

LIVERPOOL CATHOLIC RAMBLERS

AFFILIATED TO
THE RAMBLERS FEDERATION

ASSOCIATION AND HOLIDAY GUILD

CLUB NIGHT EVERY THURSDAY
ST. SEBASTIAN'S HALL
LOCKERBY ROAD, FAIRFIELD

Chairman:
J. F. HARVEY, Esq.

Monthly News-Letter

Vice-Chairman:
CYRIL KELLY, Esq.

All matter intended for publication to be addressed to the
Secretary, 177 Towson Street, Liverpool, 5.

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April 1940

The Catholic Holiday Movement

Perhaps the most important development of all time in the Catholic Holiday scheme was made on Thursday, the 11th April, when the Association in general meeting sanctioned the formation of the Catholic Holiday Guild Limited (By Guarantee).

The Chairman (Mr. J. F. Harvey), Mr. Morbury and the Secretary outlined the reasons for the new move, and made it clear that we were entering on the logical culmination of all our previous efforts to provide Holidays for Catholics in all parts of the country.

The success of the 1939 holidays, and the Reunion held last Easter in Ambleside when 55 Catholics from all parts of the country gathered at Ambleside under our auspices, had established beyond doubt the necessity for the immediate conversion of our policy to a national one.

As a national organization, the Guild will draw its members from every corner of the kingdom, and certain of these will constitute its Council of Management. In the Articles of Association provision is made for the Ramblers always to have the power to appoint three nominees as Vice-Chairmen of the Guild, and others to act as ordinary members of the Council. The connection between the Guild and the Liverpool Catholic Ramblers Association will therefore always be maintained.

His Grace the Archbishop of Liverpool has already granted his approval to the Guild, and will be its President. The patronage of the Hierarchy - and of leading lay-Catholics is now being sought.

The Guild will be incorporated under the Companies Act, 1929, and its members, who will be called 'Founders', are to make a donation of £1 at least. In addition to the ordinary right to attend and vote at meetings and be eligible for election to the Council of Management, 'Founders' will receive preference when booking for holidays and will be entitled to a small discount on the booking charge.

Any other Catholics will of course be welcomed at the centres, and if they wish to become members they may arrange to pay their donation over a period.

There will be no shareholders in the Guild, and no dividends will be paid; all surplus will be devoted to the extension and improvement of the Guild's centres.

Turning to practical policy, the Guild intends this summer to organize Holidays in the Lake District, Rhin (Scotland) and on the Sussex Downs.

Negotiations have been going on for some time for our first permanent centre, a beautiful mansion in the heart of Lakeland, with its own Italian gardens, fountain, waterfalls, lovely walks and the rights over a lake of world wide repute, the whole estate extending into 150 acres.

Arrangements have been made to make the mansion ready to receive guests early in the season if the negotiations can be brought to a successful conclusion in time. It is estimated that at least 500 guests

will stay at the Lakeland centre this summer, and it will remain open all the year round, special charges being in operation in the off-season for 'needy folk'.

It is anticipated that our complete programme for 1940 will be published early in May, and as the season progresses it may be found opportune to supplement this with short organized holidays in other areas.

Next year the Guild hopes to have not one but three permanent centres, and it will go on providing centres until the needs of the millions of Catholics in these islands for healthy, happy, carefree Holidays in a truly Catholic atmosphere have been satisfied.

The Guild is conscious of the demand for houses on the lines of the well known 'Youth Hostels'. In time it is hoped to open a number of these, where a nights accommodation may be had for a very low charge by those unable to afford the more expensive type of holiday.

In happier days, by co-operation with our fellow Catholics in other countries our chain of centres will extend to the continent, and 'exchange' holiday groups will be organized.

Another aspect of the Guild's work which was not touched upon at the General Meeting is the organization of rambling clubs in other towns. Several Lancashire towns have, we know, their own Catholic Rambling Clubs, and there are several down in London. We are told by our holiday friends however that many towns are without, and we have been requested to assist in their formation.

That roughly is an outline of the huge tasks awaiting the Guild's attention, and we hope that with God's Blessing these tasks will be accomplished victoriously.

Of course, the Guild will rely on individual assistance from every Catholic, and not the least from every member, past and present, of the Liverpool Catholic Ramblers Association.

As stated above, full membership of the Guild will be granted to any Catholic (over the age of eighteen) on payment of a donation of £1 at least.

An apology

The Editor regrets that owing to unforeseen circumstances the News-Letters for February and March have not been published. We now present our April number, and apologise to all our subscribers, and those of our writers who have so patiently been awaiting the appearance in print of their articles.

The Secretary wishes it to be known that as from the 20th April his address will be: 146 PRIORY ROAD, ANFIELD, LIVERPOOL, 4.

Rambles for April

APRIL 21st CALDY HILL and WEST KIRBY: Meet Pier Head 10 a.m.
Fare 8d. Leader Miss K. Kelly.

APRIL 28th CHORLEY. Meet Pier Head 10 a.m. Fare 2/3. We hope there will be sufficient members present on this ramble to warrant the hire of a private bus. Many Catholics from other towns who have supported our Holiday will join our party during the day.

Note. Mr. King, Assistant Secretary, would like to receive the names of any members willing to lead rambles during the coming summer.

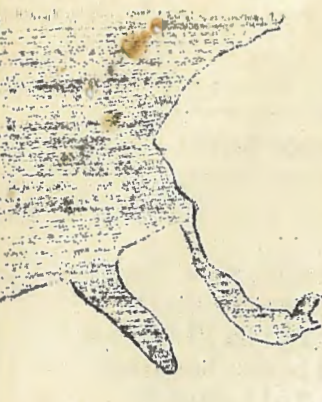
Socials

APRIL 18th THE CAMPUS BOYS. This Trio have kindly promised to give us a short entertainment of Cowboy and Hilly Billy Songs. They have given performanes at most important theatres.

APRIL 25th OLD TIME NIGHT, with Mrs. Formby as Hostess.

Second instalment

The Abbey of Birkenhead (continued)



In the 27th year of the Reign of Henry VIII, an Act of Parliament granted to the King all monasteries and priories under the annual value of £200, and, as the revenue of Birket Priory did not produce that amount, it 'lapsed' to the King!

On the right of the Priory stood what was called "Birket House", and in later years "The Hall". It possessed no particular excellence as a building, but had a most desirable site on a fertile spot of rising ground surrounded by a plantation.

During the civil wars which troubled the reign of Charles I this house was garrisoned by his troops, who thus commanded the passage to the river; but on September 22, 1644, it was taken by the Parliamentarians. In a letter written the next day it is said: "This last night the enemy possessed themselves of Birket House, in Wirral, wherein we had a small garrison". In 1843 the Hall was pulled down, and its site and gardens laid out in streets.

A walk from the Woodside Boat House, across the fields, to Birkenhead Priory was, years ago, considered a retired promenade on the margin of the river. The view from this point embraced Helsby Hills and Beeston Castle. The venerable pile of the Abbey ruins and the Hall were the sole structures in the landscape, and the time-worn, stunted oak trees which abounded on the southern promontory of Birkenhead gave a picturesque beauty to the scene. In the sketches of the Abbey, early in this century, the refectory was connected with the chapter by three fine gothic archways, the boundary of a former portion of the edifice.

In the year 1818, as the grave diggers were preparing a grave in the Abbey grounds, they dug up a stone bearing the inscription to the memory of one of the priors, Thomas Rayneford, who was inducted to the Priory in 1460, and held office for thirteen years. The date on the stone is 1473. Underneath it were found three skeletons in a very perfect state, the teeth particularly so.

The Dread Wirral Wapentak

About the year 1820, the Lower part of Chester Street, Birkenhead, that led to Tranmere, was a notoriously disorderly district, bearing so bad a reputation that none cared to pass through it after nightfall. Herdmans public house was a meeting place for the most desperate characters, and at the Tranmere Ferry Hotel the dread power, the lord of the Wapentak, held his courts and fearful orgies.

The short account here given is extracted from the papers of the late Mr. Joseph Mayer, F.S.A., who collected the history from men who had themselves suffered heavy fines and run imminent risk of imprisonment from the Wapentak. They were pressed to serve on its jury, compelled under penalty of a goodly sum to attend his noisy dinners and serve him in many ways consistently, and still more deplorably, legitimately, so much so that their record seems almost incredible.

The jurisdiction of the Wapentak dates back so far that no authentic record even of its name could be expected to survive. The name suggests an authority similar to that vested in the dictator of ancient Rome - a man charged to see that "the Commonwealth take no hurt" in times of hostile inroad. His office would override all tribunals, civil or military, and would admit no appeals. Roman history tells us how such arbitrary jurisdiction created abuses, how they survived the necessity which called them forth, and how unscrupulous persons, in whom the power was vested, were apt to use it for plunder or oppression.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

::A line from our Social Reporter::



The long awaited fancy dress ball was held recently and several new costumes were duly rewarded. Miss Mary Laycock showed originality in her conception of Lord Haw Haw, and needless to say her effort was duly recognised. Mr. Johnny Whitehead was awarded a prize for his characterisation of a Coster, whilst Miss May Doyle appeared in a life-like presentation of a school marm complete with evacuees (she might have had inside information).

The sensation of the evening, however, was the sudden appearance of Charlie Chaplin whose antics caused a great deal of amusement, and everybody was getting "curiouser and curiouser" as to his identity. After a few discreet enquiries I heard that he had come from St. Sylvester's but I don't know whether it is true. The Judges seemed to have great difficulty in deciding the winners, and I must say it was no easy job as everybody had taken a lot of trouble with their costumes.



The next interesting event was the indoor sports night. The different races were more of a humorous kind than a means of showing ability in the sports world, but Gerry Molloy and Tom Inight certainly strove valiantly to decide the winner of the sack race, and although Tom made heroic efforts to recover his balance after a precarious wobble, Gerry just managed to reach the tape before him.



DO YOU SUPPORT
THE RAMBLES?

The three-legged race provided plenty of amusement, as well, to the onlookers, particularly when Mary Campbell and Ossie Fogarty went flying right through the tape and through the doors and ended up in a muddled heap on the door mat. Eileen Brown and Mary Cramer endeavoured to follow their example but unfortunately all they managed (after winning) was a painful contact with the wall. Johnny Burns as usual provided the laugh of the evening by finishing the obstacle race first on all fours; I rather fancy Johnny has had a lot of practice in threading needles and clambering along the floor in an undignified position. (By the way, Johnny, did you have a pin in your hand when you blew up the balloon?) Everybody enjoyed the evening and Miss Minnie Douthwaite deserves a round of applause for her organizing ability.

The Valentine Dance was the next item on the programme and as usual with our dances it went off with a great swing. There seemed to be a fairly good number of men present this time - maybe it was because it might have been their last chance of a dance before they 'Picked up their muskets'. Bill Roberts for one, no doubt, will remember it as his farwell event as he left for "somewhere in the north of England" on the following day. Should he happen to read this, I would like to say I hope he didn't find my pessimistic views too discouraging when setting foot on the northern soil.

A grand Film Show was promised for the 22nd February and quite a good crowd turned up, but the lecturer didn't, she having been take ill that very day, and the show is there, still a thing of promise.

NORAH TASKER.

The Chairman replies to John Bull

Dear John Bull,

Your two-paged effort in the January News-Letter was, without doubt, a call-to-arms. Let me put you at your ease by saying in the first place that I liked it and am grasping the opportunity to reply to you in order that I may put a few thoughts and recollections on paper.

Perhaps it will be as well if I deal with your points in the order in which you placed them.

I have your letter before me and see that your first difficulty is in introducing yourself. You are 'an ordinary Club Member' - not even on the Committee'. As Big Noise No. 1, I know better than that, and while you may not be on the Committee at the moment I am sure you were -once an 'extraordinary' Club member.

From that the next point arises. There was an unprecedented difficulty at the last A.G.M. in obtaining nominations for the new Committee, and if my memory serves me right, you (if you are really the member I guess you are) declined to let your name go forward. You were in a position, therefore, to know the reason why the other members did the same. The 'deep reason' you suggest as a cause of this apathy may not be just a 'shot in the dark'.

I always impress upon Committee members that the proceedings of our meetings are confidential, but I do not think I am breaking this rule myself when I say that Committee Meetings for the past few years have been plain sailing. But that surely would not justify a Committee Member's action in refusing to stand again. There is no dictatorship on the Committee, and I have always pursued the policy of inviting discussions before calling for a vote on any point, and any objection has received careful consideration. There is an excuse for members who have served on the Committee for some years - they are entitled to a 'break'; is that your reason, John? But what of those old standing members who have not served in that capacity? While there are probably some exceptions, I believe that the majority of Club members are quite content to let others perform the task of organizing and entertaining.

For the very good reason you mention, I had to forsake some of my activities for the Club and regret that in doing so I may have lost some of that personal touch, particularly with new members.

From that comes a grouse - In the old days, which you so happily recall to mind, it was possible to have new members introduced to all and sundry and they were made to feel at home on their first visit - whether Ramble or Social. In those days we were a great happy family carrying the Banner "Each for all and all for one". There was a lot to be said for Wood Street, The Floor, unsuitable as it was for dancing, threw us back on our resources with the result that games, singing, concert parties and the like were looked forward to and appreciated.

Our migration to St. Sebastians Hall was an immense step forward in the annals of the Association, but it brought its difficulties. Dancing came into its own to the detriment of the other forms of amusement which I have enumerated and which I maintain are the best means of creating and sustaining the 'Big Family' spirit.

Dancing (I hesitate to call it the 'Terpsichorian Art' as that sounds too much like our Social Reporter) may have its points, but I think that it has developed an 'I dance with you and nobody else' spirit into the otherwise social atmosphere. Perhaps I seem to have digressed a little - but you will read between the lines that I - like you - would welcome a return to the good old days. In your own words "What about it"?

The question of the Table Tennis is one to be dealt with by the Committee, and I will see that at our next meeting the point is raised.

(continued next page)

May I take this opportunity of offering my thanks to you, dear John Bull, and also to the other regular contributors to the News-Letter without whom I am afraid it would cease to function.

Many thanks for your kind wishes.

Sincerely yours,

J.F.HARVEY, Chairman.

Little Audrey's Diary of the Moel Fammau Ramble.



Up bright and early this morning. Had to be at Pierhead for 9.45 boat. Spirits just slightly damped when Ben remarked that really, we should have been on the 9.30 boat.

10 a.m. Caught the 9.50. bus for Mold. However, so great are our numbers that they decide to run a special bus. Are we good, or do we just think we are?

10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Raucous singing and shouting. No need to worry unduly. After all, it's our own bus.

11.15 a.m. We start the hike. Hear someone make a remark about Little Audrey. Resolve to stick to them like glue all day.

1 p.m. We arrive at Pant-y-mwn for lunch. Benny said: "Aw, blimey, look Jed, it's a marmoset. Blimey, Jed, it's got a little jumper on". Chorus from girls - "Oooh, isn't it lovely?" "Oooh, isn't it sweet?"

Exclusive sort of place this. Some of the crew have actually ordered coffee!

Gerry Morley said - "The lady's husband must go to sea; he's probably bought her these carpets from abroad."

Benny said - "Blimey, Jed, her husband goes to sea? You take the rest of the ramble, Johnny, I'm staying here!"

Said Gerry Morley: "Would anyone like a ham sandwich?"

2.30 p.m. We start hiking again. Managed to get Benny on the road although it needed no little effort.

3.30 p.m. We begin to climb. It's getting rather warm - I notice Gerry carrying Margaret's coat. Said Margaret: "And I'm going to have two zips as well". Said Johnny: "Why?" Can't you trust the Catholic Ramblers?"

3.45 p.m. Were just about half way up. It certainly is warm, and the going is very heavy. Some are standing still, apparently to admire the view. They're a crowd of chisellers. We know darned well they're out of breath.

4 p.m. Moel Fammau conquered.

4.1 p.m. Margaret busy sampling the contents of Benny's and Johnny's flasks. Notice Gerry Morley sampling something too. Said Gerry Molloy: "Would anyone like a ham sandwich?"

4.30 p.m. Benny's finished his cigarettes so he thinks it's time to go. I like these cliff walks - lovely views at every turn.

5 p.m. We discover we've left Margaret and Gerry behind. On second thoughts think maybe they've left us in front.

5.45 p.m. Just finished one of the most delightful parts of the ramble. Meet Margaret and Gerry on the main road. That's funny: We once met Tom Marsden and Mary Carter in exactly the same place. This definitely will stand investigation.

(continued on next page).

Little Audrey's Diary (continued)

6 p.m. Conference at the tea place. Shall we walk to Mold, or shall we get the earlier bus at Loggerheads? "I ask you; What would you do, chums?"

6.10 p.m. Says the Labdlord "I'd be obliged if you stopped singing. We're not licenced for music". Says Jim Brady: "Thanks for the compliment, Sir. We've never been called musical before". Says Gerry Molloy: "Wouldn't someone like a salad sandwich? I've got a new landlady, y'see, and she's giving me stacks of food". Says Benny: "Blimey, Jed, did you hear that - a shilling for a plate of bread and jam!"

7.35 p.m. We board the bus for home. Then a very charming gentleman sat next to May Carroll. At least, he asked her permission first. Says May Carroll: "Yes, if you can sing". Says the gentleman: "I ought to be able to, I'm the Secretary of the Ramblers Federation".

Collapse of May.

Our Social Reporter's LATE NEWS BULLETIN

The McMahon family are in the news this month - Bill having "been and got" himself engaged to Slice Mulhearn. This engagement business must be catching. Good luck to you both.

Peter McMahon has made his appearance as a member of the family, and I hope that when he grows up he will follow the example of his parents (Tess and Frank) by being a staunch supporter of the C.R.A.

I was pleased to see Miss Lil Prendergast at the Club again; she has now recovered fully from the unpleasant operation she had on her ear. (Don't try listening at keyholes just yet, Lil, its very draughty. I know because I've tried it)

Congratulations to two more old club members, Mr. George Kelly and Miss Eileen Croughan, who were married at Our Lady's, Wavertree, on the 6th April.

As the Grand National jas just been run, and won, I think it appropriate to draw your notice to a little spot of poetry written by John Edwards. Here it is; take heed of its warning.

Norah Tasker.

"Willie's Day at the Races"

Now tha's heard me talk of our Willie, Now this day Dame Fortune was smilin'
The pride of yon village Broadgreen. And all that 's four 'orses 'ad wun
T'look at 'e seems t'be silly 'Is prospectin' ad brought a great pile
And its true, 'e's a perfect scream. An' Willie got back thirteen pun'. in,
'E went down t'races last Friday Now Willie 'ad always been feared
Wi' two bob and tuppence in'change When he saw number thirteen,
'Twas all 'e 'ad left from 'is dole pay But this time 'e cared not an' cheered
But that's nowt uncommon or strange. 'E'd goo wom in splendour and spleen
'E went down to Aintree on tramcar So 'e didn't waste time any moer
Wi' 'is mind made up and firm "Now I'll have a good time", said 'e,
'E'd cum back in taxi or 'andcar' An' I'll start wi' a seven course dinner
Accordin' to what did return. In t'place called t'Adelphi",
Now 'e laid a shillin' cross-treble An' 'e did, 'an 'e got up to 'op it,
And another tanner each way But sat down all sickly and pale,
Paid a peny for a lovely cream whipple 'Is money 'ad fell thro' 'is pocket,
And for t'other a penny P.K. Now 'e's bidin' 'is time in gaol.
As a punter our Willie is good
'E studies 'is form wi' a pin
After touchin' it wi' 'is blood
and puts all 'is money on 'im.

:: The Ramble to Alford, Sunday, 21st January ::
:: by Zingari ::

Who said thirteen was an unlucky number? Thirteen members of our club are inclined to disagree, after this strange and very beautiful ramble. I say "strange" because of the unusual weather conditions and "beautiful" because of the effects produced by the cold upon the landscape. We counted ourselves fortunate indeed to have been out on such a day. We are united by an experience, and henceforth shall regard ourselves as beings apart - the Upper Thirteen, so to speak. "Let the common herd lie shivering a-bed", we say, "We know how to live".

We started our walk from Chester and for four miles followed the meanderings of the Dee which, much to our delight, was frozen solid. It was natural, in the circumstances, for us to insist on walking on the River to mark the occasion, with frequent excursions up the banks for a more extensive survey of our surroundings. Where the bank was high, the view was simply incomparable - the fantastic skeletons of the riverside trees, every twisted branch alive with scintillating feathers of hoar frost - the wide white sweep of the river itself - and farther on the tiny figures of skaters, like so many busy ants, gliding, twisting, turning, melting finally into the distance.

A full description of that riverside journey would take a more energetic pen than mine - Gorry and the Icicles; Search for a Stone; The Two Dark Strangers; The Man who Skated Backwards; The Crossing of the Ferry; The Girl in the Balalaeva Hat. I can give but the chapter heads.

We quitted the river reluctantly at Eccleston and made off across the fields towards Saughton where we hoped to find a comfortable dinner place. We were out of luck here, as the local hostelry was experiencing some difficulty with its water supply. (Maybe they were frozen up!) The Thirteen were called into conference and decided "better have dinner out than no dinner at all". We found a wood, which provided some shelter, and, clustering round the base of a tree for warmth disposed of our dinners in record time. It was an event.



The rest of the afternoon was spent almost entirely in the fields, so different to the muddy horrors of a month or two ago. We found time to make a slide on a frozen streamlet; to watch some of the stages by which running water is turned into solid ice; we saw a fox going home from its patrol. We discovered Aldford, and that Aldford boasted an Inn whose proprietress "catered for Ramblers". The Thirteen entered upon a period of well-earned warmth and refreshment of ease and relaxation; of tea cup rites and parlour games; and Thirteen enjoyed it!

After this brief period of self-indulgence, we returned to the outer world of cold and darkness - to five miles of glittering, icy road, which remained to be conquered before we could go home with clear consciences.

The miles slipped by unnoticed, the cold gave way before that "inner warmth" which is always engendered by an invigorating walk. The Thirteen arrived in Chester with glowing faces, to board a convenient bus and sing their way to Woodside. Part of H.M. Forces actively co-operated in making the latter action a complete success.

This was not a ramble - it was an EPIC!