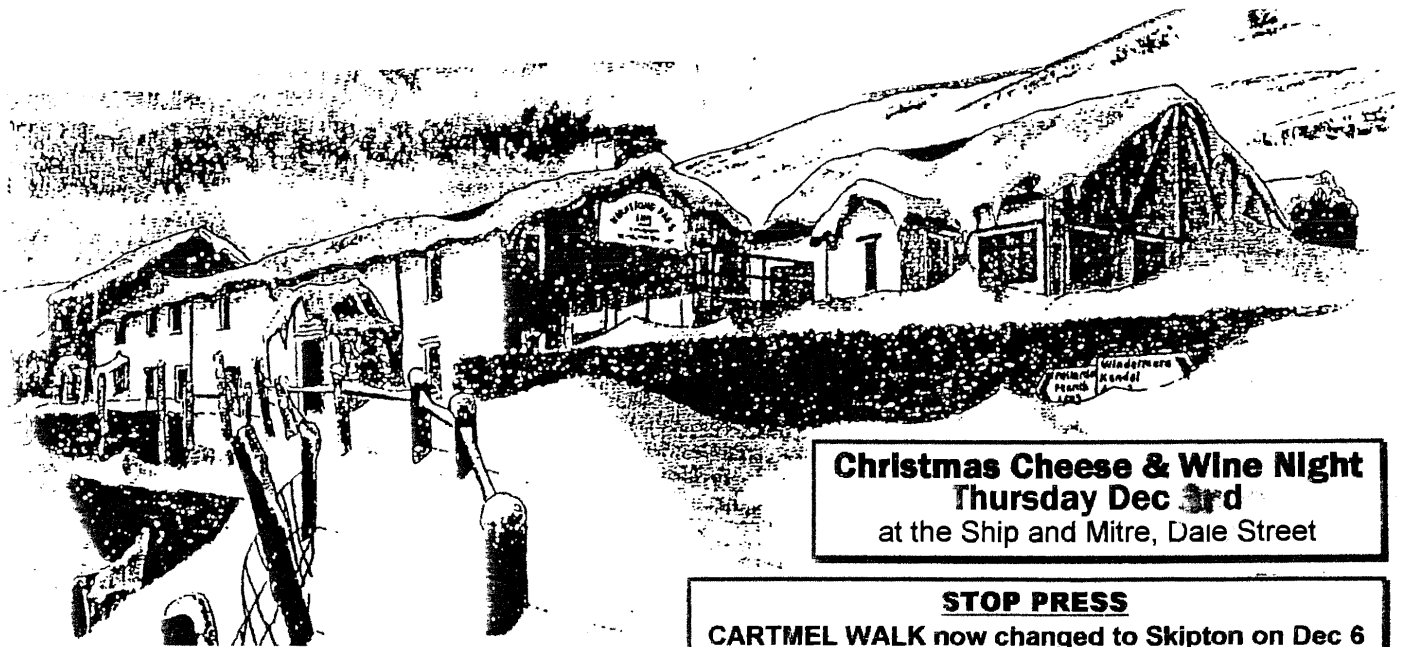


Liverpool Catholic Ramblers Christmas Newsletter

Issue No.78

2009

Seventh Series



The Kirkstone Pass Inn

Brewed from 'The Struggle' near the summit of the pass

Christmas Cheese & Wine Night
Thursday Dec 3rd
at the Ship and Mitre, Dale Street

STOP PRESS

CARTMEL WALK now changed to Skipton on Dec 6
This is a meal optional event but there was a problem at Cartmel. No problems at Skipton after the walk.

Nineteen-year-old cyclist was a human torch at Cockermouth in 1958

That was me, after I had spent many hours in the saddle with two friends. I remember my first warm welcome of the Kirkstone Pass Inn, after slogging up The Struggle in rain and thick mist.

We were ambitiously attempting to cycle around the Lake District in a week (going up via the Yorkshire Dales, starting and finishing at Warrington). We stood upon our pedals up the Kirkstone Pass.

Several years later I had to stand upon the brake pedal of my old Morris Minor on the Honister Pass after I had swapped my 26" bike wheels for four 13" car wheels but the brakes were not responding too well as I had a full car of walkers and baggage.

Anyway, all those years ago, I found Cockermouth hostel was quite primitive with no washrooms. We filled jugs and bowls for washing ourselves from a tap in the garden! Gas lights were used on the low ceilings, and being 6ft 1½in I had to crouch slightly. I inadvertently stood right underneath one of those glowing gas mantles (whilst serving soup) when there was a strong smell of singeing. The others could see my, er, flaming hair, but I couldn't see it!

The flames were quickly smothered and fortunately the skin on my scalp was protected with my (then)

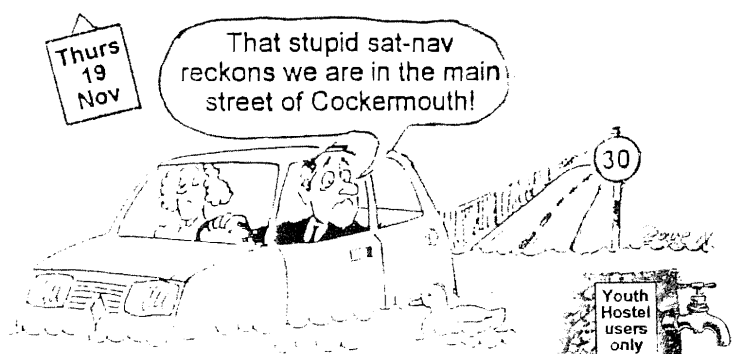
thick mop of hair. Of course, the others just laughed their heads off. I was thankful to still have a head!

We occasionally covered over 80 miles in one day and even got as far as Northumberland (to 'Twice Brewed' youth hostel) via parts of Hadrian's Wall.

One of those energetic friends cycling with me was a geology student. He in time got married and then became Director of Warrington Museum. His wife since sadly died; but he still rides a bike to this day!

So, have any of you been to Cockermouth? I don't think even Lakes lover Alfred Wainwright ever got there. However, if you are the exception and have been there, why did you go? Why not tell us about it in the Readers' Letters page.

Saddlesquasher



FORTHCOMING WALKS

Contrary to the recent wet weather there are often some fine, crisp pleasant days for our winter walks.

January

- 3 **Lyme Deer Park** near Stockport (M62 route).
- 10 No ramble
- 17 **Rivington Pike**, nr Bolton. On pleasant paths and hills through Lever Park estate. Lovely tea rooms in the small barn and the main barn.
- 24 **Arnside**. Part coast walk above Morecambe Bay. A challenge for some to climb the Knott.

Pre-Christmas walk (Dec 13) changed to Sunday Dec 20 – Neston to West Kirkby

Original date cancelled due to leader not available.

Public Transport will be used, and so booking is not necessary. Meet at the Subway café by the Metro (facing St Thomas Street) 10.00 to 10.30am. You can get a £4 day travel pass on the bus or even admit that you're over 60 by using your travel pass. Leader: Dot, probably assisted by Roy. Chance of a meal afterwards at Weatherspoons in West Kirkby.

OBITUARY – Margaret Clay sadly died recently after a short illness.

Margaret (*nee Acred*) was a member of the club in the 1960's where she met her husband Bill who was then a committee member and a keen walk leader. They moved to Belper in Derbyshire a few years ago. Our sincere messages of sympathy and condolences go out to William and daughters Christine and Helen. May she rest in Peace.

Bookings for the coach/Cancellations

You are reminded that if you need to cancel your booking that you must inform Will Harris by the Thursday night prior to the walk, otherwise you will be charged the full cost of your coach booking.

New Members

Welcome to the following members who joined or rejoined our club recently. They are: Paula Duncan, Carol Finlayson and Mary Rasmussen. We hope you enjoy many happy years of walking with us.

Another recipe from Brenda's book:

Brandy boiled fruit cake

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| 8oz (225g) margarine | 2 full tsp mixed spice |
| 12oz (350g) granulated sugar | 4 beaten eggs |
| 1½ lb (700g) mixed dried fruit | 1lb (450g) plain flour |
| ½ pint (275ml) water | large pinch of salt |
| 2 level tsp bicarbonate of soda | 2 x tots of brandy |

1. Place the margarine, sugar, fruit, water, bicarbonate of soda and mixed spice in a saucepan.
2. Bring to the boil and simmer for 1 minute.
3. Pour into a large bowl and allow to cool, then add 2 measures of brandy.
4. Line a 9in cake tin.
5. Add the eggs, flour and salt to the cooled mixture and mix well. Pour into the prepared cake tin.
6. Bake in the centre of the oven for 1¼ hours at 180 deg C/350 deg F/gas mark 4.

Christmas Buffet Dance

Saturday Dec 12th

at New Century Hall Tickets £10

Venue is same as last year – it's on the back streets behind Walton Church, not far from Rice Lane flyover

8 till late – don't be late for the 9.00 buffet

Get your ticket on the coach or at our Cheese and Wine Night or phone Will on 0151-486 6541

Christmas Hamper Draw

Your donations of items of food or anything that you would like to find in a Christmas hamper are welcome for our draw at the Christmas dance. Will Harris is the man to give them to at our Christmas Cheese and Wine Night or give them to the person going around with the book on the coach. Thanks.

Birds gave your editor the V sign

I was well rewarded when taking an abnormal early morning stroll on pleasant paths along the shady wooded banks of Carr Mill Dam recently – barely 15 minutes' walk from my abode. After hearing a familiar honking sound above me I focussed my eyes on a colossal flight of Canada Geese (at least 300) in several V formations. But suddenly they all seemed to swerve in unison and plunged downwards in my direction like kamikaze pilots – a little daunting like Alfred Hitchcock's film; *The Birds*.

They almost crashed onto the lake at high speed, just yards from where I was standing; but then they stretched upright – their feet hitting the water first at a sharp angle; webbed feet pushing against the water and then water-skiing with wings flapping at full stretch, helping them to brake while skimming through the deep water – a really awesome display!

So have any of you had an awesome experience on holiday recently, or indeed, even on your own doorstep? Then why not tell us about it in the newsletter?

Thanks to those who contributed in any way to this edition and send me your Readers' Letters or other material for our future editions to the newsletter office: 7 Abbots Way, Billinge, Wigan WN5 7SB or send an email to davenews@hotmail.com

Cheese & Wine Nights

Come along and enjoy the free entry to our super prize quizzes and light musical entertainment held on the first Thursday of December (3rd) and Thurs Jan 7th at the Ship and Mitre (upstairs) in Dale Street. Cheese & Wine costs just £1.50. Free night car parking opposite (under flyover).

Our February Bring and Buy Sale

Help to generate extra cash for the club's funds by donating any useful unwanted items for our bring and buy sale on the night of the first Thursday of February (4th) at the Ship and Mitre (upstairs).

Does global warming mean hotter summers . . . but colder winters?

Try convincing anyone living in Britain that our summers are hotter! Or try to tell any polar bear whose habitat is rapidly melting away that winters are getting colder!

Yet, it could all be true, as some parts of Europe had abnormal heavy falls of snow in mid-October this year, especially in eastern Germany, southern Austria, the Czech Republic and southern Poland.

The picture below appeared in one of our national newspapers on October 16. It is one of the main streets in the alpine resort of Zakopane, Poland. You can see where adept snowploughs have thrown the snow in huge mounds on each side of the road.

Unlike our country, Zakopane's sheep are always kept in safe enclosures day and night – usually with a shepherd present – otherwise the wolves would get them! Unless attacked, wolves are actually scared of humans. They live in dense forests and mountains and are very rarely seen in the daytime.

It is hard to believe that a group of us were trekking in Zakopane's snow-free Tatra Mountains just three weeks before this snowfall. It was quite warm then.

Deep snow in October

A shepherd leads his flock along a road in Zakopane (Ray Mc?) after heavy mid-October snow. Two climbers were killed in the Tatra Mountains and a shepherd froze to death as temperatures plummeted to well below zero.

Some Polish villagers suffered because they had not yet bought coal for the winter.

There was also deep snow in the mountain ranges of eastern Germany. In the Austrian Alps there had been 90cm (3ft) of snow in two days. Some of their ski resorts opened – the earliest start to the season on record.



Paragliding for her 100th birthday!

Yes! Centenarian Peggy McAlpine put the icing on the cake by paragliding straight into the Guinness Book of Records. This Scottish great-grandmother had never done it before but she did do a bungee jump for her 80th birthday! She used to be a climber before moving to Cyprus in 2004 with her daughter. She and her 'pilot' had to jump from a craggy 2,500ft mountain and were airborne for 15 minutes above the Mediterranean coast with stunning views. After a safe landing (there was an ambulance on stand-by just in case) she then celebrated her triumph with champagne. Peggy thoroughly enjoyed it and hinted she would do it again any time, perhaps when she was 105! And it was far superior to that bungee jump she did 20 years ago.

Well, that could make really elderly but still proud active ramblers perhaps feel just a little bit inadequate!

Is octogenarian skiing next?

Nearly two dozen young-at-heart members and a few friends are all off on a skiing holiday to Zakopane this coming February and March in two equal groups. A few are in their forties but several others have bus passes now, and one (yours truly) has only ten years to reach that milestone. Well, we can all be optimists!



Centenarian Peggy, with her pilot, Ozgur Gozakar



READERS' LETTERS



More of your Readers' Letters are welcome in future editions

LEAVE THE 'C' WALKS/WALKERS ALONE

That was a very derogatory write up against the 'C' walkers/walks, in the last newsletter. What kind of message does that send to new members who, by the way, always start off on the 'C' walks?

The 'C' walkers can do just a strenuous walk in mountainous areas as the 'A' or 'B' walkers, apart from one difference. They walk at a leisurely pace, therefore enabling them to enjoy the scenery and beauty of nature all around them.

The 'C' walkers could also be regarded as environmentally friendly. A recent documentary on the BBC stated that walkers who race quickly up mountains and hills cause a great deal of erosion over the decades, just think what 82 years of damage the Catholic Ramblers have contributed to the landscape – those who race, that is.

This article also claims there is a shortage of leaders for the 'C' walks and that some leaders have 'C' walks SPRUNG upon them at the last minute. This could be deemed as a rather foolish and hazardous practice. The writer also states, we are fell walkers not rambles – since when? The programme, newsletter, and newspaper adverts have us down as Liverpool Catholic Ramblers' Association; no mention of fell walkers there!

The 'C' walkers would like to thank Dot Murphy and Ray Mac for freely leading the majority of 'C' walks which very often includes a tough but enjoyable uphill climb. We would also like to thank all other leaders who do a grand job of leading walks.

Veronica (Ronny) Murray

ESKDALE WEEKEND

As stated by VT, the Eskdale weekend was enjoyable, up until the moment of departure when Margaret Scotland went to the drying room for her boots. They had taken a walk all by themselves and no other boots were left in their place. If anyone knows anything about this would they let Margaret know.

Ronny Murray

Having seen the above it is reassuring that at least one member cares enough about the club to respond to a newsletter article that at first glance seemed to give the 'C' walkers the boot! There was a vital clue saying that in theory we should now just have 'A' and 'B' walks.

However, all you 'C' walkers need not worry – your position is safe in the committee's hands!

My dictionary defines a fell walker as someone who walks in high moorland fells and mountains of northern England. Well surely that includes us?

What I really should have explained was that ALL rambling clubs around Merseyside have evolved into fell walking clubs (even though they are still actually called rambling clubs). Can anyone put an actual date on evolution? Instead of all of us once rambling along the flatter walks in the Wirral or the Formby coastline, etc, most of us now walk in the Pennines and the Lake District, as opposed to the south of England's unchanged flat rambling groups.

On my CV I used to list fell walking as my weekend hobby. It impressed one prospective employer as he revealed that he was also a fell walker – I know that 'rambling' wouldn't have had as much impact.

Actually, Ronny wrongly states that new members always start off on 'C' walks. Some newcomers start straight off with a 'B' or even an 'A' walk.

And so, could you personally plan ahead and book a walk or two for the next four or six weeks in advance? Now think about it.

The answer for many is: "No, I can't plan that far in advance." Unfortunately it is exactly the same with our 'C' leaders – they, likewise, don't always know.

Can anyone name anybody who causes erosion by racing in our club? Fell runners maybe, but the problem has been tackled by paving paths, even abroad; eg: in the Tatra Mountains thousands walk daily where I guess about 80% of paths are paved.

Many 'C' walks have recently been planned at the very last minute. It is not the ideal way to do things, but I do know the leaders don't regard it as a foolish and hazardous practice. All leaders can lead straight from the map. If they can't then they shouldn't be leading.

So what can we do? One unpopular solution would be to have just one ramble per month like our Seniors' Section or some other walking clubs do. Then the 'C' walks could be planned in advance. The average attendance at the moment for each member is probably about one ramble out of every four. We obviously need more members to fill in the vacuum. What are all your views on this?

If you do still wish to be regarded as a rambler (as Ronny does) that is your prerogative. **A Walker**

ESKDALE WEEKEND. Margaret's boots were most likely taken by mistake – possibly not by one of us, but by a walker from one of the other groups who were there – it does happen. When that person was due to go out again and tried to put Margaret's boots on they would realise it and then they would probably phone the hostel to try to contact the real owner.

SENIORS' SECTION REPORTS

A Bowness break – 13-16 October

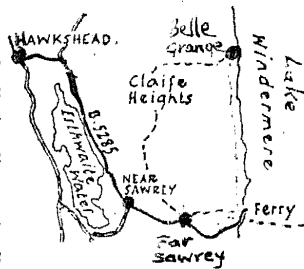
A group of 18 were booked into the Hydro Hotel. It stands on a hill, overlooking Bowness and a broad span of Windermere, weather permitting!

We were welcomed by a cheerful receptionist who allocated our rooms to us. After settling in, the group gathered in the lounge bar for tea, coffee or whatever else one fancied.

Marcia volunteered to lead and had programmed three walks, the order of which had to be shuffled due to mist and unreliable ferry services. With our bus passes in hand, the bus to Ambleside was boarded. It was a tourist bus, the type with a semi-open top deck. With the covered portion occupied, we soon found out why – for every tree the bus passed under we were showered with drips of water or got wafted by wet leaves.

Upon arrival in Ambleside (does anyone know what Amble, Ambleside, is aside of?). The party debussed, heading for Loughrig Fell. Here I must admit that in six score years, and . . . of walking in the Lakes, this was the first time I had approached the fell from this direction. Because of the low mist we didn't use the upper path, but took the lower one skirting Rydal Water, then up onto the Terrace, and then descending to Grasmere and the bus back – but inside this time.

Thursday: Again the ferries on Lake Windermere were awry, and again the itinerary had to be rearranged, so the more reliable chain ferry was used. Our walk was northwards, along the banks of the lake beneath Claife Heights, to Belle Grange.



It was great to have a number of former regulars with us, troddling (*troddling being too old to toddle but too young to trundle*) step for step with us "regulars."

Unfortunately Maureen developed boot problems, two in fact, losing the sole of both boots! Now we know cats have nine lives, but humans with three

soles – never. Maybe the "Crier of Claife" was abroad, but having two soles, I'm sure her remaining one is as pure as the driven snow!

Upon reaching Belle Grange it was here the party divided, some returning the way we had just come. The rest set off to ascend the Heights then descending passing Wise Ean and Moss Eccles Tarns, taking in views of Near Sawrey, before arriving at Far Sawrey, to imbibe at the Local, in a beautiful valley with the meadows and tree-fringed tarns illuminated by afternoon sun.

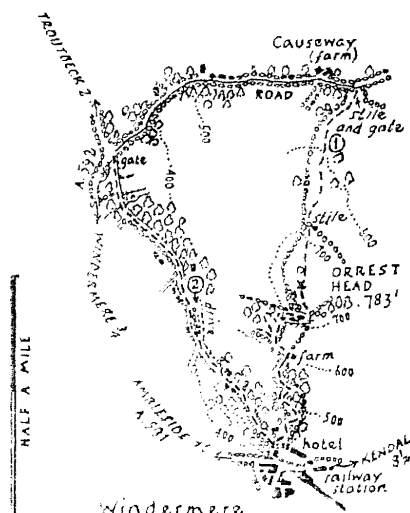


Having just missed the ferry, a wait of twenty minutes was passed eating and drinking our remaining supplies before cruising across to the Hydro for the rest of our four-course dinners.

Friday: With the majority of the party returning home, a smaller party set off for Orrest Head via the eastern outskirts of Bowness and Windermere, crossing the railway and the A591 reaching Orrest Head via side roads and footpaths. It was on a path when stopping at a gate that we saw in the adjoining field two roe deer running swiftly and leaping over a fence – a fascinating site.

With the last of the walks over and also the ending of a lovely three days, thanks to Marcia for her leadership and patience in shepherding us oldies, for she is a serious fell and long distance walker and Tony for his support, he has climbed Kilimanjaro – no less; also Jean for her organising skills in putting all this together. **G.**

It is encouraging to note in the last paragraph that at least one Seniors' Section Catholic Rambler is regarded as a 'fell walker' – not just a 'rambler'. (See Readers' Letter page) – Editor.



MOMENTS

I am sure that everybody has moments. Moments they treasure or moments they would rather forget. This is one of mine.

My wife and I had enjoyed a day's walking in Cheshire, a beautiful spring day, a cloudless sky, warm sunshine with the meadows in which sheep and their lambs alongside cattle browsing on the lush grass which has that special sheen, until the seedbeds develop, dimming it.

The day had that still quietude of a traditional English Sunday of yesteryear – no traffic or industrial noise just absolute peace.

With evening drawing in as we finished the walk, upon entering a pub I asked the young barmaid: "Is the Sunday roast still on?" She looked at me for a second or two, then replied with patience and understanding, "Yes sir, if it wasn't Wednesday!" **G.**

Town Green – 15 November

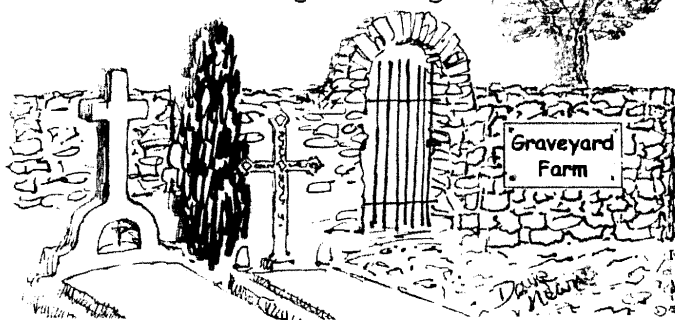
Leader: Bill Potter

Upon meeting at Maghull Station, we had the pleasure of being introduced to Maureen Davies, a friend brought along by Kath to join us on our walk. Town Green is a district of Aughton, just one stop out from Maghull and although we had all got our travel passes in our hot sticky hands, no one came to inspect them.

After leaving Town Green we were soon in a semi rural area of Aughton, the sun was shining its warmth not diminished by a light breeze. After a short while Bill brought us to the gates of an old manor house, Moor Hall. Unfortunately only a small portion of it could be seen, but Bill had "Googled" a brief history of it. A house had stood on the site since the thirteenth century, but it was subsequently altered extensively. One former owner was a lady named Mrs William Potter, so we all tugged our forelocks in defence to Bill's possible ancestry.

While we were grouped around 'His Lordship in Waiting,' and being on private property, a neighbour came to enquire about our presence. Upon hearing our interest he returned home to phone the owner to find whether he was home but got no reply, he even brought a key to unlock the gate, but again there was no response to his call. He assured us the owner would have been only too pleased for us to see part of the building, despite our muddy footwear. To compensate, he took us around the perimeter of the grounds so that we could view the frontage of the building, enhanced by a tree-fringed pond. It was at this point that the conversation turned to trees, about being able to establish the age of a tree by a group holding hands around the trunk – how the girth was found by this

method wasn't revealed! One bright spark suggested that a more accurate method would be to fell the tree and count the growth rings!



Lunch was taken at a farm that had a very welcome bench with a sign above it stating "Ramblers Rest" – but unfortunately the welcome was somewhat dampened by an engraving giving the name: "Graveyard Farm" – we did not dally too long!

The farm's name was taken presumably from a nearby Quaker graveyard, dated as 1661, an inhabitant being one Oliver Atherton who was imprisoned for not paying his tithes to the Countess of Derby. When he died his coffin he was taken around the local villages and hamlets as a warning to other tithe truants. I am sure that the unfortunate Oliver has no possible relationship to one Peter . . .

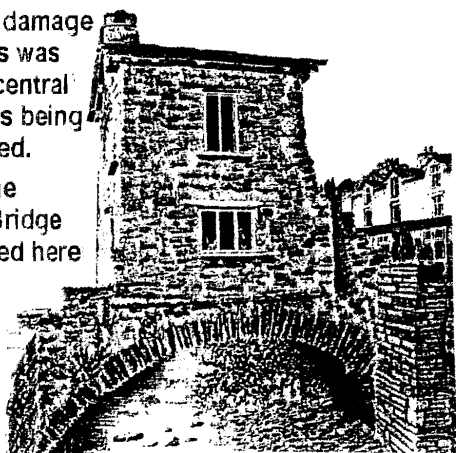
With the resumption of the walk the first shower of the day started to fall, but luckily, for most of it we sheltered in a barn. It was getting chilly by now so with still a few miles to cover we crossed the M58 – by a bridge, of course. Skirting a golf course via various paths and byways we arrived back at Maghull Station to de-boot and head to the Bootle Arms for a convivial meal. We hope that Maureen enjoyed her first day with us and that it will not be her last!

Thanks, Bill, for an interesting and pleasantly level walk, and to all for contributing to a fine day's rambling.

20vuz

Most of the bridge damage in the recent floods was due mainly to the central supports of bridges being built on the river bed.

Bridges such as the famous Ashness Bridge and the one pictured here at Ambleside should be safe as they are both constructed on rocks each side of the river.



The Officers and Committee wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year

Tesco van rambles down bike path

A Tesco delivery van taking groceries to a farm near Manchester last month followed the sat-nav instructions which took it down a well-used cycle path but it soon got wedged between trees on each side of the path.

However, the RAC didn't take long to reverse it back onto the main road again and the van delivered its load.

Puzzled?

This cowboy has been busy sorting out kids toys recently and he will be cheering up all those Cumberland children in a short while, plus countless other kids. He has his own unique form of transport that will combat any flooded road. Well, who is he? Turn him upside down if still puzzled.

