

Ramblers Gems

A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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Current Restrictions Update

The government announced on the 30th July that as the lockdown restrictions continue to be eased it is now possible for group walking with up to 30 people to recommence. This applies only in England and Wales for Scotland group walks remain limited to 15 people from five households.

The current spike in Covid 19 cases within Blackburn with Darwen and the local restrictions that are now in place in surrounding North East Lancashire area make it unwise to restart our activities. So for the moment the walking programme as detailed within the current syllabus remains cancelled.

Although it is disappointing for us not to be able to go out together as a class especially in this our 125th anniversary year, it is clear that we all need to continue to act responsibly in the current but ever changing situation. Our walks leaders have to be confident that restarting the walk programme is the right thing for them to do and we should not be placing unnecessary pressure on them until the time is right.

Michael C

A Time for Change

The government has an ambitious plan to kickstart an active travel revolution and the Ramblers call for more dedicated support for walking in order to create greener routes in our towns and cities. **Gear Change**, the cycling and walking plan for England, will set out the government's new initiative for walking and cycling, through the establishment of Active Travel England.

The proposals would include long term budgets for walking and cycling, funding for low traffic neighbourhoods, new mini Holland type environments, more traffic free school streets and a low emission city. Steps to improve the safety of walkers are also proposed. This would include plans to change the present Highway Code to give priority to pedestrians and to a move away from shared space for walkers and cyclists as is the case now. It is hoped that additional monies will be made available to our local councils to increase the budget for public right of way maintenance, which currently is sadly neglected.

This is a great opportunity to increase walking and improve the local infrastructure. Increasing access to urban green routes must be part of any government vision for walking and cycling.

The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy will set out in greater detail how this vision for active travel will be delivered. Walking must be accessible to all ages and abilities, as it requires no specialist equipment and remains a popular and sustainable means of travel. The infrastructure is not fully appreciated as it is limited and now taken for granted.

Now is the time for change.

Michael C

Out from Waddington

An 8.5 mile Ramble

About this time in the syllabus for 2020 I should have led a walk around Waddington. As Covid struck I had not yet reccied the walk, so as restrictions eased I and Gill Parker went off to do the walk, at a socially distanced pace. We parked at the free car park on Twitter Lane outside Waddington and made our way back into the village. The path now goes between the houses, crossing a field and joins the West Bradford road. Turning right, we passed a beautifully kept garden and the proud owner was tending to it – so we complimented him on his gorgeous floral display.

After passing the school, we continued until we reached the path on the right taking us to Meadow Head, where soon we were into a field of knee high wet grass! This continued for two more fields of the same as we trudged on in a northerly direction. The route passed between a couple of houses, but then it was out again into more very wet pasture land. After some Herculean nettles and balsam was negotiated and a very broken and wobbly stile was conquered, it was probably at this point we decided that perhaps this wasn't a ramble for SVRC!

Crossing another field and yet another wobbly stile we finally arrived at Eaves Hall Lane and proceeded walking along this, a gently uphill pull followed giving our feet chance to dry out. The metalled lane eventually runs out and becomes Moor Lane, an open and easy to follow, moorland track. The lane was somewhat boggy in places but did provide us with some great views back towards Pendle which more than made up for that.



A brief lunch break gave sweeping views back over Bradford Fell, on towards Clitheroe (ignoring what the cement works was pumping out) and across to the Newton Fells. Continuing to follow the track with trees on our right, eventually we reached Slaidburn Road at the Waddington quarry.



Now we turned to follow the road downhill, known locally as Titttrington Brow. We did this walk mid-week – and boy did we know it. The quarry was in full flow with quarry trucks thundering up and down Slaidburn Road at an alarming pace and with such frequency that we often had to jump into the hedges to ensure our safety. We continued down the road, as quickly as we could, till we reached the site of the old Moorcock Inn – now since long gone and an “exclusive” housing development is under construction. There were no prices on display, but I wouldn't want my windows rattling all day long with those quarry trucks!



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Soon, we took a footpath on the left across fields reaching a small wooded area and stream. Ah! The stream which in drier conditions would have been easy to cross at a ford, however, the stepping stones were submerged so it was time to get our wet feet once more. Again, was this a no-no for SVR? We sloshed on over muddy fields churned up by cows, along the stream by Feazer Wood, to finally reach some farm buildings where our way was blocked by a locked gate (photos were taken for Ribble Valley Council) giving us no alternative but to climb over the gate. The path continues in a southerly direction along the side of Hospital Wood and we soon reached the West Bradford road.



The Waddington Arms

We needed a brew and scone to revive us, the brew was to hand at The Waddington Arms but they had no scones (marks deducted) and I was attacked by a rouge sun brolly which decided to blow over and catch me on my shoulder. Still no 'sweetener' from the pub! On our way back to the car we noticed The Country Kitchen seems to have shut up all together – the windows white washed over and no signs of life.

This may seem a challenging ramble, muddy in places, a bit difficult to navigate at times due to overgrowth and locked gates, but there were magnificent extensive panoramic views to be had, which more than compensated for the negatives. In drier weather this walk might be worth re appraising.

Jane C

A Walk in the Ribble Valley

This is an account of the ramble which took place on Saturday 28th July 1979, written by Tom Johnstone. Articles from Tom regularly appeared in Lancashire Evening Telegraph,

It was on a dull day with grey skies and a humid atmosphere that 10 adults and two junior members of Spring Vale Rambling Class meet at Wilpshire for a ramble in the Ribble Valley. Leaving Wilpshire the party followed the road to Salesbury and the cricket ground to cross the common and then follow field paths to Ashes Farm.

Passing through the farmyard a sharp right turn took us onto field paths by Lovely Hall to reach Copster Green, with a good view in front of us to Longridge Fells. On leaving the hamlet we took the lane leading on towards Ribchester Bridge and Little Town. Crossing the bridge the path led via Stewarts Wood and Clough Bank with the River Ribble and Salewheel Woods beyond. At Dinkley footbridge the path divides for Hurst Green and Langho. The river at this point used to be crossed by boat rowed by the local farmer for a small charge, but that is only a memory now.

Our path crossed the suspension bridge to approach Dinkley Hall where we followed the lane leading to the Tanners Arms and then across the fields to Dinkley Grange, eventually crossing two footbridges to reach Longsight Road. Over the road the field path led us to Dewhurst Farm and then onto Sharples Farm, before following the railway into Vicarage Lane and onto Wilpshire.

Tom Johnstone



The new footbridge at Dinkley

It never rains but it pours

I had volunteered to lead the Clitheroe Geology Trail walk for SVRC. So in March 2019 Christine D and I set off to do a recce. The walk started out well across the dry limestone route through the Geology Trail, but we soon realised we were going to encounter a lot of mud and very some soggy fields.

We negotiated our way through some tricky bits of mud by balancing on stones and hanging on to the edges of field fences or trees. As we reached Mearley Hall located on the slopes of Pendle Hill, we could see our destination in the distance and descended towards the A59.

Suddenly we realised there was a vast body of water before us and Christine exclaimed, "I can't see any water feature marked on my map."

That was because there wasn't one!

It was a flooded field and it looked like our way was blocked. We proceeded downhearted across the field thinking that we were going to have to backtrack to Mearley Hall, and take an alternative route via Lane Side Farm or Little Mearley Hall to get us back and across the Clitheroe by-pass.

Luckily there was a brook on the other side of the fence to the left of our footpath which had a raised bit of land so we could just about manage to circumnavigate the flood. To cut a long story short we climbed over the first and third fences and limbo danced under the middle one.



The flooded stile and footpath adjacent to the A59 Clitheroe

Relieved we carried on across the A59 and crossed over the bridleway taking the path and track towards High Moor. We left the track to go down the footpath which would bring us out at Bracken Way and a short walk to our cars on North Road car park. Not to today it didn't because the stream at the bottom was flooded and we could not even see the stepping stones to balance and get across them. Back we went to the track and around to High Moor to follow the route down to Shawbridge Street and, wait for it, Waterloo Road!

The week before we were due to lead the walk I went back to High Moor car park and did a walk back across the field by the pavilion and Clitheroe Grammar School playing fields to the A59 and our assault course and then down to Bracken Way to check all the water had drained away.



Part of our assault course but after the flood on my second recce.

It isn't always easy being a walk leader and sometimes it takes two or three attempts to get a safe route, to include the best bits of the most interesting parts of the area and to find something you really like and want to share with other walkers so they have a great day out!

Barbara S

The Rise of the Grane

As a rambling group we regularly walk throughout the Grane Road area and further to my previous articles describing the early history, my focus now highlights the period during the Industrial Revolution which had its birth in Lancashire.

From the late 18th C to the end of the 19th C, the Grane valley experienced a rapidly accelerating rate of change in farming, industrialisation and population. Due to inheritance practices, many farms became smaller. To provide for growth in spinning and weaving, a lot of the farms had cottages adjacent, and special annexes built to accommodate handlooms. The spinning stage became fully mechanised following the development of the 'Spinning Jenny' by Hargreaves in 1765 and Arkwright's Water Frame in 1769. Initially this provided a lot more yarn for weaving, with an efficient network established to distribute the yarn, and collect finished cloth for sale.

As a foretaste of eventual mechanisation, in 1798 Ogden Brook was being used to power three 'engines'- rotary carding machines at Calf Hey and two at Broad Holden. A fulling mill was established at Helmshore. The fulling process consists of beating woven woollen cloth while wet to cause the opposing fibres to interlock this produces a more homogenous textile. This is the final stage in the production of cloth. It would only be a matter of time before weaving followed suit.



The Helmshore Fulling Mill now a museum



The Musburry Heights Quarry Chimney

By the early 1800s, a village became established below the new turnpike road at Crowtrees. From two rows of cottages, it grew, with a Methodist Chapel and Sunday School, an Anglican Church and school, a public house, the Seven Stars and shops. At the same time large scale quarrying of 'Haslingden Slates' developed. Haslingden slates are a form of gritstone which splits easily into thin flags ideal for roofing and paving. For many centuries, small quarries or 'stone pits' accessible from the old main road, had been worked. Demand for flagstones for mill floors and pavements led to large quarries at Clough Head and Musburry Heights. Musburry extended for nearly a mile, with a network of horse-drawn tramways. These led to a cutting plant or sawmill, where stone was trimmed. The partially rebuilt chimney of the engine house can be seen today on Musburry Heights. A rope-worked incline also visible today, brought stone down to Holden Wood where a further tramway took stone to the goods station at Grane Road on the East Lancs Railway. The railway was opened in 1848 from Stubbins junction to Accrington. Haslingden stone flags were used all over the UK and exported to many parts of the British Empire, including India and Africa.

Textile manufacture moved from cottage to the Mill. In the Grane mills were built at Calf Hey and Holden Wood. Larger mills in Haslingden and Helmshore could be reached on foot. So by the mid 1800s, Grane village housed mill workers and quarrymen, as well as farmers. However, events which would destroy this thriving community were being set in train.

Alan R