



NEWSLETTER

Series 9
Issue 1

July 2013 – January 2014

LIVERPOOL CATHOLIC RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION EST. 1927

IN THIS ISSUE

Snowdon walk 4 life 23rd June 2013



SNOWDON WALK FOR LIFE

June 23rd 2013 will be forever etched in the minds of the 74 brave souls that braved Snowdon, to raise valuable funds for the Liverpool McCartney Centre. After one of our members was treated for Breast Cancer, our amazing intrepid ramblers were more than ready to help raise money for the centre. Lord Mayor Gary Millar gave us some very welcome support, and kindly came to wave us off on our adventure. 74 of us braved vicious winds, golf ball sized driving rain, and hail to get to the summit, and over half of them got there including some that had never been out walking before which was tremendous!! Others almost made it to the top, but had to turn back because of the terrifying conditions. Everyone agreed though, that although the weather was atrocious, there was a fantastic bulldog spirit amongst everyone on the day, and there were plenty of stories to tell afterwards and in the years to come! Best of all, we raised an amazing £5001!!!!!! Well done everyone, what a club!



Welcome to our first newsletter!!! This installment is a bumper 6 month update, normal newsletters will be on a quarterly basis. Well, what a year 2013 was for the LCRA!!!

Some of the highlights included:

The group raised over £5,001 for charity, for the Linda McCartney Centre. Some of the group enjoyed a 7 day trip to Poland, and a weekend in Bowness was enjoyed by all.

The social side of the group goes from strength to strength, which included two mad nights on the tiles.



Presenting the cheque to the Lind McCartney Centre

A number of the group went along to the Linda McCartney Centre where the cheque for £5,001 was handed over.

The Lord Mayor, Gary Miller came along to the event to show his support.

The group, were given a tour around the new therapy suite which will be used by cancer patients and their families.

The contribution of £5001 will go a long way in supporting the amazing work and treatments that are provided to patients at the centre

12th September 2013 The West Highland Way

Before



The West Highland Way.

On the 12th September 2013 LCRA members Glen, Dave, Paul and Steve Jago, took on the challenges of the West Highland Way, a 96 mile walk from Milngavie on the outskirts of Glasgow to Fort William.

For a place to call home, they stayed in a number of places and locations. This included staying in a local Youth Hostel, a hotel, a bunkhouse and camping (where all the mod cons were on offer!). They got to sample local cuisine and slept under the stars beside beautiful Loch Lomond where there were plenty of photos were taken, including some of the local wildlife, e.g. cheeky "feathered friends" that showed some of their Celtic courage as they weren't in the least bit shy.

They encountered some spectacular scenery, and faced many challenges with the weather, but they kept going regardless of this. They even managed to take in some local history, visiting Rob Roy's cave, not everyone can say that they have done that!

Glen has written an account of the first part of their Scottish adventures which has been included as a supplement with this newsletter. We highly recommend that you read it! Can't wait for part 2! Watch this space.....



After

WALKING THE SANDSTONE TRAIL

6th JULY 2013

What an amazing achievement for Jacqui Browne, Sian Cuthbertson, Jill Fabian, Cathy Guest, Liz Kinsella, Joan Nelson & Brian Smith, – all of them fairly new Ramblers (with no experience of leading walks) when they decided to take on the 34 mile adventure to walk the Sandstone Trail in Cheshire over 2 days. Luckily they had the glorious sunny weather in July 2013 to help them on their way.

The official start/finish of the walk was Frodsham/Manley Hill, and they packed in many adventures along the way. One of the biggest challenges they faced was passing bulls and cows in the fields, and Brian being his noble self took on the unofficial role of Cow/Bull Herder, shooing them all away from the girls!

They walked through some of the finest countryside in Cheshire including Tulverton, Beeston Castle, Delamere Forest, Gresty's Waste among other places. They came across beautiful landscapes, open woodland & forests, numerous war memorials, historical cottages & lodges and lots of other interesting sites on the way.

The group of intrepid adventurers came across some lovely pubs and enjoyed some lovely food to keep them going, enjoyed by all! They also said "we were all very disappointed that we didn't find the cave named "Mad Allen's Hole"! Ha ha!" But all in all they all agreed it had been a fantastic journey. You can read a full account of their exploits as a supplement to this news letter.

It's great to see our ramblers out and about, even when not on organized club walks! Looks like there will be plenty of stories to tell in the future.....keep em coming! Well done to all!

On their travels!



Relaxing in the sun!

August 2013

Poland



Poland

Members of the club enjoyed a 5 holiday in Zakopane in Poland, undertaking walks in the beautiful Tatra Mountains. The weather was glorious, it was hot every day with little or no rain, and the scenery was absolutely stunning, (most of it caught on camera) and everyone enjoyed meeting up in the evening for a drink and a catch up.

What is also amazing about Zakopane is that it is a really affordable place to visit. Everyone agreed, it is the sort of place where it is difficult to spend your money! In addition to the beautiful walks in the National Park, the group enjoyed the array of bars, shops and meeting the locals who were friendly and accommodating.

For the remaining 2 days, the group finished off their holiday in Krakow. Again the weather was glorious, and there are loads of places to undertake some sightseeing. In the evenings it was a chance to catch up and have plenty of fun! Excellent holiday enjoyed by all!! Roll on 2014..... watch this space for news....

Day trip to Slovakia

While in Zakopane, some of us decided to go on an organised day trip to Slovakia. We visited.....which was absolutely beautiful with some outstanding panoramic views, which were made all the better by the beautiful blue skies, gorgeous sunshine and brilliant company. Our young guide was very informative and really helpful, and we shared some of our unique LCRA/Scouse humour with him, which he really enjoyed, and he willingly joined in with the banter!!

After taking the ski lifts back down, the next part of the trip was to walk down the mountain which took about 2-3 hours, surrounded on all sides by amazing scenery, and taking in the views all around us. We even got to see a waterfall and had a little stop off in a mountain café which was really welcomed, due to the heat of the day.



Piano Bar

The Piano Bar has become LCRA's "Local" in Zakopane. It's relaxed comfortable setting and easy manner makes it a great place to wind down after the activities of the day. The Bar Manager is well used to us rowdy lot by now, and calmly sits reading his paper while we enjoy the surroundings, each other's company, and of course a nice drink or 3. At the bar there are no seat's but swings (as demonstrated by Peter above), and no, the construction hat is not a necessity to sit at the bar! You can play the piano if you want to, or just relax in the lovely beer garden. It's a great pub and a lovely place to get together, and like the rest of Zakopane, not the least bit expensive!



May 2013

Bowness



Bowness

A brilliant weekend in Bowness was had by all. Will Harris managed to get us a really good deal to stay at the Hydro Hotel, where the accommodation, service and the food was outstanding.

We managed to cram in a range of activities including walking, (the views were outstanding) and some of us walked around beautiful Lake Windermere, and others took a scenic boat trip across the lake. Plenty of photographs taken!!!

While we were there we had the chance to have a good look around the town, and paid a little visit to the local swans.

In the evenings we all visited a number of local pubs which were friendly, and gave the opportunity to relax and catch up with each other's day.

Some of us made the most of it, and didn't get back until the early hours after visiting the local club life!!!!!!

Everyone agreed that the weekend was brilliant and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

2014 Bowness Weekend!

The club is now returning for another great weekend at Bowness, staying at the Hydro Hotel between 16-18th May. It's a £25 deposit if you want to go, and places are limited, so you need to be quick! Single rooms are also limited, so make sure you book as early as possible.



Christmas night out 2013

On the town



For our Christmas night out in 2013 we had not one but two!! (Us Ramblers know how to party!!!) Night out number one was at the Vagabonds Club on Queens Drive, where the entertainment was provided by the lovely, talented Trish Welsh, who sang some beautiful songs which were enjoyed by all. There was also a lovely buffet, which everyone really enjoyed.

Again, there was a really good turnout, and we all got to stretch our dancing legs!!

Night out number two, was a pub crawl which started in the Ship and Mitre, and we moved progressively on from pub to pub in Dale Street.

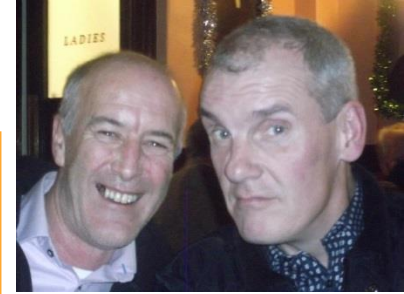
Once again, there was an excellent turn out, and a great laugh and loads of fun was had courtesy of a fluffy white hat!! (See picture on the right as evidence!)

The night had a real party atmosphere to it, and some of us went on to the Cavern Pub to finish off a great evening.

There was an excellent band on, and great music in between, and not a group to shy away from the action, we all took to the dance floor to display some nifty moves!!!

It was brilliant to see everyone enjoying themselves, and letting their hair down. It demonstrates that although we spend a lot of time out walking together as ramblers, we are also good friends and enjoy each other's company on social evenings as well.

We are planning another ramblers' pub crawl in the Spring, details will be announced in the next newsletter. Get your dancing shoes ready!!!!



Ramblers Corner

CALLING ANY FIRST AIDERS!!! AND OTHER STUFF!!

If any of you have a First Aid qualification, and would like to help us out on the rambles, will you please give your name to Pete on the coach.

Our next charity walk for the Linda McCartney Centre will be to Snowdon on Sunday June 22nd! More details to follow in the next newsletter. Invite your family and friends along!

Donations

Does anyone have any hats or gloves, socks or chocolate . If you do, please pass to Cathy Clements. All donations will go to the Hope Project which supports homeless people on the streets of Liverpool.

Do you have any unwanted gifts etc, that you would like to donate to LCRA for our coach raffles? If so please let Cathy, Peter, Glen or Vanessa know.

Amazing Facts!!! Did You Know.....

- Armadillos give birth only to quadruplets!
- It's impossible to hum while holding your nose!
- Peanuts are one of the ingredients of dynamite.

Last word

Does anyone have any ideas or stories they would like to contribute to future newsletters?

If so contact Garry D'Arcy or Cathy Clements

To see the summer programme 2014, go to our website or LCRA Facebook page

What's coming up?

27 th April	AMBLESIDE, Lakes, M58/M6
4 th May	No Ramble
11 th May	BOLTON ABBEY, Yorks. M58/M6
18 th May	BOWNESS Weekend, 16 th to 18 th
25 th May	KESWICK (09:00), Lakes. M58/M6
1 st June	No Ramble
8 th June	DOVEDALE, Peak. M62
15 th June	No Ramble
22 nd June	SNOWDON (09:00 Charity Walk), Wales. <i>Tunnel</i>
29 th June	GRASMERE, Lakes. M58/M6

Upstairs at the Ship and Mitre

Public House (Dale St – By the flyover)

on the first Thursday of each month at 9 p.m.

There is usually entertainment in the form of the music group, a quiz, and cheese and wine for a small charge

Bowness Weekend is on May 16-18th. To see if there are any places left, you need to contact Will Harris

Our next Rambler's pub crawl will be on Sunday May 4th. Starting at the Ship and Mitre at 3pm

Contact group

Facebook: LLCLCRA (Open Group)LRA (open group)

Website: www.liverpoolcatholicramblers.com

Phone Number: Will Harris 0151 486 6541

27th April AMBLESIDE, Lakes, via M58/M

OBITUARY

We had a letter from Maureen O'Connor (a rambler quite a few years back) in the days of Chris Scott and the late Brian Kelly, to mention just a couple.

She asked that we mention her brother **Kevin O'Connor** (another regular walker & climber).

Unfortunately Kevin passed away on 9th December 2013, and Maureen asked if we could inform members via the newsletter.

She would also like to especially thank Mike Parr, Mike Marsden, Terry O'Connor (who attended Kev's funeral) along with thanks to Billy Clay and John Keenan (who were there in 'spirit'). Thank you, it was much appreciated.

NEWSLETTERS

If you have received this newsletter in the post, you will notice it's in black and white. Colour versions are available on the website and on facebook. Also, if you prefer to receive a colour copy via email please let me know at willharris33@btinternet.com. This also means we save on postage.

CANCELLATIONS

These have always been allowed up to the Thursday before a walk. Late cancellations do not give us a lot of time to reuse the coach seats, members waiting have often arranged to do something else at this late stage.

We're therefore changing the final cancellation date to Tuesday, so if you cancel after this, you still have to pay. Ideally don't book just to reserve a seat then cancel. Only book when you're sure you're going. This is fairer to everybody.

Sandstone Trail – July 2013

Jacqui Browne

Jacqui Browne, Sian Cuthbertson, Jill Fabian, Cathy Guest, Liz Kinsella, Joan Nelson & Brian Smith, – all of us fairly new Ramblers (with no experience of leading walks) decided to take on the 34 mile adventure to walk the Sandstone Trail in Cheshire over 2 days. Luckily we had the glorious sunny weather in July to help us on our way. We also had a slightly outdated Sandstone Trail book, a summary of the trail and a compass. Sian volunteered to navigate for us and spent hours marking out the route in the book

Day1. Saturday morning on 6th July 2013 we met early at the **Bears Paw Pub in Frodsham**. (The official start/finish) The trail took us up to **Frodsham Hill & Helsby Hill** and onto **Manley** where we found **Stonehouse Farm** (a beautiful B&B) with gardens. The owner was quick to spot us resting at his garden furniture and with a very warm welcome served us with morning tea & coffee and honey flapjacks. We stocked up on our water supplies and soon were back on our way. Overall we made great progress.

In **Delamere Forest** we hit a section where we were a bit unsure of the way so we stopped a passer-by “are we on the right track for the Sandstone Trail?” “Yes” the passer by replied and the group all started walking off until Jacqui, looking at the compass said “yes, but are we in the direction of Frodsham or Whitchurch?” “It’s Frodsham” he replied! Our trusty compass and limited compass skills had come in very handy! On to **Gresty’s Waste** we headed which is was the halfway point for day 1.

Throughout the trail no doubt our biggest challenge was passing the cows and bulls in the fields but we did have Brian our trusty Cow herder with us who shooed the cows away from the hysterical girls! We walked through some of the finest countryside in Cheshire, beautiful landscapes, open woodland & forests, numerous war memorials, historical cottages & lodges and lots of other interesting sites on way.

Just past **Tiverton**, we were getting very tired but still had time to stop at **Wharton’s Lock** to help an elderly couple manoeuvre “Huggles” the Canal boat through the Lock. High on the Sandstone crag **Beeston Castle** was in sight on our RIGHT (insider joke!) so we knew we weren’t too far from our nights stop. After 18 miles walking we finally arrived at **Beeston Outdoor Education Centre** to enjoy an amazing home cooked meal, a few drinks and a cosy bed for the night (costing only £41 for dinner, bed, breakfast and packed lunch this was amazing value –would highly recommend)

Day2. A cooked breakfast was a great start to the second day and we were once again greeted by the glorious weather and ready to complete the second part of the trail **Beeston to Whitchurch**.

Once again we saw some great scenery whilst walking through **Burwardsley, Bulkeley Hill**, from the highest point at **Rawhead, Kitty’s Stone and Bickerton Hill**. I know we were all very disappointed that we didn’t find the cave named “Mad Allen’s Hole”! Ha ha! We had a short unplanned diversion through a Race track & horse stables and was abruptly redirected on our way. (It turned out we were on private ground - Michael Owen’s Manor House and training Stables!)

We were particularly looking forward to reaching **Willey Moor Lock**, and having a drink there and so to a few choruses of “Willey Moor, Willey Moor, Willey Moor.” we went merrily on our way.

However, Willey Moor was not to be as we unfortunately got in a terrible muddle. We misidentified the ‘evergreen hedge’ we needed to turn by and walked through a beautiful wild flower meadow (despite the book telling us DO NOT go through field of wild flowers! oops). Once we realised we were off the trail (the barbed wire styles should have been a clue!) we had to retrace our steps across 2 fields and return to the ‘evergreen hedge’. Whilst Brian and Sian went to try and find directions, Liz decided to shelter in the shade of a tree and was soon surrounded by a herd of cows and a very frisky bull! We were all very frightened for poor Liz but a hysterically funny moment, as Liz made a run for it, cows and bull hot on her trail and we all scrambled frantically over the gate to safety - just in the nick of time!

Back on track again we walked across a very boggy field, unfortunately Jacqui took one wrong step and was stuck in the bog literally up to her knees, much to the amusement of the rest of the group (sorry but it was very scary for poor Jacqui!) and not forgetting to mention Brian’s crisp clean trousers were covered in the cow manure as he and Joan pulled Jacqui out. (We believe we were in the aptly named ‘No man’s heath??’) We eventually made it to the

main road and as it was getting late (and we had our Spa hotel waiting) we decided to call it a day, having clocked a total of 31 + miles.

After an amazing night in the **Macdonald Golf and Spa Hotel** (where we laughed non- stop recalling our adventures) we returned to the trail and had a leisurely stroll from **Jubilee Park** in **Whitchurch** up to **Grindley Brook**, along the canal enjoying a picnic of Prosecco & nibbles and completed the 34 miles (although not all trail was covered we wanted to at least do the mileage)

We ended our mega journey with a delicious lunch in the **Horse & Jockey pub**. A fantastic walk, a fun weekend with **the best** company. For our first time 'out on our own' we were pretty proud of what we had achieved! Until next time folks 😊

The West Highland Way - September 2013

Glen Lloyd

On the 12th September 2013 Liverpool Catholic Ramblers members Glen Lloyd and Paul Jago set off to take on the challenges of the West Highland Way, a 96 mile walk from Milngavie on the outskirts of Glasgow to Fort William.

Having decided to travel and commence the first leg of our eight day trek at once, we caught the earliest train out of Lime Street at 5.13 a.m. Changing at Manchester Piccadilly, to catch our train north to Glasgow Central. Arriving there on time we found we had ten minutes to get our ticket for the train through to Milngavie. Pronounced (Mulguy). Everything went as smooth as clockwork and we arrived in Milngavie by 10.25 a.m.

As we leave the station the West Highland Way is immediately sign posted, and is surprisingly nearer than you would think. Through the sub-way under the railway, turn left then right into Douglas Street, a pedestrianised area of the town, and you can't help but notice the obelisk for the Way, straight ahead. As you approach, the beginning of the West Highland Way appears to your right, quite clearly named on a huge archway.

Using our charm we coaxed a lovely young local lass (see I speak the lingo) into taking a few photos of us by the obelisk. Back-packs mounted, tent, cooker, sleeping bags and mats, and even our kettle all externally attached to us, we nipped into the local shop for that one vital need, a couple of bottles of H2O each. Away we go.

Under the archway, across a local car park and you are soon into a woodland park, local people walking their dogs acknowledging you as you pass them by. The rule is simple, follow the path ahead until the 'Thistle logo' re-directs you. We head on towards 'Mugdock Wood' following our path we soon come out alongside 'Craigallan Loch' where are track starts to gently climb. In no time at all, we are in stunning scenic country side, passing through a metal gate we head on towards 'Dumgoyne', and our track starts to gently descend, its good under foot though and crosses a low level moorland type of area, eventually the 'Glengoyne distillery' appears at the foot of 'Dumgoyne' this section of path follows the route of an old railway line and is fairly level. We soon pass a pub called the Beech Tree Inn (No stopping for a pint on this walk) heading on, we disappear into a woodland area again then cross a bridge where we climb up towards a minor road that leads us into Drymen.

With a sigh of relief, early start and weight of back-pack beginning to take its toll, was I glad to see Easter Drumquhassie Farm, our camp site for the night. A converted corrugated barn housed a very clean and effective dining area, with toilet and shower portakabins attached, spotless as well. Quick cup of tea, pitch the tent in the rain, hang our damp clothes on the washing line inside the barn, and we'll nip for a pint. How far is the pub I enquire? About a mile down the road is the reply. Suddenly my feet are reminding me they have done enough, but Paul won't take no for an answer. So off we go. They forgot to tell me that, that mile was along a roller-coaster section of tarmac road. 13 miles in all, plus the 1 back, was I sorry. Well at least until we arrived in Drymen. Four pubs and a local shop to replenish supplies for tomorrow. Soon put a smile back on my face. After a bargain ramblers meal in the Drymen Inn. Quarter pound burger with salad and a stainless steel bucket of chips each for £4.95, life was pretty good, and the walk back to the farm was easy. Paul reckons that was down to the pints we drank. I think it was because it was pitch black by then, and if you can't see the climb the feet don't feel it.

After a great night's sleep, we awake to the sound of even heavier rain, not to worry were well equipped, up shower, shave nice cuppa and off we go, but Paul wants to walk back to town to get a breakfast. OK mate, no problem, see you when you get back. No chance of me doing that extra mileage before we set off for Rowardennan, 15 mile stretch today and a serious climb over

Conic hill.

By the time he returns the tent is packed and were ready to go, back-pack is feeling heavier this morning. Down the road again and take the style to the right before the bridge, head out across woodland and off into the Garadhban Forest, a slow but steady climb on good track, we clear the forest into an area that has recently been felled giving some great views over the southern end of Loch Lomond. Out on to an open moor area, Conic Hill looms ahead, not too much of an ascent I tell myself. After crossing a bridge we reach a style, to my horror the path steeply descends to another bridge, and Conic Hill is now looking like Ben Nevis. Well onwards and upwards I tell myself as Paul starts to disappear ahead.

It was a long hard slog for me but well worth it in the end, about two thirds of the way up some Highland longhorn cattle lay across the track, I tried to bribe them with some food, to take my back-pack to the top, but no joy. Once I arrived at the top of the track it had been well worth it, the views over Loch Lomond and its islands were fantastic. Paul climbed the extra 175 feet to the top for a better view, but I was happy enough on the track ready for the descent.

Conic Hill is on the fault line that divides the Highlands from the lowlands and as you descend and look north and south the difference in the landscape is so obvious. The descent is very steep and severe, but the views are fantastic, and this is on an overcast day as well.

We soon find ourselves down on the bank off Loch Lomond just north of Balmaha, the route from here cross's the road a few times but also follows along the banks of Loch Lomond and along it's stoney beaches, with some steep ascents and descents, through woodland areas. Eventually heading into a forest before again returning down to the banks where we came across a lovely camp site at Cashel.

As the days walk had took its toll on me more so than Paul, we decided to stop here for the night. Excellent facilities, shower block and toilets spotless, and even a washing machine and dryer, to refresh our clothing. Nearest pub? 3 miles north or 3 miles south. A nice cup of tea will do fine thanks. Tent up, some pork pies and biscuits as the darkness falls on the Loch side, bliss.

Good morning world, and what a lovely sunny day it was to. Turned out to be the best day of the whole walk in the end. After another good night's sleep, we unzipped the outer tent to find a couple of our feathered friends on our door step. And they weren't frightened off by the sight of us, cheeky little creatures they were. The weather was so good and the location we were in was so perfect, we went and used the laundry facilities while we took some scenic photos of our surroundings. Enjoying this wonderful site, we had a nice cup of tea and a bite to eat before packing our equipment away.

We set off on our next leg of our walk about 11.30a.m. In shorts and tee shirts with the sun shining through the trees, we followed the track along the banks of Loch Lomond once again. This section was fairly low level, leading us past another smaller camp site in Salloch. It was nicely situated on the banks of the loch, the facilities weren't as good, but a well kept site.

From here on our track climbed to some great heights in places, before returning back down to the banks of the loch, the track was a mixture of rock boulders and tree roots, the trees themselves shading our bald heads from the rays of sunlight.

By 2.00p.m. We arrived in Rowardennan. As the shop on our camp site never had much of a packed lunch selection, the sight of the Rowardennan Hotel was very pleasing on the eye. They had a public bar were we had the pleasure of resting our feet whilst enjoying a nice bowl (yes bowl) of sausage mash and chips for lunch, all washed down by a nice pot of tea. Outside on the patio area, the view up the loch was spectacular on such a fine day. I even got a few shots of Ben Lomond between the tree line alongside us.

There are two choices of route from here, the lower route or the higher route. Being hardened walkers we chose the higher route. An undulating forest track, this leads on to a more open forest path with more up and down

sections with small burns to cross. Again openings in the forest gave spectacular views across the loch, and the many waterfalls we passed came in handy for

topping up our water bottles. Eventually our path begins to descend slowly leading us to a bridge over Snaid burn into Inversnaid. The bridge enables us to get some good shots of the waterfall.

The Inversnaid hotel stands gloriously on the bank of the loch. Not knowing where the bunkhouse we plan to stay in was, and the fact that there is only a very steep tarmac road to the east and my shoulders are aching with the weight of carrying this back-pack for a third day. We decide to ditch our load outside and go in and enquire.

The hotel was quite luxurious, and here we stand like a pair of scruffs in walking boots shorts and tee shirts. We head for reception, were a pleasant young lass informs us that the bunkhouse is a mile up that steep road, but (here's the music to my ears) she can give them a ring to see if they have a room for two and if so they will send a car down to pick us up (Hallelujah). Can I use the toilets I ask. Of course, she replies (wait for it), If you'd like to have a drink and then get me to ring them that's not a problem. I'm thinking to myself, I love this girl. So we took the liberty of having a couple of pints before ordering our lift.

The driver picking us up explained that we could have a baggage handler, move our equipment on to each stage of our walk, if we'd like him to give them a ring. Yes please came the reply. Best £40.00 I spent on this trip.

The bunkhouse itself, was a converted church, our room was small with two single beds but very comfortable. There was a drying room down the hall, and shower and toilets. The dining room was upstairs and still had the original leaded glass windows in. After our meal we decided to take a walk back down the pub, as we were now feeling refreshed. One of the staff heard our intentions, and we were given a lift down there, and picked up at the end of the night, brilliant, what more could you ask for.

After a good night's sleep, we are up early and head upstairs for breakfast. We also find we can have a packed lunch prepared for a reasonable cost, excellent. We fill out our tags for the baggage handler, listing our stop over stages for the rest of our walk and pop our payment in an envelope, and attach them to our bags.

The weather is foul this morning, heavy rain and winds. As we wait for a lift back down to the trail, the baggage handler arrives and lends us two day packs for our pack lunches, gloves etc.

In full water proofs we are dropped off back down by the loch, and head off into the wind. Not only do we have the weather to contend with but we are now heading into what is classed as the roughest section of the route with many up and down sections over stones and tree routes. We come upon some rough stone steps that lead us to a sign highlighting a detour to Rob Roys cave, this we must see. The two of us climb down over huge rocks that have fallen into the loch itself, almost at water level we then have to climb back up to this cave, as Paul heads inside, I wait to take a few photos then follow him in. As we exit the cave the Loch Lomond tour boat arrives with the tannoy system announcing the location of the cave. Well them tourists didn't have to look too hard as we were waving and shouting something about 'go home you Sassenachs'. It was all good fun, laughing at ourselves for not even taking our day bags off our backs before climbing down.

The path continues to twist along the loch crossing a couple of wooden bridges on the way. With all the heavy rainfall one of the bridges no longer spanned the width of the waterfall it was meant to bypass. Skipping on boulders through the water to complete our crossing we were pretty pleased with ourselves. There was a couple of people who had just crossed it, on catching up with them we were to find they were Americans, he was in his eighties his wife in her seventies, that brought us back down to earth. They were a great couple who we would meet again.

Eventually our path drops back down to the side of the loch again before leading us on to where the valley starts to open up, there's a place called Ardlui over on the opposite bank, and you can summon the ferry by hoisting the orange ball on the mast. As we continue on we start to climb away from Loch Lomond and into our forth day we start to leave it behind. Ahead of us the valley widens leading us to a place called 'Beinglas farm' with great facilities for the camp site or the wigwams you can stop in. Again we popped into the onsite bar, but again only for a pot of tea while we ate our pack lunches.

The rain had eased somewhat by now. And we set off on our way again, heading north along Glen Falloch, the track is wide and almost like a cinder path as we climb into the forest, but the view of mountain tops all around is amazing. We pass along the side of a very fast flowing river further on, as we climb away from the river we head

into high level farm land and go on to pass through two quite low tunnels to pass under the railway and the A82 road, our route continues along a track that use to be the old road, before steadily climbing through more farm land leading us towards Crainlarich.

The rain is back by now and the breeze is cold. Paul is disappearing ahead of me as the strain of the walk begins to tell on my feet. Head down into the rain I plod on until eventually my little mate (the post with thistle) appears, directing me to the left. As I look to the left raising my head, to my horror I see another sheer climb, straightening my head to curse, I now see an even taller post pointing right to Crainlarich, and guess what, it's all downhill through the forest. That's the very path for me.

Although I know I'm not far now it was still some distance to go. And although I was enjoying the steep descent. I couldn't help but think, I have to climb back up here tomorrow.

I soon arrive at the youth hostel we were booking into, assuming Paul was already there. No Paul? There's nowhere else he can be, unless, he like me, had his head down but carried on towards Tyndrum. Try ringing him on the mobile, no signal. As I go into panic mode, his bald head appears around the corner of the hostel. Cut a long story short, he needed the loo, so where I passed under the train station he went up onto the platform in search of toilets.

Booked in, showered shaved and a nice microwave meal. That was us ready for our bunks.

Good Night for now Ramblers.