



"Aren't you glad you all came on my 'C' walk? The view from where I am standing is well worth the effort!"

Liverpool Catholic Ramblers NEWSLETTER

October 2006

Issue 58 Seventh Series

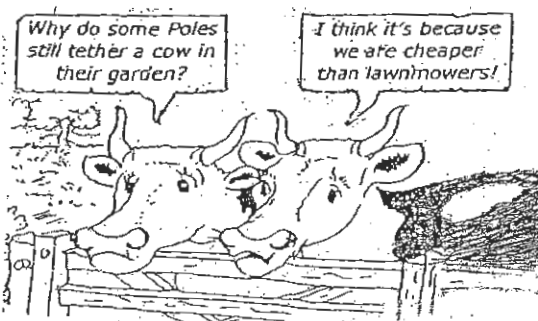
In this edition

Page 2: Main news - an update of all the latest happenings in the club

Page 3: Three bears seen near a ski slope. *Can a bear ski? Only if it suffers from insomnia. Brown bears hibernate, don't they?*

Page 4: Jim's big day in North Wales *plus* Richie on the buses (*inside panel*)

Cover cartoon from Polish phrasebook:
Czy wszyscy już przyszli?
(*Has everyone arrived?*)



Annual Subscriptions are now due

Married couples £6, Single members £5 – payable to the Registrar: Chris Harris,
57 Higher Road, Halewood, L26 1TA (Cheques made payable to LCRA)

If you have joined in the last two months, then you don't renew until next September

Editorial

7 Abbots Way, Billinge,
Wigan, WN5 7SB

I hope you all enjoy reading this short newsletter as much as I did compiling it. Both Richie and Jim have had a sneak preview of the bits concerning them and have given me the green light to publish the unabridged versions.

I think a pint will be coming your way if you can tell Jim who wrote that story about him but I won't put that down in writing – Miss Marples would probably get it right.

The Seniors' Section have been away at the Chalet near Maeshafn this week, so they are having a rest from doing their usual write-ups.

When people have had a good holiday, they like to tell everyone about it. All I can say is that there must have been some grim rambles' holidays this summer! However, I suspect that, for whatever reason, some people just can't get down to doing a report.

Why not try putting your report in verse? It is sometimes easier that way. Keep it brief – if a report is far too lengthy, people will switch off and not read it.



Actually, our story about Jim was sent to me by email. All I had to do was grab hold of my mouse and change the typeface and heading, then convert the write-up into two columns for easier reading.

So start sending all your material to me now for the Christmas edition – you can also send reports on disc (Microsoft Word). Thanks.

Dave News

New members

We welcome the following new members who have joined our ranks recently: Terry and Ruth Gallagher and Paul Campbell. We hope that you have many happy years with us.

Bring and Buy Sale – The club made approx £78 at the recent Cheese & Wine Night/Bring and Buy Sale recently. Thanks to Lyn and Nick who organised it, and to Mike Riley for the C&W, and to all those who supported this function.

Is anyone eighty years old next year?

The Echo is doing a feature to celebrate their anniversary. It is also our club's Eightieth Anniversary, but we also need members who are 80 years old next year to come forward and inform our committee. A feature will be compiled in conjunction with the Echo. So watch this space.

The recent Hawes weekend (in Wensleydale) seemed to be an enjoyable experience – I didn't go myself, but they were blessed with good weather and the 'A' party didn't get back until 7pm on the Saturday, so they must have clocked up a few rambling miles.

New Year Weekend at Ambleside

Reservations are limited at the big hostel in Ambleside. Many beds have already been taken. The three-day package, Dec 30, 31 and Jan 1, costs approx £102 per person for 2-bed and 3-bed rooms. Early to bed and other regulations are waived at New Year. You must arrange your own transport or share cars with someone. Bookings can only be accepted with a deposit, followed by the full money.

New Leaders wanted

We are looking for more leaders to volunteer for 'A,' 'B' and 'C' walks for the new winter programme, shortly to be printed.

As last time, we won't put the leaders' names in the programmes, but leaders will be appointed at each monthly committee meeting prior to the relevant rambles.

CHEESE & WINE NIGHTS – held on the first Thursday of each month at the Ship & Mitre, Dale Street (upstairs). £1.50 inclusive of Ken's Quiz (prizes) and musical entertainment by our own group: 'Free and Easy'



Christmas Dance

at the Eldonian Village Hall
Saturday, December 9th

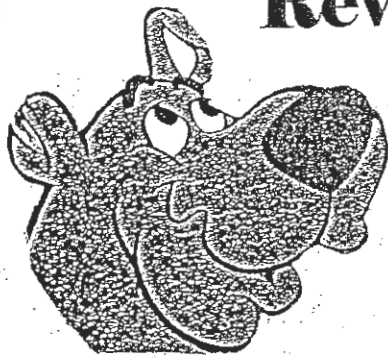
Tickets on sale shortly – £5

Light refreshments may be purchased, as long as you get there early.

OBITUARY

Joan O'Neill (nee Gannon). Joan leaves a widower, Shawn. I think that it was about 30 years ago when the O'Neill's used to come out with us. May she rest in peace.

Reverse Polarity – the bear facts



POLES over here are now going back to Poland – but only for a short holiday. Many flock to Zakopane – then go back to work, in Britain and Ireland!

Magic moment on our recent trip was when a bear and two cubs were spotted by four of our group, near a mountain lodge/hostel, until a ranger chased them back into the dense forest and mountains!



Paths in the Tatra Mountains were well marked

A few minutes later, more of us arrived at that mountain lodge for lunch, and, excitedly, 'Goldilocks' Riley (Helen, not Mike), Brenda, Phil and Dave D told us the story of the three bears, but lamentably, we had missed them!

They were spotted just below an area called the Five Lakes Valley, where a ski route runs.

"Did you take a photograph?" I asked them.

"No, they were too far away," they said, "but a Polish man did – with a good camera."

Some of our group of 20-plus included a trip to the world-famous salt mines near Cracow – a floodlit labyrinth with awesome chapels, altars, crystal chandeliers, etc – all carved out of salt. The tour finished at the deep underground restaurant, followed by the fast ascent in miners' rickety lifts back to the surface. Another day saw some travelling to see the infamous Auschwitz camp. Then a few more spent an afternoon, on rafts, through the breathtaking Dunajec Gorge which divides part of southern Poland with northern Slovakia.

The Frosty Cave labyrinth

But most of us did actually include many scenic walks in the 7,000ft Tatra Mountains towering above Zakopane. We also went into the floodlit Jaskinia Mrozna (Frosty Cave) which none of us had done before, and this amazingly turned out to be a mile-long pot-hole with ravines, many steps with handrails and a bit of unavoidable limbo-dancing thrown in – a great one-off experience at only 55p admission.

Zakopane's sing-along nights

After a few nights, Richie, on keyboard, was the life and soul of the party – at the Piano Bar.

A group of young Poles soon joined in and sang the English songs. They also were on holiday – from England, of course!



Richie certainly left his mark . . . especially on some of the parked cars at the end of a walk! (with sticks poking out from rucksack). Sorry Richie, I just couldn't help dropping that one in. Incidentally, Richie was proud of his new pedometer – and he dropped that one in too,

into a shallow river he was paddling in! I think his pedometer has dried out since, as have most of our Piano Bar crowd! Life would be boring without you Richie. Polish women would give up everything for you – see panel overleaf.

None of us did the mountain with chains this time (Giewont) although two of us got within 30 minutes of the summit. It was a combination of inclement weather and a bit too late in the day.

Half of us had a meal out one night at the 'Grab-a-Granny' dance restaurant. The drinks were quite expensive at that place (costing 25% more) at just over £1 a pint! It needed a Philadelphia lawyer to sort out the bill, or a Jim'll Fix It. Luckily we had both – Phil and Jim.

Just a couple of weeks before the holiday, Easyjet abruptly cancelled the economy flight from Liverpool for half our lot. The end result was three separate groups departing on three separate dates using two separate airlines and two airports – Liverpool and Manchester.

'Fawly Towers'

Looking back, many of us are glad to have missed out on the 'Crazy' Daisy Hotel, in Cracow, where some of our unlucky lot spent the last night. This Polish 'Fawly Towers' was recommended by Easyjet. Tales about it were endless. Basically (in Flo's vibrant prose): "It was crap!" In contrast, both our places in Zakopane were fine – full buffet breakfast, etc.

Anyway, our photos are in circulation. Nick gave me a rather cheeky photo for this edition. I know this story is revealed on page 3 but I simply had to give this one the red light, Nick!

One of our ladies was a bit anxious about the security check at Krakow Airport, but finally, had nothing to declare – that's after she threw away lipstick, water bottle, deodorant aerosol, creams, etc! But how about this one: Joan had completely forgotten about her lethal fruit knife in her handbag. She sailed through the security checks on the outward journey at Liverpool, and the initial one on return at Krakow. The knife was finally spotted, on the very last check.

And so finally, we polished off yet another great Polish holiday.



G. Vont

Jim's Big day in North Wales - August 2006

THE 'B' party were to climb up Snowdon by the Pyg Track and then descend to Llanberis. But this wasn't good enough for the 'A' group. They needed something tougher than that!

Thus four hardy hikers, Tom, John, Paul and leader Jim, set out from Ynys Ettws, the climbing hut in the Llanberis Pass, to walk/scramble up Cwm Glas Mawr (the Big Green Coomb) to Garnedd Ugain (Cairn Twenty) and finally, Snowdon. Descend by the Snowdon Ranger path, climb Moel Cynghorian (meaning unknown) and thence to Llanberis. The cloud was low and through the murk little could be seen of the way ahead. But Jim was confident. He'd been here before (on a sunny day). What trepidations the others felt they kept to themselves.

At first, the route, though steep, was nothing untoward, and they reached the point where the stream drops in a series of falls and the scrambling begins. But with the rock - slippery in the moisture-laden air - disappearing above in the gloom, they decided to leave the scrambling to another day. (It's amazing how the weather affects confidence. On a bright day a scramble can seem a delight. When the mist spreads her cloak of darkness, a feeling of morbidity prevails).

The rocky outcrops were forcing the party eastwards, away from the stream they intended to follow to Llyn Bach, and it was with a little surprise that they found themselves on the shores of a lake. They had come within ten metres of the water's edge before they were aware of it! But this was not Llyn Bach. This was the larger, lower lake, Llyn Glas. And lunch.

A glance at the map showed Llyn Bach to be roughly 250 feet above, southwest. John, who had been out before with the leader on the Tryfan, Old Duke of York expedition (there's nothing Grand about Jim), suggested they go west until they hit the stream again (presuming they could recognise it; this is the land of a hundred streams). But Jim was confident! He'd been here before (on a sunny day).

So off they set, vaguely southwest, climbing rocky knolls as they appeared out of the Stygian gloom, with first Jim, and then Paul, leading the way. Half an hour or so later, Llyn Bach remained undiscovered, her beauties hidden 'neath her misty veil.

By now the group were contouring a scree-strewn hillside, with the sound of a myriad running waters welling up from the bible-black bowl below, when a stream appeared from the left. John's map showed two streams coming down from the headwall of the cwm, the direction they wished to take. These streams were not shown on Jim's map and he didn't recollect them - he'd been here before, remember - but as they knew they must be above Llyn Bach, they decided to go up with the stream.

Following the shallow gully encasing the stream, progress was getting more and more difficult and more and more slow. Tom reminded everybody they had a rendezvous with a coach to keep, and as tiredness encroached and they were unsure of exactly where they were, the decision was taken to head back.

An hour and half later they were once more on the Llanberis Pass, contemplating with not a little dread the four mile road-walk to the transport home, when a little bus jauntily rounded the bend. It had a halo above the driver's cab and a white knight on horseback inside...

... And so, at five o'clock, those hard men of the mountains were discussing their exploits in the Prince of Wales - after walking a whole three miles, just about half the distance of the 'C' party!!



Anon

You did the right thing Jim, and possess good leadership qualities. A leader will always turn back when safety is at risk. Only a foolish leader would press on regardlessly. - EDITOR



↪ REVERSE PROTOCOL

MEANWHILE, back in Poland, Richie and I had just jumped on a packed single-decker bus whereupon a Polish lady, who looked older than Richie, insisted that he should have her seat, and stood up for him! (Maybe he looked tired, after our ramble).

So Richie, rather embarrassed, because he was studying Polish but hadn't learnt the phrase: "It's ok, I haven't got my bus pass yet" then sat next to the old lady's daughter. A quite bemused Richie said it was the first time that a lady had given her seat to him on a bus! Ironically, I was standing (the true pensioner) but I had to crouch down to look out for the bus stop!