

# Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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## A Breath of Fresh Air

A brand-new nature trail and community space has recently opened in the heart of Clitheroe. The site is now owned and managed by the Primrose Community Nature Trust. The Primrose Nature Reserve was already listed as a Biological Heritage Site but had been severely neglected over the years and required extensive restoration work which was carried out under management and direction of the Ribble Rivers Trust. The work carried out makes this a beautiful natural sanctuary for wildlife, incorporating a new walkway and Monet bridges. The dam has been made safe and now has the longest Alaskan A fish pass in England.

It was back in 1787 when the 7-metre-high dam was constructed to provide a consistent source of water that could be utilised to power a cotton mill, and lately a print works, paper works, and lifting equipment manufacturer at the Works.

However, the paper mill at Primrose had a relatively short life, and was closed by 1890, but the lodge continued to feed the nearby Lower Mill which ultimately became a bleaching and dyeing works and continued to operate until 1963. The lodge prevented upstream migration of several aquatic species and created artificial sediment downstream.



Ribble Rivers Trust has worked hard to improve the habitats and access at this new Nature Reserve. The site opened to the public on the 26th March, 2021. The project, which was started in 2019, has created a wide range of new spaces for wildlife, as well as offering a new recreation space for Clitheroe residents and visitors alike, improving the water quality to reduce downstream flood risk. In a recent survey, 231 species of plants and trees were identified and 28 species of birds. Only a few mammals were recorded, but a future project aims to encourage water voles to find this as a place to flourish.

So, the next time you visit Clitheroe take a walk down Whalley Road, to just beyond Holme Mill and explore this now delightful area to take a breath of fresh air.

**Glenda B**

## A King in Residence

We have successfully held our first ramble and hopefully now we will be able to undertake the remaining walks in our syllabus.

One of the rambles on our new walks programme carries the title of 'Bolton by Bowland' and lists King Henry's Well as a feature along the route. There are several sites associated with King Henry in that area of the Ribble Valley. As well as King Henry's Well near to Bolton Hall there is King Henry's Grove about a mile west of Waddington. There was also a King Henry's Cave in Brungerley Park Clitheroe, but it was destroyed when the River Ribble changed its course and washed all evidence away.

The King Henry in question was Henry VI who was deposed during the Wars of the Roses, in favour of Edward IV. It was during this period that kings were often deposed and then sometimes reinstated at a later date. King Henry was determined to regain his throne and made some unsuccessful attempts at doing so. Following his defeat at the battle of Hexham in the North East in 1464, Henry fled south to the Bowland area in Lancashire, where a supporter Sir Ralph Pudsay gave him refuge at Bolton Hall. According to legend Henry, together with a water diviner, was credited with finding the well in the grounds of the Hall. This continues to bear his name even today.

When news of his stay at the Hall began to spread, he decided he had better move on and stayed for a time at Waddington Hall which was the home of another supporter Sir John Tempest. However, King Edward's forces were starting to close in and he fled from Waddington Hall, but was captured near Clitheroe after crossing the River Ribble at Brungerley. He was subsequently held captive at the Tower of London.



**Tony C**

Photograph from SVRC Picture Album of Sights and Scenes of the Valley of the Ribble (early 1900's)

## Hiking Haunts

Did you know that in 2014 Lancashire was named the third most haunted 'hot spot' in the UK? Here are the details of two local 'haunts' where we often walk...

**Smithills**, an ancient manor house near Bolton is home to many ghosts, including unnamed laughing children and a man who only appears as a reflection in an old mirror. One ghost has been identified - George Marsh, a Bolton farmer who was burned at the stake as a Protestant martyr.



This ghost still haunts it and what's more, he doesn't take kindly to having any trace of himself removed. A flagstone, said to bear an imprint of his foot, was removed but was put back fairly sharpish when what was described as poltergeist activity began.

Other sightings and hearings include, and are not limited to, horses and soldiers in the grounds, a mischievous lady in the brown room who has been known to pinch people's bums.

**Hoghton Tower** has more than its fair share of ghosts - so much so that staff even keep a Ghost File to record things that go bump in the night. The file is pretty thick - as one staff member points out, they have 'a heritage of ghosts'.

Entries include the temperatures changing dramatically without reason; dogs refusing to enter a well house, maybe because a sceptre of a strange dog is often seen there, a spirit that also frequents the well house, glimpses of a lonely monk and a Green Lady. This lady is clad in beautiful green velvet and likes to walk around the building gently laughing to herself. Other ghostly sightings include a Tudor woman who walks around in the courtyard, a little girl in various locations around the house and a ghostly monk at the North entrance.

So when out rambling, keep your eyes and ears open, as you could see something strange and mysterious.

**Barbara S**

## 2020-A Walking Overview

We have just past the milestone of 12 months of this pandemic and I decided to highlight my walking activities over the previous year. I keep a diary in which I regularly outline the significant events of my life and the past year saw an overabundance of the significant events. Normally very few interesting things happen in my walking life but last year I hope was a one off.

**January** The first couple of months started as usual with Monday and Friday health walks, plus meeting cycling friends on Wednesdays with walks at Scorton, Stainforth and Gargrave, Spring Vale walks at Rishton and Entwistle. In the news there were distant rumours of a virus in China that may be travelling to Europe.

**February** saw our typically bad weather including the storms Ciara and Dennis. These curtailed some health walks, but Spring Vale battled on regardless with walks at Ryal Fold and Great Harwood. My mid-week walks also continued with visits to Airton and Settle. It was all quiet on the western front and everything appears 'normal'.

**March** The first day of the month I was on the Ramblers coach walk to Silverdale and Arnside. A couple of pints in The Albion on Arnside seafront with Gordon Rawling was the end to a perfect days walking. Not so perfect for the next week I was in bed with 'flu-like' symptoms-now suspect this was Covid19. On the 14<sup>th</sup> I was attired in 'period dress' for the Spring Vale from Sunnyhurst and looking pretty dapper I might say. The following week I was confined to bed again with those 'flu-like' symptoms. The Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> a drive out, picnic and short walk with wife to Arncliffe and Halton Ghyll. A sign on farm gate clearly stating, 'GO HOME!' brought it into reality for the very next day, the 23<sup>rd</sup> National lockdown with EVERYTHING cancelled.

**April** it was this month when I started to discover local footpaths never walked before! - Davyfield, Eccleshill, Holden Fold and even Baileys Field. I became obsessed with Polyphemus Wood near Holden Fold with 14 visits in one month! It provided me with circular walks and good views over Darwen and the surrounding areas. Good weather even enticed me into a spot of DIY with fence treatment and garage door painting (B&Q was open). I even took hammer and nails one day to repair a stile near Davyfield Brook.

**May** continued with good weather and I got more adventurous in my missions out, with a walk around the Golf Club, Ryal Fold, Lyons Den. Sometimes a lift to top end of Belthorn village, then walking home via Shaws at Waterside, Holden Fold, Baileys Field and Polyphemus Wood. On a street party for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day-met several neighbours I had never seen before. Ann said it was because I walked everywhere, but they drove everywhere. I celebrated my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday (Hip Hip Hurray) with a walk from Bull Hill over Cadshaw, Cranberry Moss, Hoddlesden and Blacksnape.

**June** Something different was required so started short walks from cafes like Grane, Vale Tea Rooms, Spout House Farm, Wheelton, Turton Tower and Vaughns. All busy and best

avoided at weekends. Managed to get minor dental treatment, and a pedicure, not by the same person I might add, but what a boost! I had several conversations with my GP.

**July** Back to same routine Davyfield/Polyphemus, Blackmoor and Fishmoor circuits with car-assisted visits to Grane, Wheelton and Vaughns during the week. I was struggling now to think of new alternative walking routes.

**August** The restrictions eased a little this month, so it was mid-week walks with car assist to meet cycle friends at Gargrave, Scorton, Airton, Stainforth and Feizor. Each involved a short walk in the area ending at the cafe. (My dentist loves me). Took a car trip to Knott End on BH Monday using local lanes as the M6 and A6 reported 'solid'. I did manage a short walk on the Wyre Way-good cafe and ice cream parlour by the Fleetwood Ferry terminal.

**September** Great! we are still out of lockdown so it was back to small group walks from Barlow, Edgworth on Mondays. Had a pair of boots re-soled. Continuing on my short walks from 'takeaway cafes' such as Grane, Vaughns, Wheelton and Turton Tower.

**October** The highlights for the month, had flu jab on 6<sup>th</sup> and a haircut on 8<sup>th</sup>. This was followed by an emotional event, a funeral of a walking friend in Rossendale with just 8 people attending -very sad. My emerald wedding anniversary(55th) was commemorated with meal at The Rock, Tockholes, but no emeralds! Another big event I booked a 'trip to the tip'. More very local walks enjoyed. It was the wet Spring Vale AGM held this year under large trees in Whitehall Park. A damp version of the Sermon on the Mount. Summertime ended and on queue the rain arrived.

**November** It was too good to last and Lockdown II started on 5<sup>th</sup>. Continued solo and paired walks from 'takeaway' cafes. Our one apple tree had a bonanza year so gave away a lot of apples, some to the Salvation Army in Blackburn (clients love apple pies). Did a walk with Michael Counter at Burrs Country Park. Another funeral of a walking friend from Blackburn Health Walks at Darwen Cemetery-max of 15 attended. I mastered and surprised myself with new technology by attending a Zoom session to decide the walks programme for Spring Vale RC 2021/2022 season.

**December** Our locality entered Tier IV. Snow first appeared on the Darwen Hills. Kept up my short local walks but wrapped-up well to avoid the cold. Continued sending articles to Ramblers Gems to keep the brain cells active. Rain, Rain, Very Windy, Dull, Damp and Cold appear in my daily weather summaries on most days (not all at once!) We celebrated our first Christmas Day at home for 5 years with Ann making the most fabulous meal, even if we did sit down for it after dark at 4-30!

As I write this in April 2021, it all seems like it couldn't really have happened, but my diary says otherwise. I am continuing to keep my diary so as the year progresses the adventures are still unfolding.

**Alan R**



## The Royal Horticultural Society

This charity, inspires a passion for gardening and growing plants, promote the value of gardens, demonstrate how gardening is good for us as well as explaining the vital role that plants play in our lives.

The RHS owns four gardens across the UK: The closest to us here in Lancashire is at Harlow Carr, Harrogate in North Yorkshire. The others are at Wisley in Surrey, Hyde Hall in Essex and Rosemoor in Devon. These gardens welcome more than 1.2 million visitors each year.

A brand new spectacular 154-acre garden within an easy travel distance is being developed at Bridgewater. The work is transforming the historic grounds of Worsley New Hall in Salford into a beautiful green place for the local community and visitors to enjoy all year-round. The RHS Bridgewater is scheduled to open in May 2021.



The Paradise Garden at RHS Bridgewater Salford

The RHS also work in partnership with more than 200 Partner Gardens giving its members free access at various times of the year. All these gardens across the UK are a great help to gardeners as they provide access to diverse plant collections, examples of innovative and attractive planting design and good horticultural practices. They all hold regular talks, demonstrations and guided informative walks around their gardens.

**Michael C**

## On the Tracks - Hoddlesden

As Spring Vale Ramblers we enjoy walks around our local area, occasionally coming across old and disused railway track beds. These now redundant lines were once a hive of activity operating to serve the local community and industries. They have been closed for some considerable time and their histories are long forgotten. In this series of articles, I would like to bring back to life some of these forgotten lines. The first one I investigated is the branch line to Hoddlesden.

In 1864 the small village of Hoddlesden was booming with coal mines, brick making and cotton mills. Owners John and Joseph Place, Adam Bullough, Philip Graham, and William Bayne Ranken started building houses for their workers. They also required better transport to Hoddlesden so applied to Parliament for a railway line, which was authorised in 1872. Although Mr Bullough gave money and land for stations at both Hoddlesden and Waterside, these were refused. In 1876 the two-mile route from Goosehouse Bridge to Hoddlesden finally opened with hopes that it would carry people as well as goods, but the upgrade never happened. However, the line lasted for freight until 1962.

It stretched for two miles ending at Hoddlesden goods yard. Mr Ranken felt there would soon be a passenger service but this was not to be. The day it opened there was a village party on the field behind the Griffin pub (now the Ranken Arms) with a marquee and a 'sit down' meal.

The original line included a siding to Bullough's Waterside fire clay works and a branch to the Hoddlesden pipe works. In 1908 a circular loop was constructed at the Whitebirk brick and tile works at Waterside, where after 1950 traffic terminated. The surviving section closed in 1962.

Evidence of the line can still be seen today. There is a buttress of the bridge which carried the line over Roman Road at Eccleshill. The footpath from the Polythemus Wood cross the old line, as do several paths at Waterside. There are also old rails crossing the road in Hoddlesden.

It would be wonderful if this old line could be re-established to form a walking and cycle route into Hoddlesden.

**Eleanor**

## April Nature

Millions of migrant birds will be flooding into Britain from south of the Sahara. Cuckoos, swallows, house martins and delicate willow warblers. On walks you may see a kestrel or ground nesting birds such as a curlew or lapwing. Please keep your dogs on a lead.

Prepare for the start of the dawn chorus and Dawn Chorus Day on the 4<sup>th</sup> May by listening to bird song ID at <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/bird-songs/what-bird-is-that/>

Among our resident birds, the nesting season is well under way. Great tits, blue tits and long-tailed tits are rearing young and robins, song thrushes and blackbirds are fledging.



Curlew



House Martin

It's breeding time in the water too; watch out for sticklebacks in ponds and rivers; the red-bellied males will be busy tending their nests of sticks and vegetation. Smooth newts float in their spring finery like miniature dragons in garden ponds. April becomes a significant month for our common toad. March/April are the peak months for common toad breeding and spawning – which is often a few weeks later than our common frog.

The first bats are emerging from hibernation; look out for our smallest, the pipistrelle (two species) and our largest, the noctule. Eight species of bat are resident in Lancashire. These include: Brown long-eared; whiskered; Brandt's, Natterer's, Daubenton's and Noctule bats.

On heaths, gorse and broom are flowering and in marshy areas, lady's smock, the food plant of the orange-tip butterfly. There are a vast number of common names including Our Lady's smock, milkmaids, fairy flower, May flower, coco plant or the cuckooflower.



Our Ladies Smock



Gorse

Keep an eye out for some early invertebrates on foliage such as the hawthorn shield bug or green shield bug and ladybirds in your garden.

On riverbanks look in the clear waters as you may see trout, stickleback, roach and chub.

In the woods, many plants are coming into bloom. Take notice of the woodland flowers and try to name as many as you can from this list - Bluebell, Cowslip, Coltsfoot, Dandelion, Daffodil, wild Narcissus, Dog's Mercury, Early Purple Orchid, Lesser celandine, Primrose, Snowdrop and Sweet Violet.

If you pass by any bit of British woodland in the spring, chances are you will catch the scent of wild garlic on the wind.

Have you heard the familiar whirr of bees buzzing around your garden yet? Many species emerge in spring to gorge on early nectar and find nest sites, so it's the perfect time to go on a little bee hunt. From huge, fuzzy bumblebee queens to pint-sized solitary bees, there are 11 early spring bees to look out for on your next trip outdoors.

<https://www.lancswt.org.uk/blog/charlotte-varela/spring-bees-identification>



An Early Mining Bee

Jean G