

Liverpool Catholic Ramblers'
Association

Christmas Newsletter



Seventh Series

December 1999

Issue No 23

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

THEY SAY a sense of humour helps to simplify things in this life. Well there's quite a bit of humour in this newsletter. This computer has just been telling me off for giving it bad commands. I suspect that it will stop talking to me altogether at the turn of the century so I've turned its clock back ten years. Anyone with old video recorders are also recommended to turn their year clocks back before the big crash!

I have been getting a few ideas from the Australian Catholic Walking Club of Victoria's newsletters that Albert Downing passes on to me. A story in their September newsletter bears an uncanny resemblance to one in our last edition. This was a walk where four of their members spent a few days in the mountains and while they were on the summit they spotted an eagle circling around close by. There is also a picture of two eagles circling around the peaks on that page.

This brings us back to Bob Carney's write up when I

made a mistake by wrongly adding that a Munro is a Scottish peak over 3000 feet. It is actually any peak over 4,000 feet.

Also wrongly stated was that the Brocken-Spectre gives an effect of a halo around your head. It should have read around the whole body.

Anyway, thanks to all who contributed to this edition. More articles are always needed, so just post them to me at the address above. Thanks.

Dave Newns

THE RECENT RETREAT AT UP HOLLAND

FIFTEEN Seniors' Section members and ten of ours enjoyed listening to Canon Jimmy Collins elaborating on many relevant facts connected with rambling, such as: "You feel God's presence a lot more when walking in the mountains," or "When you take photographs it's the people that matter - the views come secondary."

He included a gripping account of his recent long distance

walk that he himself had researched (and written a book) covering footpaths from Upholland all the way to Walsingham where there is a shrine a little similar to the more universally known one in Lourdes.

Although 83 years old (I think) Canon Collins is still fit and very active both in mind and body. Oh! And the cooked meal was the best I have experienced on a retreat - *Editor*

NEW MEMBERS APPEARING EVERY WEEK

MANY NEW FACES have been seen on the rambles recently. Your names will be published in the next newsletter once you have been approved by the committee at the next monthly meeting. Meanwhile we hope you enjoy your walks with us.

A RECENT MASSIVE RAMBLERS' REUNION

A FORTNIGHT AGO over ninety past club members, plus a few present ones including myself, got together for a great night out at the Harbourside Club, a bit further up from the Albert Dock. This wasn't advertised in the newsletter because the organisers and the majority of those present don't get a newsletter any more. There is talk of another get-together in the spring, probably having a barn dance. I will, however, ensure that this is advertised in the newsletter.

**What has
Rambling Sid
got missing
pictured here
towards the
end of a
his winter
ramble?
Answer is
in the
Ramblerite
opposite**



Christmas Buffet Dance

to be held at brand new SYLVESTRIAN Sports and Social Club
in Silvester Street, near the Eldonian Village, off Vauxhall Road
on SATURDAY 11th DECEMBER, 1999

Tickets £7

Dancing to their Professional Disco from 8 till late

Meanwhile don't forget to donate items for the Hamper Draw. See Mike Riley



Social Events



at the Cornmarket

DECEMBER

- 2nd **MINCE PIE NIGHT**
- 9th **CHRISTMAS QUIZ**
- 16th **SIT AND CHAT NIGHT**
Nothing planned for this night
but Will Harris will be down taking
bookings for walks, etc.

JANUARY

- 6th **CHEESE AND WINE NIGHT**
Make a note of this date.
- 13th **PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT**
- 20th **MARY'S REALLY HARD QUIZ**

FEBRUARY

- 3rd **PIE NIGHT**

Ramblerite



NUMBERS out on walks have leaped up again after an inexplicable drop over the past year. Much of the credit must be due to our recent publicity campaign. Happily, full coaches are now imminent.

An interesting comparison with another Merseyside rambling club, who fill a 51-seater coach (plus a 6-week waiting list) is that this represents only 5 per cent of their membership. Now if we had only 5 per cent turning out it would mean that just ten of us would be on the coach. When we actually fill our 51-seater coach it represents a healthy 25 per cent of our membership. **Note: Priority must now be given to those who pay £7 on booking.**

MILLENNIUM WEEKEND

There are 30 of us booked for the Ambleside youth hostel. If you are going up in the mini-bus pay Bob Carney as soon as possible. The cost of four days hire (including fuel for running around) is £20 each. Bob's number is 427 5373. There was a vacancy for just one male club member when this newsletter came out. Phone Dave Dickel on 01244 533995.



Now have you worked out what Rambling Sid should be holding towards the end of his ramble? Yes, it's a torch - there's that odd occasion when it could be a life-saver, so put your powerful mini-torch in your rucksack (or jacket) now!

MORE LEADERS NEEDED

When our current winter programme got printed a few leaders left it too late to get their names down alongside some of the walks. We now urgently need extra leaders for our sudden increase in numbers on the coaches. See Will Harris.

MAP-READING COURSE

Map-reading lessons have been given by Ray Mc on the past few Monday nights. There have been good attendances. Contact Ray if you are proficient enough to find your way to the Ship and Mitre pub in Dale Street, with or without a compass. *Sorry, I couldn't find my way there!* - Editor.

FORTHCOMING RAMBLES

December 5th (Hayfield)

DOES RUDOLPH LIVE IN LYME PARK?

The 'C' walk starts near Disley in Cheshire. I will be leading after swapping from the 'B' (Dave N). We walk through Lyme Deer Park and finish along the Sett Valley Trail leading to Hayfield. The 'A' and 'B' parties will probably be trekking on the popular high-level path along the edges of the Kinder Scout Plateau, the centre of which is the highest point in Derbyshire at 1088 feet. (*Kinder is pronounced as in Tinder*).

December 12th (Grassington)

STEPPING BACK TO DICKENSIAN TIMES

Grassington, 8 miles north of Skipton, have a Dickensian festival for three Saturdays in December. Unfortunately we'll be there on a Sunday but some of the atmosphere will still be around in the shops and pubs. We'll be having walks in the area, but check with your leader to see how much time is allocated for browsing around the village. Although we've got our dance the night before, bookings are already quite heavy.

First coach ramble of the New Millennium

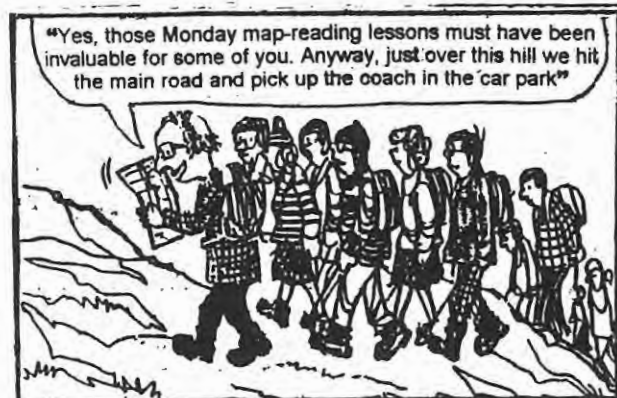
Sunday January 9th 2000 (Peckforton Hills)

BEESTON CASTLE AND THE SANDSTONE TRAIL (with a pub meal afterwards - optional).

After the Millennium celebrations and numerous walks at Ambleside, there may be some with sore feet - but sore heads would be more apt! The Seniors' Section could possibly join us (or meet us after the walk) as they plan to walk in the Delamere area - not too far from where we are. At the end of the walk we will be sojourning at the Bickerton Poacher pub at the southern end of the Peckforton Hills for an extended hour or so, with a good choice of menu for those wishing to eat. Three grades of walk along part of the Sandstone Trail. This could well be a full coach.



Reading maps isn't too hard. The difficulty is the multifarious ways of interpreting them!



Full details of next year's Scottish walking holiday

Ben Nevis or bust!

A week in Scotland with the club

Saturday May 27 to Sunday June 4, 2000

This is the schools' half-term holiday and includes Bank Holiday Monday (May 29).

Choice of two or three grades of walk each day whenever feasible



Map showing location of our four hostels

THREE superior-graded youth hostels have been selected for this holiday (with Torridon excepted). The doors are open all day and night until 2.00am at superior-graded hostels but warning notices are pinned up to remind us about "No noise after 11pm." A substantial continental breakfast is included in the overnight charge at hostels 1, 2 and 4 at approx £12 each (we are awaiting new prices for next year).

Apart from continental breakfast, meals are not provided in Scottish hostels, but you can do your own cooking in the large members kitchens, or you can eat out occasionally. Breakfast consists of fruit juice, cereal, large soft rolls with ham and cheese, tea and coffee. Note: Breakfast isn't provided at Torridon which is a standard-grade hostel but there are facilities for cooking your own meals (cutlery, pots and pans are all provided). Note: A joint youth hostel membership card is held by our club.

- 1 **LOCH LOMOND** (hostel and conference centre) on Saturday night; a very impressive Laird's mansion (frequently filmed and used in TV's "High Road") 1½ miles from shops, restaurants and pub meals in the small town of Balloch at the southern tip of the Loch. There's a handy Catholic church near the Balloch Hotel for those wishing to get to Mass at 6.00 on Saturday evening or at 9.30 on Sunday morning (straight after breakfast). The small village of Luss, a couple of miles away (also featured in TV's "High Road") is worth a visit.
- 2 **GLEN NEVIS** (next two nights) nestling in the heart of Scotland's most scenic glen near Fort William. The Ben Nevis tourist path (Pony Track) starts here.
- 3 **TORRIDON** hostel for four nights. Current cost is £9.00 per night (could be a slight price rise, maybe not). Torridon is a Standard-grade hostel and it's self-catering only, or eat out nearby. Note: External doors are locked at 11.30pm here.
- 4 **EDINBURGH, Eglinton** (2 hostels in Edinburgh) Saturday night with time on Sunday for sightseeing, shopping, etc, before returning home in the afternoon.

CAR DRIVERS NEEDED (no minibus).

COST OF PETROL: At time of booking unleaded petrol works out at £10 per 100 miles - a quick calculation: 1000 miles = £100. That's £25 each for four in a car, or £33 for three sharing. (Hopefully the Chancellor's spring Budget won't hit us with more petrol tax!).

A £20 deposit is required before a booking can be secured. See Bob Carney

Crinkled but not crumpled on Crinkle Crag

The Langdales walk - October 17th

NOT having rambled for some time I was pleasantly surprised to find a rather luxurious video-equipped coach pulling in to our pick-up point and being well filled on this bright and clear autumn Sunday morning. I spotted several new faces, all eager to get up to the Lakes.

Unpleasant memories, owing to atrocious weather on my last visit to the Langdales came to mind. Would these hills be kinder today? A decision was needed. B walk or C?

Not feeling like ending up in some far-flung outpost of Britain with the A-walking human dynamos, and having already done Paul Healy's proposed C walk from Elterwater village (via Blea Tarn) to the Langdales car park, I chose the B. Would I regret it? Ray McIntosh the leader said the tops at around 2,500 feet were the place to be on this glorious day.

Paul's party initially disembarked with more numbers than usual for a C group. Did they know something I didn't about the B route? Our turn came to disembark at the car park by the Dungeon Ghyll hotel where I was expecting to negotiate a near vertical ascent of the adjacent mountain but much to my surprise Ray ambled us along the Langdale valley, in the Oxendale valley direction. Then, as if by sleight of hand, he took us up a steep path to the left, to head for the famous Crinkle Crag. Seemingly he was anxious to push on as our initial rest breaks were brief. Obviously, a fairly lengthy journey lay ahead as we passed Red Tarn above the ravine.

Then people began to talk disconcertingly about "The Bad Step". An ominously-sounding hazard came to mind. Ray quickly assuaged our fears but as the obstacle came into view I wondered what I had let myself in for? This rocky outcrop required us to kick up our left legs like the Tiller Girls to gain a foothold, then we had to haul

ourselves up so that the right foot could slot in a groove followed by another press-up movement. Fellow ramblers held outstretched hands so that the obstacle was safely overcome.

We were rewarded with wonderful panoramic views at the top where I made good use of my camera. Next we had to tackle something called 'The Band'. Instead of being a band of strolling minstrels, this turned out to be a long embedded pathway down to civilisation. Owing to having to keep my head down to watch my footing I developed a stiff neck. Rather fancifully, I thought of it as a crinkle in my neck due to crossing Crinkle Crag!

Towards the end of the long descent a fine-looking cart-horse proffered his head over a rope fence. He was duly rewarded with a fine selection of polos but the donors haplessly ended up with saliva-strewn hands.

Homeward bound, it has become *de rigueur* to call in for refreshment at the Carnforth Hotel where the coach driver seemingly took 15 three-point turns to position his coach nearby. The landlady presented us with chips and butties but not the usual sausages or fish fingers. I wondered why? Then I realised I had a drink problem. Only time for another beer before our statutory three-quarters-of-an-hour pub stop!

Never mind, a lovely day was had by all in good company and there were no untoward incidents thanks to the skill of the leaders.

Richie Cannon





Seniors' Section Write-ups



The Basil Fawly of Hollingworth Lake - 10/10/99

HARRY O'NEILL'S Rochdale walks are prevalent in the Seniors' Calendar. So established are they that we had "apologies" from five members. Two were in Japan, another was in America (poor excuses), but two were in West Derby recovering from Kodak's 50th anniversary party. Such is the lifestyle of this Section.

The meeting point was at the Hollingworth Lake Visitor Centre. There is a pay-and-display car park by the lake with a Basil Fawly attendant, so be warned. Minutes after arriving, the Leader greeted the party and returned to his car to find he already had a £14 parking fine ticket on his windscreen!

Each year there is a different route with interesting terrain and on this occasion we set off, using OS Map Landranger 109, in the direction of Tunshill and the three reservoirs at Ogden. Coming down the hill we were accompanied by a flight of Canada Geese which made a spectacular water ballet landing on Piethorne Reservoir. We talked of Eric Hardy who is still going strong on Radio Merseyside.

A hillside descent also brought out the trekking poles and comments that a recent report said that 150,000 poles were sold last year*. This could mean many are sold in pairs - perhaps with George Orwell's Animal Farm phrase in mind "four legs good, two legs bad". Some walkers doubt that poles reduce knee strain

by a third but accept that using two poles give an all body workout. Latest developments include a pole shock absorbing system; an example being the Brasher Anti-Shock at £60 per pair. So far, Seniors seem to use just one pole but an attractive second pole may be the Tippling Canes or Flask Sticks which can be filled with a favourite drink. (*Shurely shome mishtake - Ed.*)

We crossed Bleakedgate Moor and north to Low House Moor before returning to Hollingworth Lake Country Park. The party, happy with a good day in the hills, then repaired to a local restaurant for refreshments and a good meal.

With many thanks to Harry from all who enjoyed this day - Jean and Gerry McDonald, Peter Atherton, Tony Gilmore, and Marcia and Tony Thompson. The final good news is that I can report that a letter from Harry to the Ministry (of Silly Walks) resulted in Basil's hasty £14 parking ticket being withdrawn.

Atom

* Many General Section members also bought poles last year

Couple from Japan show us Merseyside's high spot

THE THREAT of rain didn't deter ten intrepid diehards from setting off from the Skillicorns' front door in high spirits. Little did they know how relentless, how heartless that rain would turn out to be!

It was on Sunday, October 24th that we walked through woodland turning gold and followed the stream down to Carr Mill Dam, the sight of which brought nostalgic memories flooding back to Tony. But we weren't let into any secrets. Was he a speedboat driver, a daredevil swimmer or a fisherman like those we saw round the dam? With a passing glance at the local flora and fauna we forgot our memories and turned to more pressing things - lunch under the trees.

Lunch is always an opportunity for someone to regale the others with tales of their latest holiday. How fortunate we all are! This time George and Freda relived some of their adventures in Japan. Reassuring for the others. Not likely to get lost on this walk round their own neighbourhood!

After lunch the way took us on to the ridge to the south of Billinge where we were able to see for miles or would have been able to only for you know what! But

the company was excellent, our spirits high and we were able to imagine life in the area four hundred years ago as our leader pointed out some fine old houses. He was stumped however, on being asked the history of Crank Caverns. There's always some awkward customer, isn't there?

Undaunted, he led us on and on and the rain became more and more pitiless but nobody complained. Having reached the side of Billinge Hill, the highest point on Merseyside, we were offered an option, up or down? Eight went up and comments like, "It would be lovely on a nice day," and "In the right conditions you can see Snowdon from here," were heard. The descent took us back to our starting point but Freda's offers of tea were politely declined. I've been drinking it for years and I'm still here. Seriously, it was very thoughtful of tired and very wet ramblers who were obviously worried about wearing out the front door-mat.

GEFA



Seniors' Section Programme



RAMBLES: Dec 12 THURSTASTON - Bill Potter

Jan 9 TBA - Jean and Gerry McDonald

Jan 23 LYDIATE AND SEFTON - George Skillicorn (01744- 892823)

HOUSE MEETINGS: Dec 2 MAUREEN HOWARD

Jan 6 JEAN and GERRY McDONALD

A peep at a Christmas newsletter in 1953

IT WAS only eight years since World War II and the country was still trying to find it's feet - so was the club, as there were no rambles during the war years.

This page from the club's Christmas newsletter of 1953 (scaled down to half its original size) has unearthed quite a few interesting facts.

On December 27th the Carr Mill Dam walk (that's just down the road from where I live) would have started from St Helens. It only cost 10p to get a return from Liverpool to St Helens on public transport then!

Incidentally, there was a walk in the Carr Mill Dam area just recently (see Seniors' "Japanese" report overleaf).

Our jargon has changed somewhat from the Rivington Pike write-up and would raise a few eyebrows if the mood of the party was described as such today; also in the final paragraph the headgear has the same description.

Butty breaks were referred to as "meal halts." That report was written by a headmaster from Crosby who died about 20 years ago (but don't ask me how I knew that!).

Over the last 30 years or so, we took it for granted for a coach to drop us off and pick us up on the Rivington walks but in 1953 they had to get there by public transport, and at the end of the day they had a long walk along the road to Chorley for the bus to Liverpool.

The bottom notice advertising the Wednesday night Christmas Party urges you to come early and get your money's worth - the cost was just 10p in today's money! You could have a really wild time!

I have just broken off to scan through one of our anniversary newsletters and found that 1953 was when the club first rented the clubrooms in the Cathedral Buildings at Brownlow Hill, so this must have been their first Christmas party there.

It wrongly states in that Fortieth Anniversary newsletter that two walks "A" and "B" were inaugurated in May 1953. They were actually having one or two "A" and "B" walks way back in 1949 when a few coach rambles were also introduced.

DATE.	RAMBLE.	MEET.	TIME.	APP. COST.
Dec. 27th.	Carrmill Dam.	Stn. John St.	2.0 p.m.	2/-d.
		LEADER		
Jan. 3rd.	Yuletide Walk & Treasure Hunt.		Details at Club	23/12/53.
Jan. 9/10th.	Chalet Weekend.		Details at Club	6/1/54.
Jan. 17th.	Gt. Budworth.	Russell St.	10.0 a.m.	3/6d.
		LEADER - Frank Quick.		
Jan. 24th.	Little Switzerland.	Pier Head	10.15 a.m.	3/6d.
		LEADER - B. Edwards.		
Jan. 31st.	Parbold.	Exchange Stn.	10.45 a.m.	2/3d.
		LEADER - H. Roche.		

The Benediction Walks are Carrmill Dam (Dec.) and Parbold (Jan.)

DO TAKE NOTE OF THE ALTERATIONS WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THE RAMBLING PROGRAMME.

RIVINGTON PIKE.

22nd November, 1953

This might be described as a typical autumn ramble - cosy bus-rides, a modicum of fog and, of course, the colourful background of the hills covered with red and brown patchwork. The mood of the party was also gay - perhaps poor "Grandma" and some of her companions would describe it as boisterous? After being "assisted" up and down steep inclines (mostly down!) and over ditches (mostly half way over!) our tame old-age pensioner always came up smiling.

Another red-head was observed to be taking lessons in the "mountain goat" technique. Advice flowed from all sides recommending leaning back, digging in of heels, and even the use of crampons was contemplated. The pupil seemed to be progressing much better towards the end of the day.

The leader's timing was much admired - a long afternoon on the open moor was enjoyed by all, in spite of the going being hard underfoot at times. We came to the road just as dusk was falling, and the community singing along the highway to Chorley didn't seem to suffer from the rival teams plugging different ditties simultaneously.

Umbrellas on rambles are hardly standard equipment, but the paper one which turned up this time was put to many uses - an improvised bus shelter, gay headwear, and even as a parachute for descending steep slopes. Another member preferred gravity to take its course, and thought it advisable to add to his own not inconsiderable weight the heavy contents of an enormous pie-dish. This held up the proceedings at meal halts, but we were quite ruthless and forged on irrespective of digestive considerations.

Did the bus conductress ever check up on the passengers for the twenty-odd tickets bought wholesale? And did "Grandma" get her change?

Austin Callaghan.

-0-

CHRISTMAS PARTY

WEDNESDAY, 30TH DECEMBER, 1953.
8.0 p.m. Charge 2/-d.

Come along early and get your money's worth.
With our present Social Sub., anything may happen!!!!

Watch out for more archive gems in your next newsletter, but they won't be appearing until the next century! Meanwhile:

The Chairman and Committee wish you all a very
Happy Christmas
and the best of health and happiness in the
New Millennium

