

# Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

Volume 2 Issue 32

6th August 2021

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

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Robin Hood's Well
- 2 Sense of Sound on the Canal
- 3 The Crosses of Stonyhurst part 2
- 4 Nature in August
- 5 Walking Cartoon Humour  
In Tall Grass / Golden Moon Rise

## Robin Hood's Well

A mention of Robin Hood conjures up an image of a gallant man in green, perhaps with a feather in his jaunty hat, robbing from the rich to give to the poor and generally being a nobleman turned folk hero in a fight against the wicked Prince John. The character is much associated with Nottingham and its surrounding forest of Sherwood. So why is there so much reference to locations and features within our local area?

Darwen has its Robin Hood Cottage near to Punstock Lane, on the banks of the River Calder near to Higham is a Robin Hood's Well, and there is a pub named the Robin Hood Inn at Helmshore.

Also, on the Helmshore side of Holcombe Moor stands Robin Hood's Well. This site would have been a welcome place for pilgrims to rest and take a drink on their way to Whalley Abbey or Sawley Abbey. The Well is to be found built into a stone wall at the top of the bridleway leading onto the moors.

This is a medieval route marked by the nearby Pilgrims' Cross or at least the modern stone that rests in its original place. After the abbeys were dissolved and the pilgrims no longer passed along this path, this well found new users. These would be drovers and packhorse men on route to Haslingden.

The well is in good condition with water coming out now from a central plastic pipe with a modern grid providing access to the spring. Most intriguing of all is the very large, old stone cap which has many irregular cup shaped marks on it, as if parts of the stone have been scooped out. On the right-hand side of the cap stone is a big void, as if this was carved to hold something. The rest of the well looks more modern, with a trough and a central carved opening allowing excess water to drain out down small steps and across the lane.



It is likely this name did not refer to the famous outlaw but has morphed into it. It probably derives from Robin Goodfellow, a fairy figure now best known as Puck in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Robin Goodfellow is an old name locals gave to a fairy and many rural landmarks had fairies associated with them. Belief in fairies was once widespread, and these same magical folk were also referred to as hobgoblins or boggarts.

Michael C

## Sense of Sound on the Canal

This is the eighth article in my series of walks undertaken by the Spring Vale Rambling Class on a typical outing undertaken by the group concentrating on birds you hear and not just what you see.

A ramble where you would see and hear this particular group of birds would be from Whins Lane, Wheelton taking the footpath at the side of Contours Day Spa down onto the canal towpath out towards Botany Bay, Chorley.

### Canada Geese

Just as we quietly approach the canal side, we start to hear the voices of boat owners chatting away as they mend their decking at the side of their boats ready for the new season. The sawing of wood and the ringing sound of metal on metal as the necessary repair work is undertaken. Then we see the familiar sight of the Canadian mob of geese hanging around in a large group on the nearby field just as if they were a group of lads. Although their abrasive honking noise sounds aggressive, that isn't the case. They are just trying to fit in and not be noticed. They are quite friendly unlike other geese even though they hiss, bark and cackle. Most of us will have been emotionally moved when hearing the loud resounding honking and you have looked up into the sky to see the great wedge of the traditional v-formation in the autumn sky. Just like a group of lads leaving the pub they only manage to maintain their required formation by sheer determination.



### Moorhens

This medium sized water bird is sometimes known as the "little hen" and is easy to spot as he lurks in the edges of the canal. He can be very confusing for us mere humans. Having a number of different cries, people believe he is just trying to test us! The most common is his "*Kek-Kek-Kek*" sounded as a single burst repeated every few seconds or prolonging it by 20 or more sets of notes which indicates that the bird is circling and is often mistaken as a member of the owl family as it would be carried out at night.

During the day the call maybe more of a "*Krrrk-Krrrk*" sound and has been heard in flight or stationary at night. A third call from this ventriloquist is a "*Kiddick-Kiddick*" type of sound common amongst stationary Moorhens.



### Coots

Although people may ask why have you included a Coot when there are so many other birds that we see on the canal? But this little chap is often overlooked. Being much prettier than a Moorhen with his red and yellow head shield not bald as the saying would have us believe! But it's the Coots' feet that make you laugh. They look like scaly, deflated washing up gloves, weird to look at, but handy to help him walk on water especially if there are weeds involved. Although not known for his voice his natural buoyancy means that he soon bobs up to the surface while he digests his meal. This is when he makes his explosive "*Pitts, Pitt's*" noises, almost like a hammer striking an anvil, but his individual honking brings his presence to our attention as if to say don't forget me!



As we approach Top Lock and hear the gentle lapping of water as it breaks its way through the lock-gates we hear the steady chugging sound of a highly decorated canal barge in the distance as it makes its way towards the canal pool where it will have to wait its turn. We decide that we will take time out to watch this unusual operation successfully taking place and have a long cool glass of beer before completing this wonderful and educational walk. Nature and industrial history on the same walk.

### Maggie A

# The Crosses of Stonyhurst

## part 2.

This is a continuation of the walk which I started in Ramblers Gems Vol 2 Issue 28, dated the 9<sup>th</sup> July. The walk details the many stone crosses that are to be found around the Stonyhurst estate in the Ribble Valley.



We left the ramble at the Paulinus Cross, and the walk now continues on the old Clitheroe Road looking for the **Stonyhurst Park Cross**. This is the cross that I mistakenly thought had no name! This cross is situated in woodland with all routes covered by tall bracken, cows, calves and the occasional bull!



Some think that the cross was put up to commemorate the death of Maria Shireburn, who spent little time at her Stonyhurst estate, until after her husband's death, residing in the area 1732 -1754. Today the cross can still be found in Victory Wood, which is not named on the 1:25,000 OS map, but the cross again not on a public footpaths but going through the woods, you take your life in your own hands.

The walk continues through the wood, on unmarked paths, and fords a stream, to finally pop you out on the bridleway near Greengore, the former hunting lodge. Turning left off the bridleway, taking a public footpath via Higher Deer House will bring you to The Pinfold Cross.



**The Pinfold Cross** is at the top of Robin Brow. There was, allegedly, an ancient cross here, but the current cross was erected by the boys of Stonyhurst as a mark of respect to James Wells. James was a "servant" (not my words) at the college and a fiddler in the College orchestra who fell to his death in a nearby quarry, possibly in Pinfold Woods, having "spent the evening too merrily". Perhaps this is the reason for the quotes carved into the base "Watch For You Know Not The Day Or Hour"

The last cross described by The Bowland Climber was to be "found" back in Hurst Green. As he was talking to a lady attending to her garden adjacent to the green, he mentioned his quest to find the 8<sup>th</sup> cross. The lady reluctantly explained that it was in a neighbour's garden and no - folk couldn't go wandering about.



(Note: I wonder if this garden is one of the Hurst Green open gardens?). After further discussion the lady relented and allowed the author to view it from her garden – hidden by an acer just the base is visible.

So, the next time SVRC are in the Hurst Green area, we will be looking in all the gardens for an acer hiding a cross base.

**Jane C**

## Nature in August

August is a brilliant time of year to try and get photographs of Britain's snakes and lizards, especially when they are moving slowly in the cool of the morning - and that's just the start of August's surprises!

In your garden you can get close-up and study different species of moths. Have you tried making a moth trap?

Now is the time to go walking on heathland, moorland, bogs and even in woodland with acidic or peat soils. Heather with their purple flowers can be a spectacular sight. In the undergrowth you can hear millions of grasshoppers calling for a mate. Winmarleigh & Cockerham Moss, Garstang (Lancashire's largest peatland) is being restored to its former glory as a haven for rare wildlife and an invaluable carbon store.

This is the time to see the flowers of willowherb, evening primrose, and bindweed, which are widespread in many habitats. Look out for the flowers and seed cases of yellow rattle in grasslands.



**Yellow Rattle**



**Lords and Ladies**

In woods and hedges the first fruits of lords and ladies are showing and blackberries are ripening.

If you cool off down by the sea, in more sheltered shores, you may be able to find dog whelks (sea snails) and their eggs.

The first wintering waders such as black-tailed godwits, turnstones and grey plovers are beginning to arrive for the winter. Brockholes Nature Reserve is a great place to go bird spotting in August.

Offshore, Manx shearwaters are heading south after breeding off our Welsh and Scottish coasts and will return next February or March. If you're lucky you may see dolphins or even a minke whale off the west coast of North Wales or Anglesey. In May 2020, Bottlenose dolphins were seen swimming in the Irish Sea along the Blackpool coastline.



**Turnstone**

Why not visit Heysham Harbour, the Middleton NR Biological Heritage Site and Heysham Nature Reserve to see what you can discover. Sedge warblers chatter, rare butterflies flutter and buzzards circle overhead at Heysham Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).



**Common Lizard**

Fungi are appearing now in woods and fields. You will smell the weirdly shaped stinkhorn before you see it among woodland vegetation. This mushroom first appears as an egg partly submerged in the surrounding substrate with a jelly like feel. The mushroom then (slowly) bursts out and forms the very phallic looking fungi!

Young foxes are playing in fields and quiet urban areas. Grasshoppers and bush crickets are calling now. You can identify the bush crickets by looking for their very long antennae. The best places to look are sunny grasslands and hedgerows.

**Jean G**

## Walking Cartoon Humour



DESTINATION	HOW TO GET THERE
Nowhere	Road
Anywhere	Midnight Train
Georgia	Midnight Train
Clarksville	Last Train
Heaven	Stairway
Hell	Highway
Hotel California	Dark Desert Highway



Submitted by Jane C

## In Tall Grass

by Carl Sandburg

Bees and a honeycomb in the dried head of a horse in a pasture corner—a skull in the tall grass and a buzz and a buzz of the yellow honey-hunters.

And I ask no better a winding sheet  
(over the earth and under the sun.)

Let the bees go honey-hunting with yellow blur of wings in the dome of my head, in the rumbling, singing arch of my skull.

Let there be wings and yellow dust and the drone of dreams of honey—who loses and remembers? who keeps and forgets?

In a blue sheen of moon over the bones and under the hanging honeycomb the bees come home and the bees sleep.

## Golden Moonrise

by William Stanley Braithwaite

When your eyes gaze seaward

Piercing through the dim

Slow descending nightfall,

On the outer rim

Where the deep blue silence

Touches sky and sea,

Hast thou seen the golden

Moon, rise silently?

Seen the great battalions

Of the stars grow pale —

Melting in the magic

Of her silver veil?

I have seen the wonder,

I have felt the balm

Of the golden moonrise

Turn to silver calm.

Submitted by Pesto Cenorr