

Liverpool Catholic Ramblers Newsletter

SPRING 2002

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Maia Bentley
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Walks for May

Sandwiched by two bank holidays there are only three walks in May so coach bookings could be heavy

May 5th

BANK HOLIDAY - no coach

May 12th - a choice of mountain or coastal walks

SNOWDONIA 'A' or ANGLESEY 'B' and 'C'

'A' leader is Carol Kellett (Snowdonia) or

'B' Ray Mc and 'C' Richie Cannon (see below)

May 19th

AMBLESIDE - Popular area for walks. 'A' Bob Carney, 'B' To be arranged 'C' Lyn Perrow.

May 26th

INGLETON - 'A' TBA, 'B' Dave Newns, 'C' Roy F. A chance to look at the famous waterfalls

YNS MON - ANGLESEY

Shipwrecks and ancient burial chambers

THE CLUB will be venturing out to pastures new* on the first walk of the new programme so I thought I would supply more details of what you might expect.

Whilst the 'A' party get off the coach first to scale the dizzy heights of Snowdonia, two more leisurely walks in the lovely Isle of Anglesey will be offered. The 'B' will be led by the last of the West Country druids, Ray Mc, in the Red Wharf Bay area, no doubt encompassing some oak groves where ritual sacrifices will be enacted, and a 'C' led by myself starting and finishing at Benllech on the Eastern coast.

Both walks are intended to take in some fantastic scenery on the coastal paths in that area.

My walk will head northwards towards the lifeboat station at Moelfre along which the cliffs rise dramatically from the Irish Sea. You may be able to spot puffins and other sea birds and maybe a pelican crossing! You must be really unfit if you are puffin' yourself as the walks will be fairly flat.

A little further north we may be able to view the memorial to "The Royal Charter." Old salty dogs among you will recall this was a fast 3-masted steam clipper with an iron hull. She left Melbourne on 20th August 1859 and had almost reached Liverpool when she met a north-east hurricane-force wind as she rounded the Skerries. She dropped anchors but they did not hold and at 3.30am on 26th October she split in two when she hit the rocks at Moelfre. Local people tried to help but there were few survivors.

More than 450 souls were lost - most of whom had been gold diggers returning from Australia's gold fields. The ship was carrying more than £300,000 in the currency of the era. Looters made their fortunes and the scene was witnessed and written about by Charles Dickens, a Times correspondent then, who travelled up from London.

And so, from here I plan to turn inland to visit Din Lligwy village (see illustration). Here lies a burial chamber, mostly underground. Short stones support an enormous capstone estimated to weigh 25 tons. How they lifted such a weight without a crane is quite amazing!

*Actually we had caravan weekends there 25 years ago - Editor



Din Lligwy hut circle

Din Lligwy 'village' was probably the home of an important local chieftain in the 4th century AD. Inside the enclosures are two circular huts and several rectangular buildings: they would have been thatched. The circular buildings were used as dwellings, and the others were workshops or barns. Iron smelting hearths, pottery and Roman coins were found during excavations which started in 1905.

Unburned bones of 15-30 people were found when the site was further excavated in 1909. Animal bones, flints and Beaker pottery were also present. It is thought the chamber was built in the late Neolithic period.

Returning to Benllech we could call in at Ann's Pantry, a teashop overlooking the cove at Moelfre, affording great views and home-made cakes including bara brith. Nearby is Hindlea Anchor, from a cargo boat wrecked off Moelfre on 27th October 1959. Moelfre lifeboat rescued all those on board and the crew received RNLI medals. Shortly after the rescue the coaster split in two on rocks near the location where the Royal Charter was wrecked exactly 100 years earlier!

After all this talk of wrecks I hope this has not put you off venturing out with us and that you do not find yourselves "wrecked" in the pub on the way home! There will be no lifeboat men around to rescue you!

Richie Cannon

DEATHS

Sadly, the Mother of Fran Keen and Anthony Sealeaf passed away after a short illness several weeks ago. We offer our sincere sympathy and condolences to Fran and Anthony. May she rest in peace.

Ken Jones also died recently after a long illness. Ken lived in Mold and was a close friend of Tom Reilly. Ken used to walk with us a few years ago. We offer our sympathy and condolences to Ken's wife and all his friends.

Keith Scott also died recently. He was active in the club about three decades ago and had been ill for some time. We offer our sympathy and condolences to his brother Chris, who was also a keen club member before moving away from Liverpool and is on the committee of the Catholic Holiday Fellowship at Lakeside House in Keswick.

LOST PROPERTY

ONE MINUTE is all it takes to write your initials or name on the washing label inside your clothing. Using just an ordinary ball-point pen will withstand a dozen washes.

If your child had lost some new clothes on the school bus you would quickly write their name on any subsequent clothing - yet, unmarked gear is being left regularly on our coach. If you have your property marked it would save a lot of hassle. *Mark yours NOW!*

Just the last few weeks several pairs of walking trousers have been left unclaimed. Check if you have lost yours and give any committee member a ring. We may have them.

BOOTS FOR SALE

SECOND-HAND (*second feet!*) - boots - sizes 5, 6½-7 are for sale at £5 a pair. Contact Dave N for fitting details on 01744 632211.

Also Margaret Anthony has a pair of boots for sale, size 8, hardly worn. Contact Margaret.

Ramblerite

SPRING seems to have brought more members out of hibernation and about 50 members are booked for the Keswick weekend on April 26th with 43 staying at our customary Lakeside House.

It's a healthy sign to have a good turn-out, and a few weeks ago we had a full coach booked for Ogwen/Aber Falls. Unfortunately the coach company didn't hear about it! Their list said that we would be on our original Keswick weekend on April 7th, so the coach never materialised - but that's another story. Fortunately we did manage to muster up enough cars to take the majority to Wales on that hot sunny day. The 'B' and 'C' trekked just south of Conway while about ten 'A' walkers enjoyed a superb trek over the Carnedd range from Aber.

The following week the coach was back for another dry day around the Ribblesdale and Horton-in-Ribblesdale area.

Last Sunday morning was wet and miserable, but, like magic, it had cleared up by early afternoon. Everyone got off the coach at the Kirkstone Inn. The 'A' then shot vertically up Red Screes and did a high-level route to Glenridding. The rest walked past the original Kirk Stone to Brothers Water, then

split into two - the 'B' going up a calm and sunny valley to Hayeswater, then got hit by blustery winds as they trekked along the ridge to Angle Tarn - the 'C' ascending the Helvellyn side of the Kirkstone Pass but maybe not as high as Helvellyn, although it felt like it for some! Both 'B' and 'C' parties got down to Glenridding at 6.20pm only to find the 'A' were already roaming around that renowned Ullswater village.

On a couple of our coach trips we have been getting complaints about a draughty hole towards the rear end resulting in some of the passengers sat in their all-weather gear. We are told that Matthews are 'looking into it.' Only problem is if they block the hole we'll all suffocate in summer!

Well, the new programme is out, albeit a bit late. There's been the usual struggle of getting enough leaders names down to lead the planned walks.

In September we were planning to have two days in the Cheviots but because of the length of time it would take to travel there and back we are now thinking of a weekend a bit closer to home - possibly at Eskdale youth hostel instead, so keep your ears to the ground and happy rambling. *Dave N*

Foot & Mouth - How good is your memory?

MID-FEBRUARY 2001 and our planned rambling programme had to be scrapped due to the outbreak of F & M, but the committee quickly got together a makeshift programme of city visits and organised alternative walks on permitted paths often in coastal areas or alongside canals.

It was twelve months ago (April 22nd) that we were on that day trip to York and some have since been wishing that the club could revisit that historic city.

Foot and Mouth never spread to Snowdonia and early in May we had the good news that some paths were being reopened there and so we had that memorable coach trip on May 20th allowing many of us to walk up Snowdon. I couldn't forget that date. It was my birthday. But can you remember how many Sunday walks we had in the month of July last year? You may be surprised at the answer. Actually it was five walks, namely an easy walk to Southport on July 1st but this was followed by some serious walking, first on permitted paths around Grasmere, and then we took cars to Cwm Eigiau in Snowdonia. On Saturday July 21st there was a misleading announcement that most footpaths in Britain were 'now open' again. We quickly learned the next day at Glenridding that many paths through farmland were still firmly closed, so careful planning was still necessary. The fifth walk in July was on the 29th when we used the minibus for the Loggerheads ramble.

In August we had a coach for our Edale and Capel Curig rambles plus a local walk on the Wirral. We had a rest for the bank holiday but the following Sunday saw the Langdales trip followed by the Barmouth weekend. We then continued with our full programme of coach rambles, although there were still restrictions in the Yorkshire Dales and a few other spots such as Pendle Hill when we had to move the walk down a valley or two resulting in the discovery of a quaint historic village called Wycoller.

So the Foot and Mouth epidemic put a slight dent in our rambles programme but didn't do any major damage. Now it's great to see fields full of healthy cattle again and fellsides full of sheep and gambolling new-born lambs. *Dave N*

Ambleside at New Year

ONCE AGAIN we've booked several rooms at the massive Ambleside hostel for the New Year. Bookings are for three nights: Mon 30th Dec, Tues 31st and Wed 1st Jan, travelling back Thursday.

Numbers are limited so get your names down fast with a £10 deposit.

Costs vary from 2-bedded £16 per person per night, 3-bedded £15.33 and 4-bedded £15.25. Dormitories (approx 7 beds) will be £13.75 per person.

Choice of self-catering or prepared meals. Evening meals (Mon and Wed) cost £5, New Year's Eve buffet is £8. Breakfasts are £3.40 and packed lunches are £3. Booking forms will be available from Dave Dickel or ring him on 01244 533995.

NEW MEMBERS

WELCOME to the following new members: Lora Evans, Bernard and Susan Heath, Patricia Casey, Brenda Nettleton, Irene Jones and anyone else that we may have forgotten to mention.

May you have many happy and memorable years with us.

Walking two miles a day can cut the risk of an early death by half



THIS evidence comes from two studies reported on the Bandolier website. One of the studies was conducted in Finland with a study of twins (about 8,000 males and 8,000 females); the other was in Hawaii when 707 non-smoking retired men of Japanese ancestry were involved in heart research since the early 1980's.

After a 12-year study 208 had died: 33 from heart diseases, 19 from strokes, 68 from cancer and 88 from other causes.

They were initially asked about the average distance they walked each day, from less than a mile, one to two miles, and more than two miles a day.

The groups were matched to adjust for cholesterol, diabetes, hypertension, diet, weight and alcohol consumption.

The extensive study concluded that the more you walk the less likely you are to have an early death - from all causes.

The risk of death in men who walked less than one mile a day was 1.8 times that of men who walked more than two miles a day.

The study of the twins in Finland found a death rate of 12 per cent for the sedentary group, but only 4.9 per cent for the active groups.

Walking also seems to help your memory, or slow down the loss of it. This third study, in the USA, looked at 5,925 women over 65 and concluded that those who did more walking had a cognitive decline much slower than the more sedentary ones.

Nothing to do with walking but interesting to know

The US standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet 8½ inches.

This is an exceedingly odd number, so why was that gauge used?

Because that's the way they built them in England, and English expatriates built the US railroads.

Why did the English build them that way?

Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used.

Why did they use that gauge?

Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

So why did the wagons have that particular odd spacing?

Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some old long-distance roads in England, because that was the spacing of the wheel ruts.

So who built those rutted roads?

The first long-distance roads in Europe and England were built by Imperial Rome for their legions. The main roads have been used ever since.

And the ruts in the roads?

The ruts in the roads, which everyone had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels, were first formed by Roman war chariots. Since the chariots were made for (or by) Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. The US standard railroad gauge of 4 feet 8½ inches derives from the original specification for an Imperial Rome war chariot, which was just wide enough to accommodate the back end of two war horses.

Thus we have the answer to the original question.

Now for the twist to the story.

When we see a space shuttle sitting on its launching pad, there are two booster rockets attached to the side of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SRB's. The SRB's are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah. The engineers who designed the SRB's might have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRB's had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site. The railroad line from the factory had to run through a tunnel in the mountains. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track is about as wide as two horses' rumps. So, a major design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's bottom!



Don't you just love engineering?



Forthcoming Socials



SHIP & MITRE, Dale Street (upstairs) THURSDAY NIGHTS - First Thursday of each month is Cheese and Wine Night

May 2
CHEESE AND WINE NIGHT
plus Ken's Quiz

May 9
COME DANCING (Second session)
with Roy F. Learn to Line Dance,
etc, for our 75th Anniversary Dance

May 16
PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT try to
beat our Jack of Hearts, our Joker
Mike Riley, and win a cash prize

May 23
RAY'S STAND UP QUIZ

May 30
BRING AND BUY SALE. Ray Mc is
the auctioneer. Bring anything that
might generate money for the club
or fight to bid for that antique Des
O'Connor tape including ear plugs.

June 6
CHEESE AND WINE NIGHT plus
MUSIC NIGHT with QUIZ

June 13
CHRIS CROSS QUIZ

June 20
PICTURE QUIZ

June 27
YET MORE DANCING TUITION
(Line or other dancing) with Roy F.

July 3
CHEESE AND WINE NIGHT plus
INDEPENDENCE QUIZ (Ken R)

Club's 75th Anniversary Dinner Dance

Change of date: Now SAT 16th NOV at Devonshire House, Edge Lane, 7 for 7.30pm

Hollingworth Lake - April 4

ON a beautiful sunny morning, ten rambblers arrived in Rochdale at the home of Harry O'Neill, in good time despite a slight detour because of a road closure. Were we too early though? Where was Harry we wondered when we got no reply.

It transpired that he and the earlier arrivals were already basking in the sunshine on the patio, enjoying a cup of coffee. Happy as some would have been to stay there, we left in three cars for the drive to Hollingworth Lake. The traffic lights had a habit of turning red each time before Tony, in car three, made it. However, we all got there and were soon ready to set off.

We walked a short distance before reaching the Rochdale Canal and then continued along the path with the canal on our right and the railway on our left. We passed several locks with their gates in good condition, suggesting that this stretch of canal may again come into use. The mill buildings alongside reminded us of its use in times past.

As we sat beside the canal enjoying our lunch break we marvelled at the sparkling beauty of the water, observed horses in the field opposite and were aware of the farmer spreading fertiliser on his crops. What an educational nasal bouquet!! Some photos were taken here as we sat in the warm sunshine, with Tony doing his Patrick Lichfield act from the bridge.

After leaving the canal our walk took us up a gradual incline to a path, the views from which were impressive. Along the way we passed an animal retirement home where there was a greyhound, some longhaired cats and several peacocks and peahens. This was definitely horse country, horses with coats and horses without.

We had a nice encounter with some Shetland Ponies and their carers before continuing with a gentle climb over the rocks, the reservoir on the right - quite a pleasant sight!

We saw some isolated houses, perhaps restored farm buildings, and enjoyed the spring flowers, trees and hedges bursting into a green haze with the sun helping to enhance their colour. We had another stop for tea and then sauntered back to the cars.

We returned to Harry's house where once again we enjoyed his hospitality, some glamorising themselves, before leaving for a meal en-route home.

Special thanks to Harry for a fabulous day, lovely walk of just the right length and pleasant company.

Lil'mo

Bickerton - March 10

AFTER the trauma of Foot and Mouth it was back to normal. Well, not quite - it was teeming. Gerry was being a good boy-scout, rounding up the stragglers, one of us was in the wrong car park, another was late, yes. But numbers were down to five!

We were soon ready, waterproofs donned, spirits high, and though Cheshire is allegedly flat, found ourselves going up Bickerton Hill and on to Bulkeley Hill. Our leader assured us that there were extensive views into Shropshire which featured the Long Mynd and the Wrekin, and we had no reason to doubt it but he omitted to mention the caveat, "weather permitting." At this point the rain was relentless and the wind, shall we say, lively. However there's always a silver lining, on this occasion watching Tony manfully and determinedly trying to control his very wayward umbrella and at the same time have a conversation with George who was having difficulty trying not to burst his sides.

We descended on the Sandstone Trail and Gerry spotted a dilapidated hut at the roadside (actually I think he and Jean erected it on the pioneering ramble). The only thing in its favour was that it had a roof on it and we were all able to have a comfortable lunch in it.

Setting off again we discovered to our amazement that the rain had stopped. In fact, from then on we were all concerned that nobody had brought any sun-block! The day got better and better as we made our way to Rawhead Farm, over Bird's Hill and down again to Bickerton Church in the lychgate of which Jean was tempted to have her afternoon tea but common sense prevailed and the momentous decision postponed.

We had all been enchanted by the scenery and had enjoyed a lovely walk, with varied terrain - nine hundred feet of ascent overall - lovely views, excellent company and a meal to look forward to - and thereby hangs a tail. If you like lamb, visit the Bickerton Poacher armed with a large doggy-bag. The meat is beautiful but I defy you to finish it.

Thanks, Jean and Gerry, for a super day.

Gefa

Ramble at Billinge - March 24

THE MEET for this walk was the kitchen table at Freda and George's around which the assembled group were plied with tea, coffee and biscuits to fortify us for the rigours of the day.

It was heartening to see the increased attendance of recent rambles - the most heartening of all being the presence of Joe Kennedy, back to fitness after a very trying time.

Alas, Rose was unable to join us due to being unwell, but hopefully a quick recovery will soon put that right.

A short walk put Urbania behind and Ruraltania ahead, and every step took us further into open countryside. Fields became larger, some ploughed, some already showing a crop and others laying fallow.

After walking for an hour, George called a halt for lunch, which was taken sitting on a bank overlooking the South Eastern plain of Lancashire. At least, some of us were facing in the opposite direction. Then the question arose as to what was on her left and right, as opposed to our left and right?

This discussion was cut short by Pete seeking sympathy because he had just been stung on his hand by nettles - as I commented at the time, my sympathy was with the nettles!

Time to move. The weather had been kind so far - the wind was a bit sharp, but the exercise soon had the blood flowing once more. The temperature increased a degree or so as the path took us down through a wooded dell to a bridge spanning a stream.

Although the Spring was a bit tardy in appearing, there were plenty of signs aplenty, with trees and bushes abudding. The Spring flowers: daffs, crocus, primula, etc, were in abundance, but mostly in gardens - sadly very few growing wild.

Presently we came upon an anomaly - an abandoned farm; house deserted, barn crumbling, heavy farm machinery tangled in brambles, rusting, or paint peeling prior to rusting. A few yards away a small plaque fixed to a telegraph pole proclaimed 'Promise Land' - broken or unfulfilled promise - who can say?

A gentle ascent through the wooded slope of Billinge Hill led us to the beacon. This landmark, cleaned and restored for the millennium, had yet again been restored to its 'former glory' by a moronic paint sprayer - to what end?

I may have painted a picture of decay and depression, but in truth we passed farms very well equipped and obviously efficiently worked - buildings no longer used for farming, but imaginatively re-developed for domestic use. One especially caught my eye, with warm stone almost glowing - it could have come from the Cotswolds.

Steep stone steps took us down to a lane which George said in freezing weather was the local Cresta Run of Billinge. The descent must be scary to say the least, and anyone coming up wouldn't stand a chance, but in the present conditions it was just a country lane taking us back, after a lovely and imaginative walk, to the start of the day at George and Freda's kitchen table and more tea and biscuits!

Many thanks folks - for the walk and the hospitality.

G

