

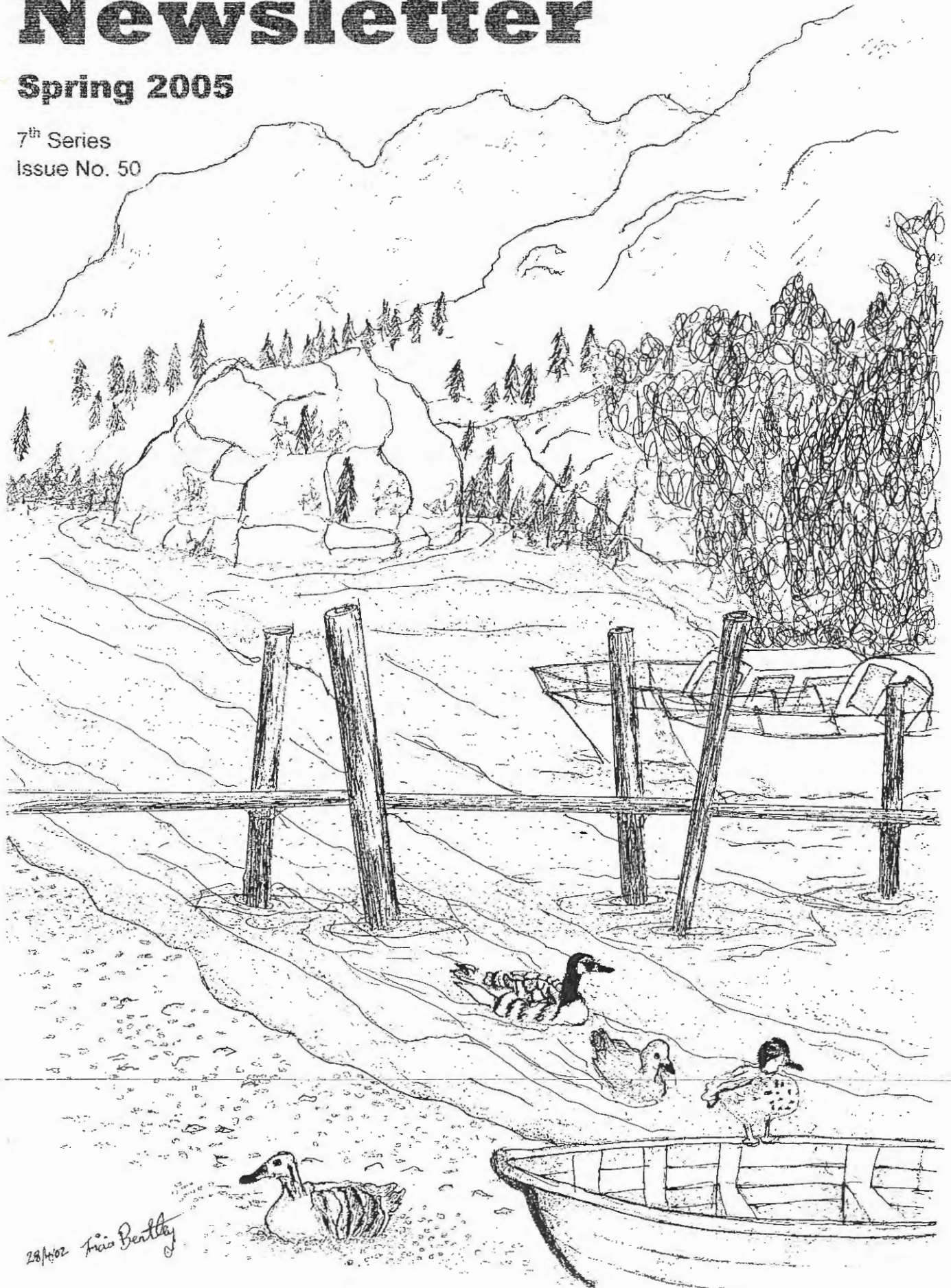
Liverpool Catholic Ramblers' Association

Newsletter

Spring 2005

7th Series

Issue No. 50



Keswick Landing Stage - Derwentwater

Ramblerite

JUST savouring a few reflections on a couple of recent rambles. There was a full turnout for the recent Langdales trip and the 'B' walk was a really good and tough one, led by Bob Hughes.

Both the 'A' and 'B' parties set off together up Stickle Ghyll, behind the Dungeon Ghyll Hotel, then both split up on reaching the lake at the top.

As it turned out, our 'B' walk was more like an 'A' walk, taking in two peaks at over 2,000ft. I certainly knew I'd done a walk when I woke up on Monday Morning!

The week before we were on our way to Llangollen when to our surprise, there were a few inches of snow on the Horseshoe Pass, which transformed the landscape. After dropping the 'B' party off at the Ponderosa Café at the top of the pass, the rest of us stayed on the coach for our Llangollen start.

Carol started the 'A' off with a pleasant walk, first to the top of the ruined castle and then heading for the rugged Treffor Rocks ridge. We got some spectacular views from the top of the ridge in an area where many of us hadn't been before.

Lost property on coaches

MANY ITEMS, including boots, have been left on the coach recently.

There are now far too many unclaimed items for the club or the coach company to hold onto indefinitely and they could soon end up in a charity shop or binned. One can get tired when travelling and easily forget things. I have left jackets on the back of airport lounge seats twice!

The urgent thing to do if you have left anything on the coach is ring the company during office hours – Matthews Coaches 342 1833. It's also worth checking to see if your gear has been put in the club's first aid/equipment bag.

Writing your name on the back of the wash label of your rambling gear with a ballpoint pen ensures that any lost property will get back to you. (*It takes many washes before the ink finally fades away*). Putting your name on walking sticks is also recommended. Mine is written in ink on the cork handle. So get writing your name on your gear NOW!

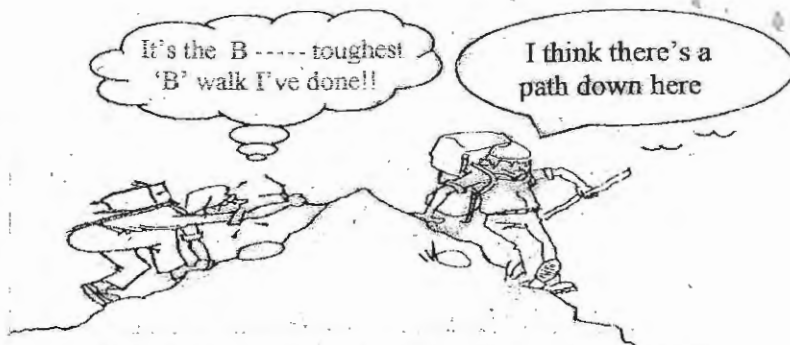
Now where did I put that cup of tea?

Scatterbrain

CLUB'S CLOTH BADGES



You will see many of our members wearing these on their rucksacks, etc. These are on sale at just £2 each.



We carried on towards World's End then returned via part of the Offa's Dyke path down below. Later on we met the 'B' walk near Valley Crucis Abbey. They started to cross the river by a bridge behind the abbey but Dot Murphy was lucky not to suffer serious injury as she suddenly fell headfirst from the 8ft high footbridge! She escaped with a few cuts and bruises (see skin-diving report) but it just goes to show how careful you have to be on the walks, as rambling can be dangerous, even at low level.

Anyway, I'm glad to say that the numbers on the coach have been picking up, with some full coaches in recent weeks. I'd like to thank all of you for supporting the club so well – and I can now say to everyone: "Book early!"

Ken Regan

How to practice skin-diving from a bridge!

TO ENJOY this course on skin-diving you first have to book out with the Catholic Ramblers – at £9 for a full day's course – not a bad deal really!

Depending on the programme, you start in one of four regions. Mine was in Wales in the month of March. We arrived at the top of the Horseshoe Pass by the Ponderosa Café. I was surprised to see snow everywhere. It looked beautiful.

Suddenly, through the café window I spotted Dave Newns and two friends who had come up by car. Hah Hah! I thought. Now I now why we have snow today – Dave's just imported it from Poland, where he had just come back from his skiing holiday. Three cheers!

On this course the leader of our pack, Joan, manoeuvred us down the Eglwseg Glen and across to a place called World's End where there's a ford, with water running across the road. It was the start of the River Eglwseg, which runs down into the River Dee in Llangollen.

Suddenly I had a flashback to this place where we stood. Remembering what was thought to be sand in my eyes and sand in Roy's buttocks – a crowd gathered around the Ford, holding an urn. Yep! We got some lady's ashes in our eyes and in our dinner. I rubbed my eyes and Roy shook his booty – not much else we could do!

We left in a cloud of smoke as Joan now marched us up onto a muddy path called Offa's Dyke and led us on towards Valle Crucis Abbey.

Here we hit the River Eglwseg again, only this time we had to go over a high footbridge and two stiles. This is where I had my first lesson in skin-diving backwards from a bridge.

To practice this, you place left leg on stile, cock right leg onto floor, pull left leg over, head back, and flip, bang, splash! Thank God I'm not back at World's End!

That fast-flowing River Eglwseg got me again, or was she just trying to wash my eyes?

Dot Murphy



"Would you care for a skin-diving course with the Catholic Ramblers?"

KESWICK WEEKEND – the full money MUST be paid before you go

Pay cash to Will Harris or send a cheque made out to LCRA. Will's address is 57 Higher Road, Liverpool L26 1TA

A little snippet of Liverpool's history

Edward Falkner – a 'swashbuckling' local hero

IMAGINE Eighteenth Century Liverpool. By then it was a thriving seaport and a small town built of dingy bricks.

Numerous creaking windmills, perched on hills around that small town, harnessed the wind, as did sailing ships that could now use a new dock regardless of tidal flow.

It could boast some pleasant countryside on its outskirts, on which coach and horse travelled, plus a royal deer park at Toxteth.



Picture Edward Falkner, born around 1760 in Fairfield, then a country area of course. He had a great yearning for adventure and excitement, fulfilled by joining the army. He rose remarkably quickly through the ranks and gained a reputation for leading his men – not from an armchair – but from the front! His bravery and swashbuckling style drew the admiration of his loyal troops.

Threat of invasion by France

In 1788 he married Bridget Tarleton, sister of General Sir Banastre Tarleton Bart, after whom Tarleton Street (off Church Street) is probably named.

Early in 1797, England was rumoured to be under threat of invasion by revolutionary France. Falkner, by this time, had been appointed a remarkably young Sheriff of Lancashire. He was elected, by the city fathers, onto a committee to plan for a defence of the town. The threat was taken seriously and it was said that within 24 hours he could muster a fighting force of 1000 loyal volunteers some of whom were ships' carpenters – said to be the most muscular and powerful men in the world – who would, if necessary, arm themselves with their own shipbuilding weapons, e.g. axes and adzes, and march out to face the enemy. In one week alone, pilot boats were voluntarily manned in Liverpool Bay to watch out and warn of any invasion, and 570 seamen volunteers manned lines of fortifications on both sides of the river with 56 heavy guns.

Falkner's 'fleet of ships'

It was thought that French spies operating in Liverpool were so alarmed by these men that they advised their generals not to attack Liverpool.

On February 20th 1797 two French frigates, anchored off Ilfracombe, soon scuttled several merchantmen then sailed for Fishguard off the Pembroke-shire coast. With 1400 troops and crew

they carried large quantities of gun-powder and ball. Soon, great numbers of Welshmen were engaged in skirmishes.

It is reported that Edward Falkner went out to meet General Tate, Commander of the French Corps to demand his surrender, warning him that a fleet of ships, with the Liverpool Volunteers onboard, was heading his way to cut him off from the sea. Pure bluff! He had no ships at his disposal!

An ingenious idea was also adopted (probably down to Falkner) to deceive the enemy. The wearing of traditional Welsh costume (red cloaks) purposely thrown over the clothes of the farmers and their wives, posted on surrounding hills, gave the French the impression that they were surrounded by British Army Redcoats.

Trees absorbing the soot

In a couple of days the French had unconditionally surrendered. When news of this reached Liverpool, Falkner was feted as a hero. He was also rewarded: with the land on which Falkner Square was built, then a valuable plot of peat and mossland with a lake nearby called Mosslake – it was an outstandingly beautiful place.

He set about building beautiful Georgian houses (*now superbly restored*) around the square for the gentry. He also had London-style plane trees planted, as these absorbed the chimney soot in their bark. Many of those buildings have a history to tell such as links to the American Civil War, etc.

So, if it is a fine day and you are off to town, why not take an inner-city ramble to this oasis of peace and beauty; lie down on the grass, soak up the sun and reflect on the life and times of a Liverpool hero of yesteryear.

PS: Falkner Square is off Upper Parliament Street, Toxteth. Turn right at the traffic lights about halfway down if travelling towards the Mersey. *Richie Cannon*

Editor's briefs

WELL, I've flown back to Billinge – for a few months anyway! And now I hope to be out and about a bit more.

Thanks to Ken, Dot and Richie (plus L.A.M. from the Seniors' Section) for contributions to this newsletter. Richie's local history article on this page was actually given to me last autumn but I kept holding it back until it was needed to fill a vacuum. It was needed this time.

So, here's hoping you all enjoy reading this short edition and more of you out there will send in your ramble write-ups, articles, or whatever. Material for the next edition should be given or sent to me, Dave Newns, at 7 Abbots Way, Billinge, Wigan WN5 7SB. Thanks.



New members

AS promised, I now have a list of all the new members who have joined us over the four months or so. They are:

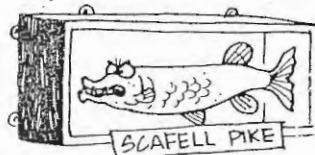
Anna Foter, Mike Fowler, Barbara Hardy, Linda Kelly, Teresa Kelly, Val Liptrot, Pat Manley, Hilary McDonough, Eve Nieman, Glynis Nieman, Paul Scott-Davies and finally, Sue Sefton.

We hope that you will have many happy years of walking with us.

May's rambles

THE new programme is not quite ready yet, so here is a preview of May's rambles.

- May 1 Bank Hol. No walk.
- May 8 Beddgelert (Wales).
- May 15 Dufton (Lakes).
- May 22 Hathersage (Peak).
- May 29 Bank Hol. No walk.



Testing our late Pope's ski slopes

IN HIS younger days, our late Pope John Paul II's many talents included skiing in the Tatra Mountains near his home, not too far from Cracow.

I have skied many times since 1967 (with numerous club members) but the last time was 15 years ago. So, having made enquiries last summer, I then planned a solo revival to visit Zakopane this winter, where the Pope used to ski, before he became a pope.

But it didn't take long before Mike, Helen, Brenda and Dave D, plus one of my bus-pass sisters (who had skied just once before) heard about my plans, and to my delight, they all jumped on this old-timer's bandwagon.

You may well be thinking that we were getting a bit too long in the tooth for throwing ourselves down ski slopes, but it was revealed to us that last year at least one 80-year-old lady enjoyed ski lessons in Zakopane! With today's modern equipment, ski-hire technicians don't only adjust the bindings

The snow conditions were great and I had soon successfully tested the steepest black run in Poland, without mishap.

I later got the all clear from a mother-minding sister to book myself another skiing trip (in March) for nine days.

March saw Flo and Rene accompany me; using bus passes to get to the airport! Rene had water-skied before and so took it like a duck to water but Flo soon tried to duck out of the skiing, but fought back.

With snow now twice as deep as it was in January, it was even more of a challenge in the bad visibility to ski from the blizzard-swept cable car summit at 7,000 feet. I skied down the 8-mile route in under 40 minutes – but I stopped for a rest several times! *Some were zooming down in 30 minutes at an average speed of 16mph, but much faster in places!*

● **HIGHLIGHT** of my winter started in January with meeting a young Irish airline pilot from Wizzair in a ski slope bar. His regular routine was: fly for six days then ski for three days!

Six weeks later, on the return flight to Liverpool, his Irish brogue echoed: "We'll be taking off in tree minutes!"

Well, I soon got myself invited into the spacious cockpit of that brand new 184-seat aircraft, apparently on automatic pilot, with Peter now sitting with his back to the huge windscreen. (*But there was a Polish co-pilot alongside!*) I sank into plush upholstery and we chatted for 20 minutes. He said that he recently had a go at snowboarding, but was getting a lot of bruising and bangs on the head – quite risky for an airline pilot. But then again, he was Irish! *Dave Newnski*

PS: The experienced skier would not find the same efficiency or variety of runs found in Austria, but the big plus in Zakopane was the very low cost of both skiing and après skiing.

Cost of skiing: Flight, half board accom, ski/boot hire plus ski lift passes for 7 days:

Austria £990 Poland £290!

Breakdown: Economy flight £100, taxis and buses £25, accommodation £105, ski and boot hire £30. Ski lifts totalled about £30 (for me).

Ski instruction was extra.

(quick-release springs) on your skis to your boot size but they also adjust them to your body weight. Now one is more likely to get injured badly playing football than when skiing.

And so, mid January soon saw Mike and Dave D enjoying their first skiing lesson. Brenda and Helen were spectators but they occasionally went off on a low-level ramble in fairly deep snow – a beautiful Christmas card scene! I usually sloped off to test Zakopane's other slopes, and get my skiing standard back to where I was 15 years ago.



Seniors' Section

Winwick ramble - 13th Feb

WINWICK lies north of Warrington, close to Junction 9 of the M62 motorway. Down the road, fourteen intrepid ramblers assembled in the Swan Hotel's car park in the midst of sleet, snow, gales and rain. Preparing to brave the elements, our waterproofs, hats, scarves, etc, were put on, but, unpredictably, the sun shone soon after setting off.

We passed Winwick Church and looked up to see the stone pig with a bell round its neck beside a statue of St. Anthony of Egypt. On the other side of the door was a statue of St. Oswald.

As we began the walk, we passed several buildings that were once part of Winwick Hospital, an asylum in 1902 but used as the largest military hospital during the two world wars. We crossed fields one of which was the site of a battle during the Civil War. From here we went along Hermitage Green Lane until we reached The Hermit Pub. A brave representative was sent to seek permission to use the picnic tables for our lunch break. Tea and coffee were purchased while the locals were enjoying the Manchester Derby on T.V. By now it was a bright spring day.

After the lunch stop we passed through the hamlet of Hermitage Green and saw St. Oswald's Well reputed to be the spot where the Northumbrian Saint was slain. After climbing stone steps we crossed fields parallel to the M6 Motorway and were conscious of the constant traffic noise. An accidental detour led us to Southworth Hall, but retracing our steps we eventually found the large pond we were looking for. We skirted the pond, climbed over a stile and then crossed the M62. Almost immediately we descended a steep flight of steps that led to Houghton Green and the Plough Inn. After a short break we continued down a lane, passed Peel Hall Kennels and up to a motorway footbridge back over the M62. Passing Arbury Farm we made our way back to Middleton Lane and the Swan Inn.

Twelve ramblers were hoping to have a meal there but unfortunately they could not accommodate us. We decided to return to the Plough Inn where we enjoyed a pleasant evening meal.

A.L.M.

Ski Holiday - the bits we didn't want you to see

AT Cracow Airport, Mike's suitcase never turned up! He had no problem choosing a shirt to wear after the meal! Happily, the case arrived next day.

A clever Polish pickpocket, pretending to be drunk, lifted my wallet at the start of my second holiday. I'm still pursuing an insurance claim.

Even before we started, I left my new ski jacket on a seat at Liverpool Airport! Luckily I got it back on return, but for the full length of that second holiday I had to wear an ill-fitting charity shop ski jacket, cost £2.

Sadly, Flo's suitcase disappeared on the return flight by WizzAir. Now police are looking out for a baggage-handler wearing Flo's dirty washing!

