

Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

Volume 2 Issue 11

13th March 2021

For further information or to submit a contribution email: svrcramblers@gmail.com Web Site <http://www.springvaleramblers.co.uk/>

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 A Further Set Back / Mothering Sunday**
- 2 The First Days of Spring / Wind Farms**
- 3 Spring / Sustrans**
- 4 The World of Geocaching Pt 2**
- 5 Armstrong Country**

A Further Set Back

From Monday 29 March the UK governments roadmap for lifting lockdown and the Ramblers guidelines means that people in England will only be able to walk outside in groups of six for **informal** walks. At this stage it does **not** allow organised walking groups to start up again with their walks programme.

This means that we will **not** be able to hold our planned organised walks on Good Friday and Easter Saturday. We are now working towards starting our walks programme from Monday 12 April. After this date group walking will be allowed.

We are in discussions with our leaders to decide which of our walks we will be allowed to undertake given that keeping to local travel restrictions may still be in place. Our new syllabus will be available from next week.

Mothering Sunday

This Sunday will be Mothering Sunday and having a mum or someone who acts like a mum – whether it's an auntie, step-mum, granny or even a close family friend – is something that most of us have been fortunate enough to experience and, when it comes to saying thank you, there are so many ways to show just how much we care and to celebrate all that they do or have done for us.

My own mum sadly isn't with us anymore, but she always said it wasn't about how much you spent on gifts or treats, it always came down to time and love. She instilled this in me and it has remained with me ever since. Mum's perfect Mother's day was anything that brought me, my brother and sister together. She always understood how busy we all were and was happy staying at home or going out – it really didn't matter where we were. So long as our thoughts were with her.

As you can imagine, during these times when some of us cannot see or hug your mums, it is more important than ever to show them just how much we love them. It is always the little things that matter the most – a handmade card, the small bunch of flowers, breakfast in bed or just having the family all together in one place.



Michael C

First days of Spring

Easter is often referred to as a 'moveable feast'. In some years it is celebrated in early March, whilst at other times it can occur in late April. The arrival of Spring is similarly very confusing. The 1st of March (St David's Day) is regarded meteorologically as the first day of Spring, whereas some people count the clocks going forward at the end of March as signalling the end of Winter. There is also the spring or vernal equinox on the 20th of March to consider. The 1st of April is also a contender in some people's eyes.

Efficient



The natural world is influenced more by weather rather than dates on a calendar (I have seen frogs-spawn in December). On recent local walks with my dogs in such places as Sunnyhurst Woods, daffodil leaves are very prominent. There are also the few flowers of the lesser celandine and now crocus are starting to bloom.

Spring migrant birds will also be arriving quite soon - although a lot depends on the strength of southerly winds. Sunnyhurst Wood up until the late 1980s, used to have nesting Wood Warblers which arrive in Spring. Sadly, their distinctive song, which has been likened to a spinning coin coming to rest on a tabletop, has been absent in the Woods since that time.

Tony C



Wind Farms

now part of the scenery?

Walking in Pennine Lancashire or Yorkshire there will almost always be a wind farm on the horizon. As the number of such farms has increased, the controversy and objections seem to have decreased. The aim was to be able to produce 10% of electrical energy from wind turbines by 2010. My latest energy statement tells me that 35% of my electricity is now produced by 'renewables'. The sites are never 100% productive. Put simply-the maximum output possible is never achieved due to variations in wind speed and strengths. The "capacity factor" for Scout Moor for example is said to be 27%.

The original wind farm at Mere Clough Cliviger was commissioned in 1992 with 50 metre tall turbines, which did not breach the skyline, a condition of the then planning approval. These turbines were later replaced after 20 years in service, these turbines are now 100 metres tall and certainly are visible from many directions including as far as the Dales.



Scout Moor wind farm has 26 turbines and was completed in 2008 at a cost of £50 million. The project manager commented "The weather has been the single biggest challenge with wind speeds in excess of 120mph and temperatures as low as minus 12 degrees Celsius" (feels like minus 25 with a wind-chill factor).

The latest local wind farm within this area is on Oswaldtwistle Moor, with 24 turbines, all within the boundary of the township of Hyndburn. The parent company, Energikontor financially supports many environmental projects in the Hyndburn area including the Prospects Foundation

A less 'valuable landscapes' are more likely to be chosen for wind farms, an inverse law i.e. the Lakes or the Dales, the Cotswolds and Chilterns NEVER.

Alan R

Spring by Christina Rossetti

Frost-locked all the winter,
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,
What shall make their sap ascend
That they may put forth shoots?
Tips of tender green,
Leaf, or blade, or sheath;
Telling of the hidden life
That breaks forth underneath,
Life nursed in its grave by Death.

Blows the thaw-wind pleasantly,
Drips the soaking rain,
By fits looks down the waking sun:
Young grass springs on the plain;
Young leaves clothe early hedgerow trees;
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,
Swollen with sap put forth their shoots;
Curled-headed ferns sprout in the lane;
Birds sing and pair again.

There is no time like Spring,
When life's alive in everything,
Before new nestlings sing,
Before cleft swallows speed their journey back
Along the trackless track -
God guides their wing,
He spreads their table that they nothing lack, -
Before the daisy grows a common flower
Before the sun has power
To scorch the world up in his noontide hour.

There is no time like Spring,
Like Spring that passes by;
There is no life like Spring-life born to die, -
Piercing the sod,
Clothing the uncouth clod,
Hatched in the nest,
Fledged on the windy bough,
Strong on the wing:
There is no time like Spring that passes by,
Now newly born, and now
Hastening to die.

Pesto Cenorr

Sustrans

Sustrans is a national charity who are the custodians of the National Cycle Network (NCN) – a UK-wide network of traffic free paths for everyone connecting cities, towns and countryside. They make it easier for people to *walk*, cycle and get active by bringing people together to create places with clean air and green spaces.

It is called the National Cycle Network, but it is a network of signed paths and routes for walking, cycling, wheeling and exploring the outdoors. The National Cycle Network has created 12,763 miles of signed cycle routes throughout the UK including 5,273 miles of traffic-free paths. As a charity they rely on donations and fundraising. The National Cycle Network does receive funding from the UK Government.



If you walk with Spring Vale Rambling Class, you will often find yourself on sections of NCN6 during our circular walks. During the winter months and spells of wet muddy weather these multiuser tracks provide for some easier walking. The following are NCRs that we regularly use.

- Bury – Rawtenstall. much of the Irwell Sculpture Trail is an NCR route.
- Between Bury and Accrington – part of the old East Lancashire railway path and includes Woodnook Vale from Rising Bridge.
- Accrington to Blackburn follows the towpath of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal including Hyndburn Greenway.
- Blackburn to Preston the route goes through Witton Park and along the River Ribble from Samlesbury into Preston.
- The Weavers Wheel is a 26km route encircling Blackburn Town Centre.
- The Padiham Greenway connects Padiham and the surrounding villages and links to Burnley.

Barbara S

The World of Geocaching part 2

In my article The World of Geocaching part 1, written in Vol 2 Issue 4, I had mentioned that I would go and look for a cache on the edges of Darwen Moors, called Darren Mushroom 7a, and report back. Needless to say this has not happened for a couple of reasons. Firstly the snow and ice arrived making this soft geocacher stay away from the moors, and secondly the cache had not been found since early 2019 and was in the area badly damaged by the moorland fires. It may simply have been destroyed. I will go and give the area a thorough search soon.

In the meantime I looked through my previous “finds” and thought I would share with you one of my ‘favourite’ caches. You can award favourite points to geocaches if you find them interesting, exciting or just in a place you would never think of visiting.

One of my favourites is one called “Pirates Treasure,” and it is in Puerto De La Cruz on Tenerife. We found it back in 2012! My OH Ian realised a long time ago that when we go walking on holiday it usually means that we are looking for Tupperware boxes somewhere along the route. He complains bitterly and then refuses to leave the area till he has found it.

“Pirates Treasure,” is a regular sized cache with a difficulty rating of 2 and a terrain rating of 3.5. This means that the physical effort needed to arrive at the geocache is “*quite strenuous, extended hike on widely variable terrain*”. Once at the cache site the difficulty rating of 2 meant that the effort needed to solve and find the cache was “*relatively easy to find within 30 mins*”. If the story that goes with the cache is to be believed? The Canaries were prime pirate hunting ground in the 16th Century and this could be a pirate or smuggling tunnel.

We walked along the coast from Puerto De La Cruz, along the black volcanic sand and then along man made walkways dug into the cliffs for about 2 miles. It is very dramatic scenery and I doubt very much that ships could land here. On approaching the area, the clue advised us that we were looking for a tunnel entrance about 15 meters above the path.



We found the tunnel easy enough, it was not tall enough to stand up in, but was accessible if you walked hunched over. Then my mind went into overdrive – what would we encounter in there? Big insects? Even bigger spiders??

The torches came out and we entered the tunnel, it was dry and dusty and insect free. There was what appeared to be a water course built into the floor of the tunnel.



Gingerly we inched along for what seemed ages, and was probably 50 – 75 meters, when we found a wooden box – ‘treasure’. Inside this box was the usual log book to sign and a couple of trinkets for kids. I felt like Indiana Jones. I signed the log, left everything tidy and we retraced our steps back into the gorgeous Canarian sunlight and to pick up another couple of caches on our way back to town.

Jane C

Armstrong Country

Sights along Hadrian Wall

The Hadrian Wall long distant path starts from Wallsend and is accompanied by the River Tyne along the Newcastle waterfront. When it reaches the seventh and final Tyne bridge at Redheugh the route then enters into Armstrong country.



The Tyne Bridge at Redheugh

William George Armstrong is the forgotten man of the industrial revolution. Although something of a local hero, Armstrong did not enjoy the reputation of his near contemporary - George Stephenson. George Armstrong's was born in 1810 in the Shieldfield area of Newcastle. His first calling was that of solicitor, but his real love was for science and in particular, engineering. He gave lectures on the subject and it was not long before he turned his hand to constructing the machinery he talked about.

His first major project was a hydro-electric generator which he unveiled to the world in 1842. By switching from hydro-electrics to hydraulics he was able to persuade a number of wealthy businessmen to back his plans to develop hydraulic cranes. These would be powered with the assistance of the Whittle Dene Water Co., a firm which he helped to setup. The result of all this endeavour was the Newcastle Craneage company based at Elswick. This company would later become known as Armstrong's Factory and eventually the Vickers Armstrong company.

The manufacture of cranes became the cornerstone of his industrial empire and of the Industrial Revolution itself. Armstrong wasn't finished yet, with the advent of the Crimean War he became involved in the development of arms manufacture, supplying arms all over the world including to both sides during the American civil war.

Armstrong also developed an interest in bridges constructing the Newcastle swing bridge and much of London's Tower bridge. By 1850 over three hundred men were employed at the Elswick factory bringing great prosperity to the area, plus a great deal of wealth to Armstrong. The country as a whole benefited because he gifted his patents to the British Government, a selfless act which earned him a Knighthood



Jesmond Dene Parkland

His success enabled him to own most of Jesmond Dene, a landscaped parkland which he planted with exotic trees and shrubs, laid paths and built bridges. He also owned as well, the magnificent mansion at Cragside, Rothbury, this house became the first in the world to be lit by hydro - electric power.



Cragside Rothbury

Quote by William Armstrong

"However high we climb in the pursuit of knowledge we shall see heights above us and the more we extend our view, the more conscious we shall be of the immensity which lies beyond."

Alan S