, their home, is ideally situated, with a very grand, well looked after garden to show it off. The traffic passing through the village does not add to its peacefulness, but I guess that, like many things, that fades into the background of the nicety of its surroundings. We set off, somewhat later than expected through by my poor calculation of the time needed to drive,



but the green grassy countryside with its spring flowers bursting into bloom (including my first blue bells of the season) everywhere soon brought things into perspective. A very notable feature was the agriculture of the fields that we crossed, a spring onion field must have been the largest in the world and the east European group cutting rhubarb drew one's attention to the likely problems created by Brexit to the harvesting community. Lunch on a bank that would normally have revealed the Mendips (it was hazy) and the surrounding hills, led us soon to join the River Seven, with thoughts of bygone days when Frances and I and the children canoed a section of it, and revealed how impressive the river was. Following it south with one or two grand houses on its banks bringing memories of the Thames to us, a river we know so well. The path led us inland and uphill, and shortly the Ombersley Church tower and spire appeared over the trees, for the more mature 80 years plus present, a very pleasant sight! Retuning to Jenny's home she had laid out a fine spread of clotted cream scones, cakes and flapjack and several pots of tea (nectar!), what a finale!

Thanks were expressed to all, especially Libby who seemed to enjoy it as much as all the oldies, and Jenny for launching the idea in such a fine way. Yes, a lovely day, grand enough to make it an annual event!'

A kind, gentle man, his family and we will very much miss him so much.