

# Lofer Diary 2005

The Border Holiday Group

### Friday 9th September

Well, after 18 months of planning and preparation the day has finally arrived, our de-

parture for the 2005 trip to Lofer, Austria. Heavy rain, the first for over three weeks, greeted us as we arrived by minibus at Gretna, to be reunited with our old friends Ben Hunt and Bill Hughes, our drivers for the trip. Luggage and wheelchairs stowed underneath, food and goodies in the galley and our eight VIP's, eight carers, two nurses and group leader are safely seated in the Jumbulance and we are off. Waving farewell to family and friends at 9.40am we commence our 29-hour journey.



Gordon checks the passports.

The atmosphere is of excitement, especially for our six first time travellers. After our first cuppa at 10.30am the galley staff loaded the ovens in the Jumbulance with the prepacked meals for our lunch. Shortly after the first motorway stop to change drivers, lunch is served. A variety of main courses on offer, cottage pie, lasagne, pasta, haggis



Queuing for the ferry at Dover

On arriving at Dover paperwork and passports are checked. Our original ferry has al-

ready left so we board The Pride of Canterbury for our crossing to Calais. No one is allowed to remain on the car deck so for the first time on one of these trips everyone will be on the upper deck for the duration of the crossing, leading to much excitement among the VIP's.

One hour and ten minutes later we are in Calais, Bill tops up the bus with fuel and a quick stop is made at EastEnders, before we leave the port. We then travel via Northern France, Belgium and into Germany for our long overnight journey. All the VIP's are tucked



Billy settles down for the night.

up in bed by 10.15pm and those on the second part of the nightshift settle down for a few hours rest.

Gordon Jackson

#### Lofer Diary 2005

#### Inside this issue:

The boat trip	2
The journey up to heaven	3
The talent competi- tion	3
Salzburg	4
Ben & Bills Mystery tour	5
The damp afternoon	6
The fancy dress	6
The riverside walk	7
The Song	10
The Group Photo	11

#### Things heard on the holiday:

- "Whae's that auld man?"
- " She's a' right that yin."
- "Look a chip lorry!"
- " Ups a daisy bye bye."

### Saturday 10th September

We wake, after our first night on the bus, in Germany. The drivers stop to allow us to have breakfast, our first stationary meal since leaving Gretna, get washed and tidied up. We are due in Lofer at 11am but bad weather and long hold ups on the autobahn mean we are running late. The galley staffs conjure up lunch of soup and bread from what we have left on the bus.

We finally arrive in Lofer at 3.45pm, over four hours late. We are greeted by Rudy, who recognises some of us. Rooms are allocated and the bus is quickly unloaded. We all make our way up to the top floor our, home for the week, the rooms all come with a view and no one is disappointed. After a freshen up and a change of clothes we are ready to start the holiday proper, with our first meal in the hotel. Followed by a sociable evening in the bar. Those who had been before said it was like they'd never been away.

Scott Cassidy & Blair Grzybowski



Keith, "Ee've missed a bit!"



The church in Lofer.

### Sunday 11th September

Sunday morning, clear bright and sunny. Oo hev a guid breakfast then take a wander roond the village, its jist like the postcards. Yin café wiz a bit noisy though, the group hed arrived. Efter lunch oor first trip wiz ti Lake Königssee for a boat trip.

Yince on the boat the views were wonderful. Oo stopped in the middle of the Lake and a bloke, the boat driver, blew his trumpet so we could hear its echo. Hei then came roond for a collection, wi' his hand oot (a think hei wiz frae Gala), Anne gave him a sweetie. Oo then hed ti get off at St Bartholomä, (Gordon hed bought the cheap tickets), then oo heard the thunder an lightning and it chucked doon wi rain. Oo hed ti wait on the boat coming ti take oo back, and hed ti dae some pushin' an' shovin' wi' the Germans, as they tried ti shove in in front o' oo.

Yince back at Könnigsee oo a hed a coffee or a drink. Christopher hed a "wee" ice cream and Scott bought an Oompa Band CD. It wiz then back ti oor hotel fur oor denner, it wiz afy guid, Heather and mei wer sensible in oo went ti oor beds early, the rest stied up for some mare lemonades and went ti bed aboot "ten".

Heather & Bill Hislop



Linda Mc, Gordon, Linda D, Pauline & Scott, after their first glimpse of the mountains



The autobahn gets a bit monotonous after a while!



Somewhere under the rainbow we wait for the boat.



The storm moves on.

#### Monday 12th September

On Monday morning my carer Linda and myself rise to a very nice breakfast, and decide to have a leisurely morning. We go down to the swimming pool, which was available to us in the Hotel Hubertus. We had a very nice time reminiscing, singing songs from the various musicals I have been part of for the last 39 years with the Gala opera. After spending a very ice morning in the pool we rejoined the rest of the group, some of whom had been cycling swimming or shopping, for Lunch.

then back to the hotel.

We all had some refreshments at the top of the mountain

before catching the last cable car down. This time I had no

fear and watched out the front of the car as we descended,

times), who would have thought it, what a memory. It was

After another beautiful meal we finished off the night with stars in your eyes. All the VIP's did a turn and our own Simon Cowell, Linda Dalgliesh, judged the competition. Christopher sang the House of Macdonald, Scott- Flower Of

Scotland, Linda Mc- Black Hills of Dakota, Anne- Eidel

Weis, Cynthia recited self penned poem The Cable Car and

Keith ably assisted by Derek sang The Music Man. Linda

a turn, and Ben taught the group "The Little Green Frog".

So far each day has been better than the last, having never been abroad before, it's been a great experience one to look

back on and one I'll never forget, it was just super.

Just the usual quiet night in the Hotel.



Linda & Pauline get ready to conquer their fear of the cable car.

(unlike Pauline the nurse who remained seated on the floor with her eyes closed at all



Linda conquers it.

chose Keith as the winner. The entertainment then went on for a while as the carers all did

Pauline does not.



Chris in full song.



Cynthia in poetic mood.



Linda McDonald

Scott gets patriotic.



Relaxing in he pool.



Lofer on Monday morning.



Cynthia admires the view from the top of Schmitten Höhe.



Looking down on Zell-am Zee.



Music Men, Keith & Derek.

#### Tuesday 13th September

Our outing today was to Salzburg; the weather was wet and windy. Betty, Lorna, Blair and Sue stayed behind in Lofer, while we did some sightseeing and shopping.



Salzburg Castle.

On arriving in Salzburg some of the VIP's shopped did some shopping at some of the stalls while others visited the cathedral, with its stunning paintings and music. Bill the driver, chose to phone Pauline at this point, to tell her where they had parked the bus, oops!

We were all given 10 Euros to buy lunch. Most of the group had lunch in a café in the square, outside but under umbrellas due to the rain. A variety of lunches were

bought, soup, toasties, ice creams and coffees, caus-

were risking life and limb crossing the road, even at

ing the waitresses to become confused and almost resulting in Gordon and Scott not getting anything.

Once we were all fed and water it was up to group leader Scott to give us the option of visiting Mozart's' house or among other things going shopping. Much shopping then ensued present buying, CD buying, more ice creams, and all the while taking in Salzburg's' sights.

With the afternoon drawing to a close, we made our way back to the bus via the river. Although it felt like we



The fountain in the square.



Salzburg Castle.



Salzburg river side.



Watch out for the bikes!



Linda & Anne at play.



Anne enjoys an ice cream lunch.



The group leader Scott goes for the native look



This way to the shops !.



Mozart's' statue Salzburg.

the crossings. Safely back at the bus station we all joined up together and waited on the bus. Christopher somehow managed to find a beer! Linda Dalgliesh kept our spirits up by singing though didn't make much. The bus arrived and we all boarded for a warm dry trip back to the hotel. After another superb meal we all settled down for another quiet evening.

Christopher Briggs & Stuart Edwards

A lazy start to the day Ben and Bills mystery tour departs at 11am. Linda D was invited to go for her first ever motor-

#### Wednesday 14th September

bike ride with Kenny, who is a very competent rider. She looked rather smart on the pillion seat with her helmet and they set off just for a few minutes run around Lofer. Group leader for the day, Anne, runs some errands with Gordon, before supervising the loading of the bus. All the group are in their white t-shirts as today will be our group photo. That is all except Derek are in their t-shirts. Just after 11am Derek comes running out the hotel in a state of undress, running late after having a dip in the pool.

Everyone present and correct we are off, but where to? Ben is driving and bill navigating. We head towards Zell am Zee but continue on through, we start to climb, the road gets a little bit narrow in places then opens up in a valley. The bus stops in a car park in front of six tollbooths, but most of us are watching a small rickety looking cable car coming down the mountain. A quick look round and there are some unusual looking cows in the field and a sign says something about wildlife. Anne and Gordon head off to the buildings across the road. The bus unloads still not sure of where we are.

Gordon and Anne return with leaflets for everyone, which reveal we are at Ferleiten Wildlife Park. We cross the road to a picnic area out side the park and line up for our group photo. Gordon asks a passing tourist to take the photo and a dozen cameras are thrust in front of him. He patiently takes our picture with each camera before heading off. The group then has the packed lunch supplied by the hotel, sitting at the foot of a mountain waterfall. We discover the tollbooths are for the Grossglockner pass which passes a large glassier. No time for this today but worth remembering for the future.

Lunch consumed and tidied away we head into the park, not entirely sure of what is to come. The weather is getting hotter and brighter and the alpine air is fresh. We pass some donkeys and large bison, there are deer sunning themselves and boar fighting over their food. We follow a tractor into the next section, which contain stag. Its feeding time and the stag come right down next to us, which is an amazing experience.

We continue on round the views changing as we climb and turn, the climbs a little harder for those pushing the chairs. Gordon pushed Cynthia while I held on to his belt and was pulled up. We stopped half way up, hugged and had a few moments silence, special. It made me realise how lucky I have been to meet these wonderful people. The top of the mountain is trying to poke through the clouds, and the waterfall is now at eye level, breathtaking. We move on round the park and discover wolves, which appeared when Lesley called them, two brown bears sleeping and a very sociable monkey. It held on to Sue's finger for a long time very endearing. The moment was soon shattered however as it then ran off and started cleaning another monkeys nether region. You can imagine the laugh, but trust Sue soon had the medical wipes out. Refreshments were then sought at the café, some shopping done and it was back to the hotel, after a very enjoyable and relaxing afternoon in the wild.

After dinner it's quiz night. Gordon and Lesley are the quizmaster and adjudicator, teams of two or three are made up of carer and VIP. Never has the group been so quiet and serious, "What time did we leave Gretna?", "What is the name of the hotel dog?", "How many rooms do we occupy in the hotel?" are just a few of the questions. All questions answered and the totals added up Lorna, Betty and Cynthia win, Ben and Bill get the booby prize, scraping 50 points thanks to Derek's generous marking. An enjoyable end to an enjoyable day.

Anne Connelly & Glenise Lancaster

Another leisurely start to the day, after breakfast we were free to go to the village, have a



Feeding time for the stags.



One of the wolves



Betty admires the view.



Blair & Scott confer.



You can see the cogs turning

### Thursday 15th September

swim or just relax in the hotel. At 11am we were all on the coach to travel to the Hellbrun Water Gardens near Salzburg. We had a picnic lunch in the courtyard before Tuesdays Group Leader, Blair, led the group round to the Gardens. For those who had never been before it was a rather "damp" but enjoyable experience.

After the tour photos were bought, bottoms dried and refreshments sought. Some of the group had a quick visit to the adjacent zoo, (luckily the let Keith out again) others visited the palace, also seeing the summerhouse used in the



The water gardens at Hellbrun.



Blair, Lorna & Scott.



Billy, Heather & Parrot.

filming on The Sound Of Music, (this made Linda Mc's day) and others went shopping again. The lovely afternoon ended early, as we had to return

to the hotel to get ready for the Fancy Dress

We all assembled in the lounge at 7pm, Gordon commented that it was the best turn out ever, every nationality was represented from Egypt to Ireland, pirates, super heroes and red Indians, even the drivers joined in dressing up in Austrian waistcoats and hats, (unfortunately there waistcoats were ladies!). The customary conga, led by Betty, wound it's way through the dining rooms much to the amusement of the other guests, some of whom joined in, and staff.

The family Grissemann gave everyone a glass of wine to have with dinner and Heather succeeded in getting her parrot drunk. After another four coarse meal, though this one a little stranger due to everyone's attire, the party began. Scott's CD's played some danced, while others sang, did some poetry or told jokes. The Germans even joined in later in the evening. Another good day was had by all.

Betty Kittel & Lorna Redpath



Pauline, Glenise & Linda D.



Cynthia & Betty..



Keith & Derek



Stuart & Chris.



The caped crusader comes Prepared.



Does our bums look wet in this?



The two Lindas pose for the school photo.



Keith, Ben & Anne..

#### Friday 16th September

different ways, some taking the chance to do more shopping, (it's a wonder they have any



A local watering hole.

money left!), while others went swimming. Christopher chose the latter and then announced once in the pool that it was the first time he'd been in a swimming pool for 16 years. Once again we make the impossible possible. (We've since been charged for the cleaners overtime as it took her all Saturday to scrub the ring off!) Only joking, good on you Chris!

After another "light" lunch our carers took us for a walk by the river. Taking in some of Lofer's more rural areas. As the temperatures soared and the terrain became more diffi-

cult, the carers with willing heart and strong arms pushed us onwards. Stopping after crossing the bridge for lollipops and the now traditional paddle in the river. Derek going a bit further than the rest, and falling in. When asked how it was he said refreshing! Lollies and paddling finished it was back to the hotel. We all thoroughly enjoyed the walk and the VIP's were very very grateful for the carers' efforts.

Before our evening meal it was time for us to wave to the people at home, on the web cam. We all got lined up in the hotel car park and waved; goodness only knows what the



Waving home via the web-cam.

passing motorist thought we were doing. We then lined up on the hotel steps for Herr Grissemann to take our photograph. Lorna and Scott then went down to the village to see the live band, something Scott had wanted to do all week. They even walked through the village with the band.

After our final evening meal in the hotel it was time for the presentations. The VIP's all received a small gift and a certificate for achievements on the holiday. Anne – Making us all Laugh, Betty – Ups A Daisy, Cynthia – Her Poetic Skills,

Heather – Intoxicating a Parrot, Linda – Leading Us To Heaven, Christopher – Drinking the most Beer, Keith – Being Bill the Drivers Worst Nightmare, & Scott – His Excellent Singing Talents. An extra certificate was presented to Glenise for her accomplishments in collecting the Greatest Number, Variety, Size and Colour of Bruises.

Keith then presented Bill with a gift from the group, while Glenise, Linda and Pauline all presented Ben with his gift. The Hotel staff were then given gifts and in return Herr



Grissemann gave everyone a copy of the photograph he had taken earlier.

On retiring to the bar for some more lemonade, each person in the group said what they had liked most about the holiday. Scott and Glenise then led the singsong, Rudy displaying hidden talents; he trained as a professional opera singer. We then wished him well, before retiring to bed for our last nights sleep in the hotel.

Cynthia Percival & Lesley Fraser

Group leader today is Keith. The day started with Christopher having three eggs for breakfast and it was suggested he trav-



Bringing up the rear, Sue, Chris, Glenise & Stuart.



Crossing over the bridge on the riverside walk.



You should have seen the one that got away.



The Group with Herr Grissemann



Norbert, Robert & Rudy.

Blair gives Scott an Austrian gift.

### Saturday 17th September

el in the boot. All the cases are packed and loaded onto the bus, just the VIP's and hand luggage to load when Anne brought the two drivers coffee at 10.15am. Once everyone was loaded Herr Grissemann and the kitchen manager thanked everyone for coming and hoped we would return again in two years time, before wishing us a safe journey home. The rest of the staff all lined up to wave us goodbye, and to all the ladies delight Norbert boarded the bus and kissed them all farewell. The bus then reversed out the car park Bill putting on the siren several times much to everyone's delight, except for Niko the dog who began to bark and howl and chase the bus. A quick stop at spar for forgotten supplies and we were on our way by 10.45am.

By 11.10am the girls were in the galley making tea and coffee, the puddle on the floor caused by spilt water not the amount of laughing that was going on! Just before 1pm we stopped for fuel, 285ltr costing 327 Euros, (there's not a quiz on the way home Derek). Lorna and Billy took advantage of the stop to purchase sweets and ice creams. No baskets were available however so Billy filled his t-shirt, and on reaching the check out spilled 21 ice creams, from his t-shirt, onto the counter, much to the amusement of the counter staff.

Lunch was cheese and ham rolls followed by the aforementioned ice creams. After driving for 3 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> hours in heavy traffic it was Bens turn to drive. Anne then gave Ben the pleas-



Lesley, Pauline & Linda in the galley.

ure of her company. Just after 5pm Derek received the rugby results, Hawick had beaten Aberdeen 33-15, a great roar from Keith and other Teries, a second roar came from them when Derek announced the Gala had been beaten.

By 6pm we were approaching Frankfurt, Bill took over the driving at this stage. On reaching the railway station car park in the centre of the city, Gordon and Derek went to find a restaurant that would cater for 21 including five wheelchairs. Travelling back to the bus in style (Mercedes taxi) Gordon reboarded the bus and told Bill to follow the taxi.

Just as we were driving off we noticed Billy was missing, we found him round the corner, (not sure if Heather was pleased we found him or not). The bus then followed the taxi but the taxi went under a low bridge, which the bus could not follow. The bus had to reverse up the street bringing Frankfurt to a standstill. The taxi then led us by another route to our mystery destination. Gordon and Derek then discovered it was a tenpin bowling club.

A long table had been reserved for us, overlooking the alleys, perfect for the 21 diners. Gordon ordered the meals and Derek ordered the drinks, somehow we managed to get 23 meals but only 19 drinks??? The meals and service at the Aschaffenburg Restaurant were excellent and before leaving Gordon led the group in thanking the manageress. Derek also thanked her and invited her back to the Jumbulance. An offer she accepted. Impressed by the bus she wished her Scottish guest a safe journey home and bade us farewell. The extra meals didn't go to waste as Christopher ate one, Derek ate the other and as he was still a bit peckish he also ate Scott's sausage and drank half of Linda's beer.

Stomachs full everyone then settled down for the final night on the bus, and the trip through Germany, Belgium and northern France.

Keith Gibson & Derek Inglis

The day starts early as we enter the port of Calais just after 5am. The bus stops for fuel and while stopped some of the carers get some extra supplies for breakfast while others



Linda prays for a safe journey home



Billy gets to work in the kitchen.



Linda makes the rolls up.



Lorna & Pauline serve lunch.



Gordon cleans up after lunch.

#### Sunday 18th September

observe some shifty looking characters trying to get into the back of some lorries. Refuelled the next stop is our home from home, EastEnders warehouse. 5a.m. ish and a surreal time to be shopping for alcohol, but there are plenty of us willing to give it a go. Supplies bought, it's time to prepare for the early morning sail. Minutes from the ferry, BANG!!!!!! whose case of wine has ricochet down the stairs of the bus? Ben would not look so pale if it was wine trickling towards him!!!! A bit of a catastrophe here. Whilst passing through customs checkpoint, Bill has hit the wing mirror off the concrete post, which has a 4" leeway either side. This mirror has catapulted itself into the glass window of the door and smashed it into smithereens. Now the question is -

"Will we be allowed to sail across the Channel in a "broken bus" "?

By some miracle, minutes later, we are waved onto the ferry. Half of us disappear quickly up on deck, (Derek and Keith getting stuck in the lift), and leave the men to put our



transport back together again. The crossing this time was a little rougher than the one out but not too bad. Shopping done, the sun was coming up and it was off to the front of the ferry to see the White Cliffs Of Dover. For most of the VIP's it was their first view of them from sea, although Linda seemed more excited about the McCain's chip lorry than the cliffs! We then descend to find a make-do, open-air, style of driving, with everything held in place with rope, string, and whatever has been to hand.

Linda more excited to see the chip lorry than the "White Cliffs"!

Once out the docks, it was time for breakfast. Cereal and jam butties, coffee, tea and orange juice, the galley team final get the hang of things, though it takes three rolls to get the drivers right! Then onward and upward, towards Bonnie Scotland. The mood on the bus be-

gins to change as we near home, you don't want the trip to end but you can't wait to get home. People sleep off and on and phone calls are made for pickup times at Gretna. The weather is mostly dry no repeat of last Fridays rain thankfully, as the bus would have been flooded with no door window.

Warwick is dry and sunny. It also has parking for bruised goods so we stop for lunch. We all tuck into a choice of Harry Ramsdens or Burger King. Real home from home. Fresh air has certainly given me an appetite, especially air at 70 M.P.H. I was at this point chatting with Bill and Ben!!!



Blair, Pauline & Linda arriving back at Dover.

Seven burger & chips and fourteen fish & chips later and we are on the final leg of our



Derek & Keith arriving back at Dover.

journey home to Gretna. The landscape becomes more familiar as we get further north and all too soon Gretna is here. A lorry, minibus and two cars await our return.

> And so to the end of our chapter, journey, and holiday. The end of another era, and what an era this week has been. I'm unsure as to how I will feel on my car journey home, I have been known to sleep the entire way. But just let me say that emotions are running high amongst all of us, and the long goodbye is alive and well at Gretna's Garden House Hotel. We chat as if we have all just met to go to Lofer, not want-



The week catches up with Linda & Gordon.



Cynthia & Pauline.



Derek has forty winks.



It's the quietest this pair have been all week.



Heather & Billy asleep again.



Anne & Scott

#### Sunday 18th September (cont.)

ing to say the words "bye see you soon."

But eventually our numbers dwindle and I feel it is time for me to head for the car. I've got my cases, my drink! the kids, my husband and the dog. No more excuses to hang about and I leave heavy hearted. I believe if I had stayed a few moments longer, I would have heard the last rendition of the "Frog Song". I say last, but I think I mean most recent, as it has become the Border Holiday Groups' anthem!!!!!.

Ben and Bill are back on the bus, waving goodbye through the open window. They head south with the lights and sirens going for one last time. The Borders crew get into their mini bus, Cynthia into her taxi, Anne heads off with her family and Stuart and Glenise head off in her car.

The end of another fantastic trip, which, when asked how it was Keith replied, "Aye, it wis a'right!"

See everybody at the reunion, I hope.



Umm umm went the little green frog one day Umm umm went the little green frog

Umm



Anne, Ben & Linda lead the last rendition of that song.

## The Little Green Frog Song

green frog one day So we all went umm umm ahh.

But we all know frogs go Ba da da da da Ba da da da da Ba da da da da We all know frogs go Ba da da da They don't go umm umm ahh.



And we all join in one last time.







Umm went the ...



Stuart bounces up the bus one last time.



Keith makes sure Bill doesn't hit anything else.



Bill waves goodbye through the broken window.



We all Know frogs go Ba da da da da.....



## The 2005 Group Photo.



The faces are from the left:

Back row:	Blair, Sue, Kenny, Gordon, Linda D, Lesley & Ben.
Middle row:	Bill, Stuart, Derek, Pauline, Margaret, Linda Mc, Scott, Billy, & Anne.
Front Row:	Chris, Keith, Cynthia, Betty & Heather.
Kneeling:	Glenise & Lorna.

#### Thank you

The group would like to thank all those people who have helped us make this trip possible, including: St Georges Church, Carlisle, Lockerbie Cheese Company, Masonic Borders (Youth Section), Hawick Customs & Traditionalists, Morrisons, Dumfries, Radio Borders, Tevoithead WRI, Mr & Mrs Hepburn, Northhouse, Mr & Mrs Hamilton, Birnie Knowe and Mr & Mrs G Sangster, Hawick.

Thanks go also to: drivers Ben and Bill for allowing us to continue where we left off on the last trip, and at times being as stupid as the rest of us. An extra thanks goes to Ben for teaching us that song it will stay with us forevermore! To the family Grissemann and all their staff, once again you have looked after us all and gave us a home from home. To Nicola Offer at the Jumbulance trust office for her help with all the paperwork and queries.

Finally thank you to all our friends and family who have supported us over the past two years. I hope you have seen the difference it makes to the VIP's.

Roll on the 2007 trip!

The Border Holiday Group, an unincorporated charitable association, organises Coach Holidays to Europe for the Sick and Disabled from the Borders Region and Southern Scotland.

Registered Charity Number: 1099217.

#### **Chairman & Treasurer:**

Mr Gordon Jackson, 7 Bruce Court, Hawick, Roxburghshire, TD9 7ER. Tel: (01450) 375353.

#### Secretary:

Miss Lesley Fraser, 10c Green Terrace, Hawick, Roxburghshire, TD9 0JG. Tel: (01450) 374166. Mob: 07958 312860. E-mail: lesley.hawick1514@tiscali..co.uk