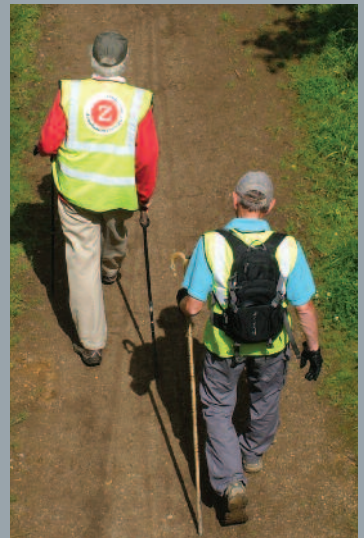




ZANE and the Art of Pedicure

Tom Benyon OBE

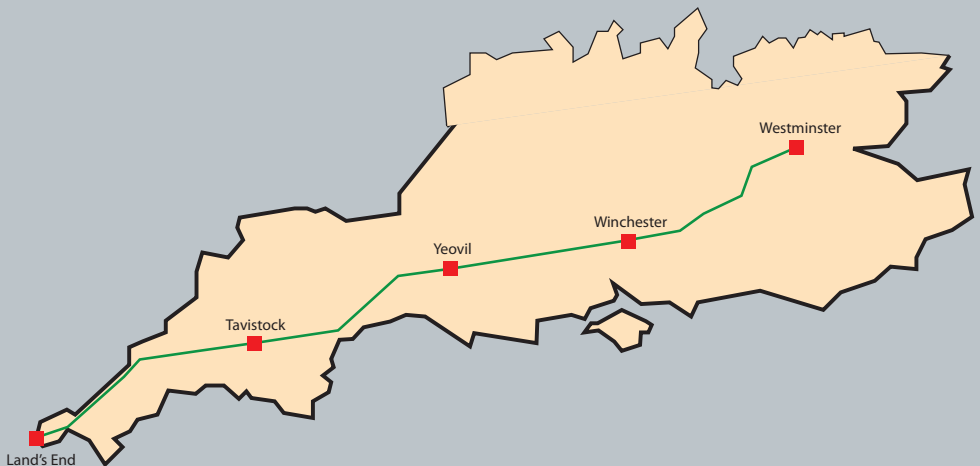
Land's End to London
June - July 2011



To the people of Zimbabwe

“My children tell me there are five subjects that no Englishman should ever discuss: Politics, Money, Sex, Religion and Death.

Needless to say these are the subjects that I find most fascinating and they form the subject matter of this small booklet. They are, to me anyway, even more interesting than “The art of pedicure”.



Also a huge thanks to my hosts along the way.

6 June 2011

A week before -

Why am I doing this again?

So here I am, not two pounds of me hanging straight, at the start of another walk, when I swore on all I hold dear last October that the walk from Edinburgh to London would be my last. What am I doing? I must be plain mad.

But, "Life", as John Lennon said, "is what happens when you are making other plans."

ZANE raised serious money from the last walk, so the Trustees and the ZANE team begged me for an encore. I was appalled, but rapidly ran out of excuses. The second walk is far worse than the first, if only because one remembers vividly how awful it was the first time round!

My default position was to get my doctor to condemn me as a relic of a bygone age, so I checked in for a full "Corporal Fraser", ("they don't like it up 'em,") in the certain confidence that I would fail my MOT . . . but to my astonishment . . . I passed.

So, without health as an excuse, I resorted to whining at Jane and my daughters to complain that I was well past this sort of thing and that I was too busy anyway. They all know my whining and would hear none of it.

"Of course you must do another," said Jane.

"Well I just won't," I replied.

"But you're the leader," she replied gently with that ghostly reasonableness that I know so well. "It's expected you will show leadership: that's what leadership is all about . . . to set an example."

Then there came the rabbit punch: "That's why they gave you an OBE."

"They didn't give it to me to charge like a madman round the UK at my age. I'll have to send it back."

"I know that's a lie for starters because you love it."

I sat dumbfounded. "That's simply nonsense."

"Well why then did you wear it to bed, clipped to your pyjamas?"

"That's a lie . . . well, it was only one time, as a joke, on the day I got it."

As she walked off she said triumphantly: "Many a true word is spoken in jest."

The final straw fell on my bent back when a lady donor cornered me at a meeting clutching a glass of gin. Her figure was all wire coat hanger, hair pulled into a bun, laser eyes and a nose that would chop kindling.

"If you do another walk," she hissed at me excitedly, "I think your blog should have more about sex and God in it". I was astonished. I had no recollection of writing anything about either topic in my earlier blog about my modest adventures on my way between Edinburgh and London. When I was walking 18.5 miles each day I was too knackered to even think about sex – well not much anyway - and I have little recall of the second, apart from various arrow prayers seeking to release me from my bed of pain. So I rushed back to my old blog. There was no mention of sex, other than my relating that I spied two people having it off in a lay-by outside Wakefield. There was nothing about God in it either.

So I will have to do better this time to satisfy the old crone. (Oh dear! It suddenly occurs to me that I am not in the business of insulting donors. So if, dear reader, you catch a sight of yourself in a glass and you are a large ZANE donor with a face that chops kindling, and so on, it was not you I was describing, but your stunt double, I promise).

So, here I am, as ready as I can be for another 340 miles or so. I am walking once more to highlight the needs of the thousands of those trapped in Zimbabwe. It could have been me; it could have been any of us.

I am asked constantly whether the position there is improving. I have to answer truthfully that it is not. In fact, the position is worse now than at any time in ZANE's eight year existence. Zimbabwe is still a terrifying police state with ghastly violence perpetrated on so called "enemies" – that is, anyone of whom the state machine disapproves. Then the great inflation that ended with the introduction of the US dollar as today's unit of currency in Zimbabwe was so thorough that it carried off all the savings of those pensioners who had prudently saved for their old age. Now, very old and vulnerable, they live "outside" the economy and, as prices (particularly ironically food that has to be imported, for Zimbabwe was once the food basket of Africa) have gone through the roof, they look to ZANE for support.

ZANE now helps over 10,000 people a year. It is the only charity that helps people it knows in both communities. As a relational charity with the only holistic social services network in the country, we do not dump food aid but we only assist those we know personally. We are, of

course, strapped for cash and we are having to turn people away.

So I am walking in the hope that people will give us the cash to continue the work.

So what am I wearing? I have given special consideration to my feet which have proved, thus far, not to be much of a problem apart from two lost toenails. The first essential is a pedicure, then a daily application of foot cream, a pair of fleecy socks, then woollen ones. I walk in trainers. On top? Light, waterproof "Gortex" clothes. I carry a "camel" – a device that allows continual water drinking to stop dehydration.

Now, last time, when Leah – our Staffie – overheard our plan to walk 450 miles, she was so outraged at the prospect of such an exertion that she managed with the speed of chain lightning with a link missing, to shoot over a cliff and neatly wounded her shoulder. In that way she got herself a "Blighty" wound (a term from WW1, when soldiers would shoot off, for example, their big toe; enough to get home without causing permanent damage). Not only did Leah cost me a fortune, but it enabled the silly bitch to loll on a cushion in the back of the car as she stared soulfully at us with her brown, liquid eyes the entire way as we tottered along behind.

One problem with staying with 25 generous donors on the way is that when I wake up in the morning I never know where the loo is. I always tell hosts that if I stagger into their bedroom at 0645, I have no malign intent, I have just forgotten the whereabouts of the loo.

13 June 2011

Day Before - Arriving at the Start

We have arrived at Mousehole in SW Cornwall. We find we are staying in a superb house atop a cliff, and we sleep overlooking the calm, pink sea with St Michael's Mount arising from the sea in the middle distance. What a beautiful country we live in! Why on earth do we traipse round the world so frantically when there is such beauty on our doorstep?

A very warm welcome from a kind couple of jolly donors. But 18 miles tomorrow and a sore toe to contend with. Wife Jane and the great Harry raring to go. No excuses left. Why didn't I do more training?

A gloom descends. If Edinburgh to London looked downhill (it wasn't) on the map before I set off on last Autumn's walk, Land's End to London looks uphill to me. I'll bet it is.

I set off with a busted toe, and that's before I even begin to walk 350 miles! How could I have been so hogwhimperingly stupid as to have walked off the toe nail (second toe, left foot) on a training walk; not that I have been able to do many of those because I have been busy.

My chiropodist Elizabeth Humble-Thomas's surgery have stuffed it with cotton wool and iodine and covered it with a compeed bandage, and off we totter and so hope for the best. Liz told me that I have to dip it – the toe - in sea salt each night and just hope for the best. Sea salt is no problem because I use it already to clear my sinuses (do you want to know all this intimate detail? If not, just skip a page).

I use a device called a Neti (it looks like what you would have to use if you were to give a pig an enema, if you were to be so

inclined). Each night and morning you have to pour half a pint of salt water up each side of your hooter. It works wonders, the only snag being a touch of water retention, so when I lean over last thing to give Jane a kiss in bed, a shoot of water is inclined to drench her left embonpoint, if you know what I mean. Not very romantic (but I will be writing about romance later). Enough of this.

The foot lady, Elizabeth (Liz) HT is a total ace. After she saw me I paid and left. Then her secretary bounded after me to return the cash because she recalled that I am walking for ZANE (Use her: 01865 247377). Talk about the kindness of strangers.

14 June 2011

Day 1 – Land's End to Penzance

Monday Land's End!

What a surprise! Who should be there but dear James Pringle, my greatest friend who drove all the way from Burford to start us off. For those of you who have never heard of Jim, he is without any exaggeration the most extraordinary man I know. He passes what I call the blink test: you know always when you see someone coming towards you whether the very sight of them gladdens or depresses you: it's all in the blink of an eye. There's nothing whatsoever you can do about it, and there is no faking it either. When I see James my heart lifts.

Jim is the kindest friend to those in scrapes I know. He is a wonderful friend in that he takes the role of "friend" seriously. He is not just a drinking companion but follows CS Lewis on the definition of love: the exercise of the will for the good of another.



Jim loves ZANE and acted as shotgun on my stagecoach for five long years, supporting me when I was right and, even more importantly, of course, arguing furiously with me, when I was wrong too.

Jim walked a full day, aged 81. What a man; what a friend!

A beautiful day, 10 miles and then lunch in a nice little pub called the King's Arms in St Just. It was spoiled rather by their taking 30 minutes just to produce soup and a ploughman's lunch. When I remonstrated mildly, they said that they were busy . . . but for goodness sake, it's not as if lunchtime comes without warning. The French can do it, why can't we?

I examine my blistered and nailless toe. It looks like a displaced haemorrhoid perching on my foot. Thank God for Compeed plasters. I hobble on.

A call, as I leave St Just, on my mobile. A deep African voice: "Are you Tom Beyon?" I had to admit I am he. "I hear

you have raised millions for Zimbabweans . . . I am a Zimbabwean . . . I want some money and live near Leicester . . . I see your route on my screen. I will come to get some from you during the walk . . ."

It was a six foot four, a "Hey Jimmy are you looking at me", a dreadlocks with "love and hate" tattooed on his knuckles, sort of voice. I jabbered we only assist those we know who live in Zimbabwe . . . that I don't carry cash. But I found I was talking to myself. The human hulk had hung up . . . I knew that sometime in the next few days he would suddenly appear without warning to collect his cash!

What am I supposed to do? Where do I hide?

Perhaps Harry might handle him. Could I slide under the car, or pretend I was just walking along and that I have nothing to do with ZANE? And what about Jane? Perhaps she can handle him? No, that's a ridiculous and ignoble idea.

The worry kept me going for the rest of the day. We stagger into Penzance. No sign of the hulk . . . yet.

15 June 2011

Day 2 - Mud on our Shoes

Delightful hosts in Penzance.

All our hosts seem to be of a certain age and the conversation always turns to ailments. I usually suggest, before it all gets too morbid, that we might indulge in a five minute "organ recital," that is we indulge in a strictly limited time slot for our aches and pains, then cut it before we all start to despair.

A long, difficult day. We use a handheld satnav and try to follow the progress of a tiny man on the screen we call Fred. When

we lose him - as we do frequently - I call him something else. Jane wisely refuses to allow me to map read. She has never forgotten that when I was an infantry officer it was rumoured that my soldiers would follow me only from curiosity as to where I would take them, rather than that they had any confidence we would arrive where I was meant to go.

The winding tracks sometimes lead us over boggy fields: soon our boots weigh double their normal weight. Walking with a shovelful of clay wrapped round your feet is very tiring. We are occasionally obliged to stoop on all fours and stagger stooping as we crawl down narrow, green tubes only a little higher than the tunnel in the "Great Escape". The routes don't appear to have been used by walkers for a long time. This slows us up, but nonetheless we appear to be making good progress.

No sign of the hulk, but as we have not been walking on easily accessible roads this comes as no surprise.

A kind donation and message from my Scottish friend, (and leading land agent), James Galbraith, telling me that I must be mad to tackle yet another walk. Two years ago, James agreed to sponsor our Scottish presentation in Edinburgh's famous New Club. When I invited him to chair the meeting he told me that the day before the meeting he was riding in his local point-to-point. As he is my generation - more or less - I begged him not to do so, to no avail. My brother-in-law, who lives near by, phoned me to say he had watched the race and seen James helicoptered from the course with a suspected broken neck. My first thought - as one does - was, "Bang goes our sponsorship!" but . . . James was only concussed, and so he chaired our meeting

really well, albeit cross-eyed. So I'll stop walking when you stop point-to-pointing James!

I have just finished Sue Gibb's fine book about the bush war and why she and her family left Zimbabwe in 1991. Titled "The Call of the Litany Bird," it's now apparently standing at number one in Amazon's Africa book list. I am not surprised, for it's a most moving read. Sue is a great ZANE supporter and her book fills a gap in the market.

Off to walk another 18 miles tomorrow.

And so to bed.

16 June 2011

Day 3 - Dodgy knee and Superwife

We started after a short drive from our hosts in Grampond. A duck egg sky blue day, six straight miles and then . . . a minor disaster. We steamed up a one in four dirt track for a long mile, only to find, purple-faced, and gasping right at the very top of Cornwall - or so it seemed to me - that we were going diametrically the wrong way. So, cursing, and blaming each other (as one does), we had to return, wearily, to make a fresh start.

It would seem that the Cornish "Hello" from a car is the raising of one languid index finger from the steering wheel. This is, I suppose, a pleasant change from what I got used to in my last walk in the environs of Wakefield, where the greeting consists of an upraised middle digit to be wagged up and down in derision.

As I walk, my left kneecap has produced a mind of its own and it determines to keep revolving. I ignore it, stoically, for at least ten miles, and lo! the sensation gently subsides.

There seems to be far fewer of the fat and tattooed, and rather less litter than in the North; maybe there are fewer people around, or they have a more efficient method of clearing up the rubbish? It's hard to tell so soon into the walk.

One of our friends told me yesterday to look after my "dear little woman!"

How wrong can you be? Jane is 100% stainless steel, Meissen china, with as many valuable achievements to her name than many people I know. I realised I had married a truly remarkable woman when I married Jane Scott Plummer. On her father's side she is descended from Sir Walter Scott and way back, in border folk lore, a lady with the remarkable name of Mucklemouth Meg, from whom Jane may have inherited her feistiness but not her looks. On her mother's side, she has eminent Scottish lawyers and Border farmers and landowners as her forebears.

But I discovered she had real class when she fell face down the stairs of our house in Edinburgh. She was, astonishingly, unhurt but I found she had managed to remove part of the banister with her chin.

Jane is a champion walker and she promises to walk every yard of the way with me. In fact she travels at great speed and with considerable elegance. Whenever I try to gain advantage by darting off when she is in the loo or somewhere, I find, however hard I try, that she is beetling past me in minutes. She pokes

me mercilessly with her walking stick if she thinks I am idling.

Some "dear little woman"! Jane is a one woman walking Big Society. Cameron should use her in posters. In Victorian times she would have been found resolutely leading a party of destitute children over the Hindu Kush, or some such barren place, away from a fate worse than death; or, perhaps, she would be quietly and without fuss, sorting the cooking in the fly blown misery of Crimea's hospital at Scutari.

Jane spent many years in voluntary charitable work; on top of that, she has brought up four lovely children and she has loved me right loyally; in parallel to all that, and now as joyful grandmother of eight



grandchildren, she spent twenty five years as a professional social worker, specialising in the problems of mentally ill geriatrics. Now she is an active ZANE Trustee and runs CEF (Community Emergency Foodbank) in Oxford. Last year, she arranged, with her excellent team of volunteers, the feeding of over 3,000 desperate people.

As I walk through the charming town of St Agnes, I ruminate that Jane's pension from social work is about £4,000 per year. This compares to the £600,000 per annum enjoyed by Fred the Shred Goodman who, almost single handed, destroyed the Royal Bank of Scotland. Well, as Nanny told us, life isn't fair, is it? I suppose at least we now know what God thinks about money when you see the sort of people he gives it to.

I met a lovely chatty lady in a garden along the way to St Columb, who remarked about Kate and Will's wedding how much she enjoyed seeing "its consummation" in Westminster Abbey!"

"Well . . ." I replied, "the 1000 year old Abbey has seen some sights in its time . . . but that would have taken some beating."

By then I was tiring fast. The rain was slanting down from a dirty, yellowish-grey sky as we walked towards Trenance Bay. I could see the waves blown high as they sprayed against the cliffs below for as far as we could see. I was shivering slightly as we were welcomed in the home of a warm and hospitable couple who, in turn, are related to two lots of relations who looked after us in our last walk. We are much blessed by being handed on from home to home of those who have in their hearts great sympathy for those trapped and destitute in Zimbabwe.

17 June 2011

Day 4 - Battling through . . .

This has been the hardest day so far, not just because it has been raining Africa style, but because I felt, when I started to walk, as if I had been basted by a giant club until I was tender. I usually start up in the morning like an old diesel engine; there are clanks of rusted metal, then wisps of blue smoke, then a grinding of rusted gears, some gentle shuddering and stop and go until we inch slowly, oh so slowly, forward, and then gently, with some low throbbing, I gather speed.

Today I felt sore, but I determined just to walk through it; sure enough, during the day, the pains abated and on I tottered.

We had to force our way through paths where it was clear that the farmer had stopped them up on purpose. But the bigger the blockage created, the more determined I become to force my way through, come what may. As a result Jane and Leah were reduced to squeezing through barbed wire, huge fences and into an old and juicy midden before we found the path.

We lunched in Newquay in the sort of bar where groups of red young men were yelling at one another like mastodons across a swamp; then came the sort of chat show laughter that indicates an absence of a sense of humour, or anything really to laugh at.

Sad to say, there are platoons of the fat and tattooed in Newquay so, of course, this is a national problem. Several rounded mums were surrounded by children who appeared to be growing just as fat. Perhaps they graze on deep fried Mars bars and ice cream.

Litter encrusted the lanes outside Newquay so, once again, litter-louting appears ubiquitous.

I am told by the ZANE staff that donors are being most generous. A warm thank you from me!

About once a year I get a single, really sour letter from an upset donor. Late last year, for example, we solicited contributions from our donors to establish if anyone might wish to pay part of the cost of the alleviation of the pernicious disfigurement of Clubfoot in children, of which we estimate that there are about 14,000 in Zimbabwe alone.

The woman wrote: "It is disgraceful that you have written to me yet again, why do you deluge me like this? etc". Here are two reasonable choices for donors when they receive a solicitation: (a) bin it, (b) make a contribution. But why write complaining when you've been asked politely if you might help someone with Clubfoot? It seems decidedly odd.

Or someone writes that as we now have a brochure, ZANE clearly is financially incontinent and is therefore no longer worth supporting. They don't wait to establish that the offending literature had been donated and that, since its despatch, we have trebled our income.

Instead of responding in kind, I always write politely back, thanking them for their past support.

But why do this tiny minority complain so imperiously? Why not just bin the letter, if one is broke and then get on with your life? Why write before one knows the facts? What is happening here? I asked the views of the head of one of the leading international charities. Do they get the same sort of letters and what did he think

was going on? His answer was illuminating: this reaction is a common phenomenon amongst a tiny minority of donors.

"We think," he said, "that the intemperate respondent is a volcano of resentment and anger and that he or she spends a good deal of time trying to find someone to spew it out on."

Sad that. But there's nowt so queer as folk.

We are staying tonight in an hotel, the costs of which are provided by a kindly donor.

18 June 2011

Day 5 – St Columb Major to Bodmin (Saturday)

Another rainy and blustery day, violent rain one minute and then arrives the warm sun; the afternoon changes to a gunmetal sky.

We walked eighteen miles and all went well, apart from poor Jane who fell into a pile of slurry. Her language, from such a classy lady, had to be heard to be believed.

We were joined by our friend, John Broadley, one time UK Ambassador to the Vatican. He is always a joy to be with. We agreed that, in one respect anyway, the often underrated and overlooked Prime Minister, Harold Wilson was a better prime Minister than Tony Blair. Why? Because Wilson refused to let UK forces fight in Vietnam to the fury of US President Lyndon Johnson. Johnson was so upset by Wilson's intransigence over this that, allegedly, he kept Wilson waiting two hours in a White House lobby before granting him an audience. Poor Blair's reputation has been irretrievably compromised over

the Iraq war. I wonder who his real friends are today and who were his real friends when he was Prime Minister?

For it's a lonely life and few people are lonelier than those at the top of politics. I contested Wilson's seat, Huyton, in 1974, and, of course, I was beaten soundly. In 1992, when I was travelling to the Scilly Islands on holiday, Harold and Mary were at the airport and so I reintroduced myself to Mary. By that time poor Harold was deep in the grip of what Reagan called the "long goodbye", Alzheimer's, and the poor man was busy counting his luggage over and over again. Mary confided to me how lonely they were: "No one comes to see us," she told me sadly, "Our friends have all walked away."

If you think back, when in office, Harold's pals appeared to be rather dodgy businessmen he had picked up along the way; most ended up either disgraced or in jail. But, in politics, participants are in contest with one another and it's not the sort of relationship conducive to genuine and relaxed friendships. Gordon Brown invited the very journalists to the funeral of his daughter, Jennifer that he is now bellowing are unsavoury in the extreme. I am sure they were never "friends" in the true meaning of the word but work friends, plastic friendships, the sort that are instantly discarded when the dogs have barked and the caravan has moved on. As I walk, the present Prime Minister, for example, is under heavy criticism for maintaining his friendship with Andy Coulson, who faces charges for phone tapping. What is Cameron meant to do, for Heaven's sake? He would have been criticised if he had dumped him: today he's criticised for not doing so.

Belloc wrote: "There's naught worth the wear of winning but laughter and the love of friends." I agree. When Jack Profumo resigned his seat in March 1963, having admitted lying to Parliament, Iain Macleod, the leader of the Commons, amid public and press hysteria quite as overblown as is manifest today, said: "Jack Profumo was a friend of mine, is a friend of mine and will continue to be a friend of mine." I have always thought that standing by friends no matter what, is rare - especially in politics - and Cameron rises in my estimation for standing by Andy Coulson.

Climbing up yet another hill, John and I recalled one time Labour chancellor Dennis Healy who perceptively said that there is an "Olive Oil Line" running across Europe. Below the line, said Healy, lies Southern France, Greece, Italy, and the Balearic Isles. All the people who live there spend their entire time singing, dancing, eating four hour lunches, making love and fiddling their taxes. Above the line lie Germany and the Baltic States, the UK and Norway and so on. All the people there spend their time making widgets, working ten hour days in the process. Their job is to pay for the excesses of their southern neighbours.

Never was a truer word said in jest.

We lunched in yet another pub with a hideous carpet, piped music, and boring over-priced food. The barmaid had a bulging strip of pasty flesh between her overly tight jeans, her navel was pierced. We had to get our food ourselves and pay for it before eating it. Then we were expected to leave a tip for service, but there was no service! I am sure there were no complaints. But I suppose the public are used to this sort of thing and what's the point?

I sing poems to myself as I labour up hills. One favourite on friendship is by Adam Lindsey Gordon. He won the Cheltenham Gold Cup and then emigrated to Australia where he won the equivalent race in Melbourne. He was MP for his area, then married unhappily. The poor man blew his brains out before he was 40.

He wrote:

“Man’s Testament”:

*“Life is full of toil and trouble
Two things stand like stone
Kindness in another’s trouble
Courage in your own.”*

It’s a bit sugary, isn’t it?

I prefer this.

*“Life is full of toil and trouble
Two things get you through,
Gloating when it hits your neighbour
Whining when it’s you.”*

And so to bed.

19 June 2011

Day 6 - Sunday catch-up

An easy day! We decided that, although it’s our day free of heavy walking, we ought to walk eight miles or so to catch up. In the past week we have had to negotiate vast gates, thorn barred paths, the occasional slurry (you will be relieved to learn that Jane no longer pongs) and a series of 1:4 hills so, however fast we have tried to maintain the pace, we were always bound to miss our targets by at least a country mile. I expect more of the same in the next week or so, so a few days in the mile bank will surely come in handy.

At last I have found a really good pub, good food, responsive waiters (the obituary of the dead waiter reads: “God

finally caught his eye”), no piped music and reasonably priced as well. So an accolade to the “Rock Inn”, Yelverton.

We overslept and missed Matins but went to a delightful evensong service at Maristow, where we are staying.

The sermon could be summed up thus:

“God made a wonderful beginning
But man spoiled it all by sinning,
We hope that the story will end in
God’s glory,
But at the moment the other side’s
winning.”

One of the dinner guests afterwards chose to inveigh vociferously against privilege, particularly in education. It seems to me that life has enough misfortune and disadvantages as it is, and we owe a duty of care to our young to give them as good a start in life as we can afford. If we don’t do that then it seems to me that we may make wonderful socialists but rotten parents and grandparents.

I hate it when people savagely criticise our political leaders of any stripe. Of course, I don’t mind a strong criticism of policy but I abhor mindless character assassination. The implication of such vilification is that if I was to do that job, I would do it a great deal better than the incumbent: but that’s an absurd lie! When Tony Blair was asked for his views on David Cameron he wished him well. The interviewer expressed astonishment. Blair relied simply that “I know well how hard the job is and I don’t want to make it harder.” Quite right. As an example of how tough the job is, Blair said in his book that the day after September 11th he was presiding over a cabinet meeting, when a message arrived. An unidentified passenger plane, not responding to signals, was approaching

London. Should it be shot down? He had three minutes to make a decision! Fortunately . . . in the third minute, it did respond. How would we fare when faced with that?

There is a poem that sums it up: It's called "Not understood", by an Irish orphan, then a New Zealand politician, one Thomas Bracken: One verse goes:

*"Not understood.
Poor souls with stunted vision
Oft measure giants by their narrow
gauge:
The perceived shafts of falsehood
and derision
Are oft impelled 'gainst those who
mould the age.
Not understood."*

I met a tree cutter when we were walking from Land's End to London. "If you were going the other way, I would say you were nearly there," he said cheerfully!

20 June 2011

Day 7 - Thinking in the Rain

The third consecutive day of unremitting rain. The water bounces off the roads and cascades from the passing cars straight down our legs. All along the eighteen miles of green canopy under which we walk, the drops hang on the trees like tiny, silver bats waiting to arrow down our necks as we pass.

I have to boast that we played a blinder today. Keeping going in such conditions was gutsy stuff even if I have to say it myself. When the going got really difficult it was good to remind myself how lucky we are. I have a loving family. My children have grown into mature and gentle people

with well established families of their own. They keep producing delightful new grandchildren for us who are growing into delightful people who are a joy, even though I have to call myself sometimes, "the man whose chequebook never sleeps!". I have a loving and faithful wife who is my best friend and my soul mate. I have wonderful friends. Although I am in my prime - and have been there quite some time - I have a job that makes a substantial difference.

Last, I live in a country where there is no knock at the door at 3 am.

So we are wading through the rain for a great cause. ZANE is the sole "relational" charity in Zimbabwe that provides assistance to both sides of the community. We only assist people we know are in need. I am privileged to work with - both in Zimbabwe as well as in the UK - some of the finest, and kindest, most selfless people I have ever met.

From time to time Jane and I look at one another and say quietly AWL, Aren't we lucky!

Then there is huge demand for ZANE's services, the substantial costs of which are being met by generous and kindly donors.

There are several thousands of frail, old people who are without relatives, effectively imprisoned in Zimbabwe with nowhere else to go. Today they have to look to ZANE for their only means of survival. And, whatever happens politically, the devastation that Zimbabwe has suffered in the last ten years has been so total, that their dependency will remain a bleak constant for many years to come; for these are people living outside the economy; any improvement that may, just may happen, is bound to pass them by.

Three cheers for my joyful friend, Chris Lavy OBE. Chris is an orthopaedic surgeon of great renown who, instead of concentrating on the ills of the rich, as he so easily could, went with his family to live in Malawi for ten years. He raised the money – never easy – and built a hospital for handicapped children often to help those with clubfoot. When he came back to the UK with his loyal wife, Vicky, to educate his young children, he found he was unable to restore his practising certificate because he had been away so long. It took a year of hard work before he could practice again!

Chris is chairman of CURE International, with whom ZANE enjoys an informal partnership. A few months ago, Chris assembled a small team, and flew to Zimbabwe as the guests of ZANE. Chris ran a training programme for nurses and social worker across the country, teaching how to combat clubfoot, a ghastly disfiguring disability that wrecks lives. It can be cured if the children are young enough by a simple process of manipulation. I have just learned that this programme is a huge success. Chris has agreed to return with his team.

We make good progress. The blisters I started to walk with seem to have become used to constant battering and throb away sullenly with the occasional red hot tweak to remind me of my mortality.

Tomorrow I will discuss politics and, of course, sometime soon to satisfy the demanding lady whose face could cut kindling, sex.

But today all Jane and I want is to wipe away the silver bats, then enjoy a hot bath and a cup of tea, lie in bed and gently remind ourselves just how darn lucky we are.

21 June 2011

Day 8 - White Van and Vanity

We started at Coxpark and we finished 17 miles later at Two Bridges, once again at the start of the walk it's as if we were wandering at the bottom of a well with the water bouncing all around us. Then, by mid day, the sky clears and slowly shows enough blue to make a pair of sailor's trousers, scattered at random with a boxful of marshmallows; it grew warm and we had a gentle walker's wind at our back.

As the day heats up we stride happily to Tavistock, one of the nicest and friendliest small towns I have ever been in. I wonder, as we walk through its streets about the new fashion amongst the young who walk clutching water bottles as if they were setting off to trek the Gobi Desert. In fact, I know however, they don't venture on foot away from the suburbs for all walker's paths appear overgrown. But how did the water companies start this extraordinary fashion? It's pointless of course, just a fad. We have all spent decades on this earth without needing to sip water every ten minutes, so which PR genius came up with this idea?

Thence off towards Dartmoor, the road with an incline so steep it makes the Sheffield hills seem as flat as a coffin lid. The road proves to be ghastly: narrow, uneven and so heavily cambered I am forced to walk with one foot treading at least eight inches lower than the other. The tarmac stunk in the sun and erupted with dozens of tiny black volcanoes. I skitter about, trying to find a level path to avoid the pain of gentle racking.

Then wham! A lunatic white van driver suddenly overtakes another car; his wing mirror skims skin from my left ear. I see the

flash of a grinning, stupid face, one finger up a gaping nostril and a flapping greasy pigtail. Half an inch to the left and it would have been good night sweet Prince for me. Dartmoor gaol is on my right. The pillock, I hope, is out on day release. As soon as he is behind bars the better. It's strange, but any liberal instincts I may have after a lifetime of disappointments, wither away when I experience the direct attentions of a hoody. Hug him, no fear: far better, give him a kick in the crutch any day.

I plod on but I take some time to regain my equilibrium. Now it's just a story . . . but I was as near death as I ever have been. It was only a skin away! I start to brood.

The newspapers, of course, add fuel to my brown study. They make ghastly reading. There is misery all round: international financial uncertainty hangs like a pall. We face financial domestic difficulties.

I used to think that there was a master plan out there with really clever people running our affairs who know what they are doing, and it was just me out of the loop. Now I know that no one really has a clue! Do you recall Sherlock Homes battling with Professor Moriarty on the edge of the Reichenbach Falls? Just one tiny nudge and we will fall screaming into the abyss.

What a cheerful old sod I am! On I trudge.

To add to this dismal background and nearer to home, a little while ago, I meet a woman who regales me with a gloomy list of appalling problems. Her son has been run over by a car; this has ruined his potentially glittering academic career. Her two other sons have taken to drugs and descended into petty crime. Her husband has left her for another woman; if that list is not enough, she has just lost the job she loved.

"Tom" she said mournfully, "Why do all these things happen to me, not you?"

I am normally quick to answer such questions: this one stymied me. All I could think of were lines from US writer Ella Wilcox, "Into every life a little rain shall fall", but this poor woman's problems were of such magnitude I would deserve to be clouted if I quoted them. Lines by Blake seem to be more appropriate: "Some are born to pure delight, some are born to endless night." But why is this so? Was Shakespeare spot on when Lear says "As flies to wanton boys, are we to the Gods, they kill us for their sport." But why have these problems not visited me? Why?

I sought an answer from one of my friends marinated in Christian thought. "It's easy," he replied. "It's not over yet!"

Oh! He's right of course!

Back to the lady with the problems. I screw my face into the sad look I hold in reserve for such occasions, but as I did so, a poem tumbled out of the dusty attic of my mind, recited to me years ago by an ancient relative:

*"Ours is an unhappy household,
No one laughs or ever smiles,
My job consists of crushing ice
For dear old father's piles.*

*Cousin Sue vomits each morning
On the dot of half past eight,
To the worry of our father,
The author of her fate.*

*Our sister Mary has been aborted
For the forty second time,
And Uncle Harry has been arrested
For a most unusual crime,"*

So there's nothing new under the sun.

Now to my brooding on vanity as I trudge endless miles along the moor. The sky is

now overcast. Scattered scrubby trees are on a rise on my far left while angry rooks clatter towards a wuthering sky. I glance at Jane as she walks. It's my experience, contrary to myth, that men are vainer than women. That goes for me too. Fortunately, my children are always at hand to level my vanities. Some time ago, for example, in one of my more mawkish moments, I asked my eldest beloved son if he would deliver the eulogy when I die. He, of course, agreed.

"But," I said reflectively, "please include only the good bits."

"It'll be very short then Dad," he replied.

Well that left me mouthing air. My vanity makes me believe that, even though I am getting on a bit, I have some certainty that I may still retain, at the very least, some residual attraction to the opposite sex and that I am not an ancient old fart that people just look through and not at.

I was lunching with my youngest daughter in London. She has the sort of looks that would make Ed Balls and George Osborne dance a foxtrot in glee. We had a joyful lunch.

Afterwards, walking up St James, I met a friend, Adam Raphael, of the Economist.

"Adam, Let me introduce you to my daughter," said I, and when the small talk finished, on we went.

"Why did you have to tell him I was your daughter?" she asked. Then she answered her own question, "But of course," she said with a nasty little smile, "otherwise at your age, it would have to have been a commercial relationship, wouldn't it?"

If you think that is all the humiliation I have to put up with, just read on.

22 June 2011

Day 9 - ZANE in Black and White

We stayed last night with General Sir Frank Kitson and his artist wife Elizabeth in their glorious Manor house, full of memorabilia.

Frank won two MC's in the Malayan campaign and Northern Ireland. He and Elizabeth are the greatest fun to be with and they are great hosts. Frank manifests a number of old fashioned virtues in short supply these days, such as an iron integrity, courage, hard work, decency and loyalty. He is disenchanted at the muddled teaching of the contemporary C of E. Perhaps political correctness is not his strong suit.

As a retired high ranking general, Frank is still asked to comment on issues such as the Iraq war and developments in Northern Ireland. He has always steadfastly refused to do so because he is out of the loop, and so he doesn't know the facts. It's a pity that his contemporaries do not always follow his example.

Now I come to ponder it, it's also a pity that Bishops continue to speak out on subjects they know very little about either. They have every right to speak their minds of course, but dear reader, you of course know deep in your gut that the NHS and social security and all the rest, are hugely complex issues: very complex indeed. So why do you suppose that Messrs Brown, Blair and Major don't discuss contemporary issues? It's not because the media are not interested, of course they are. It's because having been at the centre they once were fed all the facts; now they are no longer in that privileged position, they don't know: so they choose not to make fools of themselves. I wish Bishops

would understand that simple fact and stick to what they know about.

The next day, we continue to wade through Dartmoor. We reckoned we deserved a clear day yet instead found the sky as grey as the Archbishop's beard. We walked the first ten miles in torrential rain. Then we were joined by Cathy, the first person we employed in Zimbabwe seven long years ago. I was warned when I first met her that she was a very difficult person with a high political profile and that I would be a fool to employ her. So damning were the reports, I determined to hire her on the spot. She has, of course, been a wonderful success, and ZANE is lucky to have her.

Cathy told me that she was assisting an impoverished, aged school teacher, aged 82, let's call her Mary, who's savings were destroyed by the hyperinflation of recent years. Today Mary, who has no family, is wholly reliant on ZANE for her survival.

Then, a few weeks back, Mary became more than usually downcast. Cathy could not find out the reason for her abject misery. Last week, on impulse, Cathy gave Mary \$20 more than she usually does. The effect was dramatic. After gentle questioning Mary admitted she had been embarrassed to go to the doctor about a feminine condition because she has no underwear or knickers. ZANE has put this right due to the generosity of donors.

But there are lots of Marys and ZANE can't afford to help them all. All UK and EU aid goes to assist those in the black communities. It seems, therefore, that by definition, those living in the white community are regarded, however distressing their circumstances may be, as not deserving as their black neighbours. Therefore international aid is being

distributed on racial grounds. This is extraordinary.

So there is nothing amusing in today's blog. Instead just a sad story of a poor, old woman called Mary with no knickers who can't really be very poor because she's white.

23 June 2011

Day 10 - Human Ingenuity

As we flog along the road via Exeter Cathedral (magnificent), I have been brooding about human ingenuity. When it comes to naked self-interest there is simply no stopping it. In the main, if people can avoid allowing the government to place its vast shovel in their stores they will do so.

You can still see blocked windows in some houses whereby 18th century owners sought to avoid window tax. And, whilst preparing for this long walk, we travelled part of the "salt" trail, which was used by traders in the 11th century carrying salt from Wales to London. The government, inevitably, tried to tax it; you can still see the places where officers were stationed to levy the duty. You can also still see another small path hooking round the toll sites where traders simply evaded the officers by walking round them.

I would rate the chances that HMG have of collecting much additional money from the recent hike to charging 50 percent income tax as mighty slim.

But my first prize for rat-like ingenuity, this time to make an illicit buck, has to go to some WW2 pensioners in N. India. A services charity leader told me that, for ease of distribution, block pension money would be given to various village elders,

who would then distribute the appropriate sum to each pensioner who lived in his area. Not all of the recipients could write of course, so it was agreed that a thumb print would do to evidence receipt. On one occasion, one of the thumb prints looked rather odd, so the charity suspected that something was awry. My friend paid a surprise visit on the next pay day. He found a racket. After one old pensioner had died, his young widow simply cut off his thumb and placed it carefully in a pickle bottle. Once a quarter for many years, the rather green and squishy thumb would be extracted from the bottle to be ceremoniously planted on the dotted line.

Now to the church. My wife, Jane, is walking with me yard for yard. Apart from being a ZANE Trustee, she runs, with an excellent team, the "Community Emergency Foodbank" (CEFoxford.co.uk). CEF has fed over 5,000 people since it began some three years ago. It relies on donations of food from Oxford churches (and other sources). Distribution of food is an excellent way for Christians to demonstrate social action. CEF has been well supported. But, astonishingly, not all church leaders respond to the call to feed the poor. One vicar, of an exceptionally pretty Anglican church on the outskirts of Oxford, decided that the CEF food boxes detracted from the 11th century beauty of his church, so he removed them. We found this out when members of his congregation came to CEF to apologise for his intransigence. Another (non-Anglican this time) said that, "We have no need for such a service."

Well it's not meant to be for you, you total Ninny, but for the hungry of Oxford.

We need not wonder why so many people don't go to church in the UK but go

gardening or golfing instead, for with a few ministers like that, who needs Richard Dawkins?

Another 18 miles completed: now we are half way and knackered.

24 June 2011

Day 11 - The Hulk

When I arrived at today's start I knew I faced a problem. There was a huge black man waiting for me. Instinctively I realised that this was it: here is the Hulk, the terrifying six foot four man who rang me up on day one to demand money, then hung up after giving me a sombre warning that he was going to find me.

I searched for an avenue of escape. Could I hide under the car and leave Jane and driver Harry to deal with him?

I was trapped: no escape.

The Hulk turned out to be a charming and kindly family man, Frank - a great supporter of ZANE, whose telephone voice clearly belies his gentleness. He came to the UK eight years ago to seek asylum as his newspaper offices had been burned to the ground. Frank walked with us the entire day and he was great company. It all demonstrates how quickly we run to judgement and how wrong we can be.

As we walk I see a lay-by on the A30 and I vividly recall the sordid details of my hushed up sex scandal back in 1978. I was seeking the candidature of one of the West Country parliamentary seats when it happened.

I was wearing a very snappy dove grey suit at the time. I was driving from London and I had some time in hand before the constituency grilling was scheduled to

start. I rehearsed what I was going to say and I was sure I had a knock-out speech. It was growing dark. But a sudden thirst became overpowering. I pulled into a service station and bought a big carton of orange juice. I sat in the lay-by and began to drink. Then a bumblebee flew into the car and headed towards my nose. I brushed it away and managed to spill the juice straight down my crotch.

What was I to do? Constituents may be used to seeing incontinent MPs at the end of their service, but surely not even before they are selected.

I wriggled out of my sopping trousers and pulled the new pair from my case.

I was about to pull them on when a flashlight shone into my car. "Hello, hello, what do we have here?" An astonished pause as he saw I was alone. "What are you doing?" asked the policeman.

Ashen, I explained the position. There was a long silence. I showed him the sodden trousers.

"May I give you some advice, Sir?" he said at last; the question was rhetorical.

"If I were you, Sir, I wouldn't take off your trousers again on the A30, if I were you. People can get the wrong idea."

I failed to get the nomination.

25 June 2011

Day 12 - Party Dazed

A bad night. Awoke sweating and wondering if I can go on. I was dog tired and awoke to bad dreams of continually walking up the same never-ending hill. But it's simply too late to stop and what would all the supporters say? What would Jane and my family say? I am normally an

optimist, even when it's empty I see my glass as half full.

The day is dreadful - never ending rain - I am told to cheer up: "Rain at seven, sunny by 11." Ugh!

I think of parties in years gone by. Those days are long past. I recite a poem to cheer myself up:

*"I love a good party,
2 drinks at the most,
3 I'm under the table,
4 and I'm under the host"*

But you have to turn with the wheel in life; those days are long gone and, to tell the truth, I don't miss them. I wrote in last year's walk blog that we all need a maiden to woo (that's done), a battle to fight and a cause to live for. Lucky man that I am, I have all three.

On July 2nd Jane and I are breaking the walk for a day because our eldest beloved daughter, Clare (she is a ZANE trustee), is to be ordained in Christchurch Cathedral, Oxford by the Bishop of Oxford, John Pritchard. This is, as you will appreciate, a red letter day for my family. We are hugely proud of her. Clare will make a splendid vicar. She has plenty of common sense and a great heart for God. She can also cut her old dad down to size. Some time ago, when I was moaning on about ageing, I said to a group of people that, when one gets to be over 60, one ceases to be any sort of sex object and the young look through you.

Clare was on to me in a flash. "Dad," she said, "When were you ever a sex object? Let me make it easy for you; don't worry about the date, the decade will do."

How about that for pastoral concern?
Atheists had better watch out.

But I wonder if she is right? I wonder if I
am past it?

26 June 2011

Day 13 - Not Retiring Shy

The hottest day so far. Thank goodness it's
a Sunday, so we start to walk at around
noon - a few miles just to keep ahead of
the game.

We walked from Cricket St Thomas to
Crewkerne and we hit the worst footpath
we have ever encountered. Poor Jane was
in shorts and her legs were torn to shreds.
It was just like the scene with Humphrey
Bogart and Katherine Hepburn in "The
African Queen" as they hacked their way
through the tangled swamp. A thousand
curses and fleas on the head of the paths
department of the Somerset County
Council. May he or she, whoever is
responsible for the dereliction of these
paths, be infected with the pox both great
and small. We met, by chance, the
chairman of the Rambler's Association and
he agreed that "More needs to be done."

You can say that again.

We stayed last night in the stables of a
ruined rectory which is being carefully
restored by loving owners. Its magnificent
views stretch many miles across the soft
and watery, grey green Somerset
landscape, with its vast horizons. Last
night the sky was dark and clear. We were
not near any town and the dark remained
unpolluted by the ubiquitous neon glare
that spews everywhere else like pale
yellow vomit. The sky was black velvet on
which a giant hand had scattered silver

pepper in glorious abundance, arching
across the heavens.

Someone said that happiness is the ability
to turn the raw energy generated by anger
to a productive cause. Perhaps the
manifest injustice of the plight of the white
Africans is my cause? So, no easy
retirement for me, not just yet anyway. No
passive decline while I still have
reasonably high energy levels and good
health; rather, "Do not go gentle into this
good night; rage, rage at the dying of the
light."

27 June 2011

Day 14 - Rooms with a View/ Have I Still Got It?

We Walked from Yeovil to Sherborne on a
very hot and muggy day. As we passed the
outskirts of Sherborne we saw that the
new "Wingfield Retirement Home" had
been carefully designed so that on one
side it overlooks the main graveyard and,
on the other, the crematorium. Just the
sort of views needed to welcome and
reassure hesitant new arrivals to Wingfield
as to the reality of their situation and the
certainty of their next home.

Jane has long and animated conversations
with Leah (our dog, a Staffie). She is
convinced that:

- (a) Leah understands every word, and
- (b) these conversations are quite as fruitful
as talking to me.

Perhaps she is right on both counts?

We occasionally sing old songs and, of
course, hymns as we walk. All the old
favourites.

My favourite hymn, which I think should be
marinated in every child, is "Dear Lord and

Father of mankind, Forgive our foolish ways. Reclothe us in our rightful mind . . . etc.” What an appropriate line: “Reclothe us in our rightful mind.” This is said to be the favourite hymn of the past Labour Home Secretary, David Blunkett. He’s right on that. Would that the bankers in 2008 had heeded it, instead we saw total madness; the Euro: the concept is mad and always has been; the antics of the dictator thugs in the Middle East . . . need I comment on Zimbabwe?

And, at the same time, we should be teaching the children something about money. What building societies/ banks/ the Stock Exchange and so on are all about. This would stop them growing up as members of the “FAG” “Financial Acumen of a Gerbil” club and I am the founder. Most people appear to be members. This is why so called “savings institutions” are allowed to get away with charging vast fees for such rotten returns to their clients. No-one has a clue they are being ripped off. Most saving companies charge 1-2% each year to pay for their Manor Houses yet their performance rarely beats the FTSE index. As inflation is running at around 4.5%, the clients are losing money in real terms.

I wonder if Clare and Milly are right over my fading charms? Have I lost all my allure, such as it ever was, that is. Yet, something deep down tells me that I may still be able to attract members of the opposite sex. Or am I just a silly old man, so people look through me, and not at me as they used to?

And what did Clare say? “When were you ever a sex object, Dad, not the date, the decade will do?” She was joking, wasn’t she?

Not that I actually want to . . . well, you know what . . . Jane would never really quite forgive me and the children would jointly and severally kill me. And Christians are held on a short lead. I suggest you read the story of what King David got up to with Bathsheba in Samuel 2 chapter 11. Put it this way, if they were around today both their phones would have been hacked.

But it would be good for my male confidence to know that I am not just an old joke, that although the twinkle in the eye may be somewhat dimmed, it has not been finally, once and for all, extinguished. The trouble is, of course, that I feel today exactly as I did when I was twenty.

I looked in the glass the other day and held my head up high. Not too much turkey on the neck. Hair thinning, admittedly, but lots of very attractive people are totally bald! Some time ago, I was told that, on my left side anyway, I look like the one-time Wimbledon champion tennis player Rod Laver.

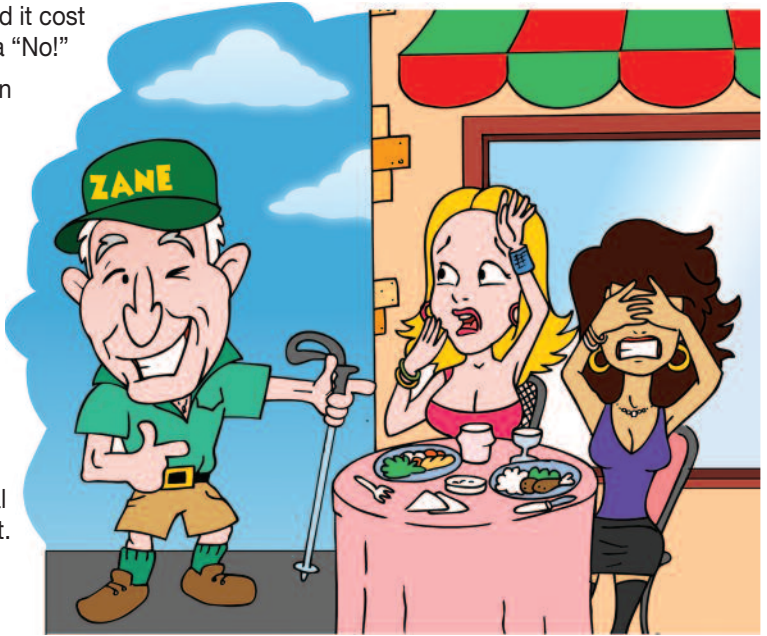
Admittedly that was a long time ago, but it is still a nice memory. Has the sweet bird of youth entirely flapped away? Surely she would have given me some preliminary flaps before her final departure?

I saw an opportunity to put myself to the test at a roadside cafe. After I sat down, I saw two girls, quite good looking in a rather tarty sort of way sitting at a table and staring at the door. Every now and then, when people came in they would shout “No!”, and dissolve into fits of giggles. One man came in with a “rug”, poor soul, apparently in a forlorn attempt to hide the fact he was bald. Someone who loves him should quietly tell him that it looked like a small, brown rodent asleep on top of a hard-boiled egg.

Poor man! What had it cost him? He attracted a “No!”

It became clear then what the girls were doing. They were judging men whom they could bear to go to bed with: the results appeared to be universally negative.

How would I fare? Okay, I had a small problem of a ricked back, so I would have to take special care to walk upright. But, come on Tom, nothing ventured, nothing gained.



I went to the men's room and looked at myself. Keep your head up, the left side - the Laver side - if possible, towards the girls.

I went out of a side door walked round the building and swung towards the entrance. In I went. I tried to look as much like Rod Laver as I could. The girls fell totally silent. I chose not to look at them, but steadfastly went on walking through the restaurant and out of the door at the far end.

My old heart soared! No cries of "No!"

Then I heard it . . . the build up of hysterical shouts of mirth that went on and on . . .

I went crimson and kept on marching as fast as I could go. What could have gone wrong? Then I looked down and saw with dismay that I had not repaired my dress before leaving the gents. Reality set in big time. The girls had seen an old man with a

staring face walking at an angle of 45 degrees with his flies agape. It was not my finest hour. Will they call the police?

Jane caught up with me. She saw me looking downcast. Shamefacedly, I admitted the full extent of my sorry story to her. She laughed, not unkindly.

“Who cares?”, she said, “I love you”.

28 June 2011

Day 15 - Shhhh!

Another hot and sticky day marked by losing our way and blaming one another. I saw a sign outside Wimborne that indicated London 113 miles so we are well on the way.

We have seven grandsons and one granddaughter, Amelie, who was born last year.

My children and I had a discussion some time ago whether children are born as innocents and are then corrupted by this wicked world, or are they born with the sin of Adam as part of their DNA? We think in our arrogance and ignorance that this sort of discussion is new to our generation, but this sort of thing has been hotly debated since the Old Testament was written.

Author G.K. Chesterton was clear:

“Original sin,” he wrote, “is one of the few propositions that needs no further proof.”

I like a poem of a child’s prayer by U.S. poet Shel Silverman:

*“Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray to God my soul to keep,
And if I die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my toys to break,
So none of the other children
will have them,
Amen”*

It makes the position clear, don’t you think?

Health and safety is out of control. Our five year old grandson, Daniel, fell over at home the other day and slightly cut his knee. The first thing he said, after screaming himself blue was, “I want an accident report!”

His mother wondered whether she was going to be sued by her son.

As I thumped along the path on the way to Winchester, I recalled the most embarrassing moment in recent years.

It was at a ZANE dinner with speaker John Simpson, who was performing brilliantly.

I was chairing the dinner and anxious that all could hear.

At the end of the room I could see a woman talking throughout Simpson’s

presentation. I was incensed. How rude! I tiptoed out of the room and re-entered by the back door. I walked up to the couple and hissed quietly, “Please be quiet!”

To my horror, I found I was talking to someone who was translating the speech so that one of our most generous deaf donors could understand! I hoped the floor would open up.

29 June 2011

Day 16 - Taboo? Not likely!

The Wiltshire County Council person responsible for footpaths should be strongly criticised. Feet high nettles, bindweed, impassable tracks, our poor little Staffie’s teets are scraped raw in the undergrowth. What a mess it all is.

There are five topics, apparently, one can never discuss in polite company: money, sex, death, religion and politics. My children tell me that I never talk about anything else. I have no complaint about this criticism as these are by far the most interesting subjects to talk about anyway.

But we find religion an embarrassment. Many find it so scary they decide to know nothing at all about the subject; they ignore it, even though Judeo/ Christian principles form the bedrock of our laws, our civil structures and much of our art and music.

Americans have no such inhibitions. Any contender for the US presidency has to say he or she is two things: (a) a hunter and (b) a “born again” Christian. Even Bill Clinton managed to get his lips round both.

In the UK any Prime Ministerial candidate who admitted to hunting would say farewell to his ambition. You can imagine what would happen to the hopes of an admitted born again Christian!

In response to my savage condemnation aimed at a job who tried to kill me in a white van at the start of this blog, a Christian donor wrote to remind me that I should be careful, for the man in question was made in the image of God! That of course is undeniably true, but I can only say that he was in such a heavy disguise, I failed to recognise him.

Families are very often fractured. We see this each day in our work in Zimbabwe ZANE staff in Zimbabwe do not dump aid. They relate to, and really get to know, all those to whom they give aid.

Often families appear to be blissfully unaware that their relative is in desperate want. If we have a needy client, and we can establish that he or she has a relative in, say, Canada, Australia or the UK, we write politely to tell them that their relative, be it their mother, father, uncle or aunt, is seeking charitable aid, can they help them, so instead of our having to use ZANE's limited funds, can they please look after their own family? Time after time they thank us and say they had no idea that their relative was needy. So much for proper loving communications. The old do not want to be a burden to the young and are often too proud to be explicit; then the young often do not listen, or they don't want to hear.

They ring and say, "How are you Dad or Mum?"

"Fine," is the reply, then small talk and then the conversation ends.

But the reality is that the pensioner may have no food or medicines in their house.

The relatives are often embarrassed to hear the facts from us.

How dysfunctional can you get?

It's not ZANE's role to help those in dire straits who can be helped by their families. We have to ensure your money goes a long way.

30 June 2011

Day 17 - Manners Maketh Man

Another 17 miles completed today. In the last few days, we have walked through Somerset, Dorset and now Wiltshire countryside. We can moan at the overgrown footpaths, and the litter. The hymn comes to mind with the line: "All the world is beautiful and only man is vile."

For it is so beautiful: mixes of massive Lincoln green trees mark the paths or tangled hawthorn hedges stand guard. Sometimes overhanging trees link up to form arches under which we pass; then when we emerge from the dappled sunlight, huge blue skies tower over us and rolling grey green hills mark the horizon. I have been all over this world yet, as I walk though the English countryside, I can't help wondering why we bother to travel overseas at all when, especially in high summer, we live in such an achingly lovely country. As a Venetian Doge is said to have commented when asked to travel somewhere or other; "Why should I travel, when I've already arrived?"

Three cheers for the Telegraph Group of newspapers! Last Christmas they made ZANE their overseas charity of the year. This has done a great deal to draw attention to the plight of those trapped in that terrifying regime and who have nowhere to go. It's one thing for me and the ZANE staff to parade the merits of our work, and another matter altogether for one of Britain's leading newspapers to tell the world that, in their view, the work is

worthwhile and the charity well run.

We have had the pleasure of a good number of visiting walkers with us these past few days. It gives the opportunity for

a good talk. One lady discussed with me the gross decline in manners.

Did you hear, a few days ago, a feminist broadcaster telling listeners that women should reject doors being opened for them, or being offered a seat on the train or tube, or other demonstration of manners that drew attention to the fact that there is a difference between men and women, on grounds that that this was patronising their sex?

It seems to me that this is a rude enough world as it is, where displays of courtesy and kindness between the sexes is about as common as hen's teeth, without some misguided woman trying to make us even more unmannerly than we already are.

I was taught to walk on the outside of the pavement, to open doors and let the woman go first, then to stand up when a woman comes into a room. I was taught that all this was designed to make the lives of others a little easier and that "manners maketh man."

And, while I am on the subject, I was also taught that lateness was rude, as it showed a lack of consideration for the time of others. And that, when someone had invited us to dinner or a wedding, one should reply promptly, arrive at the appointed hour and then thank by letter. I was also taught that, when a hostess had spent a great deal of time preparing a lovely meal to be eaten, often in beautiful surroundings, that for the men, especially the richer and most self-important ones, to arrive looking as if they had dressed for

supper at the Salvation Home for Destitutes, was rude to the hostess.

How times seem to have changed.

1 July 2011

Day 18 - Let us all praise famous men

There are a number of people in my gallery whom I hold in particular high regard. One is the Speaker, John Bercow.

I first got to know John when he was my member of parliament. He was always most friendly and helpful to my family and was generally recognised as a first class constituency member. Next, in recent years, he has been very helpful to ZANE by allowing us to use his state rooms for our annual donor lunch.

My second hero is someone only a few of our donors will ever have heard of, the Reverend John Collins. John was vicar of Holy Trinity Brompton and played a seminal role in the establishment of the Alpha Course. During his illustrious career, John nurtured a great number of influential curates who went on to great things in the C of E. John also found the time to cultivate my family. I have no doubt that, without John, ZANE would never have started, nor would our daughter Clare be getting ordained tomorrow morning.

A number of comments have arrived from donors about my item on manners. One wrote: "What about men who sit next to women at dinner or lunch and talk continuously about their own boring careers, without ever asking a single question of their neighbours? And, what about men (it's always men!) who talk only to the woman on one side, and make no attempt to talk to the lady on their other side. And what about people who are at a

function who continually check their mobile phones?”

I have seen a good many of the ZANE wristbands and button badges that not all donors liked when we sent them out a year ago; several being worn by peers in the House of Lords, no less!

It takes all sorts to make a world.

4 July 2011

Day 21 - Whatever is praiseworthy...

Another hefty 18 mile day from King's Somborne to Alresford across magnificent country. In the fullness of an English summer we crossed countryside where Hardy's Henshaw might easily swing into view on the way to sell his sad wife at the fair. We follow the Clarendon Way as it leads into the Itchen Way. We walk down little wooded tracks where trees form an overhead guard of Huzzars clad in dark green uniforms all marked out with sunshine dappled buttons. Their swords of leaves form a silent salute as we file past. We cross the Itchen River and pass two tiny, glittering lichen stained lakes. Once suddenly when I turn the corner on an ancient rutted path, there stood a clutch of twined, vast trees quietly and rhythmically bobbing in the breeze, like blousy old dowagers slowly dancing at a ball.

We are on old drove roads where travellers have walked for centuries. It's where the sheep and cattle were herded until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Word of mouth from the shepherds crossing Britain was a common way for the transmission of information throughout the country. It took three weeks, we are told, for the triumphal news of Nelson's great victory at Trafalgar to be spread as far as Edinburgh and Bath.

Before Clare's ordination we discovered at an early stage that we could not find her birth certificate. We trawled all the churches we had ever attended but without success. So at last, we had to pay for a duplicate. Then we could not find her confirmation records either! It seems you cannot be ordained unless you have been confirmed. That's not unreasonable, in fact, when you come to think about it, although I was elected as an MP without being a member of the conservative party. I was told that was not the same thing at all! So they had to lay on a special service for her! Then to cap it all, we couldn't find our marriage certificate either; at last it turned up in the box where we keep the dog's records.

As I walk, I listened to Mozart's Great Mass on my iPod. It suits my mood after a joyous weekend at Christchurch Cathedral, Oxford where the ceremony was held. Some verses in chapter four of Philippians seem to be appropriate:

“Finally Brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about these things.”

Incidentally, I am surprised always that people think that disbelief somehow excuses them from taking part in church life, that it obviously justifies their never attending church, or taking part in church activities. I would not presume to try and argue anyone into faith for it's a waste of time. But what's wrong in non believers polishing brasses, being on the flower rota or the PCC or enjoying church functions? These all form a vital part of the ancient traditions of our tribe, the glue that holds our communities together. There are few enough as it is and church life provides

one of the few opportunities where the lonely can forge friendships. Unless good-hearted people play a part, something unique and irreplaceable in the community will surely die.

A sombre aspect to the weekend was the news of the death of five friends I have worked with or with whom I have enjoyed long friendships; we were all about the same age. For some years no-one I knew appeared to die: then it appears that the grim reaper awakes suddenly from his torpor and angrily and swiftly performs an overdue cull.

So I have attended two funerals in quick succession recently. I would have to have the imagination of a ferret therefore not to ponder just a little on the dark subject of death. People are so deeply shocked by the topic that I notice that they rarely say that someone has plain "died", they use euphemisms instead: "Passed away," for example, or, as the Scots might say quaintly, "gathered." But death is death whether we can face it or not and we are all on a conveyor belt that moves us all ineluctably forward, however frenzied our attempts may be to slow it down. We have moved God out of our increasingly secular society. It seems that to many we have repositioned him on roughly the same level as the tooth fairy. The NHS and Spas and pumping iron in health clubs now appear to be our gods.

The good news is that many of the illnesses that killed our grandparents have now been eliminated: Flu, for example, was "the old man's friend," but today has been moved off the list of regular killers. But it's not all good news, as ever, there's a darker side. Blake wrote: "Woe and joy are woven fine, clothing for the soul divine". As I join the grassy track of the

Itchen Way, I can brood that behind the heralded news of another illness cracked, there hides a darker reality: another three months will be added to the actuarial ages of us all ; so, for even longer, we will lie bald, batty and incontinent and out of sight in some dreary home. This a new problem for our generation. So let's drink and be merry and forget it all? Keats, in one of his letters, writes that life is like living in a brightly lit and congenial party. Yet, every now and then, a black coated hand emerges from behind a curtain then taps someone, seemingly at random, on the shoulder. He or she quietly vanishes. But the drinks circulate even faster, the band plays and the party whirls on. Some mutter "Who's next". Others answer, "Don't be morbid. This won't happen to us!"

So, no one looks at the coffins in the funerals I attended. They all look at one another, they all chat away and examine the vaulted ceiling; others even check out other people's wives, and, of course their Blackberries: but no one looks at the coffin.

Sir Walter Raleigh wrote this on the eve of his execution in 1618:

*"Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our days,
Shuts up the story of our days,
And from which earth, and grave,
and dust,
My Lord shall rise me up, I trust."*

Let's hope he's right.

Birds apparently disturbed, suddenly rise squawking from a shaded valley on my right and soar behind the woods that lie ahead.

Amongst the dead are Sir Desmond Fennell of Winslow and Anthony Stodart of

East Lothian. These people died in reasonably good health and enjoyed successful careers. But, when you strip away the gossamer issues that beset us: money, ambition, careers and all the things that lay waste our powers, the really essentials are left: My friends enjoyed happy and fruitful marriages and they knew laughter and the love of friends. Two who died enjoyed great Christian faith.

All these people are worth our tears.

I think particularly of Major Gordon Howard MBE of the Salvation Army. In his retirement he worked for ZANE. He died of pancreatic cancer, having devoted 35 years to looking after the Athol Evans Home in Harare. He was a loving servant to the forgotten legions of vulnerable people trapped in Zimbabwe. Gordon quietly got on with his job in a modest, self-effacing way.

He leaves daughters and his devoted wife of many years, Catherine. It's a divine mystery why such wonderful Christian men, such as Gordon Howard, who are in their prime, die such savage deaths, while others who appear to be wicked, depraved and cruel appear to live forever and prosper. I shall have to have a quiet world with the recording angel when my time comes.

So even to the unbelievers of formal religion, perhaps love is left.

In Thornton Wilder's book "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" suddenly snaps, casting five people into the abyss: Wilder concludes:

"But soon we all die, and the memory of those five will have left Earth, and we ourselves shall be loved for a while and forgotten. But the love will have been enough. All those impulses of love return to the love that made them. Even memory is not necessary for love. There

is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge of love, the only survival, the only meaning."

I walk two miles in memory of each of my five dear, dead friends.

05 July 2011

Day 22 - The Crab v the Wire Coat-hanger

We walked from Alresford to Well. We passed a colossal mansion with the usual privacy gates. Behind them we could see tiny slivers of a carefully manicured lawn bordered by topiary worked shrubs. Twin Bentleys - his and hers? - stared abusively at the world at large from the front of the house.

I was told that this is apparently the luxury lair of a sugar dynasty. You can see faint shadows of the stripes of slave labour in the cut of the lawns. The subtext shrieked: "We are considerably richer than you" and "Peasants keep out." As I wondered away the words of the author Henry James tolled at me like a chime: "Behind every great fortune there is always a great crime." In my extensive experience, he was spot on.

My angry toe (see earlier blog) was giving modest trouble and my right knee cap was still gently revolving after the exertions of the previous evening. The reason these were troubling me were entirely my own fault.

After we had walked 10 miles or so, we were joined by a couple of delightful people. We were warned that the man, in his mid 80s, had been ill, so the implicit message was that he had to be watched. I have to say that this worried me because, with the best will in the world, walking 18 miles is hard enough without having to

cater for elderly potential invalids; but of course we smiled and made the best of it: they were our hosts that night.

I was feeling out of sorts. Why? Well, one of my investments wasn't working out. I have worked out a rule that, in my opinion, is brilliant. It should be in the dictionary of Quotations. It is, simply, that the pain of losing money is acutely disproportionate to the pleasure of making it. In other words, if I make a tidy profit, I shrug and think how clever I am, then the pleasure lasts a mere few hours. If, on the other hand, I lose exactly the same sum of money, I am choked with fury for days! Funny, isn't it, but I'll bet this is the same for everyone. And, oh yes, whilst I am on about it, I never give share tips. If the share rises in value, the person who receives the tip will forget it was me who gave him the

advice and think how clever he was. If, on the other hand, the share goes down, he will never forget it was me who lost him the money and he will never speak to me again! Sod's law will always out.

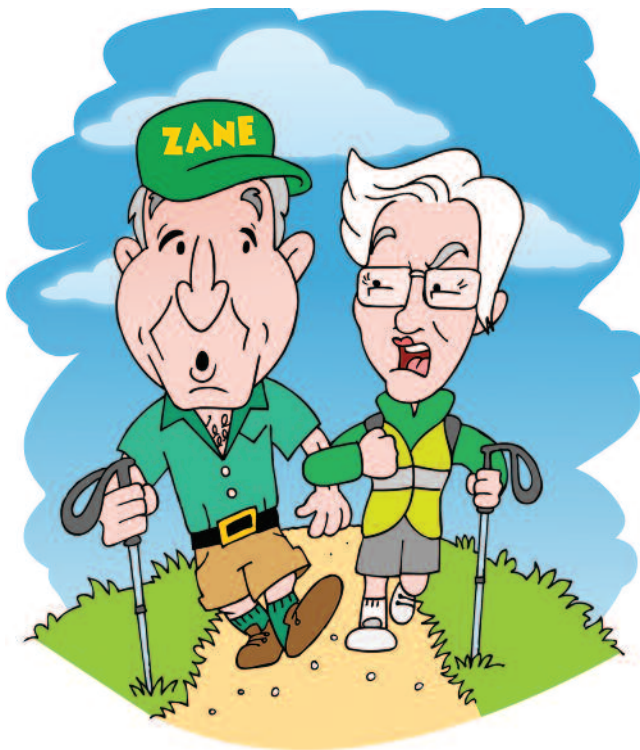
Anyway, I digress. I was out of sorts. When I am in this mood, I can irritate Jane a great deal, and there was no doubt I was doing this yesterday. I was hanging back, I lost my way and, as I walked, I insisted on listening to the magnificent Schubert Quintets on my iPod, so I was out of communication generally, and this gets Jane's goat more than anything else. Then I did my yoga by the road and looked, as one is bound to do, a complete idiot. All in all I was behaving like a pain.

I watched carefully the potential invalid, who was shaped like a wire coat-hanger: stringy, tall with hairy legs. He was, clearly, very old indeed. But, as Jane got more and more cross, I could see him looking at me with, I swear, a faint aura of distaste. Here was I, the great charity leading light and saviour of the poor, behaving like a spoiled child. I could see his lip just hint at a curl, just a touch at the very edge, but quite enough to irritate me.

I could almost hear him thinking: "I don't think much of this."

We had walked a long way, some 14 miles. We only had three to go. The coat-hanger was keeping up well and he didn't look on the point of collapse. I was still dawdling along at the back. Then I suddenly recalled the faint look of distaste.

The thought grew on me. Don't patronise me, sunshine! I will



show you what a real walker can do. So I switched from Schubert to a quick blast of the Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" and decided to power for home.

I speeded up from about three miles an hour to four. I may walk like a crab, but I can put on pace when I want to. I shot past the group like a jackrabbit on speed. On I went, the old legs pounding. Soon I was at least 100 yards ahead. On I belted, dynamic, remorseless. "I'll show them," I thought. Then . . . to my total astonishment I saw a shadow behind me; to my incredulity there was the old wire coat-hanger, the one supposed to be ill and he was after me like a dingbat on skates.

The temerity of it! Was he aware that I am an expert walker? That I have walked some 800 bloody miles from the Tyne to the Thames?

"I'll show you, you old bat." I ratcheted the pace up to four and a half miles per hour. Blow me down, but I could sense that the old man was still prancing along just behind me. And I thought he was clapped out!

I prayed for a hill, the steeper the better. A hill appeared, not quite steep enough, but it would have to do. I'm good on hills and hardly slackened pace. I glanced round to see the old geezer falling away gently. Great! On I climbed. At the top, I was triumphant, like Hillary topping Everest! I kept the momentum up and began to cruise home. I knew it would be a doddle. We had only a mile to go. I was home and dry. Ho, Har!

I couldn't believe it; a shadow appeared at my feet once again. I glanced down to see varicose veins growing purple with the strain. I flayed away and, to my inner rage, I soon saw he was about to overtake. This

couldn't be happening. It wasn't fair. He had longer legs! I felt like Murray watching the match slowly slipping away.

We raced along, neck and neck, legs thrumming like pistons, arms flailing, eyes bulging, then my kneecaps suddenly started to twirl and my inner and outer systems began to overheat. How could the old codger keep this up? Something had to be done, any tactic other than surrender. Then genius struck me: an appeal to his sense of gallantry. "Don't you think we had better wait for the ladies?" I winced at him. It was a total cheat, at that moment I couldn't have cared less about the ladies.

We calmed down. I staggered to a halt. We said nothing: there was nothing to be said.

Next morning (we were his guests) his wife said, "Henry was stiff this morning. He could hardly get out of bed."

I tried to keep my shadenfreude under control. I nearly burst with pleasure. Hah! Victory!

6 July 2011

Day 23 - Super Driver, Super-Injunction

I have been asked when ZANE started and why.

It began in July 2000 when I decided to help Cathy Olds whose husband, Martin, had recently been murdered by Mugabe's henchmen. Poor Cathy arrived in the UK terrified and penniless, with two children. She was a polio victim and so, on the Richter scale of human misery, she seemed to score in the high nines.

To cut a long story as short as possible, one thing led to another, and soon my small charitable settlement was used to



bravely for us. Now they were old and frail and hopelessly vulnerable; simply we had a moral imperative to help them.

Since that time, ZANE has grown and it is now the only holistic social services network in the country. ZANE is the largest provider of aid to both sides of the community and the only “relational” charity in Africa so I understand, in that we only assist people we know who are in dire need. We do not dump food aid indiscriminately.

Since 2008 prices have risen 500% and demand for aid is up by 600%, therefore

house additional monies to be sent to the poor in Zimbabwe. My friend, James Maberly, was also involved and so was Baroness Daphne Park. It was not until 2003 that I went to Zimbabwe for the first time to actually see whom I was assisting. It became clear that the situation facing the elderly, poor and frail in the care homes was grossly unsatisfactory; inflation was rising and there were many people with no-one to assist them at all and some were malnourished. At that time the UK services’ charities were doing nothing to help because they could see no way to send in money without breaching Zimbabwe currency regulations.

When I returned to the UK, I managed to persuade the UK services’ charities that they had a moral obligation to help WW2 veterans and their widows because these people had come to the assistance of the UK in the dark days of 1939 and fought

we are always struggling just to stand still financially. If it was not for the bravery of our staff members, who have to operate in a police state, and the generosity of our donors then many thousands of people would die of malnutrition.

ZANE is presently expanding once again and seeking to recruit a fundraiser based near London to attract additional financial support, particularly from institutions.

Cheers for Harry Campbell, our driver. He told me that, if I wrote about him in this blog, then he would take out a super-injunction against me! However, Harry is an absolute star. He nannies me, he encourages me, he drives safely and, all in all, I can think of no-one I would rather have with me for three weeks than Harry.

So go on Harry, take out a super-injunction against that if you want to!

07 July 2011

Day 24 - Whoops!

Two of the friends who accompanied us yesterday had to stop with blisters and general fatigue. Ha! I try to look concerned.

We have now reached Hampton Court, on the last leg (no pun intended) before we sign off tomorrow at Westminster. Another walk completed for the imprisoned people of Zimbabwe.

I thank the generous ZANE donors who walk with me. They realise that at least I put my feet where my mouth is!

People talk far more frankly than they ever would if they were not walking. Perhaps it's the looking at the ground and not at my face that encourages total candour. When the subject turned to marital relations, one cricketing friend admitted gloomily that his wife had "drawn stumps some time ago".

To cheer him up I told him about the time I, albeit inadvertently, visited a sex shop.

Those with a nervous disposition should read no further, but what happened was this. A short while ago, ZANE presented in Edinburgh and a couple of weeks before I went up on a recce. It has changed a great deal since I was brought up there. In those dark and austere days there was only one restaurant and the place was run by a gloomy council, a never ending series of grey solicitors, a few crusted fund managers, crabbed insurance folk and any number of Captain Mainwaring style bankers, but without his style and charm. Now the place is smothered with delightful cafes and restaurants and it's alive and a fun place to live.

The ZANE event was generously sponsored by James Galbraith (of the

point-to-point fame: see earlier blog), whose offices are sited smack in the middle of George Street.

I asked his receptionist the whereabouts of the New Club, Edinburgh's leading and very exclusive club, where the event was to be held. She told me to go down one of the link streets that connects George Street to Princess Street, to turn left, 200 yards along and it was on the left.

I set off.

It was one of those rare, bright and snappy days in which Edinburgh looks fresh and new and the castle glittered in the sunlight. I searched for the door to the club but simply couldn't find it. So I barged into a shop where the pay desk was well down inside on the right. I asked a lady with rather dead eyes where the New Club is please? She told me that it was bang next door. My eyes became accustomed to the relative gloom and I saw to my growing surprise an array of nurse's outfits, some garish underwear that I didn't think that Jane would like much, and I then realised I was inside a sex shop.

In Princess Street of all places and bang next to the New Club! Maybe their members like it.

To my immediate left there was a stand with compartments; inside were a series of, ahem, instruments that I had not seen before, even in my dreams. I have to admit that curiosity overtook me. I picked up an instrument. Reader, it was called "the Rampant Rabbit" and it stared at me. It had a small switch on its side. I turned it on gingerly (well wouldn't you?). The machine started to swell and undulate and throb in an alarming fashion. I tried to turn it off and to my growing agitation, it went still faster. I could see a few men with

raincoats looking at me curiously. I imagined the headlines shrieking: "Charity worker attacked by Rampant Rabbit". It started to jump up and down. What could I do? Desperately, I shoved the Rampant Rabbit back into its hole and fled the shop without looking to the left or the right.

Perhaps it's still there, throbbing away all by itself.

Next evening, when I got home, I excitedly told Jane the story. She was peeling potatoes. She never even paused or looked up.

"That's nice dear," she said.

8 July 2011

Day 25 - The Final Day

A good walk through a watery Richmond Park, and then we walked down the King's Road to Westminster.

We would like to thank all those who walked with us, those who encouraged us and those who so right royally wined and dined and encouraged us on the way.

I am dedicating this booklet to the people who are trapped in Zimbabwe.

Thank you to the hosts who looked after us so generously.

I hope that this blog, which I wrote, often exhausted and late at night, on my Blackberry, may make readers smile and perhaps sometimes to argue with me. These of course are my views and are not the views of the charity ZANE.

Further, I do not want the gratuitous exposure of my various

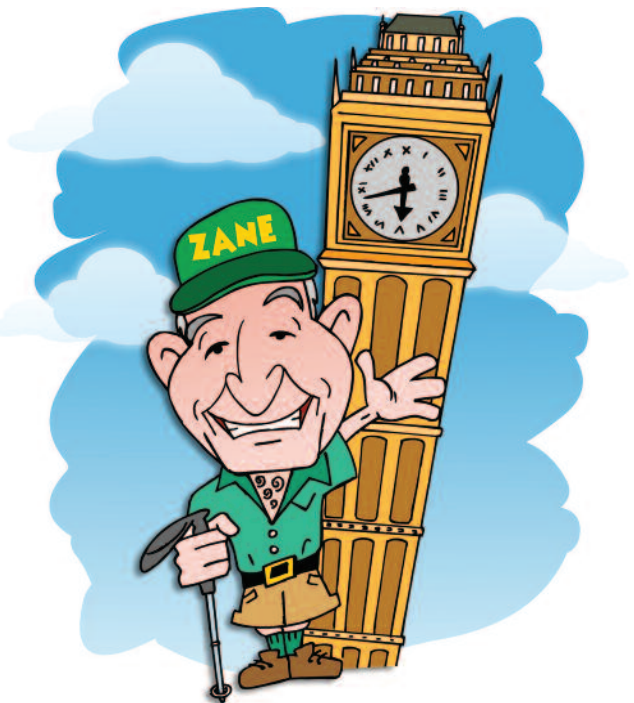
moods and frailties as well as the scrapes into which I get myself, to come between our generous donors and the plight of those we seek to serve in Zimbabwe.

Their position is worse today than it has ever been and any further assistance that donors can offer is, as ever, gratefully received.

I am particularly grateful to Harry Campbell, who drove with his usual competence, great good humour and inexhaustible patience. The walk would be far less enjoyable – and safe – without him.

Lastly, I thank my loyal and loving wife, Jane, who walked each step with me along the way. Now I come to think of it she led most of the way as well, and often left me floundering.

Tom Benyon OBE



- ★ ZANE does not supply money or food in bulk. Rather ZANE is a “relational” charity, in that we gently means test the 1,800 elderly people to whom we give aid. At the same time, we give encouragement to often very lonely people. That includes about 600 ex-servicemen and their widows/wives. In this way, ZANE ensures that only those who are really in need of support receive it and that we don’t waste donor money.
- ★ ZANE has lost no donor money to corrupt officials since its foundation in 2002. Support goes to where it is needed to make a vital difference.
- ★ ZANE is the only charity that allows donors to choose which aspect of the work they would like to support (See donor application form).
- ★ ZANE is the largest supplier of financial grants to the pensioner community in Zimbabwe.
- ★ ZANE was the Telegraph Group overseas charity of the year 2010/11
- ★ ZANE is in effective partnership with all the UK services’ charities in Zimbabwe. Since 2004, ZANE has facilitated circa £1.6m in grants to WW2 veterans and their widows (and others).
- ★ ZANE assists primary care clinics in the impoverished communities around Harare, where there is extensive disease and poverty and therefore limited access to health care.
- ★ ZANE funds an orphan prevention programme and a club foot correction programme.

www.zane.uk.com



ZANE: Zimbabwe A National Emergency

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