

Liverpool Catholic Ramblers'

EASTER/SPRINGTIME NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 61 Seventh Series

Editorial

I FEEL sure that you will find this edition interesting and informative. During this, our 80th anniversary year, our newsletters will also include much archive material.

Thanks to Roni for sending in the laces article. Send your articles or ramble stories to me at: 7 Abbotts Way, Billinge, Wigan, WN5 7SB, or by e-mail to davenews@hotmail.com – Thanks.

Keswick Weekend

Fri 20th to Sun 22nd April – Note that you must pay the full amount BEFORE going (£66).

It is a group weekend and the staff at Lakeside House will NOT take cash or cheques from individuals – everything now has to go through our club's treasurer. Pay to Will Harris or the person taking bookings on the coach. Any cheques must be made out to LCRA.

Accommodation is based on half board for two full days (breakfast and evening meal) starting with bed on the Friday night and departing after the 5pm meal on Sunday. For the Friday night there are plenty of places

where you can eat and also be entertained, such as the Oddfellows Arms. (*One of our lot has been spotted on camera on a table in the beer garden there!*).

There's also the chippy near the Moot Hall – you can actually dine upstairs there, but make your own entertainment. Ready-made sandwiches can be purchased after breakfast, at local shops for the ramble. Meal times will be on the notice board.

The usual warning about parking restrictions – the traffic warden is very vigilant in Keswick. There are no parking restrictions along Lake Road nearby, but beware, there could be some restrictions by the house.

Ramble on April 29th

I wonder how many spotted the mistake in our winter programme. There is no bank holiday that weekend, so we have now put a ramble on.

"I am on that 70-year-old photo in the Echo"

IN RESPONSE to our club's half-page article, including an old group photograph in the Liverpool Echo on Monday April 2nd, my phone has been working overtime.

Reproduced on the opposite page here, the article prompted several enquiries to me about people actually wanting to join our club.

In response to one answerphone message from a lady who sounded as if she was around sixty-five years old, I rang her back and enquired: "Have you done any walking before?"

She laughed and said, "Oh yes, many times in the past, with your club; I am on that photograph in the Echo, in the front row, second on the left in a beige coat, and I am now 94 years old!"

Well, this didn't completely surprise me, as I had already had another phone call earlier that day from a lady in St Helens who said that her dad (in his late 80's) had noticed the photograph in the Echo, saying: "That's me on that photo!"

Anyway, the first lady (May Quigley; *she was May Morris on the photo*) continued to say that she was seriously thinking of coming to our Dinner Dance at Christ the King Club in October.

"Do you think you will have any tickets left?"

She explained that her late husband (Vincent Quigley) used to be headmaster at St Laurence's, Birkenhead. She left the ramblers after they married in 1950, both at the age of 37, and now has several grandchildren and another on the way.

She liked ballroom dancing but also likes a good old chinwag – the dancing is secondary

She is still able-bodied but now lives in a nursing home in the grounds of Upton Convent and has made a lady friend there, in her 70's, who she goes on holiday with, etc, and would appreciate someone giving her a lift to the dinner, if possible, and: "Would it be a very late night?" ~~7.00~~ ^{for 7.30}

When I told her that it was ~~7.30~~ for an 8.00 meal; and then, after the speeches, etc, the actual dinner will be over by about 10.00; she replied: "Oh, that's not late, I have stayed out later than that, and I am a good ballroom dancer, but I would need a partner!" (*ENTERTAINMENT + DANCING*)

I explained that, unfortunately, there probably wouldn't be any ballroom dancing. I think it could be mostly disco dancing.

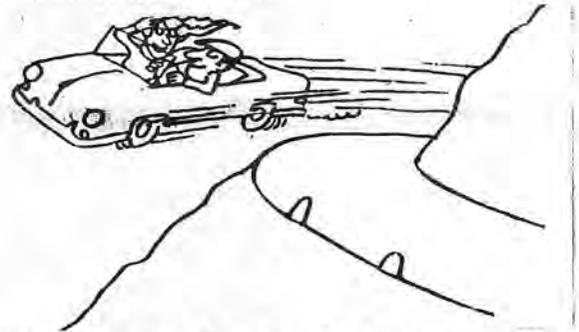
Well she understood, as she said: "It is the same at weddings now, they don't do ballroom dancing any more." But she was still interested in coming to our anniversary dinner in October, and hopes to have a good old chinwag. Like many of us, the dancing bit at this do is incidental.

I am sure she wouldn't mind her phone number being displayed here – it is 0151-606 8548. She has an answer phone because "she is out a lot."

This 94-year-old lady said she was a good tennis player in her time, playing on the courts at Cherry Lane. She is 95 in May and spoke very articulately, and then asked me for my age. I told her I would be 68 in May, and mentioned that I had recently come back from a skiing holiday.

"Oh, you are still young," she flatteringly said.

I wondered if I should book her for the next 'A' walk. But, no – I thought – people might not be able to keep up with her!



"You can call me Dave. I am both an experienced motorist and an experienced skier"

Actually, our club's story was due to appear sometime during last Christmas period, but had then been delayed until now, as it would be more appropriate to appear in the actual anniversary year. That's why it mentions things happening 79 years ago, instead of being (now) 80 years ago.

Bill Potter (Seniors' Section) and I went to be interviewed at the Echo offices last November, armed with old newsletters and photos, etc.

We were taken inside the actual busy newsroom where several reporters were beavering away with the news on their computers. This was particularly poignant for me, as some of you may know that I used to work on newspapers myself in Warrington, Widnes and finally St Helens, as a linotype operator; finishing up as an up-to-the-minute computer operator.

Then, in October 1989, I got made redundant from the printing trade (in the Eddie Shah era) when women took over from a predominantly male occupation, countrywide. The women were, and still are (wrongly) paid much less than we were earning, for doing the same job. But that's another story.

Incidentally, I have never looked back to being made redundant. I was getting pretty fed up with the increasing pressure at work, and long working hours. It was a new lease of life for me!

I have got contact phone numbers of all the people responding to the article in the Echo. So watch this space!

Dave News

THEY have trodden familiar paths both at home and abroad.

And even the threat of war, the aches and pains of old age and the modern day passion for wireless technology over walking has not dampened their enthusiasm.

After 79 years, the Liverpool Catholic Ramblers Association is still going strong.

And its loyal members are calling on all former and current ramblers to join them for their 80th birthday celebrations later this year.

The group was formed in 1927 and originally started out as a social club.

Founding members of the group decided that as part of their social meetings, they would go for walks.

Walks became a more regular thing and it eventually grew into an official rambling group.

At first the association was an exclusive group for Catholic people, but 20 years ago they opened the doors for other religions to join and the membership grew.

The group was more popular in its early years, especially just before and after World War II. Many current members are from the war-time era.

Association president, Dave Newns, 67, from Billinge, said: "It's strange to think that once I was part of the younger generation of the group, and all of a sudden I became one of the older ones.

"It used to be like an 18 to 30s club. Now it's the other way round and more like a 30 to 80s club.

"It is a shame that we don't get many younger people joining anymore. In this new age of technology, young people would prefer to stay at home and play computer games than come out for walks every Sunday."

In the group's 79-year existence, they have

PHOTOGRAPH QUALITY

The group photograph here was printed well in the Liverpool Echo, but has been photocopied for the newsletter and doesn't reproduce very well. We get this problem with photos, but drawings come out well.

Dave Newns, editor



READY FOR THE OFF: The Catholic ramblers in 1937 about to set off on a walk

formed tennis and football clubs. There have also been annual skiing trips to Europe.

The group has also been involved in supporting children's charities.

The association is in the process of organising celebrations for their special anniversary.

A big dinner dance has been arranged for October 27 at Christ the King Social Club in Childwall, for all association members, new and old, to meet and reminisce.

Mr Newns said: "Many of the members are war babies and have since left the group. At past anniversaries we have had reunions with old friends.

"This year we will be putting the old newsletters and photos on display. Many of the photos show the stunning views that we have seen on our walks."

● For details call Mr Newns 01744 632211.

news@liverpoolecho.co.uk

Seven died in crash

THE Liverpool Catholic Ramblers Association were at the centre of a tragedy forty years ago.

On August 9, 1968, an air disaster cost the lives of seven Liverpool ramblers.

On a flight to Austria for a holiday, seven members, all in their 20s, were on a British Eagle Viscount that crashed on to a



SAD DAY: How the ECHO reported the tragedy that killed Mersey holidaymakers motorway in Munich.

The women were part of a group of 13 to die from the Merseyside area.

The disaster

Investigation showed that the wing tips had snapped off the aircraft causing it to lose control and crash.

Moel Famau

January 28

Moel Famau was the walk today;
When we set out the sky was grey.
As it wasn't very far
Some of us set out by car.

We all met up at Loggerheads
Not very far from Mold.
Despite it being winter,
It wasn't very cold.

Our leader Roy said we had time
To have a little snack,
Before we put our boots on
And set off up the track.

The track was steep at first
But it levelled out quite soon
Onto a woodland path
That we followed until noon.

We met a dog called Holly
On the path along the way,
We had to find her master
Before she'd go away.

When we reached Moel Famau
We had a little stop,
We guessed it would be chilly,
Sitting at the top.

The top was very chilly
But the view was worth the climb,
Then we set off down the other path
To Loggerheads this time.

We assembled at the car park
And made some plans to meet
Down at the Red Lion
Where we had something to eat.

We thanked our trusty Roy today
For taking up the lead,
For it had been a lovely day,
I think we all agreed.

Ann O'Keefe



"Do you think we should get tickets for the rambler's anniversary dinner dance. They are just £20 each"

New Summer Programmes

SORRY, no Ramblerite this time, due to a full newsletter. However, your new Summer Programmes coincide with this newsletter. There may be car rambles on two dates in July.

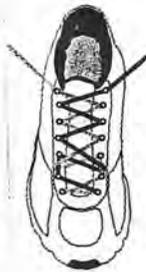
Boot or trainers trouble?

FOR SERIOUS WALKERS, the way you tie your boots or trainers, can be critical in treating foot problems. So follow this guide and your foot problems should be solved.



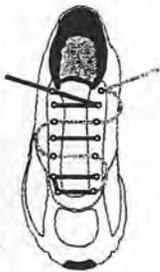
Problem: Slipping heel
Solution: Create lace lock
Use one lace, thread in a criss-cross pattern. Stop at second last eyelet. Thread each end into top eyelet on same side, making two loops. Pull each end tight through loop on opposing side; tie double knot.

Problem: Narrow heel
Solution: Two short laces
Use one lace. Lace bottom half of your shoe in a criss-cross pattern, ending at the toe; tie. Thread a second lace in a criss-cross pattern on the top half, starting in the middle; tie double knot.



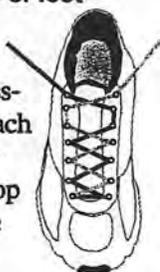
Problem: Narrow foot
Solution: Lock laces halfway
Use one lace. Thread in a criss-cross pattern. Stop midway. Thread each lace through next eyelet on same side, making two loops. Pull each end through loop on opposing side. Continue criss-cross; tie.

Problem: High arch
Solution: Create an "S"
Use one lace. Start at the bottom and thread through two eyelets on same side. Cross over and repeat on other side. Continue to top. Repeat with a second lace on other side; tie double knot.



Problem: Toe pain
Solution: Elevate the laces
Use one lace. Thread from top right-hand eyelet straight to bottom left. Leave enough lace to tie at top. Criss-cross from the bottom back up to the top. Repeat with a second lace on other side; tie double knot.

Problem: Pain on top on top of foot
Solution: Leave a space
Use one lace. Thread the bottom three eyelets in a criss-cross pattern. Then thread each lace straight up through the eyelets until you reach the top two eyelets. Criss-cross once more; tie double knot.



SAVE LAKESIDE HOUSE They have been having difficulties last year. People don't seem to be booking for a week's stay anymore but for about four days at the most. Also more are now preferring to stay for bed and breakfast only and not having the evening meal. This is also the trend for younger people throughout hotels and guesthouses in Keswick. So, Lakeside House needs more support; otherwise it may close. They have an emergency meeting in July.

So why not treat yourself and tell your friends to book an extra holiday at Lakeside House. They have rates for high season and low season - April starts the high season, and October to the end of March (approx) is the low season (except Christmas and New Year).



I believe you are desperate to fill these hotels, so could you take my luggage up please?

NEW MEMBERS

WELCOME to all our new members who have joined our club during the past few months. We hope you may spend many happy years with us.

15% DISCOUNT

The new Trespass outdoor shop in Tarleton Street is offering the club members a 15% discount. They must quote the number 104 to obtain the discount, also show membership cards.

Being slightly out of control, as I was, is the cardinal sin of many skiers!

Death-defying skiing (literally!)

SKIING, we are reminded, is now not as dangerous as football. But now judge for yourselves from this riveting escapade.

On the Monday, a few of our twenty-strong group decided to do an easy walk before skiing.

And so Brenda, Helen, Sylvia and Tommy were soon walking beneath the massive pine forest backdrop of Zakopane. (*Zakopane in Polish means a vast area of pines, pronounced Zak-oh-pah-nay*).

But they were surprised to find their path like a skating rink. Then Brenda must have attempted a triple salchow, but she fell on her wrist. Result was a prompt taxi job to hospital! Later on, Brenda was seen to be plastered, but she only had a cup of tea!

Not for the faint-hearted

It was half-term – the busiest week of the season, so, that day, I attempted to beat the cable car queue for the experienced skiers' slopes. I set out early at 7.00am, but there was still a 2-hour queue! I met a Pole in the lift queue who spoke English. He knew Wigan and Liverpool well. He worked in Southport!

Sunshine, above a blanket of cloud, greeted us at the cafe at 6,500ft, but by the time I had finished my apple pie and cream, we were engulfed in mist.

Now, following skiers down, I soon swerved to avoid a snowboarder and struggled to turn against a 4ft high marker rope, skiing slightly under it, but too late; I realised that the rope was right on the edge – there was no safety net! I shot over the cliff!



Rope is on the extreme edge

Yours truly, alias that daredevil, Bear Grylls (Channel 4 TV on Sats) about to shoot under the rope and over the edge!

All steep drops had a tall safety net . . . except this one!

I was now hurtling down hard frozen snow and it seemed I was changing my VIP status to RIP!

“Goodbye World! And cancel my next ramble!”

Luckily, it wasn't a sheer drop, but almost; and I was in the correct fall position, ie: feet first, with my skis firmly attached, but my body position was wrong; I was sliding on my back, not on my side.

Instinctively, I was desperately trying to dig the sharp metal edges of my plastic skis into the ice.

After sliding about 20 feet in around 4 seconds down the mountain (Guinness Book of Records?) my ski edges finally dug in. I stopped for two seconds, then I fruitlessly shot off down again!

After another 20-ft fall I finally dug in my sharp ski edges again, but firmly this time. I froze! – not literally; my body was as warm as toast. Then I realised I was in the Charlie Chaplin position. Let me explain: My skis were in the correct position; horizontal to the fall, but my left foot was pointing left, and my right foot was pointing to the right, with

my back to the mountain. I was looking outwards and down. I daren't move! Hell was now looming just below me, and any further fall would surely be fatal. But I can't die yet! I have still got another twelve days of my skiing holiday left!

Desolately: “Another fine mess I have . . . etc.”

I had to try to unclick one of my skis with a ski stick, but very carefully. Success! I then grabbed it before it shot down. I rammed the ski into the thick frozen crust of snow. Surprisingly, the snow was about three-foot deep and my ski now got firmly wedged. I used this as my anchor and then kicked out a step in the hard snow with my rigid ski boot.

I took off the other ski and jabbed that firmly into the deep snow. Eureka! I had worked out my escape. My skis were now my secure crutches!

It took ages to kick out about 30 steps, all the way up to heaven. A sigh of relief! I finally put my skis on . . . then a snowboarder knocked me over!

“Dziękuję bardzo!” – Polish for thank you very much! (*Pronounced djen'kooyeh bardsohh*). But that female snowboarder had just bulldozed on!

No damage! Now a five-mile mountain ski run back to Kuznice village – no problem; 20 minutes!

I found a few of the others in Zakopane and heard about Brenda in hospital with a broken wrist! “Poor Brenda,” I thought, but it did cross my mind that I almost ended up there – but in the mortuary!

They then said they were also worried about me.

I replied: “Not half as much as I was worried!”

On the next day, Brian, who hardly ever falls over, er, fell over and hurt his chest badly. He took it easy for the rest of the week. Brian and I had skied for many years, starting off with ski school instruction of around 40 hours per fortnight. But now, some of our ‘young-at-heart’ learners were doing very well without having too much tuition.

That week I wasn't with our group much – we need another report from someone. Most enjoyed themselves, especially Brenda, in spite of her injury.

On their last skiing day, Barnes Wallis (Dambusters man) would have been inspired by Ray Mc on the 6-seater chair bumpy slope; he bounced well!

I was staying for two weeks. Linda and George now joined me. Linda and I had tickets booked for at least one cable car ride. Yes, I was ready for another bash at that mountain! Amazingly there was no queue at the cable car. Why not? Well, it was apparently closed, because of high winds. It would be too dangerous for the skiers to go up there!

That week, the three of us regularly dined in the Rooster Bar with good live music. The waitresses were especially friendly. They wore red hot-pants and were scantily-dressed. Well I warned you:

This wasn't for the faint-hearted! *Dave Newmski*



The club's tragic air crash

Friday, August 9th 1968

EIGHT of our young ladies lost their lives in the crash. They were bound for Innsbruck Airport for a walking holiday in the Austrian Tyrol when the plane mystifyingly crashed onto a German autobahn.



Maureen McLindon (aged 20)



Monica Hanna (aged 25)



Barbara O'Keefe (aged 25)

This is the first time these details have appeared for 39 years because it is so poignant for some members (myself included).

Eye witnesses said the crippled plane with engines spluttering, was actually trying to land, but crashed. All 48 people on board were killed. That very busy autobahn miraculously had just one car heading straight for the crashed plane. The driver escaped with a broken windscreen.

Peter McLindon not only lost his sister Maureen (20), a nurse at Broadgreen Hospital, but also a cousin from Essex, Mary Fletcher (a member of our club). Mary was a very close cousin friend of Maureen, Peter and her Liverpool cousins, who she visited often.

Waited at Innsbruck for girlfriend and sister

It was also a double blow to Mike Humphreys, a club member, who was waiting at Innsbruck Airport with another young member, Paul Anderson.

They had been touring around Germany on a motorbike. Mike was eagerly expecting to meet up with his girlfriend, Barbara O'Keefe (25), a popular gym teacher at Blessed Ambrose Barlow secondary school, West Derby. She was also on our committee. Mike was also waiting for his sister, Valerie Humphreys (22), a teacher at St Hugh's primary school. There were two other teachers, namely Jean Baxter (24), a well-liked teacher at Our Lady of the Assumption school, Gateacre, and Mary Byron (25) a devoted teacher at Blessed Edmund Arrowsmith secondary school, Whiston. The final two were: Irene Rawlinson (23), a civil servant from Wavertree, and Monica Hanna (pictured) a shorthand typist for an engineering firm, worshipping at St Monica's, Bootle.

At that time, I had been in the club for only two years, but realised that seven of those girls had actually shared my 1956 olive green Morris Minor. I often dropped Mary Byron home on a Thursday club night (from Prescot) and taken the other six on car rambles, etc. There were many other young single men in the club doing likewise, and we remembered the happy times spent with those girls, playing tennis at our own club at Lance Lane, etc.

The night before, many of us waved goodbye to them at Lime Street on the Thursday midnight train to Heathrow. Many had just been dancing at our crowded weekly club night. Barbara O'Keefe was wearing a new lime green trouser suit that she had made. I can still vividly remember it all.

Ironically, two of them, Valerie Humphreys and Monica Hanna were last-minute replacements for two other girls who couldn't travel. The coach actually turned up for the Sunday ramble, and startlingly, some members didn't realise that it was our girls that had perished two days before, in spite of it being front page news in all the papers. The coach was hastily cancelled. Later there was a memorial Mass at the Cathedral, and then, well life must go on, and the club gradually picked up again with more new members joining, weekends away and skiing holidays (flying to Austria!).

They died in the prime of life. God bless them all - R.I.P. *Dave News*

ARCHIVES: Your Editor hasn't got a superhuman memory of the air crash. In fact, the archive material came from rather fragile copies of the Liverpool Daily Post and Echo, The Daily Mail, The Sunday Times, The Catholic Pictorial and The Universe.

If anyone would like a photocopy of one or more of the relevant sections of any of the above newspapers then please contact me personally - 01744 632211

TRIBUTES: Bishop Harris (president in 1968) said the sad loss of the young catholic rambles was a great shock. "Last year we celebrated the Association's 40th birthday when over 200 members at the dinner dance recalled many happy occasions over the years. Now this is the club's saddest moment. May they all rest in peace."

Fred Norbury, a founder member and a trustee, also gave his condolences, as did Bernard Manley, club chairman.