

LIVERPOOL CATHOLIC RAMBLERS



NEWSLETTER

A special mention to welcome our new members who have joined us on our ever-popular rambles recently in spite of the colder than usual winter that we have experienced.

On some of our recent walks the combination of sun and snow has added to the beauty of the scenic grandeur that we often miss on many a drizzly day on the hills.

Throughout the winter our coaches have more often than not been fully booked, also several people manage to come on spec and still get on the coaches, taking the place of any absentees. A reminder here that if you turn up without booking it costs you an extra £1. If you book by phone you must send a cheque or pay cash beforehand otherwise the extra £1 rule still stands. Finally a reminder that unemployed members are charged £1 less on coaches.

Thanks to all who have contributed to this newsletter. Any budding writers are to be encouraged to submit articles or ramble write-ups for these editions, and get them to me in good time for publication.

DAVE NEWNS - 7 Abbotts Way, Billinge, Wigan, Lancs WN5 7SB

Now then, it has come to the attention of the editor that:

1. At the recent Fancy Dress evening, certain ladies attended in normal wear, both claiming to be the Ugly Sisters. This was not acceptable as fancy dress as it was patently obvious they weren't sisters.
2. Brian and Annette were espied canoodling on a recent ramble. This type of activity is beyond the pail and definitely not to be encouraged. A full report is being prepared for the committee.
3. There is no collection for the coach driver on the next ramble. Instead we shall endeavour to collect for shoulder straps to convert Barry Dooley's carrier bag. Please give generously and we may even be able to present him with a pair of mittens.
4. Phil Wells has been taking leading duties too seriously. Joe Rourke is quoted as having said: "No one should lead two parties at the same time." If you ask me, he's getting too big for his boots!"

And finally the editor wishes it to be known that there is nothing wrong with his navigational abilities - going round in circles is not only healthy exercise but is conducive to a more profound understanding of both geography and terrain. Besides I forgot to wind up my compass!

A PERSONAL VIEW

Throw fifty or so people together on a bus for a day, make sure they are of different physical abilities, gender and opinion, and then give them freedom of choice. We do this every week and by and large it works out extremely well; most have a very enjoyable day out at minimum expense. Occasionally however, frustration creeps in usually through innocent thoughtlessness. The biggest recurrent area of discontent concerns the inability or reluctance of a few to stay with the group.

Sometimes people struggle. This is inevitable and quite understandable. The leader, given the opportunity, will alter his plans to compensate for this. He may change his route, he may designate a competent person to accompany the struggler to safety, however he cannot do this if stronger walkers charge ahead regardless of those at the rear, neither can he lead if one or two people consider walking to be of secondary importance to dawdling and "feeding the ducks!" This is not a criticism of the greater majority of 'C' walkers who turn up week after week in good humour and do their very best to keep up.

Rambling is not a contest and we don't need to be athletes to enjoy our walks. Please remember we do go out to walk, and a little thoughtfulness and understanding, especially when another group comes in tired and late, keeps the morale high.

These views are personal and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the committee. Any subsequent constructive criticism should be directed at myself, and I look forward

to your comments.

I promise a more lighthearted commentary for the next newsletter - so watch out, The Allstars - no one is safe from a ragging, except me. That is of course unless someone wishes to make their own contribution to the newsletter, in which case I'm sure Dave Newns will be delighted to hear from you.

Don't forget the Youth Hostelling weekends. The first is in the Brecon Beacons at Easter and a £10 deposit will secure your place.

RAY McINTOSH
Chairman of
Rambling Sub-Committee

ANNUAL FRED NORBURY/CYRIL KELLY TROPHY WINNERS

Apologies given for reporting a little later than normal as the names of the winners of the above were inadvertently missed in the last newsletter. During the late summer and autumn last year there were pitch and putt, ten-pin bowls and a quiz to determine the overall lady and gent winner of the 1990 trophies. Proud winners Lynn McKittrick and Brian Easson were presented at the club's annual dance in November. They will both keep the trophies for 12 months and have their names engraved on same. In the past many have tried to win the trophies for two or three years in succession. Could Brian and Lynn repeat their success this summer? Who knows, it has been done in the past.

WEDDINGS/ENGAGEMENTS

On Christmas Eve Allan Caple and Joan Smith combined forces and had joint Christmas and Wedding presents on their special wedding date. Congratulations to you both. Will we ever see you on a ramble with us again? Joint membership is only £5!

There is also a slight rumour that Brian Keller had been giving Annette Molloy some map-reading exercises, so when Brian asked Annette would she like to walk up the bridal path this summer Annette couldn't see why not! Congratulations to you both on your January 5th Engagement. This was a closely-guarded secret until the club's Yuletide walk on January 6th!

HOLIDAY IN IRELAND - KENMARE, approx 15 miles from Killarney.

Date: 10th August for 10 nights. Cost £159 each, based on 10 people for 10 nights. Includes return flight from Liverpool and return train from Dublin. Accommodation in two and 3-bedroom cottages. Deposits of £20 to Bernie Doyle as soon as possible. General and Family Section welcome. Enquiries to Bernie on 733 2538.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Beyond All Reasonable Doubt by Geoffrey Archer on at The Empire on Tuesday, March 5th Tickets £8 - See Bernie Doyle.

Scottish Ballet Company in SWAN LAKE on April 5th. Tickets £8. See Norah Sheehan.

The recent Fancy Dress on Valentine's Night at the Spiral Staircase was a success in two ways. First that about half actually made the effort to dress up and there were some very professional outfits to be seen, but for the one's who didn't come in fancy dress a penalty had to be paid to the Charity of their choice to be drawn for at the end of the evening. The Charity chosen was K.I.N.D. (Kids in Need and Distress) and £25 approx was collected. A swashbuckling buccaneer with a hint of a Scottish accent won the night.

THE KESWICK WEEKEND

8th, 9th & 10th March - still a few vacancies. Cost approx £37 excluding transport. Note: There will be no coach so anyone without personal transport please inform John Henshaw at time of booking so that arrangements can be made. Bookings and further information to John Henshaw (£10 deposits with booking).

"Blue skies, nothing but blue skies from now on"....exactly sums up the weather for this crisp winter's day walk. It's not very often you get the perfect combination of solid sunshine, no wind and loads of snow!

Ambleside itself was free from the ole white stuff, but with the backdrop of snow-covered mountains it resembled a typical Swiss village.

Climbing towards the snow line proved to be a bit of a problem due to pockets of unavoidable hard ice which caused a few slips but fortunately, no Mars bars were broken! In summertime this steep incline up Wansfell Pike would be a bit of a hot and sticky slog, however today it hardly caused a bead of sweat. It's always nice to catch your breath though, and take in the view, especially when you look in the direction you have come. There's always that tingle of satisfaction when you have gained some decent height with the reward of great scenic views as the prize.

Once above the snow line, about 900ft, conditions under foot became more acceptable as the crunchy snow gave a better grip, speeding progress towards our goal.

Wansfell Pike proved to be an excellent location for our eagerly-awaited butty break. Tum-tums filled, it was time to start the usual arguments and agreements on identifying which peak was what, and having a map was a distinct advantage! To the north Red Screes looked impressive, as did the long humpbacked ridge leading towards Church Street, oops! sorry, High Street. To our south, Windermere had now popped into view, reflected windscreens gave away the road below in the valley leading towards the lake.

When you get views like these, greatly enhanced with the crystal clear air, it's very difficult to move on as you feel happy to stay around the summit all day. But on you must go, and never mind, it's always there for another day. Luckily enough we were not leaving the snow yet, instead we were to keep to the modest ridge, which at one part allowed us to test out the girls' "sledge" i.e. Le Bin Bag! New speed records set and congratulations over, it was time to take the sun's hint and start dropping down.

Troutbeck, a pleasant hamlet, was our furthest point and led us to Robins Lane, a fine bridle-path that would bring us back to Ambleside. However, a path not to be rushed, as the terrain afforded, gave tremendous satisfaction. The snow tops were now turning to a rose pink colour, whilst the bottoms were increasing in darkness as the afterlight was losing its effect. A scene like that will always leave a lasting print on the ole memory bank, ensuring it was a day to remember.

Thanks Dave for a great ramble.

ROY THUIS

Editors' note: Any hardened 'A' walker not on the above walk may be wondering why some of the higher peaks in the area weren't attempted. The simple answer is that there was a warning of treacherous conditions on the higher peaks and this was confirmed in the evening by the local mountain rescue teams. Frozen snow and ice being the major problems that day.

YOUTH HOSTEL WEEKENDS

EASTER (29th, 30th and 31st March) BRECON BEACONS, Mid Wales. Three nights, approx £36 excl transport. £10 deposit with booking to Ray McIntosh.

MAY DAY BANK HOLIDAY (3rd, 4th and 5th May) LAKE DISTRICT. Three nights, approx £36 excl transport. £10 deposit with booking to Ray McIntosh.

SPRING BANK HOLIDAY (24th, 25th and 26th May) ACTIVITY WEEKEND at EDALE, Derbyshire. Three nights.

Activity w/e approx £66 - excluding transport.

Youth Hostel approx £36 - excluding transport. £10 deposit with booking to Ray McIntosh.

A VERY REWARDING WEEKEND

Last April I was contacted by an old walking companion with regards to taking part in a ramble leadership course at Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbyshire, in the Dark Peak District, during the forthcoming November. Well, my heart never fails to respond to the serene call of the hobnailed boot, so off went my application plus cheque for seventy-five pounds. I also contacted two more members of the family, Liverpool Y.A., who answered the call with equal enthusiasm, so that made up a gang of four.

I watched the leaves appear on the trees, observed them for the next six months transforming the countryside into a riot of colour and a scene to behold and to wonder at, then they were gone. Time to travel down to Castleton.

Within five minutes of signing in and being **allocated** my sleeping quarters I realised that I would not be exactly roughing it for the weekend. Losehill Hall is one of those delightful country mansions lovingly preserved that dot the English countryside. Oak-panelled dining room and library as if one is stepping back into a time warp. A small bar under the grand staircase, maybe a modern touch, but quite a delightful one, proved to be a popular venue for the two nights. The evening meal confirmed my belief that I was not exactly slumming it, how nice to engage in cross conversation with people from all over the kingdom all on the same wavelength.

First light on Saturday morning proved to be a somewhat culture shock. On drawing back the curtains in my lovely warm bedroom I discovered I was looking at a white world. Overnight a raging snow storm had transformed the Peak District, it actually looked hostile! The next two hours was a flurry, like the snow outside. The breakfast while a delightful meal was somewhat muted, the conversation centred on the adverse weather that was raging outside.

There were twenty-two of us embarked for the Rambling Leadership, split up into four groups, each group had a minder who acted as whipper-in, fetching up the rear, taking notes of how each person was dressed for the conditions, how they led their section of the walk regarding navigation which proved to be chiefly by map and compass.

When we got to the fell top south of Kinder Scout visibility was in some parts down to zero owing to the raging blizzard. The section of the walk that I was designated to lead was from Mad Woman's Stones to Ringing Roger via the Druid's Stone at a section that was pitted with hags and groughs that added to the challenge well. The flag of the Liverpool Catholic Ramblers flew high that weekend. My navigation solely by map and compass was spot on, though I must confess to a great feeling of relief and satisfaction when Ringing Roger was stumbled upon right on target.

We finished the walk at Edale at five o'clock, two hours behind the estimated time given at the outset. Travelling back to Losehill Hall in the Range Rover transporter very wet and uncomfortable despite my top quality outdoor clothing. My discomfort evaporated after a splendid hot shower, a change into fresh clothes, an evening meal that to me was more like a banquet, a couple of the house specialities - Bleaklow Kirsch, I think it was called - very pleasant and warming.

Later on that evening I was surprised to learn that the other three groups had failed to make it. They had turned back unable to make progress. I came to the conclusion that our group, with the benefit of hindsight, had, like fools, rushed in where heroes had feared to tread.

Sunday morning was spent on talks, first-aid, map and compass, leadership and a number of other interesting subjects.

I would recommend to members of this club the value of a weekend at Losehill Hall. There are further map and compass weekends and ramble leadership weekends coming up on 3rd/5th May and 22nd/24th November plus a host of other activities throughout the year.

For further information contact me.

JOE ROURKE

Family Section Programme, 1991.

Mar 8/10. This weekend is at Lakeside House, Keswick, as usual. If you have not booked and wish to go ring Pat Pearson on 489 0746. This weekend includes the March Club Walk, though we think that anybody doing this walk would already be at Lakeside House. The number above will give any such members the information they need.

MAR. 24. George and Audrey Parkinson are leading this walk around Ainsdale. Meet at Freshfield Station Carpark. Walking time is 12 noon.

APL. 14. CONISTON - side of Weatherlam. Noel and Angela Fishwick are the leaders. Meet in car park at head of Coniston Water, marked by a red cross on the enclosed map. Start walking at 11 a.m. Who cares about sliced bread! I think evening Mass is the invention of all time.

APL.21. SNOWDON. This is the joint walk with the general club. Meet at Pen-y-Pas, at the top of the Llanberis Pass. Start walking at noon.

HOUSE MEETINGS.

MAR 7. Pat and Leo Pearson, 81 Twig Lane, Huyton.

APL. 4. Noel and Angela Fishwick, 74 Moss Lane, Maghull.

Again, if anyone can't get to the House Meeting prior to the walk please ring the leader in case of any changed plans.

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A NIGHT OUT, 15TH DECEMBER, 1990.

I brought the wife along. She had the tickets and had paid for them too, so it was only right that she joined us as we set off on a cold and sharp evening. It was the kind that harbours a yearning for the warmth of good food and wine in a convivial atmosphere. It had been a bit of a rush - darting home from work, doing a fast trolley run round Sainsbury's, bathroom ablutions, dressing and then out. After an excess 30 m.p.h. we arrived at the appointed hour to down sherry, settle the nerves and relax. A gathering from the L.R.C.A. (forty-one I believe) assembled for a CHRISTMAS DINNER at a venue only remotely connected with the culinary arts. The diners-to-be were impressed by the decor and comfortable seating plan - a hidden asset beneath the magnificent ediface above.

The formal dress of the ladies was a pleasure to behold, the menfolk also being suitably attired. Double-breasted jackets were out, however - we were not that ancient. The reception provided a most amicable occasion for discourse among a very friendly group of people, past acquaintances recollecting fond memories of our Club's outings and social events. Current mutual domesticity loomed large - in other words a 'good old chinwag'.

All too soon but ravishingly waited upon came the call for dinner, and a fine one it proved to be. Turkey adorned with chipolata/bacon roll accompanied carrots, sprouts (fresh to taste and firm) and all served piping hot. A choice of sweet gave one the chance to avoid an early aversion to Christmas pudding by the provision of a delicious cherry trifle, so light and full of flavour that it melted in the mouth. The wine flowed according to taste, indulgence and the ability to carry the stuff from home. Being the noted cadger that I admit to (generosity needs a recipient), the fragrant smooth red (surprisingly from Spain) and the lightly fragrant Spaltease from the Rhine was most enjoyable. Thanks Leo and Tony.

Around the three candle lit tables conversation flowed as well as the vin - the weather, Poll Tax, the joke about the Irishman found on an iceberg after the Titanic went down, complaining that he had only asked the waiter for ice! There was a brief English lesson going on across the table at one stage. All too soon the coffee, mince pies, After Eights arrived, bringing to an end a most pleasant recreation in the Liverpool Cathedral of the Church of Christ and leading to a very enjoyable tour of the Cathedral afterwards. Nice organising, Pat.

W.A.P.

FRODSHAM, FAMILY SECTION WALK, 10TH FEBRUARY, 1991.

About two dozen intrepid souls arrived at the venue in Frodsham for a 12 o'clock start. But were we so intrepid? The Frodsham climate seemed to have been affected by the Mersey Gulf Stream. Snow was comparatively rare and sun in plentiful supply. We set off along the main road in the direction whence we had come, giving rise to the thought that this was a new sort of ramble - we were walking home! Wrong! The real reason was that we were looking for Tony's tail pipe which had parted company with his car on the inward journey. Exhausted with this fruitless search, we turned along a path close to the river Weaver, which winds its way over the flats of North Cheshire. A sign on the opposite bank indicating that the footpath went into the river was, thankfully, ignored by the leader.

We continued over a couple of stiles, meeting few humans, but occasional horses and dogs and arrived at Bellair Farm which seemingly had some nostalgic memories for one Peggy Sharkey as was. We made our way to the village of Newton where it was advisable not to blink for fear of missing it, and then took the Sandstone Trail. At some point (and being without a map I know what point) we stopped for refreshments and the usual Ramblers' banter, not always polite but well intentioned.

We made our way up Fox Hill where the gradient was so gentle that you might be foxed into thinking it was a misnomer. We had the whole world to ourselves on a beautiful day but there was one intrusion when a terrier ran out of a cottage and got amongst us. No damage done, no hard feelings. Speculation was rife that we would skirt Frodsham Hill from the land side, and, taking binoculars and telescopes, try to espy the missing tail pipe from on high. We approached via Jacob's Ladder, Peggy valiently but unsuccessfully trying to take the sign post with her. Getting down an unexpected gulley was far more exciting than the ascent. We walked up again and had some splendid views and a number of posed photographs. Then down we went to that well remembered path leading to the Vale Royal Park. Suddenly we saw a tail but alas no pipe was attached, then more and more appeared complete with squirrels - a fitting end to what had been a lovely day well away from suburbia.

Thank you, Bill and Peggy.

G. and F.

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SCARTH HILL, 9TH DECEMBER, 1990.

Having flirted with the Water Tower rather longer than we need have done, Aimee and I found and made a royal progress down Poppy Lane, waving like royals as we passed the parked cars and took the last 'vacant lot'. The effect was rather spoilt by the fact that we were a bit late, but we were forgiven by our leaders.

It was a God-given day. After spending the journey from Liverpool wondering which of the dark clouds would amuse itself by shedding its moisture content over us all day, it turned out to be really gorgeous, even warm at times. We started out past the over familiar (to my driver and myself) water tower. There was some gentle surmising about the exact use for same, and the Oxford Concise gives it beautifully simply as 'a tower with an elevated tank to give pressure for distributing water. I knew you'd be as fascinated as I was, ladies.

George's trouble in his write-up was that as he hadn't a map he couldn't say precisely where the refreshment stop took place on the Frodsham walk. Mine is that I have Noel's map but can't relate the map to what happened on the day. The red line giving me the route is most impressive. This Lancashire plain looks as though it must be a joy to work, rich, black and loamy. We passed or went through at least five farms, Blaguegate Moss and the Colliery Plantation, with Ivy House on the way.

Cont'd.....

Scarth Hill cont'd.

Our refreshment break was taken along a quiet lane, both sides being used and conversation being thrown to and fro across it. The McDonald sun-worshippers were very indignant when (athirst for knowledge of The Daily Post) Aimee cast a shadow over Gerry's fast browning face. Tony was the man of the match, battling manfully with an armful of jabs for his proposed African visit. The McDonald's crib gave rise to a lot of thought, all unnecessary with hindsight, stable and figures being a great match. It was nice to see the Caunces out. I thought that this time of the year was when farmers put up their feet and read a good book in front of a roaring wood fire. Not a bit of it. At the moment it is LEEKS.

After this our main break we continued on our sunny way. I made my usual complaint - after being promised a flat walk - when a highish flight of steps reared up ahead of us. As the alternative offered by our leader's ever ^{caring} wife was a quick dash across the M58 (under construction in 1974 the map tells me) I opted for the steps.

We'd made quite a big circle and I, personally, was quite () satisfied with the distance covered when we approached our cars from the opposite direction.

Thank you, Fishies, for a lovely day which was such a pleasant surprise weatherwise as well as an enjoyable walk.

FMR.

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RIVINGTON BARN, JANUARY, 1991.

This year the numbers at the Yuletide were somewhat ^{down} on previous years. As there were thirty strong walkers out Leo took us around Rivington a different way and, traditionally, to the War Memorial. After that we went on an extended walk across to Brinscill. The way down into the valley was via a vertical gully. All interesting stuff!

The weather remained dry, cold and pleasant all day and after a good walk the hotpot was most welcome. The Social hadn't quite the atmosphere that it usually has but the fewer numbers meant that one could dance without treading on other dancers.

Anon.

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