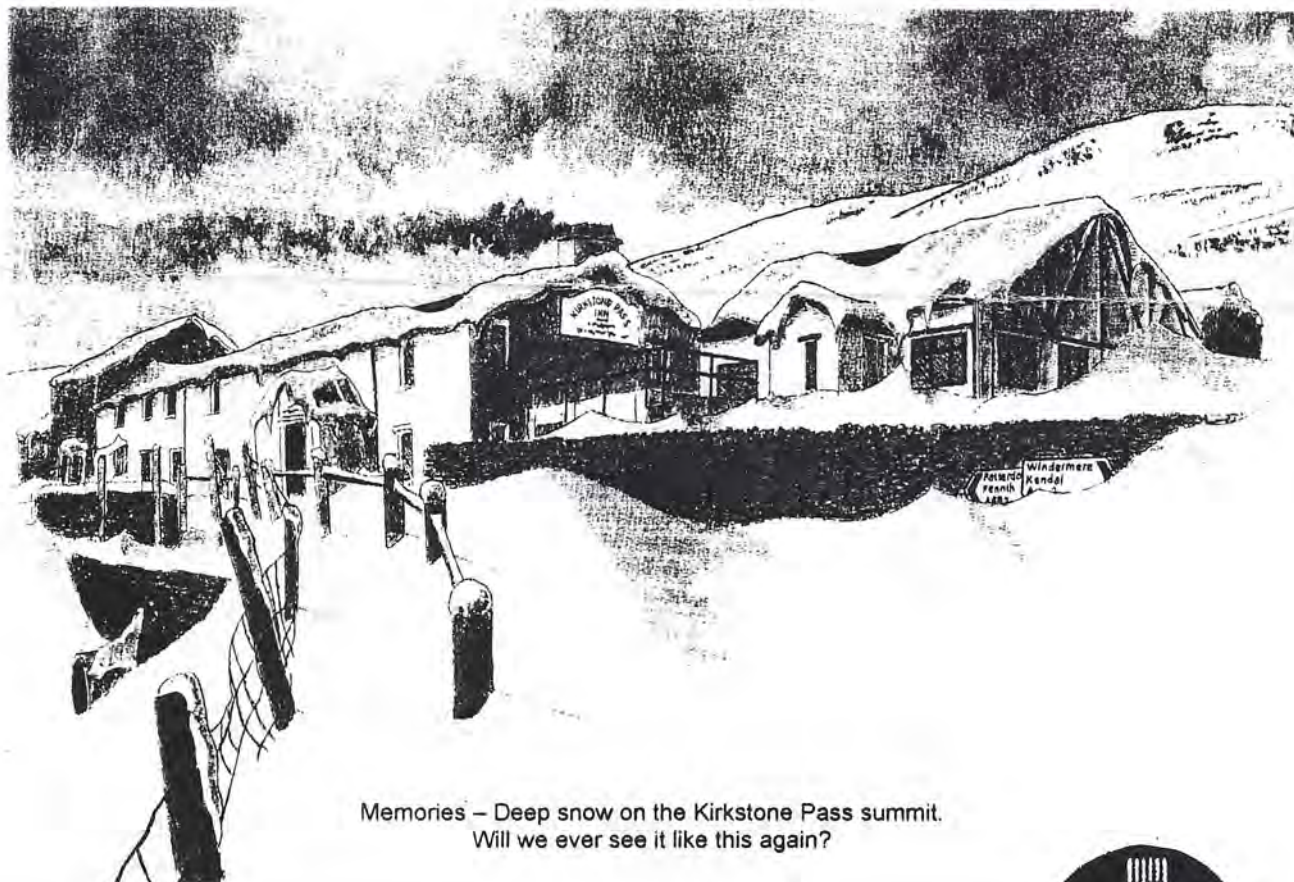


Liverpool Catholic Ramblers NEWSLETTER

September 2003

Seventh Series – Issue 42



Memories – Deep snow on the Kirkstone Pass summit.
Will we ever see it like this again?

OUR ANNUAL MASS



will be held in the Cathedral Crypt at 11^{am} on Sunday 28th September

FREE PARKING underneath the Cathedral. Entrance to the car park is opposite the students' car park in Hope Street. This is the time when we remember our past members and their families, especially those who have died recently. It's also a time to look forward to sharing many more successful years with our contemporaries.

The Rev Fr Gaine will be celebrating Mass (as last year) and several of our members will be taking an active part in the service.

A gentle reminder that ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS are now due

£5 for single members and £6 for married couples

General Section members can pay on the coach or send a cheque to our Registrar, Chris Harris,
57 Higher Road, L46 1TA – Cheques to be made out to LCRA



NOTICE is hereby given that the Seventy-seventh

Annual General Meeting

of the Liverpool Catholic Ramblers' Association

will take place on **Thursday, 25th September 2003 at 8.30pm**
at the **Ship and Mitre Public House (upstairs), Dale Street**

AGENDA

- 1 To approve the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting of the Association.
- 2 To read the Secretarial Report.
- 3 To read the Treasurer's Report.
- 4 To read the Chairman's Report.
- 5 To elect Officers and Committee for the forthcoming year.
- 6 To elect Auditors for the forthcoming year.
- 7 Any other business.

Note: Members wishing to submit resolutions of any kind must ensure they are in the possession of the Chairman not later than seven days prior to the above meeting.

Tom Reilly (Chairman)

Chairman's address: 1 Stanmore Road, Wavertree, L15 9ER

All Members and Associate Members should make a special effort to attend this meeting – your comments or your vote could be important.

AGM elections

EVERYONE is entitled to put his or her name on the current nomination list, to be signed appropriately.

If there is more than one name submitted for any single post, or there are too many nominations for the General Committee, we will hold a ballot.



NOTE:
Eligibility for Chairman requires Full Member status and at least one year's experience on the Committee.

President of the Association

Many of our Archbishops, over the years, acted as President. Others (including our present Archbishop) gave their blessing to the club but did not take on the role of President.

For the past five years our first secular President has been our devoted Chris Dobbin, but Chris now wishes to step down.

Our new President will be named at the AGM.



Ramblerite

THE SUNDAY on the recent Bank Holiday weekend must have been one of August's hottest days for walking up mountain paths in the Lake District.

On the Bank Holiday Monday at Buttermere, the youth hostel's warden exclaimed that weekend groups often point towards trouble! I had just handed her our generous tip for the staff, collected during breakfast. She continued: "So we were impressed by your trouble-free group!" And it also seemed that keeping evening meals warm for some of our latecomers was no problem. In addition to the walks a few also managed to include an evening theatre trip at Keswick (*Report on back page*).



At Staveley recently, Tom's 'C' party had no problem finishing their ramble first. They were hanging around a while for the coach (in the local hostelry of course!). It had been parked at the top of the Kirkstone Pass waiting for our other groups.

Incidentally, the club's mobile phones came in handy for all three groups that day as a couple of unscheduled coach pick-ups had to be arranged at the end of the walks. A healthy total of 42 were out then. So, presuming most of us are back from our summer holidays, let's hope that we can keep up these good attendances and maintain a steady turnover for the coach.

No more club weekends have been planned until next April when we revisit Lakeside House at Keswick. There's nothing organised for the New Year break, so here's hoping to see more of you out on Sunday rambles.

Dave News

EDITORIAL - The early appearance of this newsletter is to give notice of our AGM.

The rambling cartoons used in this edition were spotted in my Polish phrasebook - true. But I have added English subtitles!

Thanks to all contributors of this edition. More articles are needed so send them to me at:

7 Abbotts Way, Billinge, Wigan WN5 7SB. Thanks.



Forthcoming Rambles

September

7 HORTON-IN-RIBBLESDALE

In Yorkshire Dales limestone country, near Settle. The 'C' probably starting at Settle, passing caves along the valley to finish at Horton-in-Ribblesdale where there is a famous café and a pub. The 'A' and 'B' will do at least one of the peaks, namely Pen-y-Ghent. A: Carol K. B: Bob Hughes. C: TBA.

14 FLAMBOROUGH HEAD

On Yorkshire's east coast. Because of the distance it is an 8.30 start. The details of this ramble are yet to be finalised so keep your ears to the ground.

21 BROUGHTON-IN-FURNESS

A scenic part of south Lakeland, below Coniston.

28 ANNUAL MASS. No ramble.

October

5 BARMOUTH, North Wales.

12 BASLOW

Derbyshire Peak District. Gritstone edges popular with climbers and walkers alike. Close to the grounds of Chatsworth House for the 'C' walkers.

19 GRASMERE

Always popular. Roy Fletcher leading the 'B' and Lyn Perrow taking the 'C' walk.

26 HAWORTH

The Bronte Country. A bit different today with a possible 'A' walk starting north of Haworth, near Wycoller. Richie did a write-up about a "Wuthering Heights" recce he did recently in the last newsletter. It will probably be a meal optional event at the end of the day in a moorside inn.

Down at the Ship & Mitre

Dale Street (upstairs) on Thursdays

September 18 Millionaire-ish Quiz

Based on the TV quiz "Who wants to be a Millionaire" with Will Harris as quizmaster. Your chance to win up to £5 for just a few pence.

September 25

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at
8.30pm prompt

October 2

CHEESE AND WINE NIGHT

With our own musicians and Ken's Quiz
Fabulous prizes to be won.

Road to the Southern Cross

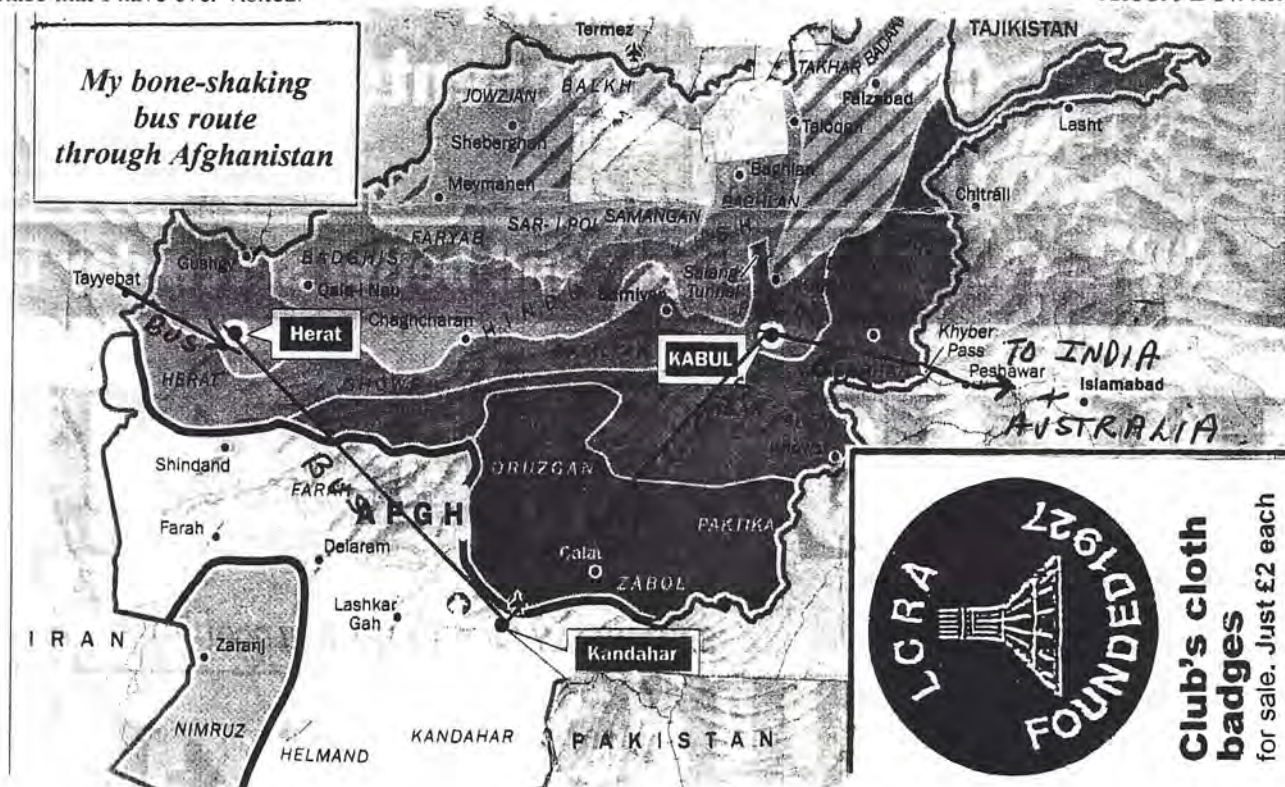
IN my first episode I had left home on April 1st 1960 and ended up in Austria helping poor families to help build homes. I will continue with my travels in the next edition, but now I just want you to jump a few pages of my story and show you my route across Afghanistan (40 years ago).

I will never forget that rough journey through Afghanistan. I travelled on buses that my colleagues and me called boneshakers. It was the roughest and poorest place that I have ever visited.

I eventually ended up in India, then finally Australia. On watching the news about Afghanistan in recent years, I am wondering now whether we travelled through the Khyber Pass or was it another adjacent mountain road.

It is difficult to get maps of Afghanistan. I wonder if anyone can help me here. My e-mail address was slightly wrong in the last edition so if you wish to e-mail me just give the editor a ring for correct details.

Albert Downing





Eagles in the clouds

My first ever ramble (many lunar months ago... circa 1979)

A DAMP drizzly car park on a desolate mountain pass in North Wales was my greeting from Pen y Pass, and this natural kicking-off point was supposed to be the very inspiration to tackle the mass of Snowdon.

Well, after spending countless tea breaks pouring over the 1-50,000 scale map of Snowdon and being the butt of all jokes from my workmates, it was now or never. This business of studying maps prior to walks sounds very impressive, if you know what you are doing, but I clearly didn't, particularly when looking at contour lines!

I must admit to complete relief when seeing a nice big information board, on the various route options, at the edge of the car park. My constant staring at that and then checking my map soon brought that time-honoured quote from my walking companion:

"Do you know what you are doing?"

As a true 'fibber of the mountains,' I gave the only reply possible:

"Err, yes, of course I do! Let's go."

So, with my bottom lip trembling, I was off along the staircase of stones marking the Pyg Track. Funny thing is, having spent ages putting all your gear on, after five minutes you're nearly taking it off again, as body temperature hits gas mark 9 on the unrelenting climb up the broken escalator.

Eventually a pace of sorts develops and a gradual progress kicks in, i.e. stopping every 10 steps or so on the false pretence that you're just checking if your mate can still carry on.

After many days, sorry I mean hours, we finally collapsed at the base of Crib Goch. I know on Everest there is a certain altitude where oxygen is required and whilst we poured the first of many cups of tea, it was unanimously agreed a permanent oxygen tent should also be installed at this point.

Studying the map for the umpteenth time it was very clear, even to me, that the dotted lines start to diverge. *The Pyg Track* looked like it may go very zigzag, but the *Crib Goch* route looked rather good, because from our point of view, it was rather straight. I somehow also managed to convince myself that those very tight contour lines either side of Crib Goch would only mean I would be getting higher, wouldn't it?

So off we went up into the silent swirling mist. All

we needed now, to complete the atmosphere, was the sound of the hound of the Baskervilles.

The path soon disappeared to be replaced by a series of rock outcrops resembling a crude 39 steps, times a few hundred. But at least we were gaining height, in some form; the fact that you could not see up or down just added to the frustration.

Eventually we felt the gradient levelling out and the beginning of a path. This, we later found out, was the infamous Crib Goch ridge, with some spectacular drop-offs either side. But in this pea-souper, where if you dropped a butt you would never find it again, it looked like a normal kind of path. So with great speed we went bombing past more sensible walkers, not understanding why they looked a whiter shade of pale, even though we were very well mannered by saying "Excuse me please" and "Thank you."

Then suddenly, for a brief moment, the great grey curtain was pulled back below us, revealing a view of a small lake normally only reserved for Spitfire pilots. To say we stopped quicker than Jeremy Clarkson in a Ferrari has to be an understatement. The curtain closed again in seconds plunging us in to a black & white world, but it was enough insight to ensure now we were very much in the same clinging fashion to the ridge as our fellow ramblers.

We moved on and it's got to be acknowledged that things were looking pretty good; the time check was still within, the sweating was now only a damp reminder and even a good few jokes were being thrown in. Yes, this rambling lark was looking more like a walk in the park, except that is, when the path finally ran out! Somewhere in my 'confidence is high' message to Houston Control, we had unwittingly strayed on to a sheep trail ending in perfect outcrop for anyone considering Hang Gliding. Since flying equipment was not in the notorious 'Things to pack' list, this option was quickly binned. Seeing a grown man crying his eyes out is not a pretty sight and being British through and through this was very likely, sorry, I mean *not* very likely to happen... yet!

Once again, I stare intently at the map whilst willing this damn fog to lift and give me a landmark. I guess the only other time I was this low was years later when fellow Rambler Mick Norgate cracked his first joke. As I cleaned back the overhanging moss with my right boot, I was even wishing one of those ever helpful 'You are Here' buttons would pop up.

"You haven't got a b - - - clue where we are, have you?" my mate reassuringly fired at me.

My initial instinct was to say:

"Yeah, that's right, kick a man when he's down! You've been as much use as a chocolate fire-guard anyway. Look mate, if you're not happy

with the leader just push me off right now!"

He moved towards me in a menacing way and with a perfectly-aimed Kung Fu boot he did just that. As I rocketed down to the inviting lake below, I could see it was true what some older folk say, that your butties and your past life do indeed flash before your very eyes. Now I was entering the dazzling bright lights of the Mersey Tunnel. As I glided so effortlessly on my rucksack, I wondered, was I pure enough to enter the Wirral. It has to be said that Birkenhead wasn't quite what I had in mind.

"You daydreaming plonker! Where are we? I should have known better than to come here with you. I thought you said that you knew where you were going!"

It's very difficult to argue with someone in a debate who is one hundred per cent right and is also on the safe side of the ledge. My immediate thought was to somehow try and calm the situation down. Perhaps the comfort of food may help.

"Look mate, I am really starving and could do with a drink."

Amazingly, a soggy sandwich seemed to defuse the situation. Then suddenly, from somewhere above us, we could hear faint voices. To get some attention, we started to pretend we were derange Meatloaf fans and began a frantic yelling and whistling session. The response was a librarians dream come true, a complete and utter silence.

It was decided we just have to scramble up the near vertical face in the hope that we at least would reach the top of something eventually. Because we have been in this grey blob of weather all day, you almost become numbed to remember what a colour tele looks like. But sure enough as we climbed higher I thought I could saw bits of blue and some definite black shape ahead and then it disappeared; now it's back again, but more sharper. What I saw next was the best thing anyone could see in that situation, a gleaming white Cairn and glorious blue skies!

We sat there with the best dam looking Cairn in the world, rejoicing in knowing we were at a known point. The cairn we were sitting at was in fact the highest point on the Crib Goch ridge. All around us was wall to wall blue sky and below our feet the prisoner of grey cloud was now just a bubbling mass of white lather. Even the lack of oxygen was having pleasant side effects,

Beep... 'Houston, the Eagle has landed!'

Beep... 'copy that eagle, your looking good on the Cairn' as those grainy TV pictures were beamed to 700 million ramblers of planet Earth.

Looking across the banks of clouds we concluded that the top of the witch's hat, seen floating in a white bath, must be the unmistakable mass of Snowdon and with it, the hope that the summit café would still be open.

A short while later, as we straddled the last few steps along the slippery rail track, we suddenly found that we could straighten our backs to full attention and even suppress our 'out of breaths' to silent running. This was entirely due to the fact that a full train of 'tourists' was slowly but surely due to pass us any moment and by heck, if those Apollo astronauts can smile after splashdown, so can we!

To this day I am still trying to work out if those train passengers, some even pushing their kid's noses to the damp windows, were looking at us with great pity or with tremendous admiration.

With the train gone we found it extremely easy to slip into our 'big bag sticks on an old lady' routine, especially as we were about to crash through the doors of the café.

Images of rounds of applause from fellow citizens, with champagne corks popping, were just a mirage as the fed up girl behind the counter, with more jewellery on her face than Beaverbrooks, welcomed us with a very well-prepared speech:



"We're nearly closed! If you want tea, you're best to get it now. Was there anything else?"

Around us we looked at the suffering victims of the Metallic Girl and using our extrasensory powers decided two cups of steaming tea would have to do.

Leaving the café, both still alive, we now had one small job of climbing a few steps to Snowdon cairn and what a grand viewing platform it made too.

Looking back over at the jagged edge of Crib Goch, it looked black and moody, which just about summed up our Lost in Space expedition earlier on. This was all a failing memory now, as we sat there leaning back against the cold stone being totally mesmerised by the orange-tinted clouds still nestling just below us. This was good enough indicator to the appending sunset and a reluctant acceptance we needed to be making our way down. There was, however, to be one more pleasant surprise to end a remarkable day. As we left the Snowdon ridge, to take the Pyg Track back down, we knew in seconds we would be engulfed by the cloud again. But just prior to that, the sun was creating enormous shadows of us across the expanse of cloud. Because of the air moisture combined with the angle of the sun rays we were getting a sort of blurred rainbow effect around our shadow edge. It really was an amazing colourful effect to be witness to and something unfortunately I have never experienced since, although 'Geoffrey, Bumbles and Zippy' do manage a close second.

Cheers, *Roy This*

Above story was typed by Roy, with enhancement and illustrations by the Editor and Ann Nonymous

That *brehtaking* Buttermere break

TWO walks for the price of one was not quite what the 'C' walkers were ready for on the recent Bank Holiday weekend, but that's exactly what they got on the Saturday (12 miles, at least!).

Sunshine greeted 24 of us on the Friday as some first moseyed around Keswick while others ambled around Buttermere Lake before our 3-course meal at 7pm. We shared the 'youth' hostel with a group speaking a funny accent (Brummies). Two of our gang also bunked down in a Buttermere farm. The Fish and The Bridge were just 6 minutes down the hill where we had options of evening meals or perhaps imbibe, just a little, with the campers.



After breakfast on Saturday, the modest bedroom space in the hostel was soon forgotten as we set off on our walks, leaving our cars behind.

Our 'A' and our 'B' parties headed for Red Pike and several other peaks towering above Buttermere.

On the tops we got enveloped in mist and it became cold and damp, so warm clothing was dug out. We met many others up there in the clouds, sharing awe-inspiring views as the mist sporadically dispersed. Mid afternoon forced the sun to smile at us, then the next day it nearly melted us!

Meanwhile, it was now 6pm on Saturday with most hostellers back; but our absent 'C' party were still out on walkies! Earlier, after strolling along Buttermere Lake they were faced with a long climb up Scarth Gap, then over the top for a tour de force along Ennerdale Valley. Yes, there was no tomfoolery on their half marathon. But now they were on the last leg of their long loop back to base.

Soon after 6pm, three of the fitter 'C's arrived at the hostel – but they had hitched a lift for many miles on an army truck and now indicated that at least three evening meals needed to be put on a low light.

At 7.30 we had half-finished our shared meal with the Brummies when a bedraggled 'C' group staggered up the half-mile-hill to the hostel – but three were still missing!

Much later, with owls hooting at 9.15, Kay and Steve, just a bit cream-crackered, put in an appearance with Tom – well ready for their soup and heated-up meals.



And here's me thinking that my booking the last-minute was lucky!

To save face, Tom felt obliged to lead an easy 'C' the next day. He included sunbathing stops plus a pub stop at the end of Crummock Water in the sweltering heat.

Several varied groups were out that Sunday; my group of six jumping on the 9.30 bus to Keswick and, after Mass, discussed the walk over pots of tea. We opted for the low-level route back to Buttermere; later, stopping for tea and cakes at the Little Town chapel. We then lost a bucketful of sweat slogging up the steep valley path to arrive back just after 7pm. At 7.30 Carol and Ken staggered in, but they had included Hindscarth, Robinson and High Snockrigg. The Dot and Gordon duo also conquered Robinson, etc.

Finally, Bob knew my walk backwards, so his group started at Buttermere; then down the valley to Braithwaite. He negotiated a favourable price for a taxi back to base, in good time for dinner, as the scheduled bus failed to turn up.

Monday saw many of us at Keswick before the drive home. Six paid to see the show-jumping, etc at the Keswick Show, but only after Joan had haggled a big party discount!

PS: Thanks to Will Harris for organising this weekend
– shuffling cars and people around, etc DN

Alderley Edge

(Report from the Seniors' Section)



SUNDAY, August 17th saw our party of ten: Gerry (leader), Jean, Freda, George, Tony, Harry, Kate, Maureen, Lillian and Anne meet in the National Trust Car Park at Alderley Edge for a 12 noon start.

However, the eleventh member of our group had not arrived. After an hour's wait and several phone calls to trace our missing member (Peter) it was decided to begin our ramble without him.

We walked through a shady wood and passed along on an almost private road flanked on both sides by some impressive detached houses. Lunch was taken slightly later than usual and more phone calls were made in vain to contact Peter.

The beautiful summer weather meant we had lovely views of the Cheshire countryside and at one point Jodrell Bank came into view. There were many stiles to negotiate, Gerry even using his secateurs to cut down the overgrown brambles to make our passage easier! Variety was the keynote of this ramble – some road walking, paths through long tussocky meadows, even negotiating fields of shoulder-high maize, clambering over a fence to find the hidden path.

Relief was felt all round when contact was made with Peter. Apparently he had missed the meeting place and returned home to walk around Lydiat, arriving at his own home in the early evening.

Like the poem "What is life if full of care, we have no time to stand and stare?" we were able to marvel at the modern machinery being used by the farmers to harvest their wheat from the golden-coloured fields all around us.

Approaching the last stage of the walk, a slightly steeper path lead up to Alderley Edge itself. The views of Cheshire and the hills of Derbyshire from this sandstone edge were impressive. Great discussion took place about the ownership of the aeroplane on the distant runway of Woodford Airport.

We retraced our route back down from the Edge, soon walking full circle to the car park, completing our ramble.

We all enjoyed our walk but the length was disputed – 10 miles, 9, 8, 7??? Our leader tried to convince us it was seven and a half miles but our weary, aching feet told a different story. Many thanks to Gerry and Jean for their leadership and planning.

A.M.L.