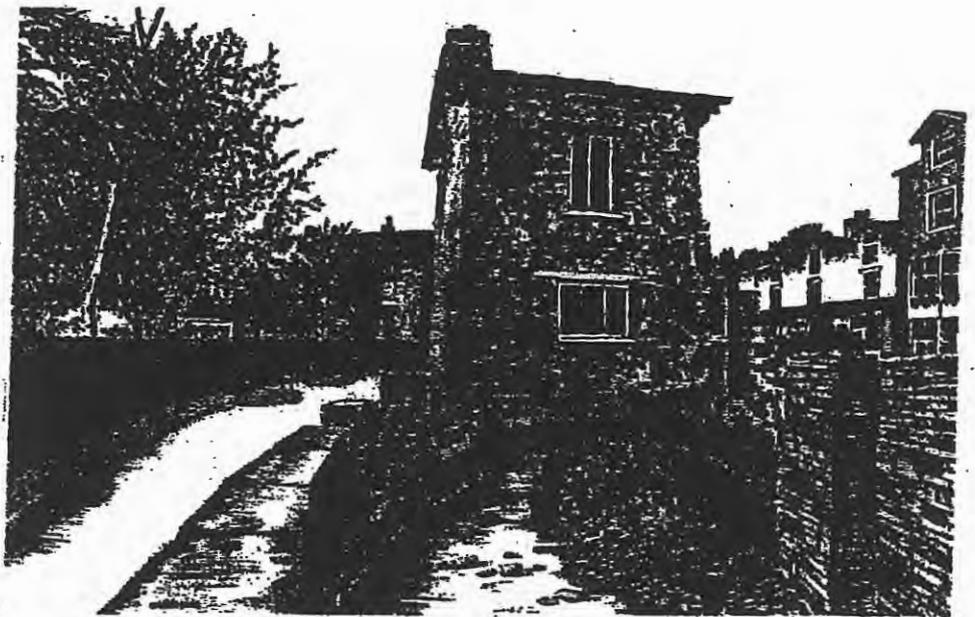


Liverpool Catholic Ramblers' Association

Christmas Newsletter



The Bridge House
AMBLESIDE



The Moot Hall
KESWICK

ANNUAL SUBS NOW OVERDUE - Fortunately most people have paid but if you haven't then this is your last reminder and your last newsletter. Single Members £5, Joint (married couples) £6

Ramble write ups, no matter how brief, in fact any suitable articles, are needed to fill this newsletter. Give or send them to me at 7 Abbots Way, Billinge, Wigan WN5 7SB. Thanks.
DAVE NEWNS, Editor

Ramblerite

CLOSED footpaths because of Foot and Mouth are hopefully now just a memory. The last closed path I encountered was at the end of October.

Two weeks later, although we didn't have a full coach, we managed three walks in dry weather up in the Clwyd Hills and finished up at the Loggerheads Inn, some having a meal.

The following week the bookings for Ambleside were heavy and so was the rain when we left Merseyside. But, like magic, it cleared, and we had a relatively dry day at Ambleside (just a little drizzle towards the end). A few didn't turn up for the coach but I bet they were kicking themselves when they realised we had a dry walk.

I suppose it is a timely reminder that if you book for a walk and don't turn up you are liable for the full fare whether you have paid or not. Also, another reminder that if you cancel by the Thursday night you can transfer your booking (but you can't then again transfer a walk that's already been transferred).

At the committee meeting following the AGM we again elected Will Harris as Chairman in charge of the rambles, not to be confused with overall club chairman Tom Reilly. Will operates behind the scenes a great deal but when he is out he is in charge of the coach, otherwise someone will deputise for him. This is usually the person holding the bookings book.

With two more walks to come before Christmas it's a good opportunity to get yourselves out into the fresh air for some healthy exercise before those lazy festive weekends at home.

A Deputy

New Member

A hearty welcome to Mark Malone who joined us recently.

An alternative Carol Concert

A number of tickets were sold to club members recently for the Philharmonic Carol Concert. They were sold out even before they could be advertised in the newsletter. Naturally some were disappointed but there is a good alternative this time. This notice was just too late to appear in the last newsletter:

Carol Concert

SATURDAY, 8th DECEMBER at 7.30pm
St Catherine's Chapel in Hope College
Entrance at Taggart Avenue

Tickets £5 (£3 concessionary)
including refreshments

Pay at the door or phone Sarah Clifford 291 3457

AMBLESIDE AT NEW YEAR

Depart Sunday 30 Dec, return Wednesday 2nd Jan for 3 nights. Fully booked except for just one male vacancy. Phone Dave Dickel on 01244 533995.

For details of the minibus travelling arrangements contact the driver, Tom Reilly, on 737 1041.

Just a reminder that a scale of YHA cancellation fees apply (from 25% up to 4 weeks before, to 75% of your total cost 1 to 2 weeks before) unless you can get someone to take your place.

SPRING KESWICK WEEKEND

At the end of April next. Accommodation is at Lakeside House which is a very large guesthouse specially catering for walking groups, with a large basement drying room (hopefully we won't need that). Rooms are 4-bedded, 3-bedded, twin-bedded and a few doubles and singles, plus two-en-suite rooms at extra cost. Bed-breakfast and evening meals for two days (Bed Friday night till after the early evening meal on Sunday).

We've been there many times in the past. Bookings now being taken with a £10 non-returnable deposit. Cost of the accommodation will be about £59.00, so you can pay by instalments if preferred. Dave Newns has the bed-plan (note: no bunks!). State if you intend going up by car when booking.

The Chairman, Officers and Committee
wish you all
A very Merry Christmas
and
A Happy New Anniversary Year

Last chance for our Christmas Buffet Dance
held at the Silvestrian Sports and Social Club, Silvestrian Street on Friday, December 7th - Tickets £8. Get them on the coach or for last-minute bookings phone Mike Riley on 521 2268.

Christmas Hamper Appeal

We still need a few more items to fill the hamper to be raffled at our Christmas dance. Donations to Mike Riley. Thanks.

Club nights when everyone got up for country dancing

ABOUT 30 to 40 years ago, if you were in your late teens or in your twenties, you would be ready for joining the LCRA.

Popular club-night event at that time was the country dancing session. The number of members enjoying themselves socially were often two or three times greater than our present-day club-night attendances, presumably due to the younger age group at that time.

However, there's an inexplicable down side to this - whenever we've had big social attendances, the numbers on rambles dropped.

Anyway, many of these younger members eventually got married, started a family, and finished rambling with the club. But last year, a group of them, a few now in their 50's (others now over 60) got together and formed their own Ramblers' Reunion Committee.

Having joined the club in the mid-Sixties myself, I obviously know most people in this group. They've held two 'Come Dancing' reunions since. I'm still trying to persuade them to 'Come Rambling' with us again, but this promises to be a great Sixties Night. *Dave N.*

The Ramblers' Reunion Committee

cordially invite everyone to a

SIXTIES NIGHT

with **BUFFET**

Dancing to a very professional group
BACKBEAT

at the Devonshire Hotel, Edge Lane
on Saturday, February 2nd - £12.50

Contact Dave Newns as soon as possible

This reunion group should not be confused with our Seniors' Section who formed their own group in 1970. They are our even older generation, and many are not over the hill yet!

MINCE PIE NIGHT Thurs, Dec 13th

A musical and festive dimension to this evening with mince pies, then carols and songs played by "Three and Easy" (The three namely Ken, Richie and Nick plus the 'Easy' Pete Carfoot). This will be followed by a Music Quiz by Ken Regan based on the songs played, with prizes for the winner and runner-up.

MARK YOUR GEAR

If you haven't got a marker pen simply use a biro to write your name on the washing labels of your walking gear NOW! It's almost impossible to wash out and if lost can then be returned to the owner.

Cheese & Wine Nights

These are held on the first Thursday of every month except Thurs, Dec 6th when the dance falls on the following night).

SQUARE FIFTY

This is our monthly draw to help boost club funds. The current prize is a bottle of spirits and two other bottles. Winners of the last two draws were Julie Gee and Ken Regan.



Our recent Annual Retreat

We had a good turnout on November 4th, with a total of 34 from the club's General and Seniors' Sections at Loyola Hall, Rainhill.



Social Events



THURSDAYS at the SHIP and MITRE, upstairs at 9pm - (We try to start at 9pm-ish but obviously need your support)

Dec 6
Bookings only

Dec 7 (Fri)
BUFFET DANCE - 8 till late
Silvestrian Club (see notice above)

Dec 13
MINCE PIES, CAROLS and a MUSIC QUIZ (see notice above)

Dec 20 No club night

Dec 27 No club night

Jan 3
CHEESE & WINE NIGHT
Tom Riley is your host

Jan 10
THAT WAS THE YEAR
THAT WAS QUIZ

Jan 17
WHO WANT'S TO BE A MILLIONNAIR-ISH QUIZ
Will Harris is Chris Tarrant

Jan 24
PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT
with Mike Riley

Jan 31
THE WEAKEST LINK
with Ray McRobinson

Feb 7
WINE & CHEESE NIGHT
Your host Tom Riley knows how to run this evening backwards

OBITUARY - TOM McEVOY

Sadly, Tom died recently, aged 53 years. He first suffered a stroke but later contracted pneumonia. He joined the club about 20 years ago and was employed by the National Blood Bank. Tom was a popular character when he came out rambling, but he stopped coming out with us several years ago. May he rest in peace.

Cat & Fiddle

NOVEMBER 11th

On parking the coach up in the mist at the Cat & Fiddle Inn, shortly after 11am, we held a 2 minutes' silence to remember those who died in the wars, then, as we all stepped out we were greeted with a threat to wheelclamp our coach if we didn't call in for a drink on return from the walk. Amicable agreement was made and Ray took the 'C' group on a scenic route to the Three Shires Head - the junction of the three boundaries of Cheshire, Derbyshire and Shropshire. Dave N led the 'B' in the opposite direction to descend into the Goyt Valley below the clouds.

They certainly weren't envious of another mud-squelching gang climbing back up that path alongside the forest into the mist. Dave now took us along part of that scenic valley by the babbling River Goyt - source of the Mersey. Soon there were memories of the vast walled rhododendron gardens at Rivington Pike as they walked through the grounds and ruins of Errwood Hall, demolished in 1938 by the Water Authorities to avoid pollution problems. They then called at the quaint isolated chapel below Foxlow Edge which was built in memory of a sickly lady who died on the way to Lourdes. She was a member of the Catholic family who once lived at the stately Errwood Hall. The 'B's' return was via Shining Tor, returning back to the Cat & Fiddle Inn just before nightfall. Ray's group emerged out of the gloom and into the cosy inn some time later.

Clampit



Our walk at the Halloween weekend



THE WITCHES had cast a spell on Pendle Hill in the form of Foot and Mouth restrictions, so, a couple of weeks before that ramble was due, the Tourist Information officers at the village of Barley (near Pendle Hill) suggested I could switch my walks to the Wycoller valley.

"Where was that?" I asked. The nearby Pendle Heritage Centre gave helpful advice and a pretty map. After a few preliminary 'sorties' I soon got bewitched by the beauty of Wycoller and its historical associations, so the club agreed to walk there. What did Wycoller have to offer? Well, for a start it has three very ancient bridges. It's also got the Pendle Way (long distance footpath) running by, and also the Bronte Way. This path originally connected Wycoller to Haworth but was extended to link various places associated with the Bronte sisters, getting their inspiration for their famous books from walking these hills and dales.

BODIES DISPLAYED ON THE BAR

Nearby Boulsworth Hill is a walkers attraction. What it lacks in dizzy heights at only 517 metres is more than compensated for by stupendous views from a ridge walk (more of this later). Actually, Boulsworth Hill was one of the old Pennine winter blackspots - many lives were claimed here in the sombre past (I hadn't told my party yet!).

This initiated a new attraction in bygone days. Dead bodies, found out on the moors, would be on display at the bar of remote inns for the customers' pleasure! The Moorcock Inn on Rochdale's Rooley Moor was particularly noted for this 'laying out' for custom, and a reward was offered to those who brought a body to the inn for display.

Bounty hunters would painstakingly search the Pennine uplands and byways, especially after a heavy fall of snow. On discovering a body they would unceremoniously throw it across the back of a packhorse to take it to a chosen inn.

The innkeeper would then send messages to nearby hamlets and valley towns. Great quantities of beer were brewed for the rush of customers. It seems this was how autopsies came into vogue from people's curiosity as to the cause of death!

BEWITCHED BY THE CRISP VIEWS

We started the walk as one body (pardon the pun!) from the Herders Inn near Wycoller, at the summit of the moorland road to Keighley, but the 'B' group that I was leading soon split to tackle Boulsworth Hill. Dave took the 'C' with a keen eye on the map in this unfamiliar area to our club.

We were blessed with a clear crisp day and from the top of the hill you could see Trawden, the nearest of the old mill towns. To the west we could clearly see Pendle Hill. We were close to the Yorkshire border with the peaks of Pen y Ghent and Ingleborough visible. A wind farm generating electricity could be seen towards Haworth.

On descending Boulsworth Hill we visited a small waterfall in a delightful glen called Spoutley Lumb, then through fields to Wycoller village.



The pre-Roman triple slab bridge over Wycoller Beck (There's also a double-arched 13th century packhorse bridge)

The oldest bridge is a single-monolith stone bridge of prehistoric origin. There's also the 16th century Wycoller Hall, now a roofless ruin. But I must also mention the charming and welcoming village tea/craft shop with olde-worlde artefacts inside where you can enjoy huge cream and jam scones or listen to the babbling Wycoller Beck from picnic tables outside. Muddy-booted walkers are always welcome at this teashop!

Meanwhile the 'C' party had earlier walked over the ancient bridges here, had a pleasant break at the teashop, then meandered along scenic parts of the Pendle and Bronte Ways towards Trawden.

The huge Ferrari parked nearby seemed out of place in the ancient backwater of Wycoller. It was now 4.30pm. The clocks had gone back the night before, so at 5pm we 'B's' headed back up to the inn where a huge Halloween moon hung low to lighten our way just before nightfall.



Dave's party arrived at the Herders Inn some time later after a spooky moonlit trek, owing to an unexpected F & M diversion to avoid a farm.

We then all relaxed inside that remote moorland inn to enjoy the Black Sheep beer that everyone around me seemed to be supping and also tucked into the cooked meals that some of us had ordered earlier that day. I looked around enjoying the warmth of a cosy fire and noticed we had the place almost entirely to ourselves apart from the friendly bar staff and just a few locals.

I checked the bar area for the customary dead body and was pleased to note none of our group was laid out through exhaustion or whatever.

Both walks were really enjoyable and I wondered why there was such a small turnout. There were plenty of walks around here to cater for all. Never mind - we can go again.

We left the inn and travelled the full length of the M65 to the M6 and got back to Liverpool by about 9pm in spite of a longer than usual pub-stop.

Richie Cannon

Seventy-five years old in the New Year

IN 1927, Tom Marquess, Fred Norbury and friends from St Oswald's discussed the original idea of starting a Catholic Holiday Guild. After preliminary meetings the first general meeting was held in July that year.

Archbishop Keating was approached and readily gave his consent and blessing. Over the years his successors became patrons, some in a presidential role.

Twelve months later, in 1928, over 110 members had joined the Holiday Guild with a small group spending a week's holiday at Hope in Derbyshire. Four socials had been held but the main activity was the rambles (12 that summer) so the title was first changed to become the Catholic Holiday Guild and Rambling Association, but finally the Holiday Guild wording was dropped to become the Liverpool Catholic Ramblers Association.

By 1930, rambles were held on the first Saturday and the third Sunday of each month. Only 18 months later we started weekly rambles but still on alternate Saturdays and Sundays. Even a few Wednesday rambles were tried but were unsuccessful, then in the summer of 1934, the weekly Sunday rambles were launched.

The years between 1930-35 also evidenced an expansion of other activities to include a tennis section, a football section, choirs, concert parties with our own pianists, theatre visits and a library.

CLUBROOM BOMBED

In 1937 our Wood Street clubroom was proving too small for our expanding membership and we moved to St Sebastian's Hall where we had previously held many dances. Now monthly Benediction was introduced, normally at the end of the ramble (and this practice only finished in 1966).

Unhappily, dark clouds were now appearing on the horizon - Munich 1938, the phoney war of 1939, the blitz of 1940. Our young men were quickly called up for service and our clubroom got bombed.

Most club activities were ceased by 1940. However, a small nucleus of members met quarterly, organised the occasional dance, and the ladies kept up a continuous correspondence with the men who were stationed on active service.

At the end of the war St Oswald's Hall was placed at our disposal to help us re-form the Association and Rambles were finally resumed in 1946. We then moved clubrooms twice, getting St Sebastian's back again for a few years.

We celebrated our 21st Anniversary in 1948 with Bishop Halsall presiding over a dinner dance at Reece's Cafe. The Cathedral Buildings in Brownlow Hill became our regular clubrooms between 1952-1967.

Our tennis and football sections were quite strong at that time - the tennis section surviving until the 80's.

After moving from Brownlow Hill, our organised dancing and games were gradually phased out in preference to the newer generation of members favouring discos.

We kept our country dance sessions alive at the annual Yuletide visits to Rivington Barn, where in

1977, we had a record crowd of almost 250 (including children of members).

It wasn't until 1953 that two grades of walk were officially instituted but this was met with some opposition at first, so these 'A' and 'B' walks were mainly used when we had a strenuous walk. About that time, holidays and weekends at the Ramblers' Association chalet at Meashafn became popular. Small groups also started continental walking holidays and skiing holidays. We also started annual trips to Snowdon but it wasn't until the late 60's that we tried other peaks in Snowdonia and could reach the Lake District on a Sunday (Keswick weekends excepted).

In the late 1960's we were now regularly using coaches instead of trains. Our popular bi-annual guesthouse weekends at Lakeside House in Keswick were often fully booked with around 50 attending.

SUCCESSFUL SOCIALS MEANT LOWER RAMBLING ATTENDANCES

In 1970 an additional section called the Family Section was formed, having their own walks and house meetings, eventually to be changed to the present-day title of Seniors' Section. At the same time an official new generation Family Section was formed but this dwindled and has been inactive for several years.

Socially, during the 70's and 80's, the General Section's attendances were high with an average of 50 or more, but the exact opposite was the effect on the rambling side, often having to cancel walks. (*A high social attendance has somehow always meant a big drop in rambles attendance*).

Since 1967, we've had a nomadic clubroom existence, moving to different premises roughly every three years. Atlantic House was the most memorable venue, with a big dance floor, but gradually discos were dropped in favour of our current social scene of quizzes, cheese and wine nights, bring and buy nights, etc.

In the earlier years we had joint rambles with other Catholic rambling clubs from St Helens, Chester, Bolton, Manchester and other areas. Most of those clubs seem to have fallen by the wayside but the Newcastle Catholic Ramblers still soldier on and we keep in contact with these mainly through Lakeside House.

For ensuring the LCRA's continuity we thank late stalwart vice-president and founder-member Fred Norbury (45 years service on the committee) died 1972, also Cyril Kelly (42 years service) died 1976 and the late Gerard Penlington (over 50 years service including many years as treasurer) who died in May, 1987.

During the 60's, 70's and 80's we've had many caravan weekends, camping at Wastwater, holidays in Scotland and 15 skiing holidays, but since then, hostel weekends had replaced caravan weekends, skiing holidays ceased and recently we've had several walking holidays both in Scotland and abroad.

Surprisingly, until 1990 only two grades of walk were on the programme. The occasional 'C' walk was a rarity and only introduced on a regular basis in February 1990.

Recent Seniors' Section ramble

Rochdale's many claims to fame

We bowled eastwards along the M.62, leaving a drizzly, misty Merseyside behind, towards our destination, being Rochdale and Harry's place in particular, where we were to start our walk.

A welcoming cuppa had the party in fine fettle to face the rigours of the day. Rochdale area is a myriad of footpaths, shallow steep-sided clefts, more than valleys, but I doubt if even Harry could give a step by step write-up of the walk. The first point of interest was the site of a former reservoir, drained and now filled in to provide a site for housing development - future homes of floating voters?!

The weather was dry, although the sun stayed hidden, but it was getting very warm. After fording a stream and a somewhat undignified ascent of a muddy path, we surfaced to more level ground, anaraks and sweaters being consigned to rucksacs, giving us the luxury of an unencumbered lunch break.

Some of the paths followed the valley floor, cutting off the distant views, and thus drawing attention closer to more intimate details of our surroundings: bushes with a tiara of rubies, and spiders' webs transformed into a jewelled necklace, and a single tormentil defied the onset of autumn.

A timely mid afternoon break was taken at a remote tea place made of wood, and once only known to cyclists and walkers, was catering for a more diverse custom, but still providing tea in mugs, mounds of sausage and chips, which would never be seen in McDonald's! Isn't there someone called "the Rochdale cowboy", and was this once his bunkhouse, for just over the road was a small head of fierce wide-horned cattle. Was this the remnant of his "Home of the Range"? A bit further on is the Three Owls Wildlife Sanctuary, once run single-handedly by a redoubtable old lady.

Next place to speculate was a farm called Dr. Dom's Farm - who the doctor was, or is, isn't acknowledged - a bit of local history for Harry to research in time for our next visit! We went on through a gate, then up an even steeper grassy bank. Meanwhile a group of young boys and girls were playing, as children should - running, skipping, tumbling head-over-heels down the bank to squawks, yells and shrieks of laughter, full of excitement, energy and the confidence of youth. This bank proved to be the retaining wall of Greenbooth Reservoir, which we followed on a path that gently rose until we were far above it's water. There was an abundance of birdlife around - one keen eyed member of our group identified a disturbance of the water as a skein of Canada Geese. I, for one, could hardly see the water below, let alone what was on it! As opposed to the start of our walk, the vista had opened out to give a view of distant moorland and a tier of three other reservoirs in the distance. With the afternoon now in late middle age, the temperature was dropping, and by a series of paths and by-ways, we wended our way in the gloaming back to Rochdale.

Rochdale has a number of claims to fame. It is the birthplace of the Co-operative movement, of Gracie Fields, and according to Harry, the widest road bridges in Europe, for the River Roch flows directly beneath the town centre, Mike Harding (the Rochdale cowboy?) and nice people, too. What more could one ask for?

After a quick wash and brush-up, we repaired to a local saloon, only to land in the midst of riding boots, jodhpurs and even spurs, but not a spittoon in sight!

Many thanks to Harry for a thoroughly enjoyable walk and a lot of laughs, too.

G

OBITUARY

MARGARET BOYLAN - Sadly, Margaret (Seniors' Section) died recently. May she rest in peace