

Ramblers Gems



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South Pennine Park

An alternative National Park right on our doorstep has been launched. The proposal for the National Park was first discussed in the Hobhouse and Dower Reports in the 1940s, which emphasised the need for special places and for the public to look after them. The South Pennine Park has been established by Pennine Prospects which will now also be known as South Pennine's Park.

The Park will cover 460 square miles from East Lancashire, across West Yorkshire and touches Greater Manchester and the Peak District in the south. It will include the areas we traditionally know as the West Pennines Moors. This region incorporates Winter Hill, Smithills, Darwen Moors and the Haslingden Moors areas. The whole proposed Park has extensive moorland areas and the internationally important habitats and species they support.

Pennine Prospects has been working in partnership with Natural England, United Utilities, Yorkshire Water, National Trust and other conservation groups.

The ambitious scheme aims to bring people closer to nature and boost resources for the local area. It is an area of stunning scenery; a spectacular ever-evolving landscape that has been moulded and shaped by the people, the packhorses, footsteps of yesteryear; rich in industrial and cultural heritage.



The chief executive of Pennine Prospects, Helen Noble has said that the need for a park was absolutely clear, because the South Pennines Park region needs a champion at a national level to fight for it, protect it and seek sustainable investment. She also added that over eight million people live within 30 minutes of the park and more than 660,000 live in it — twice the population of all the English national parks put together.

Walkers will already be aware of the moorland areas around Burnley exemplified by the Pendle Way designated trail and the Pennine Way come quite close to the border of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, whilst part of the upland areas of Greater Manchester skirt the Peak District National Park.

So, this new National Park will be in good company.

Tony C

Troodos National Forest Park - Cyprus

Many people may not be aware of the natural beauty of Cyprus but the Forest Park of Troodos which covers over 9 sq km is renowned as one of the major regions in the world for its biodiversity. Troodos is the island's highest mountain range, with Olympus, (Chionistra in Greek) reaching 1952 metres at its highest. From the village of Troodos there are a number of forest trails of varying lengths to choose from, all offering a different aspect of the multitude of combinations of facts about Cyprus be they historical, geographical, cultural or natural.

The walk I undertook recently was the 'Artemis' trail which is 8km in length. For those not aware, Artemis was a goddess, daughter of Zeus and Leto, and was the twin sister of the god Apollo. She was the protector of all wildlife, the mountains, and the forest.

The walk follows a circular path round Olympus, staying at about 1850 metres. The view stretches almost down to the coast, some 20 miles away, and can be quite spectacular. The forest is made up of Calabrian Pine, Golden Oak, and Juniper, but the biggest trees, of which some are over 500 years old are the Black Pine.



Mount Olympus, (Chionistra)

Flowers seen during this walk were catmint, germander, alysson, and sage -some with rather vicious spikes, so stout footwear is highly recommended.

Birds observed on the walk were the wheatear, coal tit, crossbill, jay and treecreeper. I was also lucky enough to spot a woodpecker busy stripping the lichen off a nearby pine to get at the insect's underneath.

The geology of the area is unique, with the 90 million year old Troodos Range originally part of the ancient Tethys Sea being formed 15 million years ago as a direct result of the collision of the African and Eurasian tectonic plates and the ensuing uplifts.



Forest Park of Troodos

Some of the areas rock formations, such as dunnite and pyroxenite, are rich in ores of Chromium and Copper. Both are important with Chromium being an essential trace mineral which helps to provide energy to the muscles and brain. As the body does not naturally produce it we may need to supplement our diet to provide the required balanced intake.

The word Copper comes from Cyprus or Cupros itself. Again, essential for human nutrition and critical for blood formation and found in leafy greens, potatoes and grains. It was the first metal worked by man and dates back 10,000 years. Otzi the iceman of 3,300 BCE was found with an axe of nearly pure copper. But beware Otzi's hair contained high levels of arsenic – too much exposure to copper smelting! Otzi was discovered mummified within the Similaun Glacier in the Tirolean Ötztal Alps, a mountain range between Austria and Italy.

After 3 hours and with dusty walking shoes, we headed to the village for the nearest taverna for a refreshing drink, with a choice of either hot or cold available for the weary travellers.

We will probably be back soon to sample another of the other trails in this mountainous area of central Cyprus, where there is also snow and skiing during the short winter from December to March.

Alan R

A Murmuration of Starlings

Starling murmurations happen when the birds start to roost. The RSPB say this can be as early as September in some places, and as late as the end of November elsewhere, with more birds joining the nightly displays during this time.

A murmuration of starlings is an amazing sight - a swooping mass of thousands of birds whirling in the sky above.

More and more birds will flock together as the weeks go on, and the number of starlings in a roost can swell to around 100,000 in some places.

Early evening, just before dusk, is the best time to see them across the UK. You don't need any special equipment as it's all visible by just looking to the skies.

They mainly choose to roost in places which are sheltered from harsh weather and predators, such as woodlands, but reedbeds, cliffs, buildings and industrial structures are also used. During the day however, they form daytime roosts at exposed places such as treetops, where the birds have good all-round visibility.

Some of the best spots in Lancashire and Merseyside to see a murmuration are:

- Brockholes Nature Reserve, Preston
- North Pier, Blackpool
- RSPB Leighton Moss, Silverdale



Barbara S

A reminder

The AGM and walk is on Saturday 23rd October at 14.00hrs from a new venue is the Darwen Methodist Church Bright Street Darwen. Not from the Spring Vale Church Darwen

Starlings

From the book *The Bramble King* by Catherine Fisher

The poem bursts at sunset from the trees,
small black syllables wheeling in a flock,
frantic sounds. Abrupt, it veers
from shadow hawks, splits, panics,
crashes back, zigzags through rhymes
on crazy gasps and indrawn gulps of air,
brief migrant urges, patterns that won't form,
never stopping or getting anywhere
till about now.

When the screeching cluster
breaks and comes down and dissolves,
to frail-bones, consonants setting in rows;
preening, quarrelling, edging each other off.
Under their spiky flights and re-arrangements,
News and wars and love affairs transmit.

Submitted by Pesto Cenorr

Harvest Moon and the Autumn Equinox

Here in the Northern Hemisphere, we call the full moon closest to the autumn equinox the Harvest Moon. In 2021, the Northern Hemisphere autumn equinox comes on September 22. The full moon falls less than two days earlier, on September 20. Thus, in East Lancashire, this week's full moon – the full moon closest to our autumn equinox – was our Harvest Moon.

In 2021 it will be no larger or smaller than a normal moon. This year, the September full moon is the fourth of the season's four full moons. Harvest Moon is just a name. Nature is particularly cooperative in giving us dusk-till-dawn moonlight, for several evenings in a row, around the time of the Harvest Moon. The exact time of the full Harvest Moon was September 20 at 23:54 GMT i.e. 24.54 BST. I do hope you noticed how bright the moon was.

Barbara S

The Ultimate Footwear Collection

Last week we included an article which was the essential kit for boys. Here is one targeted more at the girls but not necessarily so. Shoe lovers everywhere, this is your chance to shine. Below are 50 types of footwear that you may have once owned or still have in your collection. Tick the box to find out whether you're a pragmatist or a fetishist – and what shoes really mean to you.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Platforms | <input type="checkbox"/> Espadrilles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Winkle-pickers | <input type="checkbox"/> Golf Shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High Heels | <input type="checkbox"/> Bowling Shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trainers | <input type="checkbox"/> Toe Posts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flats | <input type="checkbox"/> Oxfords |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mules | <input type="checkbox"/> Peep Toes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sandals | <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking Boots |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Penny Loafers | <input type="checkbox"/> Cowboy Boots |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ankle Boots | <input type="checkbox"/> Wellingtons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pixie Boots | <input type="checkbox"/> Slingbacks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snow Boots | <input type="checkbox"/> Saddle Shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slip- ons | <input type="checkbox"/> Riding Boots |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flip-Flops | <input type="checkbox"/> Deck Shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pumps | <input type="checkbox"/> Bover Boots |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courts | <input type="checkbox"/> Cycling Shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knee-high Boots | <input type="checkbox"/> Army Boots |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stilettos | <input type="checkbox"/> Slippers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Louis XIV Heel | <input type="checkbox"/> Ballet Shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wedges | <input type="checkbox"/> Spats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moccasins | <input type="checkbox"/> Tap Shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jimmy Choos | <input type="checkbox"/> Doc Martens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kitten Heels | <input type="checkbox"/> Jelly Shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chelsea Boots | <input type="checkbox"/> Sailing Shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Derbys | <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional Clogs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brothel Creepers | <input type="checkbox"/> Monk Shoes |

Riding Boots



Five pair or fewer: Ah, never mind. You probably have the view that shoes are just there to get you from A to B. Bet two of those you ticked were hiking boots and slippers. And probably you've got odd socks on right now.

Six to 15 pairs: experimentation has sometimes been your thing, but probably mainly in your youth, when you only lasted for three lessons of tap max, and then you dressed like Bon Jovi for the rest of the time. I bet boots of various styles figured highly on your list.

16 to 25 pairs: Ah, now here's someone with an understanding of feet. It's not about practicalities, nor is it just about style. You started your collection by shopping at Tommy Balls, and now collect on-line

26 to 35 pairs: You are now bordering on the excessive and have run out of space to display all of your collection. You have had to resort to storing them in boxes under the bed. I bet it's a sure thing that traditional clogs are missing from your wardrobe!

36 to 49 pairs: You have now reached the fetishist level, you take photographs of your collection, and your knee highs aren't kept on the same shelf as your moccasins. The collection has spilt over to the top and bottom of your wardrobe as well as numerous shoe racks in your spare bedroom.

All 50 pairs: Imelda, where have you been all my life!



Men's Monk Shoes



Women's Monk Shoes

Eleanor

Samlesbury Hall

Built in 1325 by Gilbert Southworth for his bride, Samlesbury Hall remained in the family until 1679 and became one of the great houses of Lancashire as well as a stronghold of the Catholic faith. The Southworth family had descendants who were among the first pilgrims to set sail to America in the 17th Century aboard the Mayflower.

The Hall is constructed of local materials in a random mixture of timber, stone and brick and blends well with its surroundings. A chapel was added to the Great Hall in about 1420 and in the middle of the 16th century the southwest wing was completed, and many renovations took place. Above the bay or oriel window at the south-east end of the Great Hall was built a small square chamber about ten square feet, known as the "Oratory" or priest's room. It has two windows and on one side meets the slope of the roof of the Great Hall to form a "bolt hole". A story says that a priest was dragged from here, fought a duel and was killed. Stains on the floor were supposed to be his blood, and in the 1890's the floor had to be removed as servants would not stay in a house with such a gruesome story.

The present entrance hall has an elaborate ceiling of black oak and a Tutor fireplace. Here the entrance to another "bolt hole" was found and a ventilation brick can clearly be seen on the outside of the chimney. Also in this wing is the dining room with a richly carved cornice and a timbered ceiling divided into sections by moulded beams. The chapel contains a large window probably from Whalley Abbey at the time of the dissolution of the monastery, and there is also a sandstone font set on a millstone. In 1925 the hall and grounds were purchased by a Board of Trustees to be preserved for public use. The hall has been refurnished in period style and, as well as being a building of great historical interest.



Samlesbury Hall



The Great Hall

The Hall is still said to be haunted by the ghost of Lady Dorothy Southworth. She was the daughter of Sir John Southworth, a strict Roman Catholic and fell in love with the son of an equally strict Protestant. The couple were forbidden to marry, and in 1595 they planned to elope, but their plans were overheard by one of Lady Dorothy's brothers. At the time set for their escape the Southworth family surprised the couple and killed the young knight whose body was secretly buried. Lady Dorothy was sent abroad to a convent where she died of a broken heart. Some years ago, a human skeleton was discovered in the grounds of Samlesbury Hall, which is thought to have been that of the unfortunate knight. Lady Dorothy's ghost, a woman in white has been seen on occasions inside the hall and in the grounds outside.

The site adjacent to the Hall grounds became an airfield and after World War II the old sheds were taken over by Samlesbury Engineering Ltd who specialised in building coaches and trucks. They are, however, best remembered for the construction in 1954 of Donald Campbell's Bluebird K7, which was a hydroplane fitted with a Metropolitan-Vickers Beryl turbo-jet engine. Campbell had already broken the world land speed record and went on to set seven world water speed records in Bluebird.

A new engine was fitted for Donald's attempt to break the 300 mph barrier on Coniston Water in January 1967, but having touched 328 mph, Bluebird flipped into the air and broke up, killing Donald.

The Hall is full of history and is well worth a visit to explore and discover its fascinating past. There is also a Heritage Café which takes advantage of a light and airy plant centre, turning it into an oasis of calm and tranquillity to enjoy your tea and cake. See you there.

Michael C