

Liverpool Catholic Ramblers' NEWSLETTER

Spring 2010 Issue No. 80 Seventh series



New Members. Welcome to all the following who have joined us over the past few months: Carol Holywell, James Holywell, Janice Storey, Barbara Gregory, Julia McNamee, Grant and Erica Luscombe, Christine and Roger Kirk-Smith and Helen Heliston. We hope you will all enjoy many happy years of walking with us.

We are getting full coaches – which is a good sign, so there is a need to book in advance.

Found on the coach. A pair of padded gloves, grey with pink pleats and clipped to a grey woolly hat have been handed to Roy by the coach company recently. Are they yours?

Our web site. We now have a large number of nostalgic photos on our web site. You can view them on Liverpoolcatholicramblers.com – and also a reminder to email to willharris33@aol.com if you would like your newsletter emailed to you.

Cheese & Wine Nights plus free Quizzes are held on the first Thursday of each month, upstairs at the Ship & Mitre, Dale Street – but we are reminded that they start at the earlier time of 8.30pm – **May 6, June 3, July 1, August 5, etc.**

Bring and Buy sale. In spite of a small attendance on March 4 we actually raised £50.82 for club funds from our sale at the club. Thanks are due to those concerned.

Llandudno weekend, 16-18 April – We had 27 members (plus 6 who booked separately plus a couple of campers) all enjoying the weekend. Eleven did the tough Carnedd Llewellyn walk on the Saturday from the Ogwen Valley led by Vanessa with Dot as whipper-in. There were great views and lots of snow on the Carneddts! The 'C' walk did the Orme and Conway with Steve leading his first walk.

Obituaries

Ken Regan's mother sadly died recently. We offer our sympathy and sincere condolences to Ken and his relatives. May she rest in peace.

Norma Ridings also sadly died recently, aged 79. Norma enjoyed walks with our General Section for a number of years until about 10 years ago. May she rest in peace.

Editorial. Well, there was no problem filling the newsletter. In fact I had to leave a few snippets from Dot until the next edition. Thanks to all contributors. Material for the next edition to davenews@hotmail.com or send to me at 7 Abbotts Way, Billinge, Wigan WN5 7SB.

Llangollen – 7 March

Dot suggested we approached Llangollen by the “back door” for a change via the A525 Wrexham road. Our A/B party got off at Maesmaelior while the C’s continued to the Ponderosa. We walked across to the nearby visitor centre at Llandegla Forest. In the last few years the forest has been developed to a state of the art mountain biking recreation area with bikes for hire, training courses and competitions over routes of all grades of difficulty. At just over an hour from Liverpool it is worth thinking about if you are that way inclined (www.coedllandegla.com).

However there remain the designated walking routes and so after a coffee break (and resisting the bacon butties) we set out on a 2-mile route through the forest in the direction of World’s End.

It was a beautiful but cold sunny day with the snow crisp under foot in the shelter of the pines. At the top of the forest we broke out of the trees and yomped up through heather and snow to the ridge of Cym y Brain 525m. The Watkins Tower on the map seems to have disappeared so we walked past the telecoms station and took our lunch break before looking down over the Vale of Llangollen.

Out of curiosity we decided to go and see the famous Ponderosa so we dropped a mile or so to reach it. It was heaving! After using the toilets and having a good laugh at the swarms of leather-clad bikers waddling to and fro to their bikes and the chip queue we headed off down the Clwydian Way.

Reaching Bryn y Ogwen (which was just where my map folded over) there occurred a shocking mass outbreak of leaving Roy behind as I struggled with the map. By the time discipline had been restored we had lost all our lovely height and were approaching Pendre Dwfr at the foot of the pass. To get back on route we crossed over to the Offa’s Dyke path via Hen Bandy and Llwyn Hen Parc and made our way to Llangollen along the foot of Ruabon Mountain’s cliffs and Castell Dinas Bran.

Our route panned out at 13 miles but omitting the Ponderosa would bring it to about 10 miles. Nevertheless a very worthwhile increase in options for Llangollen. Thanks Dot! *Roy F*

Grasmere – 21 March

The 12 A walkers began instantly climbing Helm Crag led by joint leaders Roy and Jim. As we climbed, the cloud came in and drizzle began. Onward we went to the top where the boys, especially Jim, climbed the Lion or the Lamb, whichever it was!! We stopped for our lunch break here and as we cooled down we realised how cold it was getting but onward and upward to Codale Head. We walked up Calf Crag and at one point were walking on hardened snow. The route was a challenging ascent – we had four new walkers out with us and one struggled with the heights we were reaching

but continued at a steady pace and made it. Lily, who is Spanish and over in England to improve on her English was in training to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. She needn’t fear – she was like a mountain goat! As we reached the shoulder of Codale Head the bitter wind suddenly hit us. We were somewhat sheltered before by the hills around. By this point my coat had decided enough was enough and was as wet inside as it was outside! Not a good way to be. A joint decision was made due to the elements to retrace our steps back to the Grasmere path. Billy and Jim had actually braved the walk in shorts! We were only a quarter of a mile from our target of Sergeant Man and the drop to Easedale Tarn but this would have added on another half an hour at least.

The 3½ mile Grasmere path took us an hour and a half to descend – the plan being that the fastest we descended the more chance we had of getting to the pub. Billy’s boot sole now became loose and eventually the other sole joined in – he walked back to the coach soleless!!

Lilly was in high spirits all through the walk and keeping our morale up. We arrived at the bus too late to get to the pub for most, although a couple of the men ran round for a swift half. The ladies toilets were locked so the men had to get changed as quickly as possible in their toilets so the women could then get changed!

A very long and challenging walk with a total of 11 miles and a height achieved of 680m (2200ft) which I myself am totally pleased I did. *VT*

Pendle Hill – 28 February

We arrived at Barley on a very cold, overcast but dry day. As we were approaching, the sight of the Pendle Hill was extraordinary as it alone was bright white with snow in an otherwise green landscape. The A/B group set off via the reservoirs into Ogden Clough and reached the Big End top via the “back way” up Boar Clough with the snow getting firmer and crisper under foot. We arrived at the Beacon where scarves and hats were thrown on due to the biting wind, took a quick photograph and then we took a very short cold lunch break in the partial lee of a wall. Crossing the stile under a sprinkle of fresh snow we headed a mile along the ridge past the Scout Shelter before descending towards Worsaw Hill. We then headed for Downham.

Approaching this famously picturesque village Roy remarked that one attraction was its inaccessibility to large coaches because of a bridge restriction. But, turning a corner there before our eyes was a very large coach! On challenging the driver he reported that the particular limit did not apply to coaches, but he did not recommend it as it was a very tight squeeze! He had made the effort because he was carrying a party of elderly American Mormons looking for their roots. As we looked towards the church we saw what looked like a flock of “Men in Black” fans or part of an episode of “Father Ted” with all of the Mormons exiting the church at once. From Downham we swept out to the north via Twiston Beck bridge – almost a “bridge too far” as we just made it inside Dot’s deadline and had to take our pint in a rush (10 miles). *VT/RF*

On the piste - Zakopane 2010

An intrepid eleven ramblers made their way to Zakopane on 3rd March. We were a mixture of experienced, second year and never skied skiers!! We all stayed at the Magnolia guesthouse, located about 15 minutes' walk away from the centre of Zakopane. Jan Storey and I shared a twin-bedded room with a huge balcony on the side, ideal for storage of the vodka, coke and water, and used later to drink same direct from our balcony snow store!

Dave Newns, Howard Flynn and George Riley were the experienced skiers with Gary Smart following hot on their tails. With their advice, we second year skiers being Jan Storey, Lesley Armstrong, Peter Carfoot and myself – all progressing in confidence and skiing. There were three beginners who enrolled for a two-hour lesson on the first day at Nosal. Lisa and Tricia found they liked the skiing but Jill knew it wasn't for her. Lisa and Jill's holiday then progressed visiting all of the local clubs where they met a group of skiers from Sheffield and the Canadian Ice Hockey Team. At times it seemed that Lisa and Jill would be crawling back to their beds while the rest of us were crawling down for our buffet breakfast! This consisted of cereals, bread, cheese, meat with eggs and sausages served alternatively, plus fruit.

The day spent on Nosal allowed us second year skiers find our confidence again and this was duly celebrated with a couple of beers later. George, Howard and Dave managed the red run, a really steep side of the mountain – we left them there and walked back into town.

Over the week we visited the different slopes, namely: Harenda, Szymoszkowa and Kotelnica. But Kotelnica is 15km from Zakopane so we caught the local bus. I was at the front of the queue and asked the driver in my very broken basic Polish for two to Kotelnica which he didn't understand, finally I remembered Kotelnica was in Bialka. He understood this and we got on, George was next on the bus and just said: "Same" to the bus driver! After I had managed to work it all out!!! It's a long slope so the first few skis down hurt the legs but there were plenty of places to stop and have a rest. Jan and I tended to ski together pushing each other further (or in my case, Jan stopped me sitting down on my skis – I was leaning back while skiing, not a good thing!). Jan was particularly nervous of the chairlift and on one of her first trips forgot to ski away at the top, she came down from the lift on her back!!! On the way home from Kotelnica we were all so exhausted that after we got off the bus at the station we walked into town and went straight for our evening meal and a pint of beer!

Saturday saw us all jumping into taxis and heading for Harenda – the more experienced skiers called it harrendous! And we were soon to find out why. Again we went through the palaver of hiring the right fitting ski boots, skis and poles, then off to buy the lift passes. The boys all went on the second lift while I stuck to the lower lift with Les, Jan and Peter. All our confidence was knocked a bit as we got to the top of the button lift as there sitting on the snow was a bunch of snow-boarders! They had a tendency to just shoot very close

past you while you were skiing down the slope and totally unsettle you.

Soon the boys decided that as Lesley and mine's skiing was coming on we could possibly do the second lift! (Jan had given up for the day and was sitting drinking hot wine in the warmth of the café). So up we went, Dave, George, Les, Gary, and me all feeling confident – until we got off at the top! How high had we gone? What made us think we were able to do this?!! So Dave went off first, showing us how to tackle the severe incline of snow and ice! Les followed with Gary behind watching her, I stood stock-still! Fear! That's the reason, pure fear! The slope was so severe I really didn't see any way down alive! Les fell so George went after her leaving me alone! I eventually began to move by walking sideways on my skis down the hill bit by bit. Eventually I felt comfortable to ski across the slope and fell. I then invented a new turn that is totally unique to Harenda: Ski along the slope, sit down (before you fall), flip ski's around the other way, ski across the slope, sit down, flip ski's around . . . ! Dave looked up the slope at me incredulously and George had tears running down his face – nothing of this sort had been seen before. I slowly built my confidence up and began turning and made it down alive! After this, the ski slope was closed for an hour while bashers smoothed the piste and softened the snow; so there was nothing left to do but go into the café and have a zapikanka (a pizza-like thing) and washed down with a hot wine or a pint of beer! After the break Les and I went back to the smaller lift just to finish the day off.

Szymoszkowa was the destination for Sunday. This was a short taxi ride from our place. Jan, Peter and myself all decided a lesson was in order to try and take us that bit further. The lessons cost 70zloty (approx £16) each and my instructor whisked me off straight away and had me turning with poles everywhere! He obviously saw the potential in me as he (like the boys the day before!) took me on the big chair lift, which took us to the steeper red run! My heart was in my mouth as I looked at what I had to ski down. There before me were Dave and George with mouths to the floor – has this woman gone mad? But I only fell once on the way down and that was with Dave and George watching; once they had gone I confidently twisted and turned my way to the bottom. I was buzzing! Just that one-hour lesson had helped me with my turns graduating from snowplough turns to parallel turns.

The last two days of the holiday were spent skiing at Kotelnica and Szymoszkowa. Each night several of us would meet in the hotel lobby and go to a restaurant for our dinner washed down with two or three beers. More often than not the Piano Bar magnet would pull us in. It's a lovely laid back bar, even selling honey vodka!

All in all a very good week, lots of laughs, lots of skiing; and finally lots of tired and weary bods took off from Krakow Airport, homeward to John Lennon Airport.

Many thanks to Dave for organising the week. I'm already looking forward to 2011. VT

Mike Riley also had a group staying in Zakopane for a week, starting ten days before us. This included Mike's skiing brother James and sons. There was no report but I know some of them didn't ski but preferred low-level walks. – Ed.

Half Marathon – Sunday 28 March Liverpool Arena, start and finish.

We would all like to congratulate Carol Holywell, one of our fairly recently-joined club members, for successfully completing the recent 13.1 miles charity half marathon. Carol was running in memory of her daughter Louise.

It was an excellent day with over 5,500 taking part – the runners coming in puffing and panting, bent over at the end with legs aching. It was a good atmosphere with people shouting to runners that they knew (“All right there, Jimmy? Nice one!”);

Unfortunately, the photo for the above report printed out far too dark and so was not suitable for reproduction here. – Editor

Seniors' Section ramble reports

Otterspool – 14 February.

Along with other club leaders, Anne and Lilian were faced with two choices, cancel or modify their walk – happily they chose the latter. The meet was a car park opposite the Otterspool pub where fifteen of us assembled – a very creditable turnout, in view of the recent inclement weather conditions.

The first thing that came to my attention was the number of sports fields which were awash with numerous multi-hued football teams which brought back images of the Sunday Express cartoonist Giles who was, during the war, famous for his lampooning of the vain-glorious Nazis. The scene was typical of his matches where hoards of muddled and bloodied urchins chased a newspaper stuffed ‘casey,’ as many of my vintage years have done!

The wind was light and the river calm, though ruffled by the ebbing tide. The Wirral was mist shrouded, with the shifting clouds giving tantalising glimpses of the distant Clwydian range.

Once on the prom, which is built, in part, upon spoil from the construction of the Birkenhead Tunnel, the party soon separated as the more fleet of foot left the less fleet floundering, but we regrouped for elevenses at the ‘Britannia.’

As we resumed walking, groups of anglers were met and in conversation with them it was found that whiting, dabs (flat-fish?) and eels can be caught and all were edible! Anglers apart, there was a constant flow of people enjoying themselves walking, running, cycling or just simply leaning on the guard rail enjoying the view of the river, though honestly, there wasn't much activity on the river, apart from a coaster making its way up stream making its way for Garston Dock? A grubby tug was crossing towards the Liverpool side while further down river a larger vessel was making full use of the fast ebb tide.

It was shortly after this that we settled down to a rain-threatened lunch stop opposite the Liverpool Marina Bar and Grill where we had a table booked for the evening meal. Nearing the Marina there was a collection of “beached” crafts of all shapes and

children saying: “That’s my Dad” or “That’s my Mum.”

Thanks to James and John for the invitation to the Arena where we met your family and friends who are so close and supportive. On that day five of us (Joan, Vanessa, Gordon, Billy and I) were made to realise that it would have been so easy just to have turned over in bed. We are glad we did not miss this event.

Thank you Carol, John, James and family – U R all stars! **J, V, G, B and I**

sizes, one especially caught my eye, a beautiful yacht built of gleaming mahogany.

Arriving at our destination we repaired to the Maritime Museum for sustenance to see us on the return leg, this time without any stops! Now that the tide was almost out there appeared in mid-river a series of sand banks stretching from Camel Lairds almost to Eastham Docks which left me wondering whether Lairds will ever be able to launch any

more large vessels.

As on the outward route we passed the fence enclosing the site of the Garden Festival, which is now in a desolate state, but it was heartening to hear on the TV news that restoration work was due to start the Monday following our walk, returning it to its former glory.

I am sure that Anne and Lilian must have felt some misgiving about an apparently humdrum walk but for most of us it was a new area and a new aspect of the river and the Wirral shoreline, which has a promontory, that one or two of us puzzled whether it was natural or man-made, not being able to recall seeing it before. A leisurely, relaxing walk full of interest. Many thanks to Anne and Lilian, and all who took part.

PS: When Marcia got home she put the route on the ramble into her number crunching machine which issued the following: Distance 8 miles; Ascent 90 feet; Descent 120 feet!!!

I was wondering why, when I got back to the car, I was wheezing. **G.**



The following two ramble reports came to me ready typed, complete with borders. Borders are best suited to cover pages but I think that they are a bit superfluous around ramble reports. What do you think? – Editor.



SENIOR SECTION RAMBLE 14TH MARCH 2010
RUFF WOOD ORMSKIRK



As some of our usual leaders were indisposed it was decided at the house meeting in March that instead of cancelling the monthly Ramble we would revisit a local walk in Ormskirk.

Eight of us met in Morrisons Car Park at 12.00, George P, Audrey P, Rosemary, Maria (who caught up with some shopping), Sue, Ita, Lilian and Anne. With some helpful navigation we arrived at the Ruff Wood Car Park to meet up with Jean who had made her way direct. It was a lovely Spring day and soon we were on our way.

Crossing fields already sown with new crops, we passed a recently renovated set of farm buildings dated (1760s). In the opposite field were two figures (someone commented they were scarecrows!!!!!!!!!!!!!!), using metal detectors—but alas no treasure to be seen!!!!!! Walking along we came to a country road where there was a hidden path and stile to our right. This path led passed a tennis court in the garden of a private house. Crossing another stile leading to a copse and another stile we came to a large field with a line of telegraph poles which we had to follow. All around were signs of Spring, clumps of snowdrops and the front garden of one house had a carpet of crocii—its colour gave us a wow!!!!!! factor.

Walking alongside the track beside the line of telegraph poles lunch- time was declared. There was a thin wind blowing and we managed to tuck ourselves down behind a raised hedge in a field to avoid getting cold.

Lunch finished, we carried on following the path which led up to the main road at Lathom Park. Walking along the main road we passed an I.T. Park on the left and on the right were acres of luscious grass used for turfing gardens etc. Leaving this main road we crossed more fields until we reached a small housing estate and another road. Here we spotted the local Pub "The Prince Albert," where we had a welcome stop for tea or coffee. As it was Mothers Day and the Pub was full we sat outside at the picnic tables enjoying the sunshine.

We were now coming to the last part of our Ramble and as we passed through the estate we admired many front gardens with their colourful displays of Spring flowers. Nearby the path went alongside a house where through the fence we could see a St. Bernard dog. A steep path dropped down alongside a church graveyard surrounded by a wall. This was Vicarage Lane and walking along we reached Ruff Wood Car Park - our starting point.

Rosemary and Maria left to go home and Sue had booked a meal for us in Mawdsley. We all set off and had an interesting drive through Burscough and Rufford. On reaching Mawdsley we had a slight detour to a pub car park—only to find it was the wrong pub—not our venue!! Reversing the cars we retraced our route and found "The Black Bull". We all enjoyed a lovely meal in this quaint Pub to end our day's walk.

Thanks to all who came to join us.

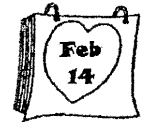


"THE QUADS"





SENIOR SECTION RAMBLE A RIVERSIDE WALK



2010

Due to wintry weather and treacherous conditions underfoot and as the January Ramble was cancelled, it was decided for the first outing of 2010 to try a local 8 mile Riverside Walk.

16 Ramblers met at the "Otterspool" Pub at 11.30 on a dry but cold day with clear views of the Wirral and distant snow-covered Welsh Hills. High tide lapped against Otterspool Promenade as we set out. For those Ramblers who had not visited this part of the River Mersey before, they were interested to see the Wirral, Stanlow Refinery, Eastham Country Park and Oil Terminal and huge oil tankers. Later on we could see the Camel Laird Shipyard, the Irish Ferry Terminal and the Mersey Ferry Terminals at Birkenhead Woodside and Seacombe.

Our route passed along the newly refurbished Promenade passing alongside the derelict Garden Festival site, (the next day an announcement was made that work was to begin on restoring these Gardens—possibly a future ramble????). A welcome coffee stop at the "Britannia Inn" was taken as the weather had suddenly become very cold.

Continuing on our way we passed new apartment blocks, Fishermen (one had caught a whiting!!!!!!), office blocks, a Chinese Restaurant and Brunswick Business Park showing how successful old warehouses can be restored to house small businesses. This part of the footpath is gated and opened from dawn to dusk. Red lights on a tall pole showed we had reached the dock entrance to the Liverpool Marina. By now pleas for lunch were heard and so we all sat around the area of the Marina. A green Superlamb Banana watched over us from the balcony of a flat. The new buildings of Liverpool One were all around as was the sky-line of the Cathedrals and Caln's Brewery. On the last part of the walk we passed the Customs and Vat building to the Albert Dock. The Ferris Wheel was turning behind the Echo Arena and BT Conference Centre. We reached the Maritime Museum for a 20 minute break.

The return journey meant retracing our route, but after half an hour the weather became noticeably warmer and a sea mist rolled in from time to time covering the Wirral side of the River. Low tide meant the sandbanks began to appear showing how navigating the upper reaches of the River Mersey is a skilled operation.

We concluded the walk at the "Otterspool Pub" having walked 13.4km in total. Thanks to all who came, an enjoyable way to spend St. Valentine's Day. Everyone then met up for an evening meal at "The Harbourside Restaurant."

THE LIVER BIRDS