

The Secret Seven Go To Rehab

Drying out in Yorkshire

By Needy Blighted

One fine, miserable Friday in October, dear children, the Secret Seven gang rushed off to Hubberholme in Upper Wharfedale for their jolly holiday. There were too many excited Daves to count (actually Antrobus, Cole, Harrison and Riley), and Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Titch. Sorry, I mean Rob Carter, Roger Hartley and our gang boss and idol Peter, also known as Chapman-san. After his grand-parents Philo and Nappi. And George too, who surprisingly in this woke world was not a girl but the pub dog. There were lashings and lashings of rain, puddles to drown in and the prospect of a dressing up party!!!

On the way Rob played Swallows and Amazons in his car and mislaid his number plate in the puddle whilst chicken Roger found a way with fewer sea miles.

After lashings of lunch and stuff, the rain had stopped and we all went for one of Chapman-san's afternoon strolls alongside the raging river Wharfe. Oh how we laughed as we slithered and squelched our merry way to a welcoming pub in Starbottom. Named after a proctologist's hairless Schnauser. As darkness fell there was something of a speed march down unlit lanes back to Hubberholme. Worn boots increased the risk of aquaplaning in the dark.

Returning to the George Inn, its roaring fires only matched by our roaring thirsts we prepared ourselves for dinner. Not by rubbing ourselves with Basil, obviously, but by trying to embody in ourselves the theme for the weekend – "Blue". I tried by wearing double denim and holding my breath but others were much more interactive and inventive. David A looked particularly smart as one of the Brothers Gibb in a smart suit, blue glasses and blue eyeshadow. A jolly evening followed, the food and liquid refreshment as good as ever. But the excitement of the day had taken its toll and soon our weary children were climbing the wooden hill to Bedfordshire, some songs yet unsung. Tomorrow is Another Day ©

Saturday was better. The river level had dropped for the moment. Breakfast revealed that we had all survived the night and were able to butter our own toast unaided. Chapman-san, now both tensing and Tenzing, announced that those of us with all of our facilities were to cross the Dale to Litton and back, without oxygen, whilst those whose motion was enabled by Meccano were to swan around those bits of Yorkshire only minimally flooded, in an air-conditioned Audi, occasionally opening and closing the doors for exercise. Where is the justice?



The Blue Angel Action Man Pack



The Blues Brothers and minder with an anonymous Jaguar

The sun shone as we waved off the Audi in Churchillian fashion, having supplied the crew with lashings of tiffin to replace the energy they depleted whilst adjusting the seats and texting. Our adventure was just beginning. Chapman-san reminded us of the route and explained again that because the map was flat, so was the land and that obviously the only hilly bits were where the folds came. The squigley brown rings on the map were the result of bits onion falling from a burger. Up and up we climbed, the stiff wind becoming ever more rigid, rain squalls dampening us despite the sun shining brightly. The summit of Horse Head Moor was for the taking. We were for it, in the mane! The prospect of descending to Litton for a sticky bun and cuppa and then returning began to be less enticing. We watched the sheep that were not sheltering being blown over. Even the “Power of Tiffin” was insufficient. The Feckless Four squelched and slithered back to the George for refreshment, rest, refreshment and refreshment. We had conquered the Dale, the weather and fear itself. We were ready to be impressed when the Vorsprung-durch-Yorkshire Pudding three arrived with their pictures of big stones on their phones!



Two men with wet rocks

Despite our more select cast, the Saturday Night party was as splendid as ever, Rob Carter remembering all the right words of On Ilkley Moor In Blue, blue songs, blue novelty items, blue recitations and of course, the blue Antrobus and Riley quizzes. Clean jokes, underwear and jolly hockey-sticks!

Modesty forbids me from mentioning who won the prize mug. It's blue and in our kitchen...



Two men with dry red



Jackie singing a Julie Andrews number

Jackie and Ed joined us as ever, after we had driven away the other customers. It seems that our record for red wine consumption has been wrested from us by a (larger) party. Ed is hopeful that we may attempt to regain it ere long!

Before we knew it, Sunday morning was upon us. Further rain was falling and the forecast was worse. After Ed's “Full Machins” breakfast we set off for home, admiring the ability of the tourist board to recreate the Lake District in this little bit of Yorkshire.

Another cracking weekend – thanks to Ed & Jackie, George the dog, George the Inn, and our friends.



*Chapman-san in his element.
(No sheep were harmed in this adventure)*

Special thanks, of course, to Peter Chapman, alias Chapman-san, for organising such a brilliant adventure for his little pals. I wonder if they will ever grow up? And can they live happily ever after, after all those lashings? Enid Blyton where are you?

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A model husband (half scale)