

Liverpool Catholic Ramblers' NEWSLETTER



SUMMER 2003

7th Series Issue 41

Ramblerite

NESTLING near the end of the Langdale Valley are the two famous Dungeon Gill pubs that are a magnet to walkers and climbers, where one can sit outside in the evening sun before travelling home. Lots of different walks start and finish from the car park there, and next Sunday, 10 August, we will be paying another visit to this beautiful area.

Now then, even bookmakers would have misjudged our July attendance figures. On the Tebay Traverse, we had three different walks in good weather, all finishing at Sedburgh. Because of members on holiday, it was the first day out for three weeks, but the coach was only half full. The following week, with a dodgy weather forecast, we went to Snowdonia – bad on attendances in recent years – but the coach was almost full! We even threw in a fourth walk – an A-plus across the Carneddys. Maybe it was the attraction of the Country & Western music that our new driver keeps playing!

Now it will be interesting to see what happens on the next Snowdonia walk on 17 August when we will be going to Rhyd Ddu – the ‘back door’ of Snowdon.

You will have noticed that when the summer programme was made out we didn’t name leaders for some of the rambles, but you can be assured there will be A, B and C leaders for all the forthcoming walks.

At the August Bank Holiday weekend we are booked for the Buttermere Youth Hostel. Keep your ears to the ground as I think there are a couple of vacancies.

And so, good company plus good walks = the LCRA.

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Editorial

JUNE was the scheduled date for this edition. Holidays intervened, but then our outdated computer became defunct.

We now have a bargain second-hand model courtesy of Ken Regan (Windows 95/ Microsoft Word 2000, Microsoft Office). So with fingers crossed, and my past newspaper expertise, we should have no more problems.

Because of high-speed photocopying at the office superstore, photographs don’t come out too well, but drawings are fine. I trust the Seniors’ Section picture (sent to me on floppy disk) is still fairly recognisable.

With many thanks to this edition’s contributors, more articles, ramble write-ups, etc, for the early September edition should be sent to me at: 7 Abbotts Way, Billinge, WIGAN WN5 7SB.

Dave News

Dear Lord,



So far today, I am doing all right.

I have not gossiped, lost my temper, been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or self-indulgent.

I have not whined, complained, cursed, or eaten any chocolate.

I have charged nothing on my credit card.

But I will be getting out of bed in a minute, and I think that I will really need your help then!

Note: There are just four Thursdays during both August and September, so that means there will be a club night every alternate week during these months

Cheese and Wine Nights

The first Thursday of each month

at The Ship and Mitre – upstairs

and LIVE MUSIC by our own talented musicians

including KEN’S QUIZ with fabulous prizes

(7th August, 4th September, 2nd October)

Also

FUNCTION NIGHTS

The third Thursday of each month

A QUIZ, A GAME OR TWO, etc, to be announced on the coaches



OBITUARY – Sadly, George McIntosh (Ray’s father) died recently after a long illness. We offer our sincere condolences to Ray, Pat and family. May he rest in peace.

That DIY Polish holiday

FIVE years ago, when a group walking holiday for 32 people (mostly club members) was planned, a travel agent did most of the work - problem was that we travelled to Poland overland.

Early this year, however, Dave D and Mike R enquired about flying there from Manchester. Well, the only way to get a flight from Manchester (instead of Gatwick) was to book privately. So, during the ensuing weeks, Dave and Mike (using a Polish air hostess as interpreter) managed to book a guesthouse with nine twin beds in Zakopane for ten days, starting the last weekend in June this year.

Zakopane is a vibrant resort at the foot of the Tatra Mountains, near the Slovak/Polish border. Not surprisingly, as soon as the trip was confirmed, about a dozen regular club walkers and a few not so regular, plus friends, quickly paid Dave their deposits for the holiday.

It must be stressed that this was not an official club holiday, but there obviously were other interested members who would have gone. Unfortunately numbers were limited to 18 people.

After learning that we would be travelling in quite small planes, changing at Warsaw (the picture here sprung to mind) we were just a little bit apprehensive.

We were pleasantly surprised to find the 48-seaters had plenty of legroom. One of our planes had propellers, but Polish Airlines has a better reputation than BA!

At Krakow Airport, when Tom and me were looking for a meal with a bit of a kick in it, we pointed questioningly at a meat dish. The woman, having translation difficulties, said: "Donkey."



"Donkey!" we exclaimed. Then, correcting herself, she said: "Sorry, not donkey - turkey!"

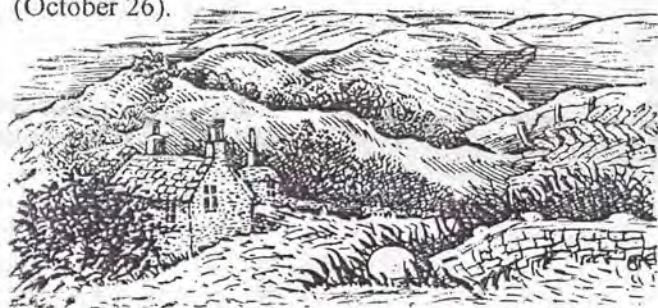
Our photos, in circulation, tell the rest of the story, including the pictures of two Polish nuns who scrambled to the summit of at least one mountain using chains, just like the rest of us, but they were still dressed in their habits! True.

Whon Ziote

Wuthering Heights

"Out on the wild and windy moors"

YES, I am referring to the scenery of West Yorkshire that inspired the 18th century novels of the talented but short-lived Bronte sisters. Why? Well simply to bring to your attention that a walk was recently pioneered by three keen members, for your delectation and delight (Bah! Humbug!) in the Haworth area, which will be the last ramble of our summer programme (October 26).



The indomitable Carol Kellett, our current 'A' walk dominatrix will be whipping the 'A' party across the brooding moors, possibly from Wycoller.

I intend to lead the 'B' party from the Parsonage (Bronte Museum). Before starting there may be time for a short visit to the museum, cost about £4.80, or to see a free video nearby of the Brontes, or to tour the Parish Church (containing the Bronte family vault) or perhaps to look around the quaint old shops along the steep cobbled main street.

You can buy ancient remedies for your ailments at "The Apothecary" where Emily Bronte's Heathcliffe was said to purchase his opium, or maybe you could buy spells or charms at a Wicca shop or visit an old-world sugar-free sweet shop with sweets in glass jars just like yesteryear (*where I must remember to buy some delicious West Indian lime sweets which I don't think you can get in Liverpool now*).

The town also has some interesting books and guides for sale, and old world cafes with pleasant views as you take your replenishment.

The 'B' walk will be circular from Haworth (with not much hill climbing). The New Millennium path takes you over Pennistone Hill towards "The Withens," the imaginary setting for Wuthering Heights, passing the "Bronte Seat" (an armchair-shaped rock) close to the Bronte Waterfalls.

Descending to the little village of Stanbury there may be a chance to stop at either of their pubs, the "Wuthering Heights" or the "Friendly Inn." The latter sells reasonably priced drinks and their "Bronte Beer" was very much enjoyed by Ken Regan and myself.

(I don't remember what Carol was drinking but she seemed very relaxed by whatever she was drinking. What do dominatrixes normally drink?).

Then we will pass alongside Lower Laithe Reservoir to get back to Haworth where there will hopefully be time available for some sightseeing.

This recce took place at the time when a dozen or so club members were away in Poland, and we found the fresh country air of the moors to be both therapeutic and peaceful, away from the stress of city life. Now where did I put that old Kate Bush video?

Richie Tannon

Road to the Southern Cross

The first of many episodes – abridged by Dave Newns

If you have any questions, you can contact me on 547email.albertdowning.com

HELLO FOLKS, I was in my late teens when I joined the Liverpool Catholic Ramblers, in 1957, but it was only a few years later when I got the globetrotting bug. There are still a number of members from those times who know me - others will soon get to know me as my story progresses – *Albert Downing*.

Although I'm still a proud member of the club, I find it difficult to get out now, but during the recent Afghan War I happened to tell Dave Newns that I had travelled through some of those awesome places in that bizarre country mentioned in the news. He suggested I wrote about some of my adventures in the newsletter.

Well, I had to think about it, and then got carried away. I have since typed over 200 pages!

As a young man it was not easy for me to get work - I had a hearing problem and still do. My ambition was to see how people

lived in other lands - how they spoke and their diverse customs.

The opportunity came in late November 1959 when I spotted some young volunteers working in a displaced person's camp in Osnabruck, North Germany. A good idea, I thought, and after several enquiries, I enrolled for six months voluntary work overseas. My family thought I was plain daft to give up my job in Liverpool.

So, my first memories are of Germany and Austria, but my globetrotting really started in 1963, covering many countries and clocking up about 15,000 miles.

After a myriad of escapades, I finally ended up Down Under in Melbourne. There I joined the Catholic Walking Club of Victoria (I still keep in touch and get their newsletters). I then spent over 20 years around that part of the world.

I have been back home now in Liverpool for the last 20 years.

Last year the Pensions people wanted a word with me about the missing 23 years. It looks like I may only get half a pension. Well, looking back, I did leave home on April Fool's Day in 1960!

*And so, my marathon story begins to unfold.

Globetrotting - Part One: From Brownlow Hill to Linz, Austria

I joined the club when Gerry Penlington, Cyril Kelly, John and Bill Potter, the Athertons, and other prominent members were there, but most are long since married with children - even grandchildren now. Sadly, Gerry, Cyril and a few more are no longer with us - others are still leading walks in our Seniors' Section.

In those days we had no motorways, so had to stay a little closer to home. The Lake District was only visited on some weekends away, but we did journey as far as Snowdonia, Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire, etc. Travel was much different in those days in the aftermath of the Second World War. Walking holidays abroad were almost unheard of.

We didn't have a pub stop on the way home but we had a good old sing-song on the coach and never bothered to change our clothes, unless it had been raining. We were a good group of people, meeting in the Cathedral Buildings for our weekly socials. We didn't get too dressed up for these, which were mostly a good old bash of country dancing to records and everyone joined in.

I used to work for the Maritime Stores in Bankhall, Liverpool in the shipping repair shed in Forth Street - long since gone. I worked alongside former deck hands that had spent their lives at sea and I heard many tales of their exploits all around the world. In fact in those days most people only saw the rest of the world if they either worked on a ship or joined the forces - volunteering or getting called up for two years' National Service.

At least I saw a bit of Britain once I joined the club, but I also became a member of the World Wide Brotherhood. These used to publish stories of adventurers abroad and give advice to anyone about to undertake such long trips abroad in just the clothes they were wearing.

Anyway, my opportunity came in late 1959. I wrote to the Cheshire Foundation in Surrey. They asked me what I could do, but all I could offer

them was general labouring. I was volunteering my help for free - just a pound a week pocket money.

They told me about the work in Osnabruck and Linz but I was just keen to go anywhere. Over those next few weeks more than 40 people were getting interviewed.

It wasn't long before I finally got fixed up, and left home on April 1 1960, travelling down to London by coach where I met up with a lad from Karachi in Pakistan. We travelled to Ostend by boat and met up with another volunteer on board - a young lady, also going to Linz. The three of us became very good and old friends.

We later met up with a group travelling from Osnabruck, Germany - in all, about 15 volunteers, arriving in Linz, Austria, on Sunday morning. It was a beautiful day and the camp boss then took us by truck to Lager Wegsheild nearby.

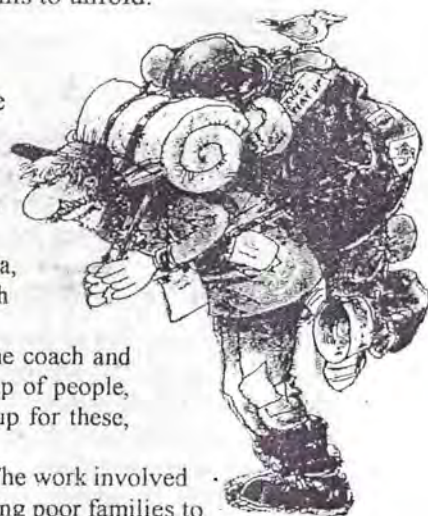
The work involved helping poor families to build homes for themselves. We did various jobs - digging cellars, mixing concrete or making bricks out of clay.

I enjoyed the work and we had a bit of time off to see the sights in Linz. I found out that composer Anton Bruckner was born close to where we were - at Ansfelden, near Linz (1824).

A long weekend off in May gave four of us the chance to visit Vienna. Everyone wished to go there, and I considered it as part of my education. It was a beautiful city and two of us got tickets for the Vienna State Opera House to see The Marriage of Figaro. I had never been to an opera before, or since, but did enjoy the experience.

We were all very happy on that hot and sticky night and stayed up until 4am in the students' quarters of Vienna. [Continues in next newsletter]

*Abridged. Full story is available.



Seniors' Section

Beeston Castle Ramble [O/S Landranger Map 117] Sunday 13th April 2003

MARCIA THOMPSON was the leader for a group of thirteen ramblers on a bright and gusty day in Cheshire. The starting point was Beeston Castle and, after we had admired Lillian's new Micra, we set off through a small wood.

Soon we were crossing a valley commanded by two Castles. Behind us was Beeston, dating from 1337, which is managed by English Heritage. Ahead was Peckforton Castle, an impressive 19th century sham used for Robin Hood films. In 600 years time, someone asked, did we think EH might deign to manage Peckforton Castle?

The first part of the walk followed the official Sandstone Trail that was clearly marked with a footprint sign. We ascended through trees into the Peckforton Hills and looked down on the Cheshire Plain. On Bulkeley Hill, hidden amongst the trees, were a small building and a few iron plate covers, with turnkey sockets, in the ground. The impression was that under the hill was a reservoir, but the wise persons on this walk could not explain the how and when.

"...THE ROUTE IS
CLEARLY MARKED..."



The sandstone cliffs provided dramatic views and some care was needed to avoid a too rapid descent. On a sunny ledge team photographs were taken. The white trig point marked the highest point and the halfway mark. The accumulated ascent for this walk was 1,000ft. On the descent Marcia drew our attention to a tall brick chimney, which remains from an old copper mine.

A return over the hills and along a cobbled road brought us to the final views of the two castles, stark against the late afternoon sky.

The walk was billed as 9 miles but at the walk's end the leader's talking pedometer clearly said 9.99 miles but then Maureen's feet said it was 10.

A good walk, on a good day, enjoyed by – Tony Gilmore, Peter Atherton, Cath Byron, Harry O'Neill, Maureen Howard, Lillian O'Malley, Freda & George Skillicorn, Jean & Gerry McDonald, Bill Potter and Marcia & Tony Thompson (*photo overleaf*).

Atom

On the bright side of life!

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson went on a camping trip. After a good meal and a bottle of wine they lay down for the night, and went to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes awoke and nudged his faithful friend.

"Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see."

Watson replied, "I see millions and millions of stars."

"What does that tell you?"

Watson pondered for a minute.

"Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo.

Chronologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, I can see that God is all powerful and that we are small and insignificant.

Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you?"

Holmes was silent for a minute, then spoke.

"Watson, you idiot. Some swine has stolen our tent!"

Club's cloth badges

for sale. Just £2 each





Seniors' Section on the Beeston Castle ramble - report overleaf