

Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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

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Changes to Highway Code

The Government has recently announced changes to the Highway Code that will make the roads safer for all walkers. The news was revealed as part of a Department for Transport announcement that a further £338m has been allocated to boost cycling and walking across the country.

The biggest change is that there will be the introduction of a hierarchy of road users putting walkers at the top. This new rule will ensure that road users who can do the most harm – drivers of motor vehicles – have the greatest responsibility to reduce the danger they pose to other road users. Pedestrian priority on pavements and when crossing or waiting to cross the road will also be strengthened.

A new version of The Highway Code will be published in the autumn.

The Importance of Water

It goes without saying that drinking enough fluid is essential for a healthy functioning mind and body. According to the NHS “in climates such as the UK’s, we should drink about 1.2 litres (six to eight glasses) of fluid every day to stop us getting dehydrated.” However, our fluid intake needs to increase in hotter climates and during exercise as our body will sweat to help regulate our core temperature.

It is therefore important that while we are out walking, we keep hydrated by drinking more water.

All life on earth requires water; the human body is made of about 60% water, and this fluid is constantly recycled out of the body from sweat and excretion. It’s important to stay hydrated to maintain the body’s electrolyte and mineral balance.

Water functions as one of the shock absorbers for the brain, joints, and vital organs in the event of trauma, cushioning them against damage.

The food and drink we enjoy cannot be absorbed as useful nutrients without enough water available for digestion and transport of necessary components to cells around our body.

Excreting water is one of the major ways that toxins and waste are removed from the body.

Dehydration is not good for your body, and it’s easy to get dehydrated when you’re sick or exercising intensely. That’s one reason your doctor tells you to drink more fluids when you have a cold or flu.

Glenda B

River Kent, Canal and Country

Our next walk on Saturday August 21st, “River Kent & Canal” will take in a variety of scenery, stately homes and industrial heritage. Here is a taster of what we will stroll past.

The first point of call will be **Sizergh Castle**; originally known as Sizergh Hall and built in the early fourteenth century, by the Strickland family, with substantial expansion in the sixteenth century. The Strickland family retained ownership until the twentieth century.



Sizergh was granted to Gervase Deincourt between 1175 and 1180 by William de Lancaster, until 1239 when Elizabeth Deincourt married Sir William de Strickland and has been in the family ever since. The Strickland family seat was near Carlisle and Sizergh was at the extremities of their estates!! (Some estate). It wasn't until the family needed a more centrally located caput that Sizergh Hall was built, only being known as Sizergh Castle in the nineteenth century.

Our route allows us to see the Solar Tower, built before 1343, is the largest such structure in Cumbria and reflected the owner's wealth. The North Range originally housed the kitchen and stable while the South Range was for high status accommodation and boasted the Hall entrance.

After walking through Low Park Wood, where we glimpse charcoal burners, we arrive at the site of the **Sedgwick Gunpowder Mill**. In 1760 Sedgwick was a small settlement of several farms and hamlets. Around this time, a young Quaker John Wakefield (1738 – 1811) saw the potential in the area. “Black Powder” was used for blasting in mining, canal and railway construction. Fast flowing streams, proximity to ports where saltpetre and sulphur were imported, and finished product exported made Furness and Westmorland an area well suited to the production of gunpowder.

3 of the 7 mills in the area would be located on the short stretch of the River Kent close to Sedgwick, but John Wakefield's “Old Sedgwick” was the first. Around 1764 Wakefield and local business partners leased land from the Strickland family to commence their business. The lease was renewed in 1810 and alterations to the mill, buildings and area continued up until 1832. In 1852 following a wrangle with the Strickland family they moved production to a new mill and closed the Old Sedgwick. Lots more information can be found on this link [Gunpower](#)

Our route then takes us up past the home built by The Wakefield family – Sedgwick House, in 1869. This was gothic in style, designed by Paley and Austin of Lancaster (who also designed St. Cuthbert's Church in Darwen) and is now a listed building. The Wakefield family left Sedgwick House just before WW2 when it was taken over by the National Fire Service. It became a special school owned by LCC prior to closing in 1987. It is now flats, has grounds with fine specimen trees and cricket ground.



We now arrive at Sedgwick Aqueduct, a Grade 2 listed scheduled monument. It was built in 1818 by William Crosley to a design by John Rennie, carrying the elevated sections of the Lancaster Kendal canal. It has an unusual design being a skewed bridge. The canal was dewatered in 1955 and the became derelict, in true local council fashion the aqueduct was scheduled for demolition for road improvements! Luckily it was saved and is now owned by the Canal and Rivers Trust.



What will we see next? Either join us on the walk or read the next Ramblers Gems.

Jane C

Lancashire Cheese

Eleven of our members braved the wet weather last Saturday (7th August) to experience the lush (and very wet) countryside around Inglewhite. This area is at the heart of Lancashire's Cheese making and none is more renowned than Mrs Kirkham Farmhouse Cheese.

The Kirkham family have resided at Beesley Farm for just over 70 years. The business is now run by Ruth and John's son, Graham with the help of his partner Kellie, sons Shaun and Mike together with a small but devoted team of staff members. Graham's father, John moved here with his family as a baby. The first Cheese was made here by Ruth (Mrs Kirkham) in September 1978.

The raw cow's milk cheese is still made by hand to the same recipe used by Graham's Mother and Grandmother and is made using only the milk from their own herd of Holstein Friesian cows. Kirkham's Lancashire Cheese is the last and only farmhouse Lancashire cheese still to be made from unpasteurised milk. The history of Lancashire cheese dates to the 13th century but it fell out of favour in recent generations. It was even banned during the second world war, as it was inefficient to make compare with other recipes like Cheshire and Cheddar – the 200 farm producers in 1939 simply stopping producing creamy Lancashire.

The Kirkham family have continued to make both creamy (aged up to 12 weeks) and tasty (aged over 12 weeks) Lancashire cheese. This is a more traditional version of Lancashire than the crumbly Lancashire now made by many modern dairies. The modern dairy version was an invention to speed up making cheese by making a drier, more crumbly, tart cheese.

Traditional creamy and tasty Lancashire is made over two-days (or sometimes even three or four). It involves using curd from both days (this method originated because some small farmers in Lancashire did not have a big enough herd to make cheese on one day, so would combine several days' - worth of curd). The pressed cheese is then traditionally clothbound and 'buttered-up' (enclosing the cheese in a buttered cloth to enable it to breath) and then aged for 3-6 months.

The farm shop is well worth a visit and our thanks go to Mrs Kirham's for their welcome, support and hospitality during our visit.

Michael C

A Calendar of Sonnets – July

by Helen Hunt Jackson

Some flowers are withered and some joys have died;
The garden reeks with an East Indian scent
From beds where gillyflowers stand weak and spent;
The white heat pales the skies from side to side;
But in still lakes and rivers, cool, content,
Like starry blooms on a new firmament,
White lilies float and regally abide.
In vain the cruel skies their hot rays shed;
The lily does not feel their brazen glare.
In vain the pallid clouds refuse to share
Their dews, the lily feels no thirst, no dread.
Unharm'd she lifts her queenly face and head;
She drinks of living waters and keeps fair.

Butterflies

by Ruby Archer

A purple haze hangs hotly o'er the hills;
The bees' low chant falls murmuring on the ear;
Bright butterflies flit by, now far, now near,
Yielding to gay caprice their fickle wills.

Their rainbow hues are yet bedewed with morn.
On wings all jewel-decked they move elate,
A beamy brilliancy irradiate,
Winding a wavy path unknown of thorn.

They find the chalice of the trumpet-vine;
And fold their wings of gossamer; alight,
Sipping a moment as a fairy might;
Then soft away, in quest of sweeter wine.

And thus they win the balm of every flower,
Wantonly gypsying in revelry -
Not burden-bearing like the groaning bee -
Bacchantes all - their life a golden hour.

Spotted Fritillary Butterfly



**Contributions by
Pesto Cenorr**

Nature's Medicine Cabinet

On the SVRC ramble to Hutton Roof back in July we were walking within the county of Cumbria which due to the mixed terrain of both limestone and acidic soils provided us with a truly mixed botany.

As we walked, there were spreads of the short yellow spikes of Agrimony, a plant used in the past to treat catarrh, skin diseases, tuberculosis and even as a charm to ward off snakes. The white flowers of Eyebright were everywhere and as its name suggests was a herbal remedy used to treat eye problems in an eyebath.



Eyebright



Lady's Bedstraw

Meadowsweet, a member of the rose family, was growing in some of the damper areas. This plant was used as an alternative to aspirin, as it is gentler on the stomach as well as a treatment to relieve flu symptoms and joint pain. Lady's Bedstraw, another yellow - coloured low growing plant, was found everywhere. According to a Christian legend, it gets its name from the belief that it was one of the herbs found in the manger at Bethlehem. It is used as an infusion for kidney and urine disorders and is used against skin rashes. It is also called Cheese Rennet, because one of its enzymes causes milk to curdle and so was once used in cheese making.

The small pink flowers of Wild Thyme were scattered below our feet as we walked. This appears in a lot of household products like toothpaste, mouth washes and gargles as well as being a traditional treatment for whooping cough and bronchitis.

Of course, it is dangerous to sample any of these plants from the wild unless you really know what you are doing.

Birds were not prominent on this ramble although a female ring ouzel was spotted, and a singing yellowhammer was heard. Yellowhammers are becoming quite scarce.

Tony C

Cotton Threads

Reproduced from an article in the LET 20th March 2000, Author unknown.

Some weeks ago, I parked and strolled around Tockholes in search of a piece of Lancashire cotton's hidden history. I decided to follow in the footsteps of the Spring Vale Rambling Club at the turn of the century. (Ed From the book *The Rambler*). The wonderful thing is that this club based in Darwen is still active and with plenty of members although there is always room for more! There was a time at Tockholes when the church specialised in open air services especially at the turn of the 20th century when an outdoor stone pulpit was built. This dates from around 1910 after the Spring Vale ramblers visited the area.

The ramblers paid homage to John Osbaldeston (1780-1862) and his grave was well maintained. These days it is more difficult to find but his inscription is just about legible.

*"Here lies John Osbaldeston
A humble inventor
Who raised many to wealth and fortune
But himself lived in poverty and died in obscurity
The dupe of false friends
And the Victim of mislaid confidence."*

John's main contribution to the textile industry was the invention of the weft-fork, a simple but very important device which stopped a power loom whenever the weft snapped. The fork was so simple to copy that the 'big men' of cotton used it without paying the inventor. They became rich and yet Osbaldeston died in poverty in Blackburn. He would have been buried in a paupers grave had it not been for the vicar of Tockholes, who gave the inventor a resting place.

This "man of cotton" was also given an inscribed tomb. As we park in Tockholes, East Lancashire folk should visit the poor man's tomb and celebrate the part he played in our history.

The Shuttle Memorial to John Osbaldeston



Eleanor

Now you See It - Now you Don't

On the 12th June SVRC went on a walk to Hurst Green. On this walk we did not pass by the Punch Bowl pub but on the 17th June I was surprised to read a story in two local newspapers – “Shock demolition of Grade-II listed pub sparks council investigation” and “Now you see it - now you don't.

An historic landmark listed building, reputed to be the "most haunted" building in Lancashire, was demolished yesterday without warning. The historic Grade II listed building has been reduced to rubble. In 2018 permission was granted for the 18th century building on Longridge Road to be converted into five holiday lets and a cafe. At that time permission was also granted to create a 15-unit static caravan holiday park on the site.



The pub's roots can be traced back to a row of three single cottages built in 1793. By 1844 the buildings were known as The Fenton Arms and by 1910 it had become known as the Punch Bowl Inn.

The Punch Bowl – is/was an old coaching inn. In 1739, Ned King and his friend Dick Turpin arrived from Essex, where there was a huge price on their heads, in an attempt to avoid capture but after two nights Dick Turpin left to go to York. In the 18th century this site became the headquarters of a notorious highwayman who preyed on unsuspecting travellers. Ned King and his cronies would keep watch from a room above the stables selecting only the wealthiest victims to way lay and rob. He used the Mitton crossroads location to perform his highway robberies.

Ned King was as famous in Lancashire as Dick Turpin. He was known as 'The Phantom' due to his ability to disappear after one of his robberies. He was eventually brought to account because of his reprehensible deeds. The authorities were resolute in their determination to

bring Ned King to account and eventually discovered his secret hideout.

The landlord, Johnathan Briscoe, was under suspicion because the authorities thought he was sharing in Ned's profits. Ned was arrested, brought to trial and found guilty or was he discovered by the Red Coats who had been sent to apprehend him but then carried out their own justice?

Ned's body was hung from a gibbet erected near Three Turns, at the top of nearby Gallows Lane (B6243). The origin of the name of the lane possibly goes back to the days when serious miscreants were tried at the town courthouse in the White Bull, Ribchester, and taken to the gallows at the upper end of the lane.

Ned King's ghost was often heard in the vicinity of The Punch Bowl which resulted in an exorcism being performed in the 19th Century. But still he continued to haunt the pub. Bottles fell off shelves, beer pumps opened, and chairs clattered over. Not until 1942 when a priest was summoned from nearby Stonyhurst College to attempt a second eradication of this troublesome spirit did Ned King disappear.

I wonder if all this recent disturbance at the Punch Bowl will cause Ned King to reappear...developers and travellers beware!



Historic England statement – “The Grade II listed Punch Bowl Inn has been demolished without consent, and we will be investigating this with our regional partners. All listed sites are of national importance and are protected by law. In the very rare instances where a listed building needs to be demolished, Listing Building Consent is needed.”

Barbara S

Thanks to Curious Walks in Lancashire, Graham Dugdale for providing much of the historic content of this article.

The Sense of Sound - Urban

This is the ninth in my series of walks undertaken by the Spring Vale Rambling Class on a typical outing where I will concentrate on what you hear and not just what you can see.

A ramble where you would see and hear this group of town birds would be setting off from the Ranken Arms pub in the centre of Hoddlesden. Taking Bayne Street and passing St Paul's School leads you past Hoddlesden Hall, the site of St Paul's Church and graveyard and after crossing over Johnstone New Road you would go around the reservoir using the low-level paths to keep you in the village boundary.

STARLING

Most people regard this chap as a scraggy, oily, unsociable gang member as he is always found in large numbers with his mates but when you actually listen, he is one of the most gifted of our songbirds. He has all manner of high-pitched peeps and chirps, curious knocks, rattles and buzzes but his constant chattering just adds to the white noise of everyday life. What people may not be aware of is his talents at mimicry as he can imitate the House Sparrow, Lapwing, car alarms, telephones as well as the Blackbird. Although he is regarded by most humans as a nuisance, he is one of our great British stars of the songbird world. If the time is right and the flocks have gathered, then you will be in for the most breathtaking of arial displays as the birds twist, wheel, swoop to perform their spectacular murmuration. If overhead the sound of their beating wings sounds like an express train rushing around. This performance occurs in the early evening and once complete the starlings all settle to roost amongst the trees, their chattering now reaches a crescendo until suddenly all is quiet.



House Sparrow

Sparrows have quite a simple song of individual *cheep* or *chirrup* notes to indicate submissiveness in flocks or if between pairs, as part of a courting ritual with the female making a short chattering sound to chase off other females or when her mate approaches.

The male continues to use it throughout the year to announce that he possesses a nest when first attracting his intended mate. Although his presence is very simple through his song, he has been recorded throughout the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians, Indonesian, Chinese and Christian cultures, being recognised as the sacred animal of Aphrodite, the goddess of love and also through the Shamans and their animal totems. We have lots to learn from this chap with regards to our health, our happiness and just like the sparrow living in communities, just how we can work in teams to help solve our own problems. More has been written about this simple bird than any other and we continue to learn each day.

House Sparrow



COLLARED DOVE

Many people will not be aware that this bird is relatively new to our shores. Coming from the warm and temperate areas of Asia and India, it wasn't until the 20th century that it appeared in Europe. His call always has three syllables "*Coo-COO-Coo*". The first two coos are longer and the emphasis is usually on the second Coo. So, one way to remember it correctly is to say "*two-LONGS, short*" or if you are a football fan then chant like "*un-iii-ted*" in time with the birds call. Some say it sounds more like "*goo-GOO-goo*" or even say it appears to be cheekily saying "*haa-haa*". Another fact about this interesting bird is related to its name, Collared Dove. Based upon a Greek myth, a maid was unhappy that she was only being paid eighteen pieces a year and she begged the Greek Gods to let the world know how little she was being rewarded by her mistress. Zeus then created this dove that has called out "*Deca-Octo*", or eighteen, ever since.



Well, we have had lots to see and hear on today's walk so now it's off to the pub for a well-earned pint of the local brew.

Maggie A