

The Liverpool
Catholic Ramblers'
Newsletter

Midsummer 2000

Seventh Series Issue 26



Editorial

TO JOG your memory, your last newsletter was the Easter one. Since then we've had several contributions from the Seniors' Section - one of them a nostalgic reminiscence of fifty years ago and well worth reading. Richie Cannon sent in an interesting true story about a French mountaineer who recently murdered a potholer.

Yours truly has kept the flag flying with witty reports of the recent Scottish holiday but it would have been good to get a few different versions of that trip. Maybe you will send something for the next edition.

Just before this newsletter was ready to be photocopied, Postman Pat delivered a promised French recipe from Richie for the Cookery Corner but I'm sorry, there were no corners left to squeeze it in, so it will appear in the next edition.

Meanwhile thanks again to all contributors and now enjoy reading your fun-packed, er (six-page) newsletter!

Dave Newns

Ramblerite



OVER the years there has been a fairly set pattern in relationship to social and rambling attendances. Usually, if we've had a good turnout at a social the following ramble has often been poorly attended, and vice-versa.

Take the recent successful Cheese and Wine night when at least 30 came down. Three days later there were only 32 on the Snowdon ramble - yet the week before when we had no social there was a full coach of 52 people out on the walk to Hathersage. Was it the weather? Well not really. On the Hathersage walk it was really too hot for walking, some getting burnt, presumably because they hadn't used sun-bloc cream. On the other hand it was perfect weather for the Snowdon trip - a nice cool breeze and thoroughly "enjoyed" by all. In fact the 'C' party made club history by getting to the summit BEFORE the 'B' party. Mind you Ray did a reverse Hoseshoe - his 'B' staggering into the summit cafe at 4.30.

Meanwhile, let's hope there's a few more cool breezes during these "hot?" summer weeks ahead. See you out there!



Social Events



AT THE CORNMARKEt, FENWICK STREET

DID YOU KNOW that another Merseyside rambling club have well-attended MONTHLY socials and yet still maintain an excellent weekly ramble turnout?

It was suggested at a Spring committee meeting that this could

be tried by our club. The main idea behind this suggestion was to improve poor social attendances.

It was amended instead to experiment with two socials per month for June and July (on the second and fourth Thursdays of

each month). But so far, this compromise seems to have caused much confusion as to which Thursday is a social night.

The good news is that in August we are back to the weekly socials. So make a note of the dates below.

July 6 Bookings only

July 13 SCOTTISH QUIZ with Bob Carney

July 20 Bookings only

July 27 CHEESE and WINE NIGHT plus DINGBATS by Will Harris

August 3 Chris Harris's TV QUIZ

August 10 MILLIONNAIR-ISH QUIZ with Will Harris - Good entertainment. Win big money!

August 17 PIE NIGHT - Sample Peter's pies (courtesy of Sayer's)

August 24 MINI GAFF QUIZ

August 31 BRING & BUY SALE - Bring all your unwanted items to make money for the club. Auctioneer Ray McIntosh

Forthcoming Rambles

July 9 KETTLEWELL - A little scenic corner of the Yorkshire Dales north of Skipton.

July 16 BARMOUTH - Good choice of scenic coastal or mountain walks in the Cadair Idris area.

July 23 LANGDALES - One of the most popular areas of the Lake District, situated several miles down the valley to the west of Ambleside.

July 30 WENSLEYDALE - We never get cheesed-off with the Yorkshire Dales. Walking in an area between Hawes and Ayesgarth.

August 6 FOUR of the 14 PEAKS for the 'A' team, with a pleasant afternoon's stroll up Llandudno's GREAT ORME for the 'C' walk.

August 13 KESWICK - The 'A' doing BLENCATHRA and a gentle 'C' led by Jack. The 'Bs' will have to pick Ray's brains for details of his "stroll."



Sadly, Jack Henderson's Mother died recently. We offer our condolences and deepest sympathy. May she rest in peace.

The Loch Lomond Lament

Oh ye take the high road,
And we'll take the low road,
And we'll reach the hostel afore ye.
It's just like a castle,
The Catholic Ramblers' den,
On the bonny bonny banks of Loch Lomond.

Now ye take the high bunk,
And I'll take the low bunk,
And you'll be a snoring afore me.
When you see your cereal
You'll never sleep again;
Switched the last Coco-Pops here just afore yel

The Glencoe Massacre

A BRIGHT start on Sunday and yes, in the dining room, our clan were playing Swap the dreaded Coco-Pops (for other people's cornflakes or Rice Crispies) in their castle-cum-hostel at Loch Lomond.

Twenty-seven had travelled up on a sunny Saturday by cars, minibus and a camper van, with three more to join us later. Now, after breakfast, some went to St Kellogg's* for Mass while others did short walks. Then everyone travelled northwards through that vast moonscape of Rannoch Moor, with an awesome vista of the massive Highland mountains ahead.

The plan for the LCRA clan was to gather at the Pass of Glencoe around noon. Fearless leader, Robert McCarney (having recently discarded the Garston Tartan in favour of waterproofs and sun hat) arrived in the packed 17-seater minibus.

Now, two cars couldn't be found - one car contained all the club's maps, etc, so they searched other likely staging posts along the pass, in vain.

Luckily, Dave and Joan had a map and the walk routes had been memorised earlier, so now (a lot later than anticipated) they activated the Battle of the Bogs!

It was only 25 days to midsummer's day and raining now, but on top of the mountains it was actually snowing! So the 'A' party, abandoned plans of doing the Aonach Eagach ridge.

They now headed up the Secret Valley to have a go at Ben Ding de Rules (or whatever!) eventually having to glissade down steep snow slopes. No problem! They had Eric the fearless snowboarder with them, plus their one-and-only Supergran Margaret. Rest of that 'A' team included 4 x 4 John, cool Kevin and "Er! Is it this way?" Paul.

Happily, they survived to tell their tale.

AMBUSHED AT GUNPOINT

Reason for delay of the map-carrying wagon was a quick stop to water the horses, but this took much longer than anticipated. (*Humble apologies*). So, making up for lost time, put both feet on the accelerator (Mary's first, then, just before the ambush, mine!). I looked out for cameras, but sped straight towards a present-day highwayman, hiding behind a tree.

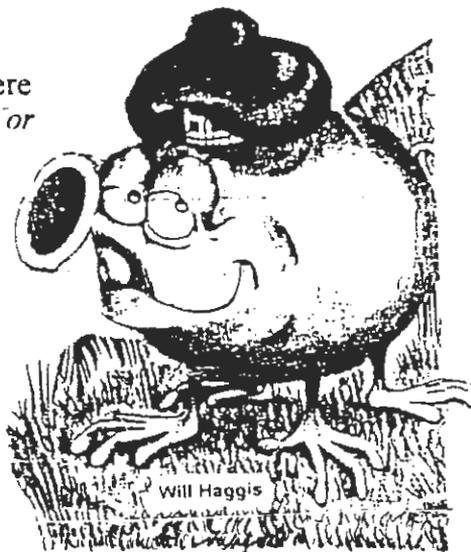
Now PC Ben Lomond jumped out from the tree, still clutching his radar-gun, and pulled us in.

"You were doing 45mph you Sassenach!" ... Finally, after giving a lecture, and asking: "How do you spell Billinge?" he let said driver off with a warning: "Don't let me catch you speeding here again this week!" Well, that was a safe bet!

Meanwhile, in Glencoe village, having misinterpreted the battle-plan, Ray, Irene; Ken and Carol had been forced to take refuge inside a cafe, eventually to devise a lovely 'C' walk under the Pap of Glencoe. (*An idea for a future trip*).

And so, a few miles back up on the pass, we can reveal a brief description of the combined 'B' and 'C' walk: "A scenic trek but can get a little bit boggy at times." OK! So they now headed ... bogwards!

*It was actually St Kessog's but St Kellogg's seemed to be more corny!



by Will Haggis (alias the Road Hog)
(any resemblance of our Treasurer is purely coincidental)

BODY PULLED FROM QUAGMIRE

At the half-way stage it was asked if anyone wanted to turn back, but they all elected to carry on up and around the U-bend, but, as the hours passed, that bedraggled party were all getting massacred in the bogs of that macabre place. Pat got that sinking feeling as she tried to take the shortest route to drop on Albert Downing's Catholic rambling mates in Australia, but was saved by being unceremoniously extracted from the mire.

Then, after an eternity, they finally reached tarmac and the haven of their vehicles, namely minibus, car and camper van. "What a horrible place Scotland is!" remarked at least one half-drowned member. "I will never ever come again!"

That evening, at Glen Nevis hostel, the leader of the clan made sure everyone had their bellies full by bringing back a load of "Blackpool suppers" from Fort William.

BEN NEVIS CONQUERED

Now what a difference a day makes ... Twenty four hours later, half the group were elated at having conquered The Ben! More about this on the next page. The others had gone to the end of Glen Nevis via the scenic path on a ledge above thunderous waterfalls which dwarfed Swallow Falls. This was truly the most scenic Scottish glen.

As the week progressed and the clan travelled way up north, the coastal and mountain scenery was breathtaking with the weather almost perfect (apart from a wet Thursday).

So, after a rather capricious Sunday, did the rest of the week run as smooth as silk? ... You must be joking!

Incidentally, towards the end of the week we all made a donation to the Torridon Mountain Rescue Team (*not that we would ever call them out!*)



More snippets inside

It has to be clarified that Will Harris, our Treasurer, was not on this trip and is not related to our unique house-trained Haggis



No noise after 11.30



"If you can't keep quiet downstairs then get to bed!"

MEN'S DORMITORY

— SNORE!
— SNORE!
— SNORE-SNORE! Runner up
— SNORE!
— SNORE!

The Winner!

Mad mountain-dweller murders messy mole!

IN THE WORLD OF SPORT much antipathy exists between potholers and mountain-dwellers. Potholers (or "speleologists") are regarded as "moles" by mountaineers and potholers call mountaineers "spiders!" Such antipathy can brim over into extreme hatred, as was revealed in a recent trial in Savoy, France.

A young experienced mountaineer, aged 25, Jeremie Brun, was called before the local magistrate to answer a charge of the murder of potholer Lionel Vivet. The incident took place in August 1998 under the following circumstances:

POTHOLER'S ROPE CUT

Vivet had planned to explore a cave high on a mountain cliff. To ease his descent he fixed a rope outside the cave a few days earlier so that he could quickly scale-down to the ground.

On finishing his "sortie" inside the cave, he came out to slide down the rope. To his horror, the rope never unfurled causing him to fall over 100 metres to a ledge where he received multiple fractures, went into a coma, and subsequently died a few days later.

In court it became evident that Jeremie Brun was embittered with potholers in general. They did not

respect his beloved mountain - they would attach ropes to rocks and abandon these for weeks, or even months on end. They were polluting his mountain and he wanted revenge.

MOUNTAINEER CHARGED

In his defence he claimed there was a security risk with ropes left abandoned. They would age and could give way at any time, suggesting this was what had happened.

The prosecutor was not convinced. Brun was charged with the "hateful act" of cutting his rope and thereby causing his death. He was given a three-year jail sentence and banned from any form of mountaineering activity for five years.

Perhaps a lesson to be learned from this is to always respect the mountains as well as the hobbies of others.

Richie Cannon

Bob loses his head in Scotland

IT WAS Bob who originally suggested the Scottish holiday. Someone had to be in charge of such a large group and so Bob, who also drove the minibus, was the obvious man. But, as head of the wild LCRA clan, he unfortunately lost his head a couple of times, upsetting one or two people as he tried to instill some discipline.

Bob said that when some people seemed a bit of a pain in the neck he was "hung over" at times when he lost his head. Well now, after Glencoe, that's exactly how some of the walkers secretly wanted to see Bob, i.e. "hung over" a big rock with a pain in his neck!

The wet weather at Glencoe didn't help. Many said the walk was too long and too hard for the first day. In

defence, not only Bob, but the other walk planners also, didn't realise the walk would be so hard (the sun was shining when the walk was planned earlier).

Everything, including the weather, got better for the rest of the holiday (apart from Bob losing his head again!). So to cut a long story short, towards the end of the week, and after Bob had found his head! the clan had a secret whip-round for him, thus showing their appreciation of the effort he put into organising the trip.

With the money collected they purchased a bottle of superior malt whisky and some butter-scotch sweets. They also bought a couple of coloured shirts just to remind him not to get shirty with them again!

In conclusion, Bob thanks once more, everyone who contributed to his surprise presents. He said that he was totally humbled by it all.

What do you do if you get separated from your party?

THERE'S a multitude of reasons why we get separated. You could simply have stopped to take a photograph and the mist has come down suddenly, and you are lost. Would you spend some time running up and down various paths? That is the **WRONG** thing to do.

Answer: Keep calm and REMAIN where you are.

All whippers-in or leaders will always retrace their steps to where they last saw you. It's the logical thing to do. And hopefully, you will still be stood there. OK!

I've left my jacket on the coach last week without my name inside!

IT HAPPENS to the best of us. Your lost property is sometimes not missed for days, but by then it may be lost forever if your name isn't on that lost item.

Have you ever had a ball-point pen run inside a pocket? You just can't get rid of the stain. Well by the same logic, use an ordinary ball-point pen NOW to write your name inside any property that you have. It eventually fades away after many washes, but by then you should have bought a special marker pen.

Plastic bottles and empty cans litter the mountainside

SURVEYS have been made nationally into who is leaving litter around mountainsides. It has been revealed surprisingly that it is the older person that's mainly the culprit. Discarded litter can maim and sometimes be fatal to wildlife. Ensure that your litter is either put in a bin at the end of the ramble or taken home with you.

The Chalet in the Fifties

We are told that as we grow old - sorry, I'll rephrase that - as we mature, our long term memory improves to the detriment of the short, so if any, or all, of my contemporaries' recollections differ from mine, please forbear!

The majority of members lived on the northern shore of the Mersey, which meant starting the journey to the chalet by tram or bus to the Pier Head, then the ferry to Woodside, with a dash up to the Crosville bus terminus to catch, hopefully, the bus to Loggerheads, where we got off at Maeshafn turning to start the 3-mile slog up to the chalet. It was such a quiet walk up after the noise of the bus that I became aware that the only sound I could hear was the crunching of my boots. Standing still, listening, but not a breath of wind to disturb the silence: a full moon at its most brilliant; countless stars on a velvet cushion, and looking to my right there was Moel Fammau turned into a mystic mountain on the majestic night - still vivid in my (long term) memory.

I had to go to a nearby farm to collect the keys, bread and milk, from where it was only a short step to the chalet.

The first job was to turn on the water, which was outside by a stop-cock in a well. This was fine in the summer and arriving in the winter, but on departure in winter when the stop-cock was under a couple of feet of water, it meant plunging an arm to above the elbow in freezing water, which meant an uncomfortable half hour or so until the arm thawed out and then warmed up the body temperature.

Physically the chalet hasn't changed very much since those days. The biggest improvement is in the kitchen, but more of that later. The passageway from the common room to the toilets wasn't there in those days, which meant a dash outside for the lads, as the girls claimed the dormitory nearest to the toilets. The lighting was by gas - a fitting attached to a beam (no ceiling) gave a dim yellow light. To light it we had to stand on a chair, light a match and tug on a ring-pull to turn on the supply, and apply the lit match, but on a dark cold night, we couldn't do that going to the toilet, so if there was no torch to hand it meant crashing into tables or chairs, which caused a racket which brought down the wrath of those woken up!

The weekend started officially at noon on Saturday, so those arriving on Friday had to provide their own food, which meant all that was necessary for a good breakfast were cooked on two very temperamental primus stoves. These had to be filled with paraffin and pumped up every ten minutes or so to keep the pressure up, otherwise they would splutter and flare, filling the kitchen with smoke soot and paraffin smell, which permeated the whole chalet. After breakfast it was a dash to catch the bus (Saturdays and Wednesdays only!) To Mold for the weekend supplies, after which we met up with any members arriving on the bus, and made our way back to the chalet in time for a walk in the afternoon.

On Saturday night after dinner, the centre of the common room was cleared, and an evening of square dancing commenced - music supplied by 78 rpm records on a wind-up

gramophone. On a fine summer evening we played football, cricket (chalet rules, not MCC!) or just sat around talking.

Sunday morning was chaotic. Without breakfast, due to the fasting from midnight observance then, and regardless of the weather, we walked over the fields to Mold for Mass at 11.0am, and returned by the same route with a good healthy appetite and well ready for breakfast, followed by a walk in the afternoon. After the walk, the evening meal was anything left over, lobbed into one pan resulting in some very unusual recipes. All then set to, to leave the chalet spick and span for the next occupants, followed by a hurried walk and sometimes a trot, carrying one box of very heavy 78 records and one very bulky and awkward gramophone, to catch the bus on the main road home.

That was the usual routine of a chalet weekend, but there are memories of a snow fight, though most of the time snow wasn't necessary(!), of building a large sledge to slide down the slope to the path, or using a spade as a sledge, rolling off as close to the path as possible. On one occasion, one member left it too late and ended up cut and bruised in a hedge on the other side of the path! It would be impossible to enjoy "Winter Games" these days, but then, there was very little gorse, heather and fences.

Another memory was a group of lads exploring a lead mine, the entrance to which was in 'Pothole Valley' - which is the valley running from the quarry down to the River Alyn. As I recall, it was possible to walk upright. About a hundred yards into the mine, we came to a vertical shaft descending to a second level. We were equipped, albeit rather primitively by today's standards, with a rope, rope ladder, a packet of biscuits and, of course, torches. We went down some twenty or thirty feet and found some rail tracks, trucks and plenty of water. Having entered the mine mid-morning, it was a bit of a shock to arrive back at the chalet early evening instead of at lunchtime as promised!

In the early fifties Maeshafn was a mining village, and not very attractive, and the Miners' Arms was not as comfortable as it is today. It had not yet been found by the 'upwardly mobile'!

There is the story of the remains of a Roman soldier in full uniform being found in the Pothole Valley, but I have never heard it confirmed.

Many friendships were formed in those days which are still as strong and valued, more so forty-fifty years on. A lot of those friendships developed into courtships (to use an old-fashioned adjective), and finally to be blessed by marriage and parenthood.

... We have a great deal to thank the Liverpool Catholic Ramblers for - oh, excuse me, the phone is ringing...
Now where did I leave the cordless?! G

Facts about the Chalet

It is situated in a secluded spot a few miles from Mold, between Maeshafn village and Eryrys. The Miners Arms Pub is a mile or so down the road. It was constructed by members of the Liverpool Ramblers Association (the RA). When they are not using it they rent it out to other clubs.

Meanwhile back on the recent Scottish trip

STEP out of Glen Nevis youth hostel and cross the bridge and you're on the path to Ben Nevis. That's what half the group did on the Bank Holiday Monday. The big smiles of achievement on members' faces on reaching the snow-bound summit was a joy to behold. The 'A' had to abandon the Arete route because of bad conditions but they still did the Ben. On their way down they passed the 'B' going up, so one member, Kevin, turned around and did it a second time! More facts appearing in the next edition.

A Snow Bunting spotted on top of the Ben

VERY RARE to see that! Later, Ospreys were spotted flying by Loch Torridon, and a Monarch of the Glen got close to the minibus on a trip to the Isle of Skye.

A total height of well over 16,000 feet was climbed by the 'A' team. All details will appear in the next newsletter.

Seniors' Section Write-ups

Rambling at Beacon Fell - 7 May

ON A GLORIOUS DAY, seven ramblers set out from Beacon Fell Visitors Centre, 12 miles north of Preston. We crossed lush meadows filled with wild flowers and cows grazing peacefully - "an idyllic scene indeed."

We continued by Woodford and Cronbrigholm, all the time enjoying the wonderful spring day. Around the farms the hedges were neatly trimmed seeming to emphasise the various colouring of the foliage.

From time to time we entered wooded areas full of the haze of bluebells and the sound of bird song. Eventually we reached Crock Bottom and the river. We enjoyed our lunch while watching the fish jumping in the river as it swept along and afterwards we continued to follow the path by the river - meeting young families splashing about while parents lazed in the sunshine.

Suddenly, as our leader had promised, we left the squeals and shouts behind and we were in the woods and peace descended. Here again we saw the aquamarine mist of bluebells and were shaded from the sun by trees with fresh green leaves of many shades.

At Higher Brock bridge we rested and then spurred on by the promise of tea, coffee and ice-cream at the old post office which was a little further on. Upon reaching said place we indulged in our refreshments.

The next few miles were up hill and whenever we turned to view the scenery and take a breather we had wonderful views of Bleasdale. Eventually we were back at the car park at the Visitors Centre.

Thank you Gerry and Jean for a most enjoyable day. Just one hour's drive from Liverpool. *Ro*

Ribchester & Longridge Fell - 11 June

IT WAS A PLEASANT MORNING on which to assemble for a ramble and nine pleasant people duly did so. Within minutes of leaving the car park we were in open countryside and heading along Stydd Lane, interesting in itself for its quaint, beautifully restored almshouses, the Catholic church of St Peter and Paul and the medieval Hospitaller church of St Saviour.

However, our leader would not let us dally too long and we were soon climbing a stile into Duddel Wood and crossing and re-crossing Duddel Brook. One of our regulars being absent, we missed the plaintive cries of someone starving but eventually stopped to satisfy the inner man.

Now we all had an opportunity to hear some of the exploits, daring and otherwise of Tony during his exciting backpacking trip to the New World.

Were we now in for a back-breaking trip up to Longridge? Indeed not. An almost imperceptible ascent past Goodshaw House and Moor Game Hall and there we were with that wonderful view before us but feeling so dreadfully sorry for those of our friends who had missed out, er, weren't we?

The tranquillity which had been a feature of the day was somewhat disturbed by a herd of bullocks who thought they were spring lambs but were most certainly not and there amongst them was, er, was it? No, couldn't be. Big Fella though, um. But he hardly moved, preferring to admire the antics of his offspring.

After that, the mudbath that followed roused little comment. Aren't some leaders lucky? *GEFA*

SENIORS' SECTION HOUSE MEETINGS

July 6: Betty & Jack Highton Aug 3: Jean & Gerry McDonald Sept 7: AGM at Nora Naylor's

True, or have those rumours been scotched?

QUESTIONS



1. Not wishing to make a spectacle about it, but there's a rumour that on the recent Scottish trip ten per cent of the thirty members actually lost their specs up there. True or false?
2. Rumours also on that same holiday that Paul Healy's and Rene's hair changed colour. True or false?
3. On the last day of that week Flo was chauffeur-driven along the Royal Mile by a man and woman in Edinburgh when suddenly, a large Haggis rolled out of a butcher's shop and collided with the car, thus losing a lot of blood. True or false?
4. Your editor actually had his blood donor card on him, ready for such an emergency above, but sadly this had already been rejected by an Edinburgh cashpoint machine the night before. True or false?

ANSWERS

1. True. Carol lost hers at Torridon but later found them again. Supergran Margaret Scotland lost hers inside a distinctive pink case somewhere up there. They haven't turned up yet. Finally, your editor, after several phone calls, had his driving glasses returned by post. They were found hiding behind a whisky bottle in the Ben Damph pub in Torridon!
2. True. They both bought ginger wigs, complete with tam-o'-shanters, in Fort William. Photographs are in circulation to prove it.
3. False about the Haggis. It jumped out of the way! But true about Flo. She had a sister living in Edinburgh.
4. True about the blood donor card being rejected by the cashpoint machine. Well, it did look much like my Flex Account card in the dark! I found the right card, after a frantic search, much later.

Cookery Corner

A Cookery Corner was started in the last edition. It was anticipated that at least one of you would be sending in a favourite recipe.



Sadly, there was no response, but hopefully, whether red peppers or green tomatoes (or even vice-versa?) more will be sent in for future newsletters.