

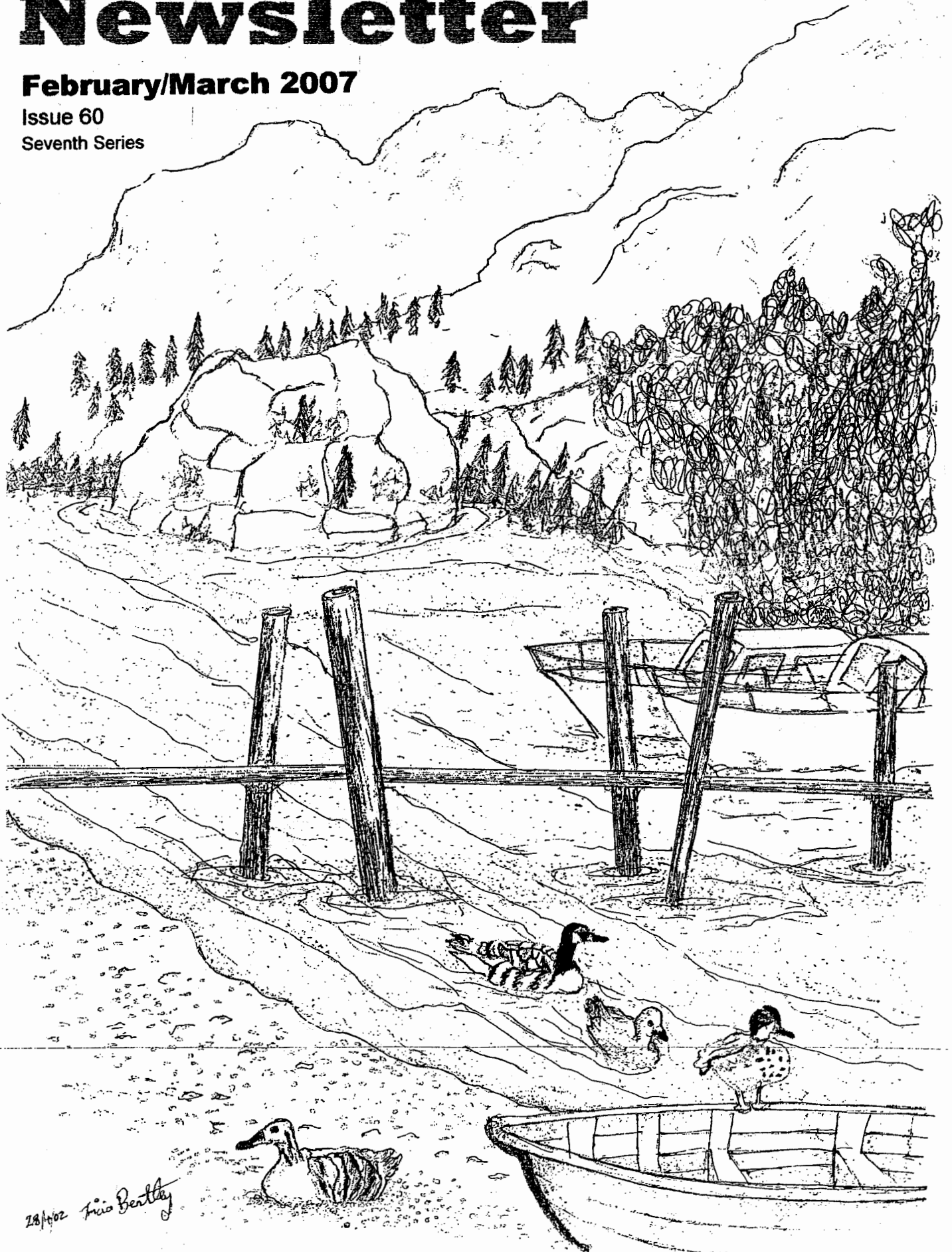
Liverpool Catholic Ramblers' Association

Newsletter

February/March 2007

Issue 60

Seventh Series



Keswick Landing Stage - Derwentwater

Close encounters – the bear facts

APPARENTLY, wolves may now be introduced to parts of Scotland in order to control the severely over-populated deer problem there. Could bears be next? Anyway bears are certainly roaming around the forested Tatra Mountains of Poland where groups of our members frequent.



With this in mind, Richie Cannon sent in this Canadian advice leaflet. It should generate a few chuckles from our lot. It seems the important thing to remember is that grizzly bears can't climb trees but black bears can! Could you recognise a black from a grizzly?

WHEN YOU SEE A BEAR

If It Does Not Approach

If spotted in the distance, make a wide detour or leave the area immediately. Report your sighting to Park Staff at the first opportunity.

If at close range, *do not approach the bear*. Remain calm, keep it in view. Avoid direct eye contact. Move away without running. Report the sighting to Park Staff.

If The Bear Approaches

If the bear is standing up, it is usually trying to identify you. Talk softly so it knows what you are. If it is snapping its jaws, lowering its head, flattening its ears, growling or making "woofing" signs, it is displaying aggression.

Do not run unless you are very close to a secure place. Move away, keeping the bear in view. Avoid direct eye contact. Dropping your pack or an object may distract it to give you more time. If it is a grizzly, consider climbing a tree.

If The Bear Attacks

Your response depends on the species and whether the bear is being defensive or offensive. Bears sometimes bluff their way out of a confrontation by charging then turning away at the last moment. Generally, the response is to *do nothing to threaten or further arouse the bear*. While fighting back usually increases the intensity of an attack, it may cause the bear to leave. Each incident is unique and the following are offered as guidelines only to deal with an unpredictable animal and complex situation.

Grizzly Attacks From Surprise

- Do nothing to threaten or further arouse the bear.
- Play dead. Assume the "cannonball position" with hands clasped behind neck and face buried in knees.
- Do not move until the bear leaves the area. Such attacks seldom last beyond a few minutes.

Black Bear Attacks From Surprise

- Playing dead is not appropriate. Try to retreat from the attack.

Grizzly or Black Bear Attacks Offensively (Including When You Are Sleeping)

- *Do not play dead*. Try to escape to a secure place (car or building) or climb a tree unless it is a black bear. If you have no other option, try to intimidate the bear with deterrents or weapons such as tree branches or rocks.

Grizzly or Black Bear Attacking For Your Food

- Abandon the food. Leave the area.
- Do not deal with a problem bear unless it is an emergency.

How would you classify an 'emergency'? – Editor

New Year at Ambleside

*We spent New Year at Ambleside
Beside Lake Windermere.*

*The weather it was very wet
And the views were not too clear.*

*On Saturday we settled in
And had a look around.
By New Year we hoped
That we would walk on higher ground.*

*On Sunday morning, after Mass,
We set off in the rain,
Into Ambleside and out
The other side again.*

*It didn't seem too bad at first,
While walking down the vale,
Then when we climbed Loughrigg,
Was it rain or was it hail?*

*We briefly sheltered in the cave,
And had our dinner there.
We weren't the only ones
To find some shelter there.*

*We battled on to reach the top
Before it got too dark,
Then quickly started down again,
To finish in the park.*

*We all enjoyed the walk,
Although we got extremely wet,
And then we still had New Year's Eve,
With buffet, to celebrate yet.*

Dave tries a freefall drop

THIS January saw our Dave Labeque freefalling . . . through his own ceiling!

He missed his bed by inches and landed on his feet, but heavily. Poor Dave unluckily fractured a rib and one of his vertebrae.

The good news was that several days later he was discharged from the Royal with a body support jacket and strong pain killers.

Joan accompanied him, along with her Nicorettes – she has given up smoking you know. Anyway, to deviate from Dave, his little doggy took a real fancy to those Nicorettes – "it is dangerous to exceed the dose" – and wolfed the lot down in one go!

This resulted in an urgent late night phone call to the vet who in turn actually phoned the Poisons Clinic at London.

Finally Dave got the message that the dog should survive but could get hyperactive for a short while! If he had any concerns, just bring the dog in overnight.

The vet's overnight fee would be over £90! Well, when the dog heard this it made a rapid recovery! The only worry now is that the dog is not allowed any more Nicorettes and may soon be sitting on the chaise longue smoking its head off!

So, keep smiling Dave and get well soon!



Ramblerite

NEW YEAR arrived with very stormy weather at our Ambleside weekend away. We thought that the strong wind couldn't get any worse, but we now know it did, a few weeks later, with storms all over the country.

However, our three Coniston walks, on February 4th saw brilliant winter sunshine. In fact a least two of us, ascending the Old Man, used suncream.

The week before, we had an optional pub meal after the dry but muddy Moel Famau rambles.

Bookings lately have been for around 30 to 35 people, so we have had a couple of full, or nearly full, smaller coaches out. Now that the spring is just around the corner we are expecting bigger turnouts, so please book beforehand to ensure that you get a seat and the right size of coach can be ordered.

Forthcoming Keswick Weekend

FRIDAY, 20th April, is the date when around 45 of us are expected to be popping up to the Lakes to fill our usual abode, Lakeside House.

Accommodation is based on full board for two days, starting with bed on the Friday and departing on the Sunday evening. Bookings are now being taken, but newcomers note that transport is by your own steam, so make sure that you are able to get up there, either by your own car, usually offering people a lift, or arrange to share someone's car when booking.

Several rooms are 3-bedded and 4-bedded, so be prepared to share with someone, stating your preference when booking if possible. Cost is £66 for the weekend. A deposit secures your place but note that you must pay the full amount **at least a week before** going up there, either to Will Harris or the person taking the bookings on rambles.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to all new members who have joined us recently. Your names will appear in the next edition.

March Cheese and Wine Night

THURS, MARCH 1ST is the date, at the Ship and Mitre (upstairs). February's was cancelled while decorators were in, but it's okay for March.

OBITUARIES – Sadly, Peter McLindon's mother died at Christmas. Also George Riley's mother died recently. Our condolences go out to both of them and their families. RIP.

Also, sadly, Peter Davies died last year. Peter stopped coming out with the main section many years ago, through health problems, but still kept his membership up until recent years. RIP.

And, the other week, one of our more senior members, who used to ramble with us a while back, Michael Coughlan, sadly died. His wife, Marie, died in 1998. May they rest in Peace.

A recent Seniors' ramble (more overleaf)

CHESTER – 14 January 2007

WHAT a difference a day makes – let alone a week. The previous Sunday the River Dee was above normal level, but not overfull. The rain, driven by a brisk, chilly wind, was sporadic, and the path beyond the meadow covered with glutinous mud. Though we slid, we didn't 'dip or dive' (a favourite Barn Dance of yesteryear).

The day before the walk was cold and raining, backed by high winds, which certainly didn't augur well for the ramble, but a satisfying group of twelve assembled in Little Roodie car park – including a welcome return of Val, and it was good to see Kath striding out with her usual vigour after an enforced lay-off, along with the hardy annuals.

The day was bright with a welcome warm sun, when the wind decided to take a breather, but because of the anticipated bad under-foot conditions, lunch was taken early, sitting on the benches by the Band(less)-stand. There was a lot of water in the river, so much so that the water level was almost the same either side of the weir – the only indication that it was there was the arch of turbulence it created.

Despite the river height, the path was surprisingly dry, compared with the previous Sunday. Most stile-less passing places were negotiated without any hind-rance, except one with a shin-deep puddle guarding it. The only way across was via a very narrow, wet, slippery plank. Cometh the hour, cometh the lass, for welly-shod Jean womanfully waded in and helped us across. Alas, this was all in vain, as we had to abandon the river path because of extensive flooding, and take to the road for a mile or so to Eccleston.

Because of the enforced diversion, we had a bit of time on our hands which enabled us to visit the village church, St Mary's, built in the nineteenth century of warm Chester sandstone, which a late afternoon sunlit to perfection. Though there was no service in progress an organ could be heard as we admired the church and its immediate surroundings.

The sun was now losing its warmth, which encouraged our return via the wooded 'Chester approach' path, where we arrived just as the light was faded, and heightening our anticipation of claiming our booked table at the Egerton Arms.

Thank you all for a wonderful day.

G.

Editor's Footnotes

YOUR last newsletter was produced at the end of November, so there has been a backlog of Seniors' Section reports. Apathetically there is only one report from our section – so, we need a few volunteers. Thankfully, we had one from the main section (in verse).

However, several people gave me a few snippets of non-rambling material recently to include in the newsletter. Another two pages could have been filled but now I have a suitcase to pack, so I have left the material for our next edition appearing around Eastertime. I hope you enjoy reading this edition, especially the bear bits.

Material for the next edition should be given to me in time for the Easter edition, or send your report on email to davenewns@hotmail.com – Thanks.

LCRA Seniors' Diary - Oct - Dec 2006 (Dates are in reverse order)

FORMBY - December 10th

IT was a long time since we'd done a Formby Ramble and it seemed a good idea for December when it seemed to be getting dark at about 2pm. The forecast for the day was dreadful: strong winds and heavy rain, so Tony and Marcia were amazed when they got to the car park at Freshfield Station, to find that ten of us turned up for the walk.



We were delighted to see George and Freda, out with us again; also Jean and Gerry, Tony G, Lilian, Harry and Bill.

We crossed the railway line and though the woods on a loop which looks vaguely Alpine and is sheltered; then down Fishermans' Path and on to the beach. This is where the wind really hit us and we were walking into it. It was bracing; the sea was wild. Tony took a photo of us all and had us lined up on the shore when a large wave scattered us and gave us wet feet. After half an hour on the beach, we retreated to the dunes and made for the Squirrel Reserve - brief stop here and then on to Wicks Lake. We saw no squirrels that day and met a disappointed visitor who had brought his family all the way from Yorkshire just to see them! By this time it was beginning to get dark, but the new paths put down by Sefton Council are easy to follow and we came back to Victoria Road via Blundell Avenue and the woods. One of the big houses in Victoria Road was clearing up after a party reputed to have cost £1.5 million - we saw the remains of the Ice Bar, and Lilian was amazed to hear that West Life had been singing there the night before!

The forecast was too pessimistic. There was hardly any rain and a bracing breeze on the beach! Our day finished with a pleasant meal at the Grapes Hotel.

LLANDUDNO - October 17th to 20th

THERE were twenty-two of us staying at the Ambassador Hotel in Llandudno, right on the sea front, and enjoying excellent meals and service. Ten of us did the planned walks and were blessed with good weather. Those on the walks were: Jean and Gerry, Marcia and Tony, Anne, Lilian, Freda, Ita, Tony G and Peter.

The first walk started at Foel Lus above Penmaen-mawr and had three main points of interest. The first was a circuit of the mountain which had splendid views of the coats, out to Anglesey and the Great Orme. The second was the old church near Garnedd Wen whose sheltered graveyard made an excellent lunch stop. A bonus was the fact that the church had been recently restored and was open to the public. Thirdly, after some ascents and descents over scrubland and round a reservoir, we came to the Druids' Circle where Tony T and Tony G tried to re-create some of the magic with the aid of walking pole divining rods. The sun shone all day and the views were splendid.

The second walk started at Trefriw. It was a great compliment to the leader that all ten people decided to join the walk again! We walked by the river to Llyn Crafnant where the rain started in earnest. However, the café by the lake is open all year, so we took refuge and, after coffee and cakes all round, we emerged to find that the sun had come out and the rest of the day was superb. Halfway along the lake, the track leads up over Mynedd Deulyn.

This is an atmospheric route. The woods are dark and gloomy; a torrent rushes down beside the path which is softly composed of thick layers of pine needles and brightly-coloured fungi peep out between the trees. By the time we'd emerged into the sunshine, the effects of the coffee and cake had worn off and thoughts were turning to lunch.

We found an excellent spot by Llyn Geirionydd where we were able to watch a group of young people canoeing on and falling into the lake. When Lilian's umbrella fell into the lake (how?). They set off to row and rescue it, but Anne got there first (on dry land!). After lunch we walked along the lake and, this being one of Peter's favourite walks of old, he was able to lead us on the scenic route back instead of the longer and steeper descent which Maria had pioneered.

On the final day, Gerry and Jean and Marcia and Tony walked over the Great Orme. Again, we had good weather and fine views and a pleasant lunch back at the hotel. We all thanked Jean for organising a really good holiday in an area with fine walks and lots of alternatives for those who were not able to join us on the rambles. We were really sorry to leave this beautiful area.

Marty

PARBOLD - October 8th

SIX of us met in the Wiggin Tree car park at the top of Parbold Hill and started with a relaxing cup of coffee. As we were leaving, Peter Atherton came in, surprised to see us. He was about to phone Marie to say no one had turned up! He should have known us better by now. Jean and Gerry always liked to start the day with a coffee and Harry needed one after driving from Rochdale.

The walk was in two parts. The first half took us up to the top of Harrock Hill to look at the ruins of the old windmill and, coming down, we found a good lunch spot with fine views of the Lancashire Plain, trying to recognise different places and then checking them on Marcia's map. An uphill road walk then took us to Hunter's Hill Quarry; an area which is being landscaped and new paths put in for walkers.

The second part of the walk started at the Church on Parbold Hill and crossed the main road to the Leeds Liverpool Canal. Going over the railway line, Bill waxed eloquent on railway history and the men stopped to listen. Marcia and Jean wandered on and sat by the canal to initiate an afternoon tea stop. After a pleasant stroll along the canal, we crossed the bridge and made for the Fairy Glen, finding a pleasant route through fields and by a stream to take us back to the car park and a meal in the Wiggin Tree.