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+ LARGER TEXT

Posted: Tuesday 01 May 2007

Manchester Associates Visit the Emerald Isle

114 Manchester Associates visit the Emerald Isle in April 2007

Manchester Associates Trip to Southern Ireland April 15th to 19th 2007

Sunday

It was before dawn in the Manchester Factory Car Park when shadowy figures began emerging from the fog to join the three coaches to begin the long 12-hour journey to our destination on the West Coast of Ireland. In all 114 Associates made the trip and enjoyed a fog ridden journey across North Wales to the ferry port of Holyhead to board the Fast ferry "Stena Pride" to Ireland. The crossing was very smooth barely a ripple on the calm waters, finally emerging from the fog as we approached the Harbour at Dun Laoghaire.

On arrival we faced the long six hour drive across Ireland to our destination at Lisdoonvarna. Everybody marvelled at the advances in the country particularly on the roads, with building of motorways and bypasses and the forest of cranes surrounding the City of Dublin on numerous building sites, all thanks to European Grants. Our journey passed quickly and after by-passing Limerick and Ennis on new roads we "Fell off" onto the narrow winding roads of County Clare to our destination.

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Lisdoonvarna is a small town of 800 souls which in September swells to thousands for the Annual "Courting" festival when un-attached farmers arrive looking for partners.



When we arrived at the "Hyro" Hotel all was quiet and we were made very welcome and after dinner were entertained by the resident keyboard player with his extensive renditions of the "James Last" Album.

Monday

Dawned bright and sunny, the kind of weather which was to last until arriving back home, and we enjoyed a spectacular drive along the coast south to the village of Bunratty, famous for starting the "Medieval Banquets" in the Castle.



The Castle was surrounded by the folk-village containing examples of houses and shops from all over Ireland, all with peat fires burning and even baking Soda-bread which some of us enjoyed. The local gift shops were doing a roaring trade including some daring Associates who bought and wore Pixie Hats and Beards.



Our next stop was the Bustling City of Limerick nestling on the River Shannon. Our driver had described the city as being a mini version of Leeds with more new roads and buildings and lots of well-known shops which provided us with a good excuse for shopping.

Tuesday

Our day today was occupied by a memorable journey across the local limestone landscape know as the "Burren" including snaking down a steep hill known locally as the "Corkscrew", with the coach wheels literally hanging over a steep drop, to the shores of Galway Bay. The Coach Company had arranged for a local guide to join us and give a guided tour of the city with lots of local information including details of what "Retirees" benefits are available to those who live in Ireland. After gasps of amazement we are all contemplating moving there!



The City of Galway was very interesting with its modern Cathedral dominating the skyline.



The narrow streets echoed with the sounds of Irish music and on our return most Associates made their way after dinner to a local "Irish Bar" for a glass of Guinness and some local music.

Wednesday

A day-out today took us to the Atlantic Coast and the tiny village of Dolin with its harbour and ferry across to the nearby Isles of Aran and the nearby sheer "Cliffs of Moher". The calm sunny weather betrayed the force of the Atlantic storms, which prevail in the area leaving hardly a tree standing and those that do leaning at precarious angles. We then continued on a drive, which could only be described as

brehtaking along the shores to the village of Ballyvaughan for a coffee break in an outdoor café with views across Galway Bay as far as the Connemara Mountains.



After climbing the "Corkscrew" again we continued to the attractive town of Ennis giving everybody a chance to some last minute shopping before our return home the following day.

Thursday

Another very early start leaving our hotel with sad hearts after the superb service we had received from the staff and then the long return across the country followed by another smooth crossing, this time in sunshine.



Then to the strains of everybody singing the local ballad "O'.Lisdoonvarna" we arrived back in the Manchester Factory Car Park in time to beat the rush hour home.

Our thanks must go to John and the committee for arranging such a superb holiday and organising the "Fine Weather", calm seas and wonderful Irish Hospitality.

Graham Kaye

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Posted: Wednesday 25 April 2007

North East Associates Holy Island Walk - 24th April

It didn't rain but we wet our wheels . . .

Our April "short walk" took us to [The Holy Island of Lindisfarne](#) situated off the north Northumberland coast.



Holy Island from Bamburgh Castle

Local knowledge obtained by our organiser, Lindsay, had us in a queue of vehicles on the mainland ready to take the earliest opportunity to cross the three-mile causeway and beach road about a couple of hours after high tide. Although a little wet as the water hadn't quite cleared the road we joined the local traders in their regular journey to the only village on the island.

Here forty-five Associates met up, split up, and set off walking on two routes.

Planning presented a dilemma. The accessible part of the island is only a mile square, yes, four miles all round. With some ingenuity our leaders came up with walks of 5.5 and 6.5 miles to choose from. These were in the form of a big "B".

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Off we set across the middle of the island to its eastern shore and then headed north along the cliff path. The "longer" walkers diverted to a stone-built whitewashed pyramid - a navigation marker - at Emmanuel Head where some seals were seen near the waters edge. The others took a short cut, and went into the lead. They always seem to reach the lunch venue first!



Emmanuel Head navigation marker

Back now to the west side across the rather desolate northerly links. Here we hit the "high" point of our day - close to nineteen metres above sea level! In this quiet and lonely place a spot count would show that sheep outnumber people, despite the island receiving half a million visitors each year.

South next, back to the village where we walked past the Priory ruins close to the old Parish Church and round to the harbour where a few rows of lobster pots and half a dozen small boats are what remains of much larger fishing industry. In the harbour area there are lots of quaint-looking upturned boats, cut in half across and used as huts by the fishermen - obviously very cost conscious folks.



Heading east again we pass the mid 16th century castle perched on a volcanic mound close to the shore. This was built using stones from the Priory, demolished after the dissolution of the monasteries. These Northumbrians are good at recycling. Starting in 1901 the then empty castle was restored, extended and made into a holiday home by Sir Edwin Lutyens. Furnishings now reflect its original period where possible. A garden designed by Gertrude Jekyll as part of this work is nearby.



Striding past the Castle

We then headed north to pick up our original cross-island path and return to the village once more. Here most of us congregated for lunch at the [Manor House Hotel](#) with many sitting in the sunny garden overlooking the Priory.



After feeding, some took the opportunity to visit the Parish Church, the Priory (EH) and the Castle (NT), the latter adding another two miles to those already covered. From its elevated position the panorama includes the Farne Islands, Bamburgh Castle, the Island itself with the Cheviot Hills as a backdrop, and round to the north is Berwick-upon-Tweed with Scotland beyond.



When leaving the island, as you reach the start of the beach road, St. Cuthbert's Way, the straight line of poles marking the Pilgrims' Way - a two mile walk across the sands linking to the mainland at low tide - is strikingly visible. Enough walking though, let's stay in the car. Plenty time on the return as the tide would not close the causeway until just after 8 p.m. Legend has it that for the period the causeway is flooded the pubs remain open. Second thoughts about leaving?

ph - 25/04/07

pictures ph

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Posted: Tuesday 24 April 2007

North East Associates Visit York - 18th April

A sunny April day saw our first excursion of the year . .

About 120 of us met up at Newcastle Station, known locally as the Central Station, to travel in three coaches to the historic city of York where we spent the day as we wished.

After disembarking into the sunshine people headed off in all directions and in an area so large that few sightings of each other were made.

How did the day go for us? Here's a selection of highlights from several Associates.

- Visited the Minster - always a top attraction, now at a cost. The Archbishop, Dr. John Sentamu, was conducting a prayer vigil at the time.
- Walked the walls around the Minster and discovered some of York's history.
- Took to the skies on the Yorkshire Wheel which now seems to be a permanent feature on the skyline.
- Let the train take the strain - with a visit to the National Railway Museum where entry is free!
 - Listened to an enthusiastic member of staff giving a talk about current workshop activities. These included:-
 - Restoration of an original Liverpool & Manchester Railway waggon.
 - Repairs to LNER V2 Prairie 4771 "Green Arrow" so that she can keep to her summer steaming schedule.
 - A complete overhaul of LNER A3 Pacific 4472 (BR 60103) "Flying Scotsman" to bring her back to full operational standard.
 - Viewed the splendour of the carriages of the old Royal Trains from Queen Victoria through to the present Queen.
 - Observed one Associate explaining to another the operation of the Walschaerts valve gear on the cut-away 1949 Southern Region 35029 Merchant Navy Class "Ellerman Lines" 4-6-2 Pacific, designed by OVS Bulleid and later rebuilt by British Railways and classified 8P. (An Anorak wrote this!)
- Had a "Cruise on the Ouse" with an excellent commentary from the Captain along the river, telling of it's history and current use, and also passing St. Peter's School where Guy Fawkes was educated.
- Took refreshment on a second return visit to a pub which is always flooded

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when the river swells.

- Enjoyed some shopping. Saw more Associates together in the Fenwick department store than anywhere else in the city!
- Enjoyed a break in 'Bettys Cafe Tea Rooms', or was it 'Little Bettys'?
- Met up with other Associates for a good pub lunch.
- Strolled through the city to see the Shambles and the many classic buildings in the central area.
- Lunched at Harvilles, a relaxed Art Deco influenced restaurant and bar, located on York's premier restaurant street, Fossgate, where the food, wine, service and ambience of the place were all excellent.
- Another memorable experience of the day was sitting outside a tea shop near the Minster listening to a busker playing a guitar exquisitely. A number of people, including some other Associates, were lingering over their pots of tea and coffee for the sheer pleasure of listening to music so sensitively played. We were also amused and pleased to see a school party visiting the Minster, obviously intrigued by the playing, filing past the musician and depositing an avalanche of coins into his open guitar case.
- Sat on a bench in the Minster garden, known as The Dean's Park, enjoying the sunshine and listening to the busking guitarist.
- Helped my wife over the 'phone with a broken-down car situation back at home. (Apologies from an absent husband?)
- Finished the day with a beautiful two-mile walk along the riverside in the afternoon sun.
- Had a glass of wine before leaving for home - nice to be driven for a change.
- Brought everyone back home safe and sound, especially to the relief of H&S.



The Minster.



Green Arrow under repair.



The Flying Scotsman's frame - straightened by over 1".



Class 31 resplendent in restoration.



Above Ouse Bridge. Is this a group of Associates on a boat trip?





Micklegate Bar.





*Gert & Henry's Restaurant - surely not the original name.
(No, that disc on the roof is not a satellite dish in disguise!)*



The Dean's Park.

*ph - 28/04/07 from the contributions of several Associates.
pictures - jim coombes & ph*

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Posted: Friday 30 March 2007

Yorkshire and Humberside Associates

A New Start?

Yorkshire and Humberside Region

- A New Start?

From Tony Sheppard

In October 2006, after retiring from P&G in August 2005, I sent out a small questionnaire to the seventy Associates who live in the Yorkshire and Humberside area. There have been a couple of Volunteer Associates in the area but none for several years. Most Associates either worked at the Wakefield cosmetics factory before it closed, were sales staff, or are partners of past P&G employees.

The idea is to resurrect regional activities of some sort so I was really pleased to get so many responses - 29 from the 70 people. The vast majority are well and leading very active lives away from P&G.

I had seven letters updating me on what people were doing and, from an ex colleague, lots of photos.

- The responses showed that:

- 15 people would like some local activity
- 10 for walks (not too long!)
- 15 to meet for a drink, meal and chat
- 15 to visit a stately home
- 12 for a theatre or exhibition
- but only 8 to do some activity (golf, horseracing, etc.)
- 19 have transport while 13 can offer lifts, and 5 would need lifts to attend
- 15 people are happy for other Associates to contact them and
- 16 would like to know who lives near them
- 12 would like contact with ex colleagues
- Finally, four people would like me to visit them if I am in their area.

As a result of the interest, I am thinking of a visit to Harewood House, and asking

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Graham Newton, who has a narrowboat on the Chesterfield Canal at Retford, to host a visit and, finally, have a meeting in Wakefield for a meal, drink and a chat.

From small acorns . . . !

If you live in the region and are interested in any of the three events please contact me on 0113 294 3881.



Tony Sheppard.

*This article first appeared in the
Winter 2006 edition of "The Associate"
where comprehensive contact details may be found.*

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Posted: Thursday 22 March 2007

North East Castle Eden Dene Walk - 22nd March

Did we see the sea?

Just over thirty Associates assembled on a damp March morning above the deep ravine which is Castle Eden Dene. This National Nature Reserve in Co. Durham is apparently the largest area of natural woodland in N E England, following the lower reaches of the valley down to the North Sea.

Off we set in our usual two groups, descending into the ravine down some steeply graded paths to the Castle Eden Burn and then to head upstream. We left the dene and walked back towards the coast along the line of an old railway, now a part of the National Cycle Network. As we turned to re-enter the dene the consensus was that the sea was just visible through the drizzle, or was it?



On the longer walk.

Back in the dene another steep descent to the burn showed many dramatic rock and other features where the water had worn down the magnesium limestone and boulder clay of the area.

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When you go down - you have to go up again - this time to reach base and then on for the customary pub lunch and a good old natter.



Our back-up team (Colin) was called in to handle the lunch arrangements - full marks!



ph 22/03/07
pictures ph

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Posted: Thursday 15 March 2007

P&G Pension Fund & Voluntary Pension Fund Reports now on-line

The 2006 annual reports for the P&G Pension Fund and the Voluntary Pension Fund are now in the reference library of this website.

To go to the reference library directly [click here](#) ».

Please note that these documents are in Adobe PDF format so if you do not already have it installed you may have to download it and install from the Adobe website.

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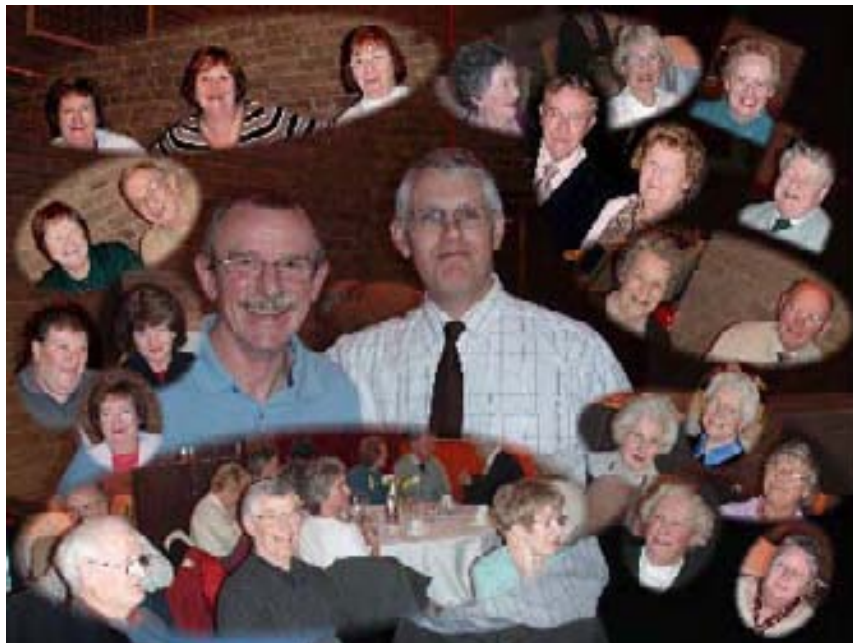
Posted: Wednesday 14 March 2007

North East Associates' Spring Event - 13th March

Our first Summer Programme event of 2007 . .

More than 100 Associates from the North East Region gathered in Gosforth Civic Hall to listen to a most interesting talk and view a series of delightful slides on the natural history of the beautiful county of Northumberland.

The talk given by Mr. John Steele, a former National Park Warden, was both entertaining and informative and delivered with great enthusiasm.



*Our speaker, Mr. John Steele - centre
with Cliff Sore - the North East's intrepid explorer
and some of the appreciative audience.*

Everyone enjoyed it and also the tea or coffee and biscuits.

The contents of a Christmas Hamper were raffled and almost £80 raised for the Employees Charitable Fund.

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This event was the first of our Summer programme and our next event will be a day trip to York on 18th April.

John Scott.

picture(s) ph

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Posted: Thursday 22 February 2007

North East Leadgate Walk - 21st February

This was a varied and interesting walk . . .

Our February "Short Walk" started from the car park of "The Jolly Drovers" in Leadgate (from the Anglo-Saxon for swinging gate) in County Durham where about 50 Associates met on a cool morning. After separating into 'long' and 'short' walkers, relating to the route to be taken and not their stature, we headed out along the line of an extinct railway now part of the Coast-to-Coast cycle route.

We first encountered the "Jolly Drovers Maze", not appreciated from ground level when you're trying to dodge the puddles, and then more sculptures appeared on this [C2C](#) route.



Behind you - there's a steep climb

Leadgate was at the west of the old Durham coalfield and close to the long-gone Consett Iron Works. Next into open country through woodland, fields and over five stiles the groups then took different routes back to base.

Iveston, through which we passed and once being a pit village, is now very 'des-res'. Those who had opted for the shorter walk found that they had another five stiles to conquer, but thankfully no more for the other group.

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To quote from a famous Tyneside song
"The rain, it poured doon aall the day
and myed the ground quite muddy"
but we weren't deterred.



Is it all like this?

Actually, the rain had fallen over the previous few days and the thought of refreshment back at The Jolly Drivers, with a good meal and the usual banter, helped us along and made for another enjoyable day.

*ph 22/02/2007
pictures cliff sore & ph*

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Posted: Monday 12 February 2007

South East Wentworth Lunch - 17th January

The premier event of the year . .

Our 7th annual lunch took place on Wednesday, 17th January at Wentworth Golf Club. There were seventy-two Associates and spouses, and four guests who met for pre-lunch drinks in the members' lounge. Everyone mingled, greeting friends, making new acquaintances, or browsing through the display of photographs of our various events throughout the year. The atmosphere was, as always, warm and friendly.

Just prior to lunch, we assembled in the Masters/Haliburton rooms to view a DVD message from P&G UK general manager Gianni Ciserani. As usual, everyone was pleased that he had taken the time to send his message about how the company was doing and how he appreciates the Associates for what they have contributed to the company. This "connection" with senior management is important and much appreciated.

We were also able to formally welcome our guests. This year we were fortunate in having Mary Lawrence, our new scheme manager, Madalyn Brooks, our new Human Resources director, Nigel Kermode, R&D director, and our guest speaker, Nigel Smith, a Gillette marketing director, as our guests.

After a superb lunch with the odd glass of wine or two, we delivered a short regional report showing that our programme of 21 events is much appreciated, attracting more than 500 attendances annually. We then invited Nigel Smith to tell us something about the Gillette Company and the introduction of Gillette Fusion, a major new launch into the UK market.

What an interesting presentation he gave. For those of us who had spent our careers within Procter & Gamble, it was fascinating to see the benefits which will be gained as a result of this merger. At a stroke, the company has increased their "Mega" brands by 30%. We were introduced, for example, to the broad spectrum of men's shaving products and the ladies "Venus" range, the "Braun" products and the bunny from Duracell. Additionally, the marketing and people skills which Gillette bring to the merger will significantly benefit the company as a whole and undoubtedly will increase shareholder value through increased profitability.

Could this also be good news for Associates? Could this lead to a pension increase?

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We will watch progress with interest.

Nigel concluded his presentation by outlining some key details on the Fusion introduction, the new super razor for men. Although early days, the introduction is proving to be highly successful. We wish Nigel and his team every success.

Interestingly, most of us chaps probably started our "shaving" careers more than 50 years ago and used the Gillette blue blade which cost a few pence. It was this blade that led me to discover the fundamental law of shaving which is:

"The size of the cut one makes when shaving is directly proportional to the importance of the event one is planning to attend".

Think about it, it is true. For perspective, fifty years on, Fusion has 5 blades plus 1 and a vibrating head. It costs £9+. How consumers expectations have changed. Whatever next!

The rest of our afternoon passed quickly, chatting with guests, friends, and colleagues. Once again, Wentworth proved to be the premier event of our calendar, attracting the highest Associate participation of any event we run.

We look forward to next year.

Terry Bell.

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Posted: Friday 09 February 2007

South East Regent's Canal Walk - 13th December, 2006

From King's Cross to Paddington - but not by Underground!

Seventeen Associates met at King's Cross Station in London to walk the Regent's Canal to Paddington Station.

First of all we popped in to the nearby Canal Museum to learn about the history of the working canals.

The museum is housed on the bank of Battlebridge Basin in what was an ice store. The ice cavern has been excavated to only half its original depth but we could envisage how big it once was.

In the summer ice was imported from Norway down the River Thames and then along the canal to be stored. Then it would be barged along the canals all over England. The barge horses were housed upstairs - or rather up a ramp - so that their heat did not affect the ice. There was a lot to see in the small museum and it was quite hard to tear people away to start the walk.

The very first part of the walk saw new buildings and cranes everywhere. You could see the imposing facades of King's Cross and St. Pancras stations through the buildings, and there were some interesting bridges crossing the canal.

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Shortly we reached Camden Lock where we had lunch and some did a spot of Christmas shopping in the famous market which is housed in a converted timber wharf.

From Camden Lock the walk got more and more interesting. After the path crossed a hump over what once was a gin warehouse we passed Victorian houses and the Cumberland Basin which serviced a nearby hay, meat and vegetable market.

We then walked by Regent's Park and some very splendid houses designed by Nash. The canal path bisects London Zoo and the aviary Lord Snowdon designed. Several magpies had got into the aviary along with the more exotic specimens, and it was strange to see wolves on the other bank as we walked through the heart of London.

Next was Macclesfield Bridge, also known as Blow-Up Bridge. The original bridge was destroyed, together with the barge and three men, when a horse drawn barge transporting loose sacks of gunpowder and petroleum exploded in 1874.

Shortly we came to Maida Hill Tunnel which was too small for us to walk through. The barges would have lain on their backs to "leg" it through along the walls of the tunnel. We went up stairs and over the top, crossed Edgware Road and then followed the pretty barge and tree lined canal into Little Venice. We circumnavigated Browning's Pool where the old Grand Junction Canal from the Midlands joined the Regent's Canal.

Some of us stopped for coffee in a café housed on a barge, admiring the birdlife through the windows. Then we followed the canal under the Westway flyover, with its speeding traffic, into the Paddington Basin. This was where the Grand Junction Canal terminated before the Regent's Canal was cut, linking it to the Thames and the sea. It was once where all the goods came into the heart of London before railways were built. Paddington Basin is now all high rise and posh restaurants and bars.

I was brought up in a street not far away but had to stop and stare to try to work out where I was.

Paddington Station is of course a monument to British engineering with its iron girder roof of three arches. Built by Brunel in 1850-54, it was the largest iron structure of

its time.

Margaret Burnip.

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