



Liverpool Catholic Ramblers

Autumn Newsletter

November 2008 7th Series Issue 72

Forthcoming rambles

November

2 ARNSIDE is a lovely part of the southern Lake District. A choice of part beach walking with the 'C' party, or climbing Arnside Knott on the more strenuous walk can be had.

Coach route: M58/M6

9 No ramble

16 CONWAY, Plenty of rolling cliff headlands or even 'flat' Conway Mountain to walk over. *Route via tunnel*

23 HEBDEN BRIDGE, Yorks. Walking in scenic wooded valleys alongside rivers in typical rural Yorkshire. Once a dilapidated old mill town, Hebden Bridge has now become one of the most sought after places in England to live in.

Route: M58/M6

Referendum

Every so often, questions repeat themselves about how the rambles are run, start and end times, etc, and it is worth revisiting previous decisions every so often. We are going to have a referendum in the next issue of the newsletter where members can vote on their personal preferences.

This note is to give members time to think about and discuss any potential changes.

1. We will decide on whether the start time remains at 9.30am, or should it be brought forward to 9.00am.
2. The time the coach generally leaves at 6.30pm or 7.00pm. Different options can be considered ranging between 6.00pm and 7.00pm. These times could be different for the Summer and the Winter seasons.
3. The break on the outward journey, currently up to 30 mins in Summer, 10 mins in Winter. Keep the same or move to 10 mins all the time.

Watch out for the voting form in the next newsletter to vote on your choices.

Christmas Buffet Dance

With an entertaining DJ

at **New Century Hall, Near Walton Church**
on **Saturday 20th December from 8 till late**
Buffet at 9.30

There will be a draw for a Christmas Hamper.

Tickets £10 including buffet – see Mike Riley on the coach or at the Cheese and Wine nights on the first Thursdays of November and December at the Ship and Mitre (upstairs).

Christmas Hamper donations

As in previous years, Mike is collecting your Christmas Fayre to include in the hamper. Just donate anything that you would like to find in a Christmas Hamper. Sorry no petfood!

Subs are overdue now. Pay up and smile!
Will is the man to see. £5 single, £6 married.

Inside this newsletter

Editor's page mentioning the AGM, holidays and a few other bits and pieces; a page all about pack horses; a page about the Annual Mass and the tragic air crash; a page with a Seniors' Section ramble report with a few cartoons at the foot – alas no reports submitted by any members of the General Section; and a poster at the back.

Welcome to all those new members who have joined us recently. We hope you enjoy many happy and memorable rambles with us.

Leather walking boots for sale, as new, ladies size 5 Karimor. Not suited to owner. £40. Contact Anne Foley 01257 254276

Gents Ski Boots, size 10. Only £10. My feet have grown bigger (don't laugh). Only 200 genuine ski miles. Had a few bumps but still a few seasons of wear left. Looking for size 10½. Save £4 a day on boot hire. See me, the Editor

No New Year mini holiday break

The club's usual New Year mini holiday will not take place this time. There is a lengthy refurbishing job in progress at the Ambleside hostel and at this late date it was decided not to organise any group alternative.



Our club is doing fine financially

In these days of financial instability you will be pleased to know that we haven't foolishly invested any money into a country that is melting.

The club's recent AGM was a vibrant event, in spite of only about 10 per cent of our members turning up.

Unless of course, they had a genuine reason for not attending, many won't bother reading this either. But you can all prove me wrong by actually reading this.

So briefly, Will Harris, our treasurer, mentioned that his biggest financial responsibility was keeping an eye on the coach income and expenditure. Smaller coaches are being used mostly at the present time and as a result we are more or less breaking even. A few relative questions were asked, such as: Why can't we have a ramble every Sunday? *Answer:* We would not be able to fill the coaches with our current low numbers; also we don't have enough leaders available.

No leaders will mean the end of the club!

The shortage of leaders was debated and it was pointed out that on some rambles recently we could only have two walks instead of an A B and C as we had only two leaders available. We were reminded that if we ended up with no leaders it would actually mean the end of the club! Fortunately, since that meeting we do have a few more members interested in leading, and with a bit of training they hope to lead club walks in the future.

The feedback from one controversial suggestion which was followed by a short debate will be discussed at the next committee meeting, so watch this space.

One constructive and sensible suggestion was to put a few flyers out to attract new members. This has been done in the past and so has now been taken up again. Our last poster campaign was actually four years ago.

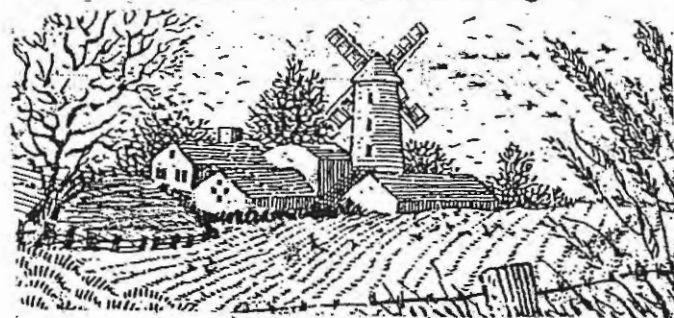
Date change to Keswick weekend

Our next Keswick weekend has just been brought forward by two weeks. It is now on the weekend before Easter. Simply mark the swap over in your programme with the date of the Coniston ramble and vice versa. **This may well be the last stay at Lakeside House, so make a note of the date.**

Editor's jottings

Ramble reports come in regularly from the Seniors Section – thanks. But I have given up on the main section doing any reports, so how about some short stories of travels in the past?

To start the ball rolling for you, I cycled around Holland when I was a naïve 19-year-old with a youth hostel group. I was a bit disappointed with Amsterdam's sordid red light district – I expected to see a colourful street lined with red lights!



Highlight of the holiday was riding along the 22-mile long dual-carriageway dyke at the top of Holland with the sea almost level with the road, but the massive 22-mile long lake on the other side (once the sea) was much lower, and so, it seemed, was the rest of Holland.

In spite of the roads being flat it was hard work, even on my racing bike, as strong winds always seemed to be against us – hence all those windmills everywhere!

Anyone who has been to Amsterdam will know that as well as canals, there were lots of bikes everywhere. It is still the same today, as my youngest sister and her 25-year-old daughter confirmed the other week. On entering their hotel room they tested the telly – as you do. Minutes later I was getting an excited text message at home that a Dutch documentary was showing the alpine skiing resort of Zakopane in wintertime!

I am now a bit anxious about that likely invasion of skiers wearing clogs around Zakopane. Seventeen of us will be clashing with them there this February.

I suppose I really got the travel bug when I flew to Singapore and Malaya, courtesy of the government, before I was 22 years old – I was wearing a jungle green uniform then, with a shedful of tales I could tell.

Many of you may well have similar snippets from the past, so how about a few jottings of your travel tales, from both sections of the club?

All contributions to the next newsletter can be given to me personally or posted to my camouflaged billet in a swamp at 7 Abbotts Way, Billinge, Wigan WN5 7SB or send by email to me at davenewns@hotmail.com

North to Alaska

Mike and Helen recently sailed northwards. If you thought that Mike may have been in a rush to visit an Icelandic bank you were wrong – anyway, only mums go to Iceland! They had actually flown over to the west side of America to Vancouver and then took a cruise ship north to Alaska. Now here is that 'Z' word creeping in again: they couldn't escape from that Zakopane mode – they had a 'Piano Bar' on board!

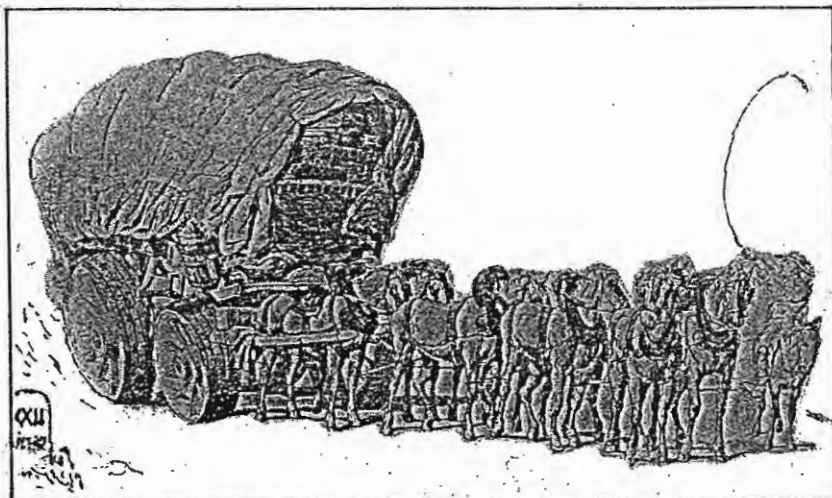
Could our pack horses return?

MOVING hefty goods over hilly country was once the work of pack horses. When the world's oilfields run dry (ostensibly not in our lifetime) will real horse power return? So let's just review those horse power days.

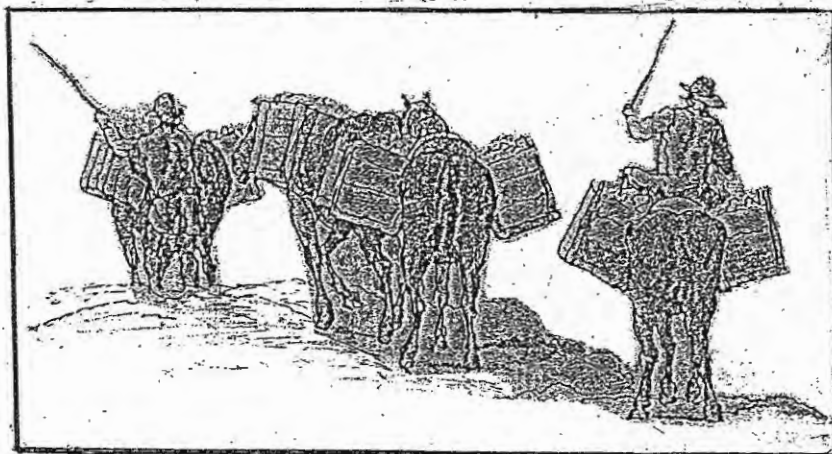
Our barges were pulled by horses, but goods were also loaded onto covered wagons and pulled by as many as eight or ten horses. It must have resembled a Wild Western setting, except that these wagons travelled slowly, probably at no more than walking pace.

Those heavy goods wagons had wide wooden wheels, but they soon cut up the surface of muddy roads, the result being that the roads usually became impassable in bad weather.

Over narrow roads and mountain passes large packs were slung across horses' backs, which hung each side of the animals. The width of many packs made it impossible for them to cross the narrow bridges with high-sided walls – the remedy was for low parapets to be built for the pack horses so that their loads could stick out above the low walls.



Large goods wagons were pulled by teams of horses



Pack horses carrying cases of limestone over hilly terrain

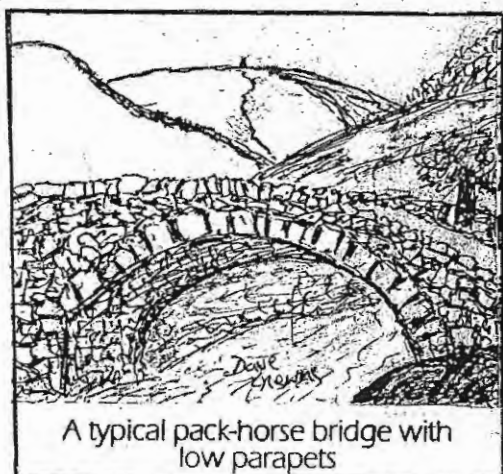
Long strings of these pack horses were formed. Sometimes the reins of one horse were plaited into the tail of the horse in front, so that just one or two men could lead a train of perhaps forty horses. These pack-horse tracks climbed from one valley to the next over hills and mountain passes.

They took the shortest route – no matter how hard it was for the men or the horses. Many paths were cobbled to stop any rapid erosion especially in wet and muddy conditions.

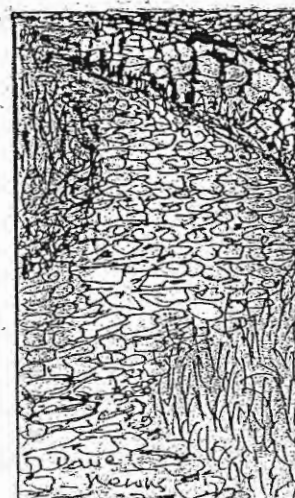
On these narrow mountain passes the leading horse often carried a bell which would ring as it walked, the sound of the bell warning the men in charge of a pack-horse train coming the other way to wait at a suitable passing place until the first train of horses had gone by.

The stone bridges for the heavily-laden pack horses had to withstand the heavy weight, hence the reason for the high arched construction which could withstand virtually any heavy traffic.

Old pack horse trails like this can still be found in parts of our hill country



A typical pack-horse bridge with low parapets



And so, will the pack horse return? Well, your guess is as good as mine, but as we know, in some remote areas throughout the world the old faithful pack horse is still plodding on at the present time.

Dave Newns

About 100 people attended our recent Annual Mass in the Cathedral Crypt when we not only remembered all our members who had died but also the victims of the air crash of forty years ago.

Everyone on board was killed which sadly included eight of our young lady members. The large congregation included at least fifty ex club members from various corners of the British Isles, with a few travelling from Ireland – mostly in their late 50's and 60's – many of whom knew the girls personally. Also included were over

“ The 1968 air crash and beyond

The air crash of 9th August 1968 is something that had a profound effect on so many people and not just the relatives and friends of the 48 passengers and crew who died that day. When the British Eagle Vickers Viscount crashed near the village of Langenbruck / Winden am Aigne in Germany at 14.29 local time so many hopes and expectations were dashed as the plane ploughed into an embankment on each side of the Munich – Nuremberg autobahn.

Liverpool suffered particularly badly from this accident with eight members of the Catholic Ramblers being amongst the victims, as well as a family of six from St Mary's, Woolton and St Mark's, Halewood. Mrs Eileen Hall, her daughters Barbara (13), Veronica (11), and son Brendan (9) died along with her mother, Mrs Elizabeth Staunton, and brother Peter Staunton. The devastation of such an accident on their family in particular just cannot be contemplated. A joint funeral was held for them at St. Mary's Woolton.

We in the Ramblers grieved as we lost Jean Baxter, Mary Byron, Monica Hanna, Valerie Humphreys, Barbara O'Keefe, Irene Rawlinson, my sister Maureen McLindon and our cousin Mary Fletcher from Essex. The parents, families and friends of all these dear ones were left only with very special memories of vibrant, talented young people. We were left to wonder what they might have achieved in life. We did not realise as we waved them off on 8th/9th August 1968 for their holiday in Seefeld, Austria that they would never return.

The years passed by and whilst we in our family have visited Seefeld many times, no family members had actually been to the site of the crash in Germany. Thankfully this situation changed in February 2007 when my cousins James and Fr. Martin Fletcher took it upon themselves to visit the scene of the accident. From newspaper cuttings they discovered the crash location at Langenbruck and met Herr Michael Klepmeir who, it was reported, had witnessed all that had happened. He confirmed that he saw the accident and that he was first on the scene. Although now 70 years old, he was clearly moved by the fact that someone had visited the site after all these years. He was most kind and considerate and took James and Martin to the crash site and then to the local cemetery where to the surprise of my cousins he showed them a beautiful shrine to all those who had died. It was here that together they said the “Our Father” in Latin, German and English. He then showed them the grave of Fr Wilhelm Hofler who had attended on those who died that day.

The visit had been a wonderful experience for James and Martin, leaving them with great memories of the kindness and respect of the German people for our loved ones. They were not to know that some months later that contact from Mrs Betty Reith in Langenbruck would lead to an even more memorable visit which would greatly assist the healing process for us all.

Early in May 2007 Fr Martin received a letter from Betty pointing out that prayers were said every five years for the victims and that a 40th Anniversary mass would be said on 9th August this year in Langenbruck. She pointed out also that she had been looking after the shrine in the cemetery since 1968. It was as a result of this contact that nine members of the Fletcher and McLindon families decided to go to Germany for this special occasion. None of us however could have anticipated the great love and kindness that we received on our visit.....

twenty Seniors' Section members and a good number of relatives and friends of the victims of the air crash.

Father Frank Johnson (himself a past member) officiated. (See below in regard to the General Section's attendance).

A buffet was held afterwards largely for the 50 ex club members and relatives of the young ladies.

There are a few surplus special memorial leaflets still available if you contact Hilda on 339 9216.

Reproduced below is a personal letter from club member Peter McLindon, who not only sadly lost his young sister Maureen in the crash but also his cousin Mary Fletcher.

It has to be said here that only a small handful of members from the General Section of the club attended this Annual Mass.

Pathetically there were less than ten people, which included the members who played in our little music group around the side of the altar.

This ominous situation when the majority of the Catholic members of the main section of the club cannot even turn up for one day of the year to attend our own special Mass is to be discussed at the club's next monthly meeting.

Photographs and rambling programme are on line

Did you know that our recent club's photographs and also pictures taken at our last year's 80th Anniversary do can be seen on our own website, plus the programme for both sections of the club can be seen at liverpool catholic ramblers.com – without the word spaces between (see poster on back page).

Peter McLindon ”

Glasson Dock

GLASSON DOCK seems to be a meeting place for anyone wanting a day out, but they appear to go no further than a 'snack van' which sold excellent tea and coffees, around which they parked their vehicles and went no further – but we rambblers, all eight of us, were made of sterner stuff.

Once we had cleared the village and were into open countryside, the vista opened up, and with the aid of warm sunshine and an almost cloudless sky, gave us a panoramic view of Heysham and beyond to the peaks of the Lake District – the view diminished somewhat by the intrusion of Heysham power Station.

We had Morecambe Bay on our right, with open countryside on our left. The tide was out – nonetheless it was a pleasing aspect. The men had built up perspiration, while the ladies merely glowed! Lunch was taken sitting upon a grassy bank with feet dangling a few metres above the shore, but a cooling breeze soon persuaded the swift appearance of pullies and jackets.

The walk continued along the coastal path, but the ancient Benedictine Abbey was not visited – it was wearing an orange plastic bonnet that day, indicating that some vital restoration work was being carried out.

The constant drone of an aircraft engine began to intrude upon the peace of the day. All it seemed to be doing was taking a circular route out over the bay and then turning inland for no apparent reason – that is until dots appeared in its wake, followed by a number of colourful canopies floating gently earthwards to land in a field; and this was repeated time and time again.



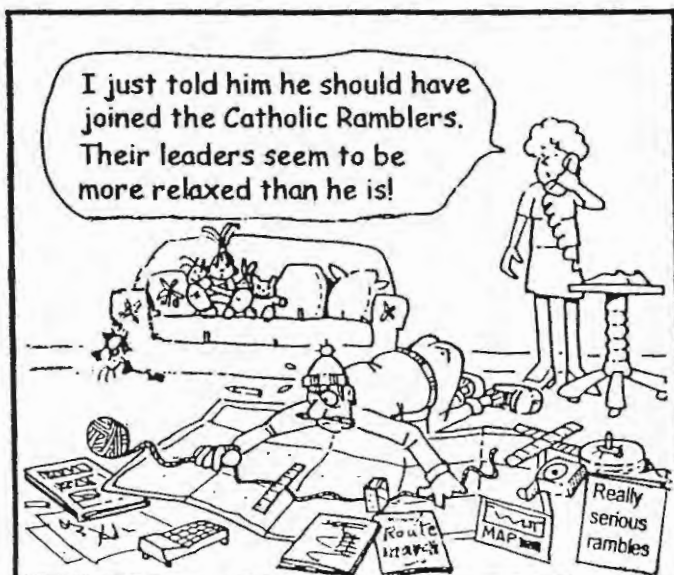
I hope they changed pilots occasionally to prevent the poor person becoming dizzy.

A mile or so further on it seemed for a moment that evasive action might have to be taken as the plane approached the field we were in – fortunately, it hedge-hopped into an adjoining field and landed safely.

It was the next meadow that we urged to deviate from our route to prevent our scent (or perspiration!) from confusing the trail-hounds in their hunt for hidden bags of aniseed, although I can't see how our gentle glow could overcome the pong of a high-powered aircraft engine!

A cuppa set us up for the final stage of the walk, taking us to the towpath of the Lancaster Canal. In the cooling early evening the aura of tranquillity was enhanced by a swan and her cygnets.

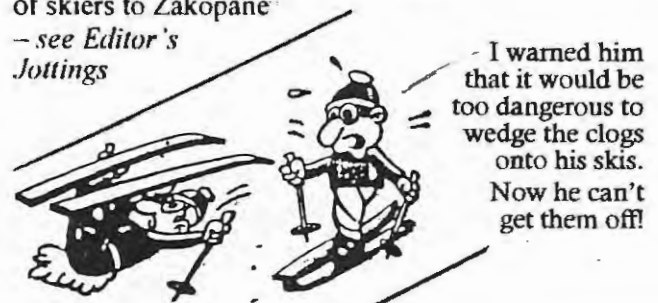
With the departure of Marcia and Tony home to enjoy their grandchildren, I was left with five lovely ladies – Freda, Lillian, Ita and her sister Julia and Jean with whom to wine and dine. G.



Smile-a-while

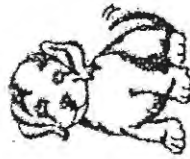
I was anxious about that likely Dutch invasion of skiers to Zakopane

– see Editor's Jottings



What would stop you from buying a new type of expensive crunchy biscuit bar for your lunch break?

It would be called a Credit Crunch!



**Don't just sit and wish that
you could get more
companions to come out on a
Sunday walk**

Make it happen!

**Display one or more of our new posters
(on the right) in a prominent place or hand a
few out for people to distribute**

You can either cut this one out or photocopy it
or even blow it up to A4 size. And why not
photocopy it on bright coloured paper?
Staples or other stationers will supply you with
one or more coloured sheets when photocopying

Enjoy days out in the country

Dogs love to go for walkies – and so do we, to
the hills, mountains and
valleys of the Lake District,
North Wales, the Derbyshire
Peak District, the Yorkshire
Dales, etc



We are out on most Sundays throughout the year
and have a choice of two or three rambles on
each coach trip ranging from easy walks to
strenuous fell treks – from ages 18 to 80-plus

Why don't you try a day out with us?

We are the Liverpool Catholic Ramblers'
Association – *and all denominations are welcome*

For info give Will a buzz on 0151-486 6541

Mike on 0151-526 6960 or text Dave on 0797 753 7276

View our website at liverpoolcatholicramblers.com

*PS: Naturally, you have to be reasonably fit, even for our easier walks
which often include at least some hilly sections*