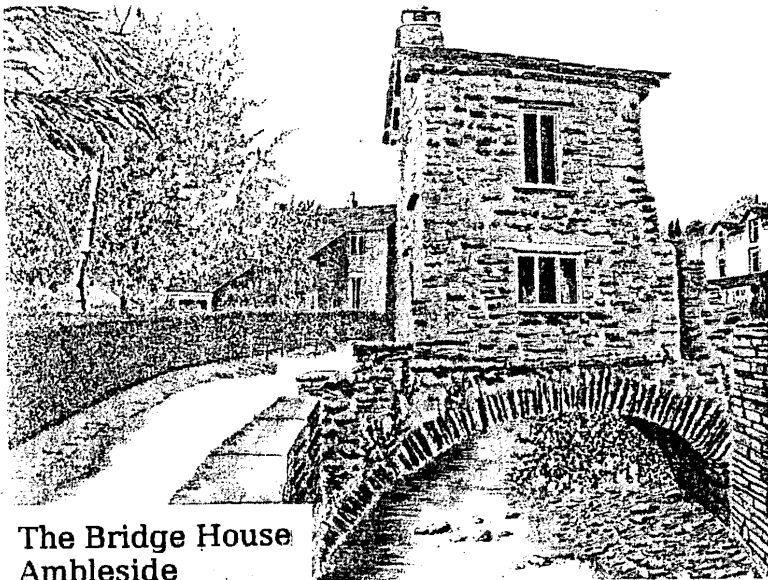


Liverpool Catholic Ramblers NEWSLETTER



The Bridge House
Ambleside

Annual subscriptions are now due

Renewable every September

Single membership £5

**Married couples, joint
membership £6**

Pay the person taking names on the
coach, or contact Will Harris,
57 Higher Road, Liverpool L26 1TA
Cheques to be made out to LCRA

Autumn 2009

Issue No 76 Seventh series

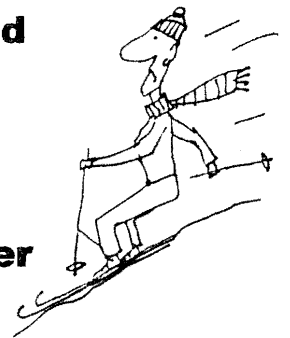
I wasn't frightened of snakes!

See page 3 story



Skiing this forthcoming winter

See page 2



Joanna was my neighbour for 18 months

See page 3 story

Joanna is seen here
holding a Gurkha kukri (a
lethal curved machete)



Watching the sunset

They set out for Galloway –
turn left just before Lockerby.
But why did they not get there?



See page 5 story

New members Welcome to Rae O'Farrell and a few more new members who have joined or applied to join our club since, plus John and Miriam Waite, both members from the past but are now renewing their membership.



❄️ Downhill skiing with Poles ❄️

Hundreds of them, 95% Polish, plus a few more mixed nationalities (Swedish, Dutch, Danes, Irish, British, etc)

Zakopane's ski slopes are getting much more overcrowded now, as it less than half-price skiing compared with say, Austria or Italy.

Accommodation is also cheap, but is a bit more expensive in February; as for the cost of après

skiing, it is only £1.10 for a large beer in some bars!

So far, five skiers plus one beginner have booked for the less crowded period of March (Wed 3rd to 10th) at just over £60 return by Easyjet (Liverpool/Krakow). It is only £13 per night for en-suite twin bed and full buffet breakfast. Single is about £20. If any more are interested then contact me, your editor.

Another group will go in February when Christmas decorations are still up until the end of that month. In fact, one or two of that group don't actually ski.

Polish schools stagger half term in February when the ski slopes are severely overcrowded. You need to book nine months ahead for our half term week.

Keen learners normally have four hours a day group ski school instruction; and then it takes an average of about three years to start to do red runs. Many don't do the black runs (steepest) as you really need many fortnightly ski trips to get to that stage, as several of us did in the past. These days, however, Zakopane ski instructors often teach on a 1-1 basis or 2-1, 3-1, etc, when it is much quicker to learn.

A strong team of newsletter writers

I wish it were our lot, but no, it is the Catholic Walking Club of Melbourne. They, like us, have a bi-monthly newsletter, but their membership total is only about half of ours; yet they seem to have many more doing reports of walks, weekends away, and even skiing trips at the moment. Their editor simply writes an editorial. Maybe I should go Down Under!

Your reports of recent or past walks, holidays, etc, are always welcome, or indeed, any other articles or adventures of yesteryear that would be of interest to our readers. This edition is a bit short on stories, so I have included one of my sagas. It includes three close shaves from death in my National Service days – quite scary at the time, but now I can smile.

A further warning for dog walkers

Sadly, a few more people have been killed recently by cows in Britain when taking their dogs out on a lead. There has now been another plea from the Farmers Union to please let your dog off the lead if attacked by cows. A dog can run away from a cow. Remember, if you have no dog right alongside you, cows won't attack.



Parody of your printer

Your newsletter quality has just been improved by a better computer printer. It will now scan or photocopy anything from slimy snakes to cyber squirrels. Paradoxically, it is faster to do the final combined printing, collating and stapling on a high-speed photocopier at Staples; so most photographs fill up with ink and don't print too well; but drawings are fine, as in cartoons, etc.

Incidentally, some of you got your last newsletters only recently because of the address system getting hijacked for a month on Will's computer.

Tale of a rugby supporter

The amusing saga below is a part of my Army story from the opposite page as I simply ran out of space.

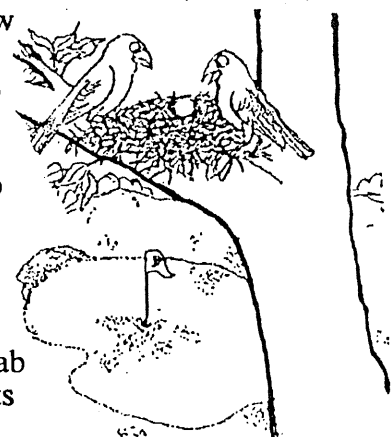
This piece is apt in the light of the recent Rugby League Cup win for Warrington where I was born and bred.

Have you ever been really scared?

We had just travelled an hour or so from Kuala Lumpur and it was now nearly kick-off time.

Our rugby captain was also an Army captain. He now came over to where I was waiting to cheer our team on.

That officer knew me quite well as a regular supporter, but he now asked me to go and grab a rugby shirt and shorts from the back of our big three-ton lorry.



I don't know about funny-shaped balls but I've been sitting on this funny-shaped egg for days and nothing seems to be happening!



Well, you daren't ever question an order from an officer. But I was a supporter. I didn't play rugby! I hoped that they had a pair of rugby boots my size.

Soon, feeling, like a lamb going to slaughter, I took the kit to the officer. Now, what was my next move?

Well, that young Army captain then gave me a kind of wind-up smirk, and said: "Thanks, Dave! I will go and hand that kit to our substitute player."

My thoughts: "Permission to shoot you now, sir?"

At the next away game I went swimming instead!

And so, all your material for the next newsletter (October) is to be given to me personally or sent to me at 7 Abbots Way, Billinge, Wigan WN5 7SB, or e-mailed to me at davenews@hotmail.com

Thanks to all the contributors to this edition and I hope that you will enjoy reading at least some of it.

PS: My answer phone is back (a new one with a digital woman's voice) after a nine-month period of no messages. So you can now even phone any little snippets to me on 01744 632211

Dave N



Shaken, not stirred, on a desert island

Researching one's past can be rather interesting. I found that Joanna Lumley almost breathed down my neck in 1961/62.

The Net shows that her dad, Major James Lumley, moved from India to Malaya after the war, probably to the camp where I was based at HQ 17th Gurkha Division. We were a separate support unit (39 Field Ambulance) and so I didn't know the name of their British Major in command, but I did remember him speaking fluent Gurkhali to his men once; so he was certainly experienced. An Internet photo soon jogged my memory. Yes, it was 15-year-old Joanna's dad!

One night the Gurkhas were pretending to be our enemy and they put the fear of God up us when they crept stealthily past us unseen, through pitch black jungle and avoided our road blocks; we couldn't hear a twig snap! Each one had a curved kukri knife for cutting through jungle, or: for self-defence. Gulp! The Japs also did this to us in the war, right through the Malayan jungles, ending up taking Singapore.

We had their Gurkha crossed kukris badge sewn on our green bush jackets. I now felt safe back in the camp office – a rude leafy hut (a basha) – with only mosquitoes to fight. Then, suddenly, a heavy metal fan spun off a roof joist and almost decapitated me!

I supported the camp's rugby team (as a spectator) when they played away – a good way to see Malaya. We had a brilliant try scorer, a Cumbrian fell runner. He sold many dummies*. And then, a few years later I bumped into him in the Travellers Rest, Thirlmere!

*Appearing to pass the ball, but you keep hold of it, and keep running.

During my 18 months spent in Malaya it was really hot and clammy and we longed for a cold spell. I certainly got it in my last 6 months which I did in Germany – that freak arctic cold winter of 1962/63!

A notice: A Retreat for RC's near Singapore: A volunteer wanted from all units. But Kuala Lumpur Cathedral did me, 6 miles away; then the venue hit me: **Blackamatti Island** – an island? I volunteered.

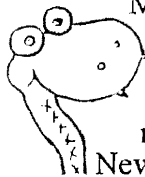
The train down to Singapore was itself an adventure. Blackamatti Island was possibly owned by a pre-war millionaire who once lived in our palatial, now converted, retreat house. We were now close to the Equator and had very rapid sunrises at 6am and rapid sunsets at 6pm, which seemed unnatural. At the Retreat, after morning Mass, we were told we would have several hours' afternoon free time daily all that week to read religious books in their plush air-conditioned library, or step outdoors to meditate.

A real 'Jungle Book' environment

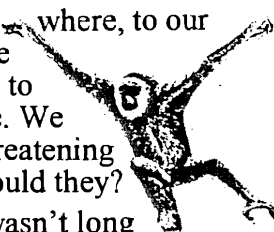
An Irish chap and I ventured outside; nobody else ever did! What's the point of a retreat on a desert island if you just stay indoors? We followed a path.

Maybe the fear of snakes had put them all off going outside; but they were, presumably, jungle-trained! I knew that most snakes are as frightened of us as we are of them. If you made a noise, they would hide. Your Rambo

News had actually eaten a cooked snake steak!



Now that path led us into trees, where, to our delightful surprise, gibbons were athletically leaping from branch to branch, shrieking their welcome. We were in a safe haven. No life-threatening incidents could happen there, could they?



It wasn't long before we emerged out of the mini jungle. Wow! Here was a super beach; deserted except for ants and intact apart from a rather hidden concrete shelter with narrow gun turret slits pointing out to the sea – a remnant of the last war, and most likely occupied by the Japs after the fall of Singapore. We wore our swimming trunks and

flip-flops or else we would be like cats on hot bricks.

Sharks were out there, somewhere!

We had to wade out in the warm water for about 75 yards as it was quite shallow, until we came to the edge of a coral reef where it became suddenly deep. I had only taught myself to swim recently but the very salty water made us quite buoyant. The plankton, two feet below us, seemed to be moving fast, but no sharks were visible. And then we looked back to the beach to the spot where our towels, shirts and shorts should be. But they weren't there?

Had something crept out of the jungle and nicked them? Then we saw them, about 200 yards to the left of where they should have been and they appeared to be still moving further to the left! Why? Help! We were caught in an island undercurrent!

We were supposed to be meditating on life. Well, if we didn't do something fast we wouldn't have a life left to meditate upon! So we cheated the sharks from a tasty meal by swimming like supercharged James Bonds, finally back to safety – shaken, but not stirred! Needless to say, we kept to the shallows after that.

We relaxed in the shade of trees; or else we would quickly burn to a cinder. One afternoon, while Paddy chased big flying ants, in vain, I was sat under a coconut tree and mermaid spotting, in vain! Directly above me was a huge bunch of coconuts which started me singing that (then) popular song: 'I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Coconuts.' Abruptly, a massive coconut zoomed down past my head with a thud! It nearly cracked my skull open! My singing wasn't that bad! But I didn't want to get to paradise just yet!

I don't remember much about the Retreat, but we found our paradise, right there on that Blackamatti Island beach! Our bodies were golden brown. I also had a week on Penang Island, but that's another story.

Was Rambo, but now Sambo!

Sorry! This squirrel keeps popping up everywhere!



NOTICE is hereby given that the eighty-third
Annual General Meeting

of the Liverpool Catholic Ramblers' Association
will take place on **Thursday, 24th September 2009**
at the **Ship & Mitre Public House** (upstairs), Dale St, at 8.30pm

AGENDA

- 1 To approve the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting of the Association.
- 2 To read the secretarial report.
- 3 To read the treasurer's report.
- 4 To read the chairman's report.
- 5 To elect officers and committee for the forthcoming year.
- 6 To elect two auditors for the forthcoming year.
- 7 Any other business.

Note: Members wishing to submit resolutions of any kind must ensure that they are in the possession of our acting secretary, not later than seven days prior to the above meeting.

Helen Riley (Acting Secretary)

Acting Secretary's address:
23 Shop Lane, Maghull, L31 7BY



Would like to get more involved in keeping our club a unique club?

Then get your name down on the club's nomination list which is in circulation

Each September our officers and committee members step down to be either re-elected or replaced by other keen members.

If more than one person is nominated for an officer's post (such as chairman) there will be a ballot by show of hands.

Nominees for chairman of the club must have served on the committee for at least twelve months and he or she must also be a Catholic.

Don't forget we have Cheese and Wine Nights on the first Thursday of every month at the Ship and Mitre pub at the Tunnel End of Dale Street (upstairs)

Would you have the bottle?

Outside Bristol Zoo is a car park with spaces for 150 cars and 8 coaches. It has been manned by the same charming and very polite car park attendant with the ticket machine. The charges were £1 per car and £5 per coach.

On Monday, 1st June this year, he did not turn up for work.

Bristol Zoo management phoned Bristol City Council to ask them to send a replacement parking attendant.

The Council said, "No! That car park is your responsibility."

The Zoo said, "No! The attendant was employed by the City Council; wasn't he?"

The Council said, "No! What attendant!"

Gone missing from his home is a man who has been taking daily the car park fees amounting to about £400 per day for the last 23 years . . . !

That's £2,400 a week . . . Tax free!

Total sum: £3.35 million!

No-one will see us up here on Ben Nevis!

On Five Live TV recently a Highland Rescues programme saw a helicopter on the way to an emergency call from Ben Nevis. A 75-year-old man had collapsed at the top of the zig-zags not far from the summit. He was wearing a bright orange jacket.

It was a busy time for walkers on the Ben but the visibility was superb. As the helicopter got closer no orange jacket could be spotted so they went in a bit closer with the camera on board. Yes, there was something bright orange about 50 yards from the path but the camera now had to zoom in a lot more to get the fine detail.

Oh! Not the right orange jacket. It was a mature couple having a secret cuddle . . . or even a bit more than a cuddle! It was a quiet rocky spot where no-one could see them. That is, apart from probably over a million TV viewers now watching them on this programme! Let's hope that they were both married, and more importantly, to each other!

The helicopter moved on. I don't think the couple even saw it! The other orange jacket wearer was soon located and the casualty air-lifted to Fort William Hospital. Happy ending was that he was found to be suffering simply from complete exhaustion. I don't know whether there was a happy ending for the couple. Better not investigate any further!

A memorable holiday

OFF we go, pulling our shell behind us (van); decision made; we'll go to Galloway; maybe a stop at Kendal en-route.



On reaching Kendal we decided to go to town, parking at the camp site by the River Mint. Last time we were in Kendal we went to the Beer Festival which was held at the Town Hall. How disappointed we were to find that we had missed it. "Never mind," Gordon says, "There's a Wetherspoons."

Now way was Wetherspoons luring me in, when I thought back to the year before in the Town Hall. On a ladies stall was (yummy) home cooked ham, cheese and bread; and all home-made chutneys; lovely! Was I sorry to have missed it this year.

Sitting on a bench in Finkle Street I hears 'ding dong,' the Town Hall bells. I saw people stopping in the High Street looking at the clock; their feet tapping, heads a rockin', the bells didn't stop; they were pealing a song – a sound I am glad I never missed. Here's some melodic facts about that clock:

The new clock and its Carillon were inaugurated at 11am on 22 June 1897 as part of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations.



The Town Hall Carillon plays a different tune each day, every three hours, starting at 6am; then 9am, 12 noon, 3pm, 6pm and midnight.

The daily tunes are – Sunday: Devotion; Monday: Kelvin Grove; Tuesday: British Grenadiers; Wednesday: All through the Night; Thursday: When the King Enjoys His Own Again; Friday: Garry Owen, and Saturday: There's Nae Luck About the House.

Next day; sky blue, sun shining, we goes walking; heading north for Potter Fell, making Gurnal Dubbs Tarn our goal for lunch. First the River Kent then through fields (part of Dales Way) and up to the tarns. The tarn was like a piece of glass shining in the sun; no one seen anywhere; only sounds of birds singing, water toppling over stones – so magical!

We ended up in Staveley to settle down for a meal and a drink; returning to Kendal via the 555 bus – a brill day. (*Editor: The club are going to Staveley on Sept 13.*)

The following morning sees swans in paper on Keswick site. Me thinks the 555 bus goes there. Let's jump it and have a day out in Keswick. (*Note: getting around with one's free bus passes.*) Reached Keswick to find tents field flooded, but canoes and dinghies everywhere. The atmosphere was fantastic; children in wet suits paddling in dinghies, toddlers splashing around naked, everyone laughing; people actually enjoying the flood waters. Looking to the right, Cat's Bells looked like a big camel with two humps ready to drink the lake. Gordon and I decided to bin Galloway – we want to be in Keswick. Ringing Keswick site we finds: No go! Too wet yet. Moves onto Windermere site for five days but ringing Keswick every day to see if water had subsided. At Windermere we met up with old Joey Jones and wife Liz. Their family were all coming up to camp, and they were going to have a barbecue. By the time they arrived we were due to move to Keswick (hurray!) so we said our goodbyes.

Arriving at Keswick for five nights (which we extended to eight) we spotted the Rugby Club open. There were lots of people outside on their patio, so we decided to investigate. Brian, the manager, who was South African, only in his twenties, told Gordon there were three real ales, plus a lady at the side of the bar does nice meals. What more could you ask for? Real beer, food and not far to walk for a quiet drink – with walks done around Keswick.

Latrigg we did, down to Derwent Folds, around Blease Fell, coming back on to dismantled railway footpath. Good.

Jumped bus to Seatoller; forgot map; decided on Allerdale Ramble trail which takes you past Castle Crag. Okay. A few days later, after a break from walking, we jumped a bus to the Honister Pass; went into café and toilets – Oh! It had all totally changed! No more make you own tea and coffee and put your money in the honesty box – it was all up-to-date for tourists. It was packed, but gone was that feeling of reaching a shelter, making a drink, saying: "Hi!" to other walkers, and having a good natter in a sharing atmosphere.

Out we both trotted, heading towards Buttermere, passing Dubbs hut by the Quarry. Last time we were there we left our names on a slate. There were loads of slates inside last time we were here, but now they had been cleared out. Never mind! Walking across the old railway sleepers by Honister Pass, we hear: "Can you point us to Rosthwaite?"

Turning, we saw two young lads with full backpacks. "Haven't got time to stop," they say. "Doing Coast to Coast in three days."

They were like the wind coming round a bend. I think: Three days, no way! We point and shout, "Enjoy yourselves!"

Making progress by the waterfall, looking upwards towards Haystacks and going around the lake to Buttermere. "There's the bus!" shouts Gordon.

Just had time to buy two ice-creams and jump the bus back. At Keswick, to our pleasant surprise, they put on a free theatre show in Hope Park by the lake. It was fantastic – Punch and Judy show (Dat's the way to do it!); big pretend compost heap with smoke and worms coming out; two men like clowns getting the children to shout as they chained a man up and threw him in a box. So did I, by the way.

Also the cabaret of Dr Galigari, sounding between Russian and French. Lydia, star of show, Queen of Tattoos, singing about her; violins playing, she danced a dance to tame the Irish shoes – it was brilliant!

Big grey clouds in sky, and then sun rising above them and then everywhere went gold – what a picture! Only trouble, I forgot my camera.



Dot and Gordon

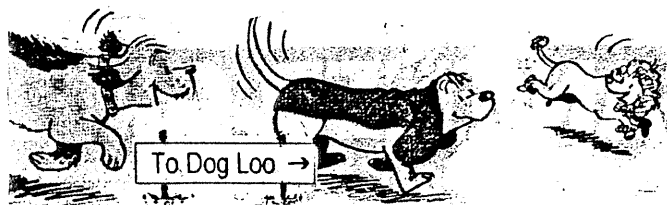
Aldford – 21.6.09 Leader Lilian

I have yet to put one foot, left or right, upon the Emerald Isle. All that I know of it is from reading, viewing or hearsay, one of those 'says' I have heard is that the Irish mile is somewhat elastic!

Now I don't wish to offend our own fair colleen (I have heard from her tennis partners, she has a ferocious forehand!) but when Lilian told us there would be no tea or coffee available at the start of the walk, but would be at a pub mile into it, I wondered which measurement would be used: E.U (1924.761m). E.V (Eirean variable) or E.U (except us, 1760 yds). So I felt duly chastened when it appeared, spot on one mile and especially so with it being lunchtime and Fathers Day, and getting our delayed pick-us-ups.

Rain had started falling at the start, so an ovies and broolly day was envisaged, but it was only a shower which stopped shortly before reaching the pub. This fortified, we continued the walk along a hedge-lined lane beside the pub, leading towards the Dee.

Our way was halted briefly by a metal gate spanning the lane, beyond which two dogs barked or bayed at us – warning or greeting wasn't exactly clear, until a gent appeared who quietened the pair. And then a third dog appeared when normal barking commenced.



Passing through the gate, the lane changed to a footpath which ended at a T-junction and a high, densely-wooded bank. Turning right, the bank continued until our lunch spot, but our leader's searing plans were awry, for the felled logs they had used on the recce had been removed, leaving bare damp earth or uncomfortable tree stumps upon which to sit – on our feet again, ready to resume walking, we had our one and only view of the Dee, for the bank encroached once more. At about this point the river starts its zigzagging course to Chester and the sea.

On a previous walk in the same field, through the same crop (maize) we must have been bitten by the same midges, for small pimples appeared on our arms and itched like mad for a couple of days – amaizing!

Leaving the river to its own course, ours took us into the quiet, neat village of Aldford, huddled around its church, and back to our cars; then on to our booked table and finally to a not too zigzagged journey home.

Many thanks to Lilian for a dee-lightful day's walk and to the company of Sue, Ita, Ann, Kath and Freda. G.

Ribchester

It was 'sun day' for the Senior members meeting in the former Roman habitat of Ribchester – all day it shone.

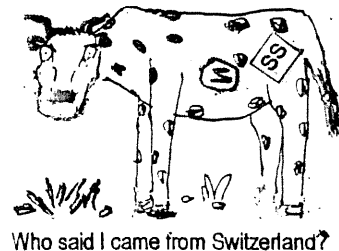
Leaving Bremetennavm Fort at which a gladiator battle was in full cry, we climbed the first 'rolling hill' of the day, treading in the steps of our Roman ancestors.



The majestic River Ribble glistened to our left, a light summer breeze before us; it was good to be out and about. Soon we came upon the remnants of a Roman Road; the tell-tale stones were clearly visible, they lay along the contours across the field, leading through Parsonage Wood. And then on to Hothersall Wood and Leece's Wood, a few of the many remnants, of England's forestation of bygone days.

Completing the usual awkward style entrance into the field ahead, led us to a moment or two of fun! It was the home of the familiar four-legged friend. Some scary members of the party were a tiny bit reassured by our bold leader's approach to the situation. "Herd together!" was the command. Replicating the cow's format, we marched forward, glancing fleetingly for the whereabouts of the enemy, to exit their domain by an awkward stile. The last being the slowest! Can't remember if the men were at the front? We were grateful for the lunch break that followed.

A further ascent of a rolling hill brought us to Bury's farm. It was here that we met a man and his wife, believe it or not, two wonderful farming people. We had a chat about his patch, the beauty of the Dales, an onward easier path, and pointing out a herd of immigrant cows from the Swiss Alps grazing in the next field.



Treading in a N/E direction, now on the homeward turn, higher ground brought us to the base of Alton Reservoirs. There are three linked together, supplying the needs of Longridge folk. We crossed some of the small streams that feed into the latter; on via Easoughs Woods, downhill (hurrah) to Anchor Hill. Thence by the Roman Fort and Museum, the village of Ribchester was finally reached.

A pub meal to finish, what more can one ask for a wonderful day. Thanks to our leader G.M., and fellow travellers. W.A.P.