

CHAPTER SIX *September 1939*

The Belgian Campaign is even now to be held in 1985 - 1986

We will repeat the 2.25 from the Department of Transport,
expenses to (make, yes, the train to Glasgow, part of the cost of Bequia
as 10.16. There is it is a relatively easy walk due mostly to
obligation to Belgrave, no need to call GR 14 to Corridor,
and preference to Beaufort, where we have accommodation booked at
the "Axe Arms Hotel de Beaufort", which is on the High Street opposite
200 metres from the Post of Gisborne, and next to the former
cafeteria. The cost of the bus and taxi to the bus station will be spent
Anthony Cunningham
Felicity Hall

9th September 1985 X 12 8579 A.H.O.

Dear Hares, one and all

My apologies for this late information. Most, but not all of you have already learnt the essentials from Felicity by letter, or through that uncertain instrument the telephone.

I had an accident two nights ago with this machine, and lost the text of a rather longer, and more explicative letter just before I was going to print it. This modern technology is not reliable, at any rate when operated by elderly clods, but the essential information is this: the next campaign of the Hares commences on the 28th September, with a two-day walk from Sedan to Florenville, a big village, on the Semois, and some 30 miles WSW of Arlon.

We will catch the 7.55 from Luxembourg to Thionville, change to take, yes, the train for Calais, but get off at Sedan at 10.16. Thence it is a relatively easy walk due north to Corbion in Belgium, on what is now called GR 14 to Corbion, and thence to Bouillon, where we have accomodation booked at the "Aux Armes de Bouillon", which is on the right bank about 200 metres from the Pont de France, and near to the former station. The cost of dinner, bed and breakfast will be about 1800 francs per person. The hotel was the most suitable of those listed in my copy of Michelin, and I think will please most people. It is of course far from the only hotel in a

town best described as (Esch + Vianden).

The second day will be rather harder (25 kilometres by road instead of 18 by road) to Florenville, through a large, large wood. We will rely on motor transport back from there.

It was suggested at the last dinner that the Hares organised also, some shorter walks, which might interest those who found 20 or 30 kilometres excessive. We have this weekend an excellent opportunity, which would kill two birds with one stone. There are good walks around Florenville, and the valley of the Semois, which has there begun to be interesting, and towards Chassepierre. They can be as long, or as short as people want to make them. Some people may even come out by car to join us at Bouillon, and then travel around on the Sunday (at least one wife who remembers a child-hood holiday in Bouillon is going to do that). Others might drive out to Florenville on the Sunday, and meet us there.

I would be grateful if Hares would let me know, preferably by the 25th if they are coming. I have promised to confirm numbers with the Hotel, and of course we want to be sure that supply and demand for car seats balance out. The possibilities for the latter walks were all set out in the longer letter whose text was lost, but I can explain them in the train. Suffice, now to say that this walk leads on to connect with last year's, and to see things worth seeing.

All good wishes.

Tony.

The Hares: 19th October 1985: Marbehan to Florenville

Leave Luxembourg Gare 08.30; Arrive Luxembourg Gare (DV) 18.12

Dear Hares,

My apologies to those of you whose names and styles of address are going to be mangled by this machine. I will get it right, but probably not this time.

Last year, navigated by Seamus and Sandy we advanced in a splendid, irregular loop from Place de la Foire to the most stylish country railway station of which I know, namely Marbehan, on the line to Brussels, and all this via Remich and Vianden.

This year we started at Sedan on the Meuse, 17 strong, and in total 23 hares participated for all or part of the walk to Bouillon, and thence to Florenville. On the 19th we can close the link to last year by walking from Florenville to Marbehan, or vice versa. Actually vice versa is better for practical reasons. The useful train leaves Luxembourg at 08.30 to arrive at Marbehan at 09.06.

The GRAE continues its wandering way from Marbehan to Florenville, but takes nine hours forty-five minutes to get there which is too long. The purist, but dull solution is that of slogging down a shorter route (the shortest route is some 16 kilometres as the crow flies). Rather better seems Ole's suggestion of using a six-seven kilometre ride in the taxis available at Marbehan to knock off the first and dullest

10 kilometres, and then walk from the military cemetery at Rossignol, some 25-26 kilometres to the railway station of Florenville, thence to catch the 16.18 bus back to Marbehan, and then the 17.37 train. We have a piece of luck in that Roy Jackson who came out to meet us at Florenville, but failed to make contact until the café at the end, did explore the trickiest part of the walk, the gorge downstream from Chiny. If all goes well he will be with us, and we will have the advantage of his acquired knowledge.

The basic principle is to arrive at Luxembourg Gare in sufficient time to buy a return ticket to Marbehan. It will help if I know by Thursday evening who is coming to make sure that we will have enough taxi seats.

Until the 19th.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Cunningham.

P.S. The Walk after this? From Montmedy to Florenville via Orval, either the 16th or the 23rd November. Three times to Florenville? Well it is like Gouvy. Communications!! Then, in December, Montmedy to Virton via the old fortifications of Montmedy constructed by? .. you have guessed it, V...., himself.

Mid of late

The Hares: 23rd November 1985: Montmedy to Florenville

Leave Luxembourg Gare 06.46; Arrive Luxembourg Gare (DV) 18.12

Dear Hares,

On the 19th October 14 Hares walked from Marbehan, (well, really from Rossignol) to Florenville, and thus linked last years' campaign, to this year's commencement, the journey from Sedan to Florenville. We have thus collectively and, in principle, (that blessed word, which allows us to ignore the odd inconvenient forgotten kilometre), completed the journey from Koblenz to Sedan, without forgetting either Liège to Luxembourg, or the first, clockwise and internal, circumambulation of the Grand-Duchy. To complete the second, (anti-clockwise, and largely external) circumambulation will require us about six more days of march.

On Saturday we welcomed a new Hare, Giuseppe Mendosa, who comes from the far far south, from Taranto, but, in his early years in Luxembourg built up a detailed knowledge of the Oesling, and has even traversed on foot some of these mysterious abandoned tunnels in the north. He and David have interests in common. He is our first Italian member. Currently there are nine nationalities on the active list.

We had service, last Saturday, beyond any normal call of duty from the Syndicate d'Initiative of Marbehan, which organised taxis, where taxis there were not. The Secretary himself turned out to make sure that arrangements worked. We are grateful to him.

There was a general agreement on Saturday, of those present, on the dates convenient for the two remaining walks of this year, viz Montmedy to Florenville, on the 23rd November, about 27 long, but fairly easy kilometres, via Avioth, and Orval: and then, on the 14th December, Montmedy to Virton, a walk which could be, but need not be, as short as 15 kilometres. (Three times to Florenville? Twice from Montmedy? You may ask, and odd it may be, but there are transport reasons).

We have two trains which get us to Montmedy in the morning. One is early, and therefore inconvenient, but relatively cheap. The other...

On the 23rd of November, but not on the 14th of December, it seems essential to take the earlier train, viz the 06.46 from Luxembourg Gare which will let us start walking about 08.15, instead of the 07.45 train which would begin the walk at nearly 10.00, leaving only just over six hours for walking, for resting and for sight seeing. We would expect to return to Luxembourg, as last weekend at 18.12, via Arlon, having left Florenville by bus, preferably at 16.10 for Arlon, but alternatively at 16.18, for Marbehan (enduring then, as on last Saturday, the driving of the Stirling Moss of the Gaume, the Fangio of the Semois, captain of a bus, empty, save for scared Hares).

So I propose a rendez-vous at Luxembourg Gare, at a sufficient time before 06.46 on the 23rd to buy single tickets to Montmedy via Longwy. In December with the much shorter journey, the later start should still leave us with sufficient time for the walk itself, and for up to one hour to visit the old fortifications of Montmedy itself. After that walk to Virton, and for the New Year, there are decisions to be made. It is not yet clear what should be done, but Rodange/Petange will be important for communications, and we evidently must visit Titelberg, which is two or three kilometres SE of Rodange. (The museum at Um Bock contains enough evidence to show why Titelberg is important, although as casual, transient pedestrians we will not, there, see more than broken down ramparts. There is lots more at Orval, Avioth, and Montmedy).

Until the 23rd.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Cunningham.

~~same edit~~ The Hares: 14th December 1985: Montmedy to Virton

Leave Luxembourg Gare 07.55; Arrive Luxembourg Gare (DV) 18.12

Dear Hares,

On the 23rd November 13 Hares arrived at Montmedy (Medy-Bas it seems to the locals) at eight o'clock, in what was still nearly darkness. Thence we headed, under Felicity's guidance, northwards, on an old Roman road, which like most old roads kept to the ridge, before descending to Avioth with its elaborate high Gothic cathedral like church, and a most sympathetic café/restaurant, with a precise, truthful and not very commercial patron. Stephen walked in first, and asked if the café served coffee. No he said, and your scribe, following just behind felt his heart sink. But all was well: it emerged, but only just in time, that all had happened was that the café had run out of coffee, but was perfectly happy to serve hot chocolate, or mulled wine. Nobody grumbled. Thence to Orval, and shelter over lunch, but no sight-seeing, for we arrived as the Abbey ruins shut, and had to leave by the time they opened. But we saw a dozen white doves by the porter's lodge, and acres of roofs. From there to Florenville for the third time by a spur of GRAE, passing an excavated Roman villa, and another bus, finally containing only hares. This man drove cautiously, but rolled cigarettes while driving.

I propose a rendez-vous at Luxembourg Gare, at a sufficient time before 07.55 to buy single tickets to Montmedy via Thionville, or if there are complications, simply to

Thionville, where, after a half hour wait, we catch the same train as for Sedan. It comes from Switzerland and goes on to Calais. We get off it at about ten to ten, in daylight even in mid December, and will have sufficient time for the walk itself, and for up to one hour to visit the old fortifications of Montmedy, (Medy-Haut). I hope that the little Museum inside the walled town is going to be open, but whatever happens we will see the ramparts, and the odd little abandoned town, which is less delapidated now than it was when I first went there eight to nine years ago. Then you could have bought an old house, in extreme disrepair, but with a carved stone porch for 100,000 Bfrancs. It was besieged in 1870, and did not surrender until Paris had already been under siege for two months. In 1914 things went much faster: there was action nearby in 1940, but by then the fortifications, constructed by, guess who ..., were entirely obsolete. It was once the principal town of the Comte de Chiny, and like Sedan and Bouillon, effectively the centre of a little, independent state. But now it has long been a sous-préfecture, and the working town is down in the valley.

The walk will be about 15-17 kilometres, and the bus from Virton is at 16.24.

Until the 14th.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Cunningham.

The Hares: 25th January 1986: Virton towards Arlon

Leave Luxembourg Gare 08.30; Arrive Luxembourg Gare (DV) 17.12

Dear Hares,

No, not to Damascus, although it is the feast of the conversion of that stalwart pedestrian, and unlucky sailor,

St Paul, but north-east from Virton by mainly woodland paths, towards Arlon. We will probably get to Toernich, probably to Meix-le-Tige, and certainly as far as Chatillon. Don't worry about this indecision. It is simply that we will be walking, more or less, parallel to the bus route, and can catch the same bus as last month almost anywhere along its route.

We will have up to seven hours, for a distance between 20 and 28 kilometres, having bought return tickets Luxembourg to Arlon, and then taken the 08.58 Service 19 Blanc 1001, from Arlon to Virton.

On the 14th December, 11 Hares set out for Montmedy, and 12 came back from Virton, an addition, or multiplication of Hares, not a less surprising subtraction, or division, and thereye hangs a tale of the noble wife of a Hare, herself a Hare, who, although otherwise occupied that day, nevertheless drove her husband out to Montmedy, to join us in the old fort and a refurbished café.

Unfortunately the Museum was shut, and with it access to the upper part of the fortifications, but we found a hole in the wall, and a staircase by which to descend into the dry

moat along which we walked until we came back to where we started. The engineers obviously found such "sneak paths" through formidable looking defences to be necessary conveniences, but they must have increased the vulnerability to coup de main operations. Did any of you, by chance see the rather fine exhibition of military engineering, put on in the Hotel de Ville of Metz over the Christmas period?

From Montmedy, Felicity navigated us over paths of sticky mud, and a welcome road or two to Virton, a town which you might think was devoted entirely to Schools. In February we ought to get back into the Grand-Duchy, by reaching Rodange.

Until the 25th January, and with all Good Wishes for the New Year.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Cunningham.

The Hares: 22nd February 1986: Chatillon to Petange

Leave Luxembourg Gare 08.30; Arrive Luxembourg Gare (DV) 17.12

Dear Hares,

On the 25th of January 18 Hares arrived at that junction of the Vir and the Ton, home to 28 educational establishments. Knowing that it was then, or never, we had coffee before we started, in two cafés, the numbers being too much for the coffee machine in our first choice!!!.

Thence to a bus-stop, at a cross-roads, but with a café, half way between Chatillon and Meix-le-Tige, after, probably 23-24 kilometres in mixed weather, slowed just a little by snow underfoot. An old map shows that in the 18th century, Chatillon was "Chastillon", and French.

On the 22nd, we will have about seven and a half hours, for about, also 24 kilometres, which should be comfortable. We buy single tickets from Luxembourg to Arlon, and take the same bus as last time, from Arlon towards Virton, but get off, north of Chatillon at that crossroads.

The return will be by the 16.51 CFL train from Petange, back in the Grand-Duchy, in the valley of the Chiers which we left at Montmedy, (and on the line Luxembourg-Longwy, and a junction with the line Luxembourg-Rodange via Bettembourg and Esch, which will be the key to the rest of the campaign).

The first two or three, and the last four-five kilometres will be woodland, but in between, most is farm land, traversed by a motorway, and containing a hypermarket at Messancy. A fair amount of road work is probably going to be inevitable.

The tentative future:

March: Rodange (which is only the length of a dismantled steel works away from Petange) to Esch-Belvaux, which is distant the length of a bigger steel works from Esch. We are, I think, entitled to skip the odd stretch of factory wall. The walk, thus abbreviated would be almost entirely rural, traversing Titelberg, and wooded heights.

April: Esch, via one of those numerous Gaalgebiergs, to Rummel-dange and the Musée des Mines, to Dudelange.

May: Dudelange to Mondorf, via Rodemarck. There will have joined up with the beginning of the 1984/85 campaign.

Until the 22nd February.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Cunningham.

March 22nd Rodange to Esch via Titelbierg

08.00 train from Luxembourg Gare to Rodange via Esch

Return to Luxembourg either 17.18 or 17.34

(DV, and not forgetting E&OE)

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Dear One and All,

Saturday last, 16 increasingly disorganised Hares arrived at Petange in five separate groups. Now it was the right number, and the right place, and they all got the train, but we were, to say the least, unregimental. The Captain-General, untypically absent, would not have been proud.

It was in no way Felicity's fault. As always she navigated perfectly, despite the assistance she receives. It was just that she was abandoned by too many of the troops. The first and crassest error was that of N.. and your scribe: we simply failed to notice a turning: then the Yo-Yo string that usually brings back the impatient vanguard of Spring-heels J. and Bare-knees F.. snapped, and then we had a casualty, who was rescued by a serendipitous amateur ambulance, and then ... But all ended well, and we are back in the Grand-Duchy which we left in June.

Next time, it is the train to Rodange two kilometres down the road, and up the hill to Titelbierg, where archaeologists have a fine time robbing Celtic graves, and sifting

their rubbish dumps, and finding Roman money inside a once-stockaded hill fort. It is not widely known that Asterix's mother come from these parts, from one of the most respected families in the whole of the Western Treveri, the Haireatorixs. Their town house was indeed at Titelbierg, although she spent most of her childhood at their country property a little east of Hollerich.

Thence we loop to the south in very rural territory, keeping well clear of Differdange. The path might take us into France. La Sauvage is nearby, the only French speaking village in Luxembourg, and almost lost in a cleft slashed into hills of iron ore. But the last two-three kilometres into Esch is inevitably industrial. We will either have to walk it, or catch the 17.05 train from Belval-Redange to catch the 16.56. The likely distance is about 23-25 kilometres.

All good wishes.

Tony Cunningham.

Deputy Assistant Orderly Room Sergeant

and Informatician-in-Ordinary

April 12th: Esch to Dudeldange via Rummeldange

08.00 train from Luxembourg Gare to Esch

Return to Luxembourg probably 17.18

(the date is determined by a Strasbourg session)

Dear One and All

The beginning of the holiday time took its toll. There were fewer Hares, but this time, on the 22nd March, we arrived altogether and in good order and military discipline at Esch, at the Buffet de la Gare, no less than one hour thirty minutes before the reserve or official train.

Esch has plenty of trains, so 10 out of 11 of us returned to Luxembourg a full hour earlier than anticipated. Only 10 because we had been accompanied and guided by Raymond Bintz of Differdange who knew the witch's grave of La Sauvage, and all the Indian trails over two thirds of the day's territory. We hugged contours for three kilometres of a former mineral railway, which demonstrated the point that there is not always much need to look after Nature, because Nature can look after itself. In mining regions one finds subsidence, and some impressive holes. We walked the length of a megaton steelworks. We saw monuments to villagers shot by armies of revolutionary France, and to soldiers to France killed in defence of Luxembourg in 1940. One had been a school fellow of J.. Others were his Algerian soldiers. R.I.P.

Next time it is Esch to Dudeldange via Rummeldange and several of those Gallows Hills. With luck we will be able to enter the old mine, which is now a Museum, in Luxembourg, and leave it in France. Investigations are in hand. Then back from Dudeldange which has a larger and fine neo-gothic church, and up above it an enormous TV mast. A Colonel of the Belgian Air Force, a "station master" as some people used to say, flew into it, half way up some two or three years ago.

May may be difficult for a walk, but at least we can dine.

Provisional date, Friday 30th, and probably in the valley of the Mamer. A walk would have to be very early (the 3rd) or very late (the 31st, the day after the dinner?).

With best wishes until the 12th.

Tony Cunningham.

27th April 1986

Hares March, March Hares, Hares Dine

Dear One and All,

On the 12th, 12 hares left Esch going SE, and they arrived at Dudeldange from the east, via Rummeldange and its Musée des Mines, and an instructive hour underground with an amiable chatty guide, possessed of an Italian name, but himself, though retired, too young to have worked in that mine. Before and after we were in France, some of the time on Sentier GR V. We traversed Volmeranges les Mines, as peaceful a village as you could find with a newly restored Church, struggled through thorn thickets, and looked down on Cattenom, and across to hang gliders, from a watershed. Some rain would be in the Moselle within 10 kilometres, some rain would get there only via Luxembourg, Ettelbruck ... Felicity lead us via the TV tower down into the town, from close to the railway line and the motorway, which we must cross on the next leg to Mondorf via Rodemarck, former principality of the Margraves of Baden: now a 300 cow village, but still a half-walled, and with a quarter-militarised chateau brooding above. But that is for the future: May is a difficult month for walking: the most we can hope to do is to dine.

Hares, pedestrian widows of hares, and their other guests will dine on Friday, 30th May at 20.00 hrs at the Direndaal restaurant (the same place as last year, perhaps

three kilometres down the Mamer from Kopstal). I would be grateful if people were to confirm, by the evening of Sunday, 25th.

The Captain General proposes that on the following morning Hares regular, secular and occasional, should assemble near the Lac de la Haute Sure and walk suitable circular distances. Mike Townsend may be with us, and it is very much his old territory.

This means that the one day's walk required to finalise this year's campaign, and join up with the beginning of the 84/85 campaign cannot occur until either the 14th or the 21st of June, feasts respectively of St Gerard and St Aloysius. We will hope to return to Luxembourg near to Mondorf, by a ford, not perhaps as wet-backs, but possibly, wet-footed. Spare socks will be recommended. But that is a long time away. The first event is the dinner.

With all good wishes.

Tony Cunningham.

P.S. Probably the 14th because 20th June is the Fête Nationale. Indeed, it looks certain.

June 14th, Dudeldorf to Mondorf les Bains

08.00 train from Luxembourg Gare towards Esch,
a single ticket, and we changes at Bettembourg for Dudeldorf
Return to Luxembourg by bus,

probably the 16.34 arriving 17.00 Luxembourg

Dear One and All,

There were 43 of us to dine on Friday last, and 15 for
the walk the morning afterwards from Goeblesmuhle to Vianden,
much of the way on the Sentier Victor Hugo.

Mike and Nan Townsend were with us, as you almost all
know, having been in the 43. Seamus and Katie Killeen tele-
phoned from Italy, where they were detained. That was doubly
a pity, because Stephen had written a song (well, adapted a
Somerset folk song) which called for contributions from all
four original, or aboriginal Hares. So Seamus needed a stand-
in.

Given that there were nine nationalities present, it is
not too surprising that the song was unfamiliar to some, but,
one Somerset born hare also failed to pick up the echoes.

Victor Hugo died, by the way just 100 years and one week
ago. Monday's Times contained a long account of his state

funeral. The old rhetorician had requested a pauper's coffin. He got it too, but under the Arc de Triomphe, and with 11 chariot loads of wreaths, the French cabinet, and the British and Russian ambassadors. It was it seems a very republican, patriotic, and grand occasion, quite unlike the simplicities of his sojourn in the house by the bridge in Vianden.

Being the Oesling, the walk was profiled like the teeth of a saw, up up up down, down, down, but always, it seems, more up than down. Some Hares even climbed one extra hill in order to go down by chair lift, traversing the river, 10 metres in the air.

The next walk, the last of this campaign will not exceed about 25 kilometres, and it is much gentler countryside.

Felicity is making a recce next weekend to discover whether the ford over the Gander is feasible. If not then we will have extra road work.

We will then have completed the second, or anti-clockwise, and largely external circumambulation. Felicity and I will then have terminated our offices, and will return to the ranks from which we came, before next year's campaign begins in the autumn under the aegis of Peter and Frank. They propose to follow, not the yellow brick road, but the small white triangles marking the network of paths which link the Luxembourg Youth Hostels.

Signing off as Orderly Room Sergeant, and with my best wishes until the 14th.

Tony.