



Liverpool Catholic Ramblers
NEWSLETTER

Christmas 1996
7th Series Issue 6

Tricia Bentley

Editor's Christmas Ramblings

On the recent Cartmel Ramble we certainly had that winter feeling as we trekked through the snow and later tested our waterproofs to their limit, finally finishing the day off with a good hot fish and chip meal, complete with Christmas decorations, at Carnforth. Christmas lights transformed the village of Grassington at the end of our ramble last week and now the promise of December 15th's Castleton Christmas village festivities have attracted bookings of well over 50 members.

Our new warm, luxury coaches are proving very popular and bookings for the forthcoming Yuletide event are heavy (see details below).

I won't ramble on any more but simply wish you all a Happy Christmas, thanking all those who took a little time to contribute material for this edition which included Ray's Ramblerite page taped on my answerphone.

Contributions for the next edition should be handed to me or posted to my grotto at 7 Abbots Way, Billinge, Wigan WN5 7SB.



Dave Newns

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the following new members. We hope you will all have many enjoyable rambles with us in 1997 and beyond:

Kathleen Robinson
Irene Aucutt

Josie Flaherty
Raymond McKanna

Suzanne Coakley
Yvonne Curphy

Dawn Case

LONG SERVICE

Brian Keller was pleased to accept Honorary Membership of the Association at our recent Committee Dinner at Birch House for his many years of service to our club, not simply as a walk leader but also serving on the committee, especially over the last decade as club treasurer. We couldn't let the occasion pass without also thanking Gerry Penlington and Chris Dobbin for their even longer service to the club, and Bernie Doyle presented them with mementos on behalf of the club.

Yuletide Event

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5th

This forthcoming annual event is proving as popular as ever, and this time we are having our hot-pot and barn dance in the plush surroundings of a hotel, namely the County Hotel in the centre of Carnforth. Cost is just £1 more than last year but well worth it.

If you are going up by car it's just straight up the M6 and turn off at the Carnforth junction (35). In a few miles you will arrive at the traffic lights, crossing the A6 in the centre of Carnforth and you are more or less there. Go straight through the lights (wait for the green!) and the County Hotel car park is first left, a few yards past these lights.

We will of course be having rambles during the day. We have managed to book the same lively Barn Dance group as we had last year. It's a great day out!

Inclusive cost is £11 by coach or £6 if going by car with reduced rates for children. Bookings to Ray McIntosh.

Ramblerite

I have been caught on the hop by our editor, having returned hotfoot from my mum and dad's in Brixham. I tell you this not only to let you know that they are avid readers of our columns, but also to assure doubters of my impeccable lineage.

On one of our days out we espied a Peregrine Falcon perched alongside the road above Sidmouth. Once quite rare along the coast, I believe their numbers are now greatly increased. Other notable birds spotted in my own garden for the first time recently are the Yellow Wagtail which we often see especially in Snowdonia, and some Long-tailed tits. So I am planning to put out food for them this winter to encourage more visits.

I am sorry no-one was able to complete the last crossword. The sunny sentence contained all the letters of the alphabet, as would have the crossword and hence the answer was ALPHABET.

Never mind, we will keep the Mediterranean Cruise for another occasion. In the meantime you can book a comfortable cruise on one of our luxury coaches each Sunday of the New Year.

Ray McIntosh 

Dear Editor

I am writing on behalf of my friend Ray Mc who appears to be on the receiving end of a comprehensive conspiracy. It seems that during a recent quiz at the Cornmarket he was denied the three points that he richly deserved for knowing that Prince Andrew's other names were Albert Christian Edward, and furthermore, that the Scottish woman actually connived with the mendacious quizmaster to suggest that the aforesaid Prince was not born in 1960.

Now as everyone knows, Messrs Riley and Reilly were awarded the two bottles of scotch, and I feel that my friend, too modest to complain himself, should be offered a public apology.

Gerome Fisher

FORTHCOMING SOCIAL EVENTS

Friday Dec 13th BUFFET DANCE at Churchills - Tickets £5 (£7 on the night)

Thursdays

Dec 19th & 26th NO CLUB NIGHT

January 2nd NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS



January 9th THE PRICE IS RIGHT - Ray McIntosh

January 16th CALL MY BLUFF - Marg and Helen

January 23rd BURNS NIGHT

January 30th INDOOR GAMES NIGHT - Will and Chris



The Liverpool Catholic Ramblers' Prayer

By Roni Murray © 1996

*Dear Lord bless the ramblers and watch over us
as we begin our journey in a tatty old bus.
In our big hob-nailed boots we scramble on board,
Oh Lord bless this bus - it's all we can afford.*

*Dear Lord bless our leaders, especially Ray Mc
who is so full of patience - kindness - and tact?
He makes sure we leave at 9.30 sharp
from outside St John's Gardens-cum-park.*

*Oh Lord guide us safely as we begin our stroll
that strengthens our bodies and cleanses our soul
Let us be mindful of the cows - and of the sheep -
and Lord watch over Jack - in case he falls asleep.*

*Dear Lord bless our butties - be it cheese or ham -
and let us share with those who only have spam.
And thank you Lord for our stamina and wills;
as we climb the mountains - and them-there-hills!*

*Oh Lord bless the A walkers as they hasten with speed
for why do they hurry - what is their need?
Like cars on a motorway - they go whizzing past.
Oh Lord don't they know - that LIFE - also goes fast.*

*And at the end of the journey - at the end of the day,
let us be thankful - and let us pray.
Thank you Lord - for a nice pleasant day.*

RONI MURRAY Copyright November 1996

The Antonine Wall

FILMS such as "Rob Roy" and "Braveheart" have certainly brought specific aspects of Scotland's past into sharp focus. Of course we are being shown events through the rose-tinted glasses of the Hollywood movie-makers. However, they still tend to leave a good impression on the ole mind.

The fact that I now have porridge three times a day does not mean that I have become an addict!

"Look Laddie, will yer get on with this wee article!"

What really must bring a lump to any Scotsman's throat has got to be Pink Floyd's "The Wall". The wall in question being Hadrian's Wall, the furthest north western point of the Roman Empire (not too dissimilar from our own glorious EEC, with culture - Rome being replaced by sober Brussels).

Hadrian ('Lego le BARRATT' to his mates) obviously saw the wall as the only way to keep the Scots in or out depending on which side of the wall you were on. Built between 122 and 128 AD, the wall stretches from Bowness-on-Solway in the west to Wallsend in the east, a distance of 120 kilometres (or four 'A' walks in ole money).

It is interesting to note that whilst Hadrian's Wall enjoys the limelight, the Roman's did actually push



their frontier further into Scotland some twenty years later by building another wall. This fortification system between the Forth and the Clyde estuaries was different in construction to Hadrian's Wall, consisting of a stone-based turf-built wall, with a wide ditch on the northern side (full of Roman chippy papers no doubt!). This wall was called The Antonine Wall after the emperor Antonius Pius, who had ordered its construction.

After a short period, for reasons unknown, the Roman military decided to abandon Antonine's Wall and fell back onto Hadrian's Wall.

One theory was Hadrian's Wall is closer to the Equator and therefore one degree C warmer in the winter! This theory has however, recently been

disregarded by the Antiques Roadshow experts.

Well, there you have it, a little tale to help you sleep on Christmas Eve.

If you are ever in that part of Scotland and want to hear a pin drop at the local pub, just burst through the doors and say . . . "Does anyone know where Antonine's Wall is?"

Roy McThiis

SENIORS' SECTION

CROOK O' LUNE (not Arkholme) Oct 13th

Everything seemed perfect for a lovely walk - weather, location, facilities, including bacon butties! There was, however, one missing ingredient - walkers!

Obviously, everybody doesn't like bacon butties and two people apparently preferred a different location. Nevertheless, a turnout of two was a little disappointing despite the quality.

As we set off along the bank of the Lune in brilliant sunshine we could not fail to agree with Mary Welsh's comment that this is Lancashire's loveliest river and she wasn't even out on the walk! On the opposite bank a disused cotton mill in handsome grey stone was not the blot on the landscape that a modern factory would certainly be.

Keeping up a good pace (no stragglers of course) we soon reached Waterworks Bridge. This splendid three-arched structure originally carried the railway across the Lune but now stands in splendid isolation but admired by all who pass. On this particular day

that did not amount to many though our group was swelled by the addition of a guest, Philip, who thoroughly enjoyed himself. Lunch was taken beside the bridge and then we entered Lawson's Wood. Thereafter our way took us in a wide sweep as we followed the river on its meander.

So far the terrain had been reasonably flat but after passing Aughton Barns farmhouse we received a shock. The path ascended at an inclination of about one in three. Surprise, surprise, as it reached the crossroads in Aughton Village there was a bench waiting for us and just made to seat five. What a thoughtful leader!

We continued to go up for a while, turning round as instructed to admire the superb views, including Hornby Castle behind. We were now crossing field after field until we came down to Hawkshead, where we reached Park Lane which led back to bacon butties and tea.

GEFA

WILLASTON - Nov 3rd

It was a very mild, dry autumn Sunday morning when eleven ramblers met in the car park alongside the now disused Headlow Road Railway Station to prepare for a walk in the countryside round the South Wirral village of Willaston.

Our route took us mainly along woodland pathways, soft underfoot and somewhat muddy in places. The trees were still green with few of the autumn tints one would expect at that time of the year. A grey squirrel was seen running along a fence, obviously not yet ready for its winter sleep. Various types of fungi were admired - perhaps one the signs of autumn - and our lunch was eaten in a field where the blackthorn hedge was laden with sloes.

From the car park we walked along a stretch of the Wirral Way, on the tracks of the former branch line from Hooton to West Kirkby. Soon after leaving this pathway we walked along a lane which becomes an unsurfaced track. This, our leader told us, was part of a Roman Road which was an important link between central England and the shores of the Irish Sea at Meols. This track was fringed by trees and ponds, probably former marl pits. (Marl is a type of clay with carbonate of lime used as a fertiliser).

As we continued on our way we admired distant views of Moel Famau in North Wales and Liverpool's two cathedrals and its Beacon.

Finally we regained the Wirral Way at a picnic area where we stopped for further refreshment before following the former railway track to Willaston and Headlow Road Station.

At the station Bill explained the ideas behind semaphore signalling. When the signal is horizontal a red light shows at night. He pointed out that the other coloured part of the signal is blue. "How then," he asked, "can a green signal be shown?" Answer: The oil lamp which was lit every night was yellow; blue + yellow = green. We also had an interesting lesson on modern signalling.

From the station some of us retraced the first part of the ramble as far as Geoff Roberts' pig farm hoping to buy some fresh, free-range eggs! The farm was, by this time, closed, but seeing pleading faces peering over the gate the farmer opened up. Unfortunately, after a search, he could only find six eggs and he had no bacon left. Obviously, as he said, he had had a busy day. We looked round the sties seeing several cows with piglets in individual enclosures. In each of these a bell hangs from the ceiling. This rings as the sow touches it when she moves, warning the piglets to get out of the way, as it is not unknown for a sow accidentally to kill its offspring.


Quite an educational ramble!

Many thanks to Molly and Tony. *G. and A. S.*

Hitler's map saves a footpath closure

An aerial spy photograph taken by the Luftwaffe during the war was produced in court last month as evidence that a footpath existed as far back as 1940. A Dorset farmer, who bought land eight years ago, had denied access to a right of way across his land, but under common law a path is considered to be public if it can be proved that it has been used for 20 years.

The aerial map was among other pictures found by a British soldier at an airfield in Northern France in 1945. They are now all included in a book called *Adolf Hitler's Holiday Snaps*. Nigel Clarke of Lyme Regis is the publisher, and it was the county archivist who knew of the existence of the photograph.

 Flying high over the Shipton Gorge area near Bridport, the photo was taken by the crew of a Dornier 17P aircraft on October 7 in 1940. It clearly shows field boundaries and the path in question. In fact the Germans were largely responsible for the first proper aerial survey of Britain.

And so, instead of Adolf using the map for the planned invasion of Britain, it was the Dorset County

Council rights of way sub-committee who studied the map's fine details over half a century later. They accepted that the photograph proved the path's long existence.

Both villagers and walkers alike had obviously used this path for many years, and the committee recommended that it be reinstated. The Ramblers' Association footpath secretary for Dorset said he was very pleased with the result.

Thanks to Roy Thiis who sent me the newspaper cutting which included a photograph of the map. Anyone who would like to see the pictures and full report just contact Roy or myself.

Editor.

A large crystal for Christmas

The world's largest single crystals are believed to have been found in Australia's remote Northern Territory. The largest of three gamets, identified by a mapmaker at the top of a small hill, was thought to be 90ft across. It weighs thousands of tons.

*Here's wishing you all a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year*

