

Will & Ed

Liverpool Catholic Ramblers

Christmas Newsletter



Christmas 2007

Issue No. 65 Seventh Series

The officers and committee wish you all a very
Happy Christmas

EDITORIAL

This edition contains numerous recent ramble reports or holiday experiences. Thanks to all concerned, and I hope you all enjoy reading it. Your next edition should appear in January. All contributions should be sent or e-mailed to me at 7 Abbotts Way, Billinge, Wigan WN5 7SB or davenews@hotmail.com Thanks

NEW MEMBERS Welcome to all who have joined us recently.

CHRISTMAS BUFFET NIGHT and DISCO is on Friday, December 14th – The venue is New Century Hall, Walton (near Walton Church). Tickets are £8.50. You can pay at the door, but preferably phoning your last-minute buffet booking beforehand to Will Harris on 486 6541. Tell your friends.

THE GRASSINGTON RAMBLE on December 16th will be heavily booked, so to avoid disappointment book now. Bookings for Ambleside at New Year are now closed. The next walk after Grassington will be on January 13th to Milnthorpe/Carnforth.

CHEESE AND WINE NIGHTS are held on the first Thursday of each month at the Ship & Mitre (upstairs) Dale Street – next one is on Thursday January 3rd.

NEW PROGRAMMES

New programmes, which are also membership cards, should now have been issued to members who have renewed their annual subscription recently. If you have not renewed your subs yet, then pay either to Will Harris, 57 Higher Road, L26 1TA or to the person taking names on the coach.

Annual Subscriptions are £5 for single members and £6 to married couples



We are looking for more leaders who are good at following marked paths through the countryside

Holmfirth – Last of the Summer Wine!

WELL, it was goodbye dreadful summer, hello promising autumn. The change of season prompted me to book for the November Holmfirth ramble. I was picked up, along with Steve Fergus and George Riley, by a half-empty coach at the Gardeners Arms. I was prepared for rain which was forecast, but not for how the day would turn out.

We had a leader shortage, and at short notice, Ken asked if I would lead a 'C' walk while he and Carol led a 'B'. Now William, with knowledge of the area (unlike me) offered to assist, so I agreed. He did assist me on this walk, but by diligently keeping due watch at the rear of the party for the rest of the day.

We disembarked at Holmfirth coach park at 11.30am. It did not help to be given duff information from the coach driver as to our proper location, but he did admit to not having his glasses with him when pointing out a spot on the map at the time!

Feeling completely disorientated with a party of 12 to lead, I followed Ken's smaller group as they headed towards "Sid's Café" in the centre of Holmfirth. Outside this café stands a woollen-hatted statue of Compo from TV's "Last of the Summer Wine." Fred seized upon a photo-shot of us standing around Compo. I was half-expecting battle-axe Lily, the fictional proprietor of the café in the TV comedy series, to chase us away with a broom, Nora Batty style.

I noticed pictures of actors and actresses hanging from the walls inside the café. I was told the actor who used to play Compo was a local, and is now buried up on a hill with his boots (not wearing them, but on his gravestone!).

Moving along, we passed the "Nora Battye Steps," the fictional home of Nora – a stop for more photos.

With no sign of Miss Batty, nor of her wrinkly stockings so beloved of Compo, we set off.

I wondered what the day would bring? I had to get us all back by 4.30pm. Couldn't we just visit other sights in Holmfirth for the rest of the day?

Then, by a stroke of luck, a middle-aged Sheffield couple approached, who confirmed that my decision to head for Digby Dyke was a good one, as this is a local beauty spot.

Heading towards the Holme River valley with our Sheffield friends we were led into a delightful area – the haunt of kingfishers, herons, tree-creepers, nuthatches, goldcrests, jays and wood-warblers.

We actually got to see a heron at close quarters as it peered into the water, unaware of our presence.

The water from the river was used to power the nearby mills. It was pointed out that the top third floor of the now unused tweed mills had such large windows because the weaving took place there. The lower floors were lived in.

Then at Bottoms Mill, at which stands a high red chimney admirably reflected in the water of a nearby pond, our Sheffield friends parted company, not before leaving me with some leaflets hastily retrieved from the Tourist Information Centre by the gentleman.

Picking up a bridal path out of town, heading for the reservoirs, we enjoyed nature's tapestry of green, brown and gold. Hare and squirrel ran away at speed. Benches were ideally placed for a comfortable lunch break in a field near Digley Dyke, hidden behind a hill, and a joy to behold when it came into view.

The bridal path wended its way around Holme Village and then more reservoirs.

We completed our circular walk through woods, bringing us back to the Holme Valley again and Holmfirth by 3.45pm.

The 'A' party were already back, or in the pub. Their route was fairly similar except that it took place in higher terrain on nearby hills.

It was pleasing to hear the girls and guys saying how much they enjoyed the variety of scenery and to recall that we had no rain all day. Perhaps the incorrect weather forecast had put some off coming out. A pity! They missed out on an enjoyable, gentle and interesting ramble, somehow different from other places.

Richie Cannon



A little further down on the far side there was the remains of the mine's engine house. We had previously noticed the line of a former canal running alongside us on the far bank of the river. Rounding a bend we came to the piers of an aqueduct with building ruins up in the trees on our left. This was the site of another mine, and the canal would have crossed on the aqueduct to bring water power to pump out the mine. These mines had run out of workable lead by the 1850s.

Pressing on we emerged from the wood at Haddon lodge (originally a corn mill) at the foot of the lane up to Over Haddon. The river was now flowing with water and within the next mile down to Conksbury Bridge there were numerous weirs creating fish ponds with strikingly green weed cover. Crossing the bridge we passed the humps and bumps of a medieval deserted village and continued down the south bank passing Raper Lodge to reach Alport. This is now a small cluster of attractive old stone houses but it had once had a lead smelting mill to make its air foul!

Crossing the bridge we climbed out of the dale by Dark Lane until we reached a range of barns and turned to the right towards Haddon Hall

In walking Dark Lane we had been on one of the prehistoric English routes known as Portways – used long before the Romans came.

The path we now took had also once been a road down to the former village of Nether Haddon. It stood opposite Haddon Hall and was removed in the 15thC to improve the view! The hall was first built by William the Conqueror's illegitimate son William Peveril but is now owned by the Dukes of Rutland (of Belvoir Castle). Ironically, because they preferred Belvoir, they neglected Haddon for 250 years with the result it is now one of our best preserved medieval mansions and well worth a visit. Opposite Haddon Plantation we turned on a path towards Wigger Dale and shortly reached the outskirts of Bakewell. Pressing on past back gardens we were pleased to see the coach waiting so that we could shed our wet gear. 9 miles.

Fred Norbury

In our 80th Anniversary newsletter was a tribute to Fred Norbury who was one of the main founder members of our Association.

We are reminded that Fred was both an active Vice-president and Trustee of the Association when he died in 1972.

But Fred wasn't very old when he died – he was only 64. His wife also sadly passed away not long afterwards.

They left behind two daughters, one son, and grandchildren.

As a result of that photograph and tribute, I got a gratifying surprise when checking my incoming e-mail last week in the form of this nostalgic letter (shown on the right) from one of Fred's daughters.

It is interesting to note that it would have been Fred's 100th birthday next month.

16, Keswick Close,
Maghull, Merseyside. L31 9BS
26th November

To Dave Newns and all members,

Last weekend at the end of Mass I was approached by a parishioner who I see regularly but with whom I have no more than a "Good Evening" acquaintance. He came towards me with your 80th Anniversary Newsletter and the question "Recognise anyone?" The newsletter was opened at the Seniors' Section page and staring out at me was my Dad. I was totally taken aback, after 35 years to see him looking out at me from the page.

I greatly appreciate your tributes to him and the other founder members, and hope you don't mind if I make a copy for my brother and sister.

I well remember the tennis club in Lance Lane, I think we went along occasionally ourselves, but I was (and probably still am) hopeless. I also remember the committee meetings in our house and the names Gerry Penlington and Cyril Kelly are also very familiar to me. I am still on 'Christmas card terms' with Cyril's daughter Maureen (now Johnston).

I married in 1962 and had 2 children at the time that Dad died. Sadly both he and Mum did not meet their last 6 grandchildren but I know he would have been so proud to see how they have turned out.

Thank you so much for the article and the pleasure mixed with sadness it gave me and I am sure will give to my brother and sister also.

Regards, Maureen Matthews (Norbury)

m.f.matthews@blueyonder.co.uk

Oh!! and his 100th birthday is actually 24th January next.

LCRA Senior Section Llandudno Holiday October 2007

Sixteen members of the Senior Section recently enjoyed a holiday in Llandudno at the Ambassador Hotel, so many thanks to Jean for arranging another splendid holiday with fine sunny weather as an extra bonus.

Three walks were planned and enjoyed. The first was Conwy mountain. Jean, Gerry, Tony, Marcia, Freda, Lilian and Anne set off from the town and followed the North Wales Path to the summit – or rather to the series of summits. We did them all and had superb views in all directions, with the benefit of a clear blue sky and constant sunshine. On one cliff top we were amused by an amusingly altered notice which read “Beware! Sheep drop.” After exploring the summit and the site of an old iron age settlement, we descended to the Sychnant Pass and ate our lunch beside Gwern Engen. After eating, we came down to the road near Llechwedd and, having crossed the fields to Crow’s Nest Farm, returned to Conwy along the lower slopes of the mountain.

Next day Rosemarie joined us for a walk from Trefriw, along the river Conwy to Llanrwst. The path goes along the top of the Cobbs, which are there to prevent the area from flooding, although even these were breached in 2004 when the whole area was cut off. In Llanrwst, there is a delightful café by the bridge. This was our lunch stop, after which we all had our photos taken by the Stone circle, before continuing along the river as far as Gwydyr Forest entrance and then returning to Trefriw via the Forest trails. This was delightful as the leaves were in their Autumn colours and the streams were full and joyful. The day finished with tea and *shopping* in the Mill shop at Trefriw.

On the final day, only Gerry, Jean, Marcia and Tony were walking and it was decided to do the Little Orme for a change. This involved walking the whole length of the Promenade and then joining the North Wales path again to get up to the Trig point. The whole area was criss crossed with paths and, after exploring some of these, we came back to the road and made our way back to Llandudno through the woods of Penrhynside and the top of Nant-y-Gamar.

We had four lovely days. Those who weren’t able to join us on the walks, explored the surrounding area, including Bodnant Gardens, Penrhyn Castle and the Great Orme. We also enjoyed two good concerts by Welsh Male Voice choirs.

Thanks again to Jean for organising a great event.

OBITUARY – KATHERINE CRITCHLEY (*Née Highton*) aged 34, treasured daughter of club members Jack and Betty Highton. She died peacefully in hospital on Nov 19th. We offer our sincere condolences to Jack and Betty, her loving husband Andrew, daughter Josephine, and all her loving family and friends. May she rest in peace.

Walk reports by B Walker

Hayfield 21 October (Explorer OL1)

A perfect autumn day! Instead of as usual going from Hayfield up the Kinder Road towards William Clough we took the Valley Road below Elle Bank Wood. Turning South alongside the River Sett the path gradually climbs the valley side towards Higher Heys Farm. At a gate we took a permissive path that scrambled up Mount Famine. A short walk along the edge brought us to South Head with splendid views towards the Kinder Edges. We chatted with a Mountain Rescue team using a radio transmitter to communicate with a rescue exercise on Kinder Scout.

After a lunch break we continued a further couple of miles to cross the ancient Edale Track above Jacob's Ladder. After pausing to allow Jim to scramble about on the Edale Rocks Torr we made for the Kinder Low Trig Point perched on its boulder (633m) then took a break at the nearby edge of the escarpment looking out to Hayfield.

In Victorian times our peaceful view would have been replaced with the fumes and bustle of up to five mills using the valley's water to make paper, calico and cotton products!

From a break in the edge we scrambled down the rock strewn slope towards point 468 and then across boggy ground and a couple of streams to join the head of a permissive track alongside the wood south of the Kinder Reservoir. Taking this track we headed for the Kinder Road at the Booth sheep wash and home to the coach park. 9 miles.

Skelwith Bridge to Coniston 4 Nov (Explorer OL6,7)

The day was mainly dry with low cloud cover. Crossing the bridge we took the Cumbria Way, pausing to view Colwith Force with its Victorian electricity generation system. Passing High Park Farm we took a path South onto Little Fell and lunched on a rocky outcrop. Continuing South we paused at Hodge Close to view its great quarry pit then passed through Bakestone Barrow Wood.

At Holme Ground we turned right onto a path cutting across to High Tilberthwaite then followed the road down to Low Tilberthwaite where the Yewdale Beck emerges from the narrow gorge of Tilberthwaite Gill. Nowadays the Gill is an attractive wooded tourist spot but in former times there were slate quarries and up to five copper mines in the upper reaches of the Gill below Wetherlam.



Our path took us through the car park (the site of a former copper mill) and up to a track on Horse Crag to the South side of the Beck. The track was cut through boulders as it was originally the bed of a canal which had brought water diverted high up the Gill down to drive the ore crushers in the mill. On our left we passed a slate quarry's deep pit before eventually emerging onto a bleak moor at the head of the Gill.

After a break we pressed on south westerly passing occasional signs of mining activity until the top of Coniston Old Man came into view through Hole Rake and we emerged high above the Coppermines Valley behind Coniston Town. Because of a sprain suffered earlier by one of the party we took it very easy coming down into the valley and decided to curtail the walk by heading straight for the coach park. 7 miles.

Monyash to Bakewell 18 Nov (Explorer OL24)

On a raw, wet day we arrived in sleet to find a light snow covering around the old mining village of Monyash. Cutting past the church we headed south east along a waterlogged Limestone Way with the limestone slick and treacherous underfoot. Crossing Fern Dale we pressed on in steady rain to pass the former monastic farm One Ash Grange and reach Cales Dale. Here as the Limestone Way plunged steeply down we turned left beneath a limestone cliff and made our way down towards Lathkill Dale leaving the snow and wind behind. Crossing a footbridge to the north bank we noted that, unlike on some previous walks, the river bed was almost dry.

After a friendly exchange of insults with the "C" party we pressed on down the Dale for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile until we reached a weir and pit with two millstones at the entrance to the Nature Reserve. This was the site of Carter's Corn Mill which served Monyash. Entering the Wood we took lunch on a log beneath dripping trees.

Shortly afterwards we came to a capped pumping shaft on the river bank. This was the site of a former lead mine.

🚗 Kerb-crawling cops in Cracow 🚗

THREE men, one in a combat jacket, were spotted in a midnight snow flurry, walking warily through a square in Cracow. A vanload of cops drove slowly towards them. Then a shout in Polish (*roughly*): “Stop! What are you three up to?”

We stopped in our tracks in the snow. That was us! Now what are we supposed to do?

Most Polish police have problems with our language, so, our best shot was: “We are English!”

That did the trick! One of the cops uttered something we couldn't understand (just as well!) and then continued on their nocturnal kerb crawl.

It was only mid November, but there was a magical Christmas-card scene; in fact snow lay one foot deep on the top of parked cars!

Globe-trotting Albert's one-man mini trip had now mushroomed to three. It was his first time in Poland, along with Peter K, but I was a regular.

We had just been on a 4½-hour snowy coach crawl from Zakopane (normally taking 2 hours); accidents half blocking the road in several places.

Earlier, I had phoned an eloquent Polish lady that we were stuck in traffic. Our abode was now a short walk away . . . as the Polish crow flies! A little apprehensive, we now gingerly crossed the city tramlines and dual carriageway, but a few minutes' later that attractive young lady was showing us our warm spacious B&B rooms.



Albert was now happily ensconced, but night owls Peter and I soon emerged out of our rooms. Our receptionist suggested our best bet was back across the tramlines. Everywhere seemed closed, so instinct took us down a side street and, bingo! We discovered the trendy Papparazzi Bar. Some of the American jet set were inside. We felt at home – well, we were part of our club's easyJet set!

“When were the Poles liberated?”

Three nights previously our plane landed in a gentle snow flurry at Cracow; then, the next afternoon, we found an inch of snow at Auschwitz.

Our Polish guide recalled that the Russians chased the Germans out of Poland before the full horrors of Auschwitz were revealed. Now he was asked: “When were the Poles liberated?”

His forthright reply took us by surprise: “Not until 1989!” (*when Communist rule collapsed*).

On our return to Cracow in the evening rush hour we picked up our luggage from safe-deposit boxes under the station, then got an express bus to a surprisingly quiet and snow-covered Zakopane.

Soon we were enjoying an evening meal in one of Zakopane's cosy alpine log restaurants with fiddlers playing. Next morning we went up in the funicular train. The afternoon saw Albert exploring the outdoor market while Peter and I did Nosal, a small mountain, after two guides gave us the okay. Only two more people were up there.

In fact, we all found it very slippery on the snowy descent, but survived. We also saw a cross-country skier, but downhill skiing was only due to start with the new cable car launch on Dec 14th.

Mountain Rescue team were busy

Next day, trudging through snow in the street, Albert was puzzled by a gold-bearded “statue” which wasn't there the previous day. I threw a coin and to Albert's surprise, the man came to life! We were heading for Kiry, a scenic valley walk. If the snow got bad we would get a horse-drawn sleigh.

Well it got bad! Albert was not as fit as he would like to be and the snow was getting deeper.

When we finally got to the mountain lodge we asked one of the guides there with a group of army blokes if they could phone for a sleigh as Albert was exhausted. But there were problems. The sleighs had stopped running and a rescue was going on in the mountains, but we could stay the night at the lodge with them! Otherwise we could walk 2km back to the turning circle, and then try to phone for help there. He gave us three numbers.

Fortunately, Albert finally managed to do the full 3½-mile snowy trek back to the road with us.

Soon we were having three bowls of soup back in Zakopane. The plan was to get a night express bus back to Cracow. We hoped to get there for a meal at 9.00 – wishful thinking – it was traffic chaos in the snow! A gang of ‘Sex in the City’ English girls were on board, so the camaraderie was good; sharing biscuits but not phone numbers. We alighted at 11.30 in Cracow – too late for a meal! Then, trekking to the square in the shadows, three of us walked back to the start of this saga.

Not one crumb was left from our breakfast the next morning, and then we jumped on a tram for a short journey to the city's massive Wawel Castle where a guide showed us around the labyrinth of stunning royal apartments. After elevenses of tea or coffee and apple pie with cream we then toured the Cathedral and crypts, saw many royal tombs and the first president's tomb of Marshal Jozefa Pilsudski (died 1935). We finished off our four-day break by doing our own tour of Cracow Old Town, followed by a hearty meal. Thanks, Albert, for sowing the seeds for this action-packed trip.

Jen Dobbry