

# Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Annual General Meeting / A Jollie Good Tale
- 2 October Musings / Weather Lore Beliefs and Sayings
- 3 Extwysle at Risk
- 4 The Ogham Tree - Ivy
- 5 The Lost Farms of Brinscall Moors / The Ivy Green

## Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Class is to be held on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October commencing at 17.30 at the Methodist Church Bright Street Darwen. BB3 1QL Prior to the AGM a short walk of approx. 4.5 mile will be undertaken followed by a potato pie and tea. The walk will commence at 14.00hrs from Bright Street. Please contact the secretary to book your meal.

## A Jollie Good Tale

While I was researching a walk from the village of Wiswell and around to the Nick of Pendle I came across the name of a house on the map called Wymondhouses. This was to me a peculiar name for a farmhouse, so I decided to search more to discover the history of this moorland dwelling. What I unearthed was a fascinating story of religious persecution and a dogged determination to overcome adversity during a turbulent period in our history.

I discovered that this old hamlet is famous in the annals of ecclesiastical history because this was the preaching base of Thomas Jollie (1629-1703). Jollie founded the first congregational church in the area. No doubt he selected Wymondhouses because it was so isolated at a time when those who chose not to conform to Church of England doctrine were far from popular.

The English Civil War (1642-1651) was fought between the Parliamentarians under Oliver Cromwell and the Royalist, under King Charles I and during the period from 1642 to 1660 there was no state church. After Charles I was executed and Charles II returned from exile in France, he promised a general amnesty and freedom of conscience, but this was generally ignored, and restrictive measures were taken against Parliamentarians and the Nonconformists.

Jollie began his ministry at St James' Church at Altham but like many Puritans he was expelled for not preaching the official line, re-introduced after Charles II was restored to power. Over the next five years he was repeatedly arrested and imprisoned for holding illegal private religious meetings. Eventually after Jollie had hidden away at Wymondhouse, some semblance of toleration was established, and the house was finally licensed for preaching and a chapel built. He used this house as his base from which to preach throughout Lancashire and Cheshire, he even preached at the church in Tockholes. He recorded an account of his travelling and preaching in a journal.

Thomas died at Wymondhouses in 1703 after fifty-three years of preaching. The farmhouse still stands, but the chapel has long since been pulled down.

Michael C

## October Musings

In the old Roman calendars, October was the eight month of the year and got its name from the word “Octo” meaning eight.

The Saxons called it Wyn Monath because it was the season of wine making.

**Old Michaelmas Day** (10<sup>th</sup>) – after the calendar reform of 1752 some activities traditionally associated with Michaelmas day (29<sup>th</sup> September) moved forward eleven days to 10<sup>th</sup> October, which is sometimes called “Old Michaelmas Day”. Mop fairs or hiring fairs took place around Michaelmas Day.

**Mop Fairs or (Hiring Fairs)** – Servants and farm labourers would traditionally work from October to October, then go into villages or town to hire themselves out again for the following year. People looking for work would dress in their best clothes and advertise their skills by carrying a symbol of their work. Maids looking for work would carry a mop (Hence mop fairs), shepherds would carry wool, gardeners – flowers etc. If they were lucky enough to gain work for the coming year their new employers would give them a small monetary token and they would replace their work symbol with a bunch of brightly coloured ribbons to show that they had been hired.

An old practice for any single female SVRC members. The 18<sup>th</sup> October, St Luke’s Day, was traditionally the day when young girls (not sure that applies to SVRC?) could have some insight into their future marriage prospects. Before going to bed they put on their faces a mixture of spices, honey and vinegar, then once in bed they would say the following rhyme:

*St Luke, St, Luke, be kind to me,*

*In dreams let me my true love see.*



## Weather lore, beliefs and sayings

Rain in October, means wind in December.

When birds and badgers are fat in October expect a cold winter.

When berries are many in October  
Beware a hard winter.

In October dung your fields  
And your land its wealth shall yield

**And finally**, there are many anniversaries in October, but my personal favourite is :

14<sup>th</sup> October 1926, Winnie-the-Pooh was first published. Written by A. A. Milne (1882 – 1956)



**Jane C**

## “Extwysle” at Risk

Whenever I do the Ribble Rivers Trust ‘River Brun’ walk or ramble around the Worsthorne, Swinden Reservoirs and Water, Netherwood and the Lee Green Reservoir area I always mean to take the Burnley Way and visit Extwistle Hall. I finally made it on Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> September this year.

**Extwistle Hall** is a historic Grade II listed mansion which stands high on Extwistle Moor in Briercliffe, Burnley. It was built in 1585 (16<sup>th</sup> Century) in the Tudor style by the Parker family, a prominent family at that time and although not medieval it does have medieval connections.



The first mention of Extwistle is in the late 12th Century, in 1193, when it was spelled “Extwysle”. This was a grant of land, in Extwistle, by a Norman knight, Richard Malbisse, firstly, to the Cistercian monks of Kirkstall Abbey, near Leeds, Yorkshire, and also to the Premonstratensian monks of Newbo Abbey, near Grantham, Lincolnshire. The monks of Newbo kept their interest in Extwistle from 1193 to about 1537 when Newbo Abbey was dissolved by Henry VIII.



Robert Parker bought the land, in 1537, after the Dissolution of the Monasteries. John Parker was High Sheriff of Lancashire for 1653 and Robert Parker for 1710. The house was remodelled in the late 18th century.

The hall has a sinister reputation and has long been associated with tales of the supernatural. Captain Robert Parker features in a piece of folklore which tells how one night, on his way home from a Jacobite agitators meeting, he met a goblin funeral passing close to Extwistle Hall. To his horror, he saw that the brass plate on the coffin bore his own name. Knowing that this foretold his own death, he took this as a warning against siding with the rebels. He swore from that moment that he would never attend another meeting or support them in any way and refused to participate in the Jacobite uprising of 1715. This turned out to be a wise decision as the revolt failed miserably and many of the leading participants were executed or financially ruined. As weeks passed, Parker may have come to feel he had been spared the fate of those who had seen goblin funerals in the past. But fate would not be diverted so easily. Perhaps if he had continued to be vigilant, he would not have gone shooting in heavy rain and put his wet coat near the fire to dry. As his children helped him to strip off the rest of his wet clothes, a powder flask in the pocket of the wet coat exploded in the heat of the fire – and the explosion killed him and badly injured two of his daughters.



The gentry hall house remained the home of the Parkers of Extwistle, for some 200 years, until the fire at the hall resulted in the Parkers leaving Extwistle for the Cuedale and Chorley area around 1718.

An agent for the Townley Parker estate resided there, briefly, until the building became a farmhouse for a large hill farm. The Townley Parker estate retained ownership until the 1920s when the estate was sold off and passed to the Tattons of Wythenshawe.

Extwistle Hall, owned by a commercial property company, has been unoccupied for more than 25 years and is listed in English Heritage's *Heritage at Risk Register*. In early 2012, £2million plans were revealed to save and restore the hall to its former glory, then afterwards to be sold off. No progress has been made since. The building is in a seriously dilapidated condition and continues to deteriorate at an accelerating rate.

**Barbara S**



## The Ogham Tree - Ivy

**Ivy** (Gort) is in the 11th Moon of the Celtic Year – (Sept 30 to Oct 27). Its Ogham letter is **G**. Ivy represents preservation and transformation through persistence and overcoming obstacles. Some interpret Ivy as binding or restricting. But ivy overcomes obstacles and climbs high. Its leaves transform as they climb higher. Its powers are associated with friendship, healing, protection, steadfastness and tenacity.

Ivy is full of magic even though it is such a common plant, the evergreen leaves of the climbing ivy are a welcome sight among the bare deciduous trees of winter. It can tolerate conditions that many can't - scrambling in dark corners up ruined walls and filling forgotten, unwanted spaces.

It can spiral as it grows up the trunks of host trees - and spiral growth is a sign of the very strong life-force pulsing from the Earth. Ivy shows its strong, true spirit even when cut right back - overcoming seemingly impossible obstacles.

If allowed to cover a garden wall, fence or an old tree stump, the ivy flowers in early Autumn will attract myriads of butterflies and insects with their sweet nectar. Take care though, some do say that to actually plant an ivy may bring bad luck - better to let some grow wild just in case!

Ivy is known to be slightly toxic if taken internally, it is bitter, unpleasant to taste and highly likely to cause stomach upsets! In times past, ivy leaves were boiled and strained then used externally as an antiseptic wash for skin irritations and sores and laid as a hot poultice to bring down swellings.



Ivy is a celebrated plant on many different spiritual paths. In some beliefs, because of its ability to regrow after being cut down, it is seen as a symbol of resurrection or rebirth. The Druids considered it to be sacred, and a feminine counterpart to the masculine holly. When placed together, either growing or as decoration, they gave (and give) great protection as well as balance and wisdom.

Traditions associated with Ivy.

- Bind together (touching down their lengths) a twig of ivy (female) and a twig of holly (male) with red wool, ribbon or thread to make a love talisman which will bring fidelity and good luck.  
This makes a sweet present for a wedding or make a Christmas decoration.
- Boys - see your future wife in your dreams by picking ten ivy leaves on the night of All Hallows (Oct 31st) and placing them under your pillow.
- Girls - carry a sprig of ivy in your pocket as you walk under the full moon. The first young man who talks to you unbidden will be your husband. If you don't want a husband, refrain from walking under the full moon with ivy about your person!
- Ivy which is allowed to grow up the walls of a house will bring protection and positive opportunities to those living within.
- Should you be a young man and go out amongst the crowds on Walpurgis night (April 30th - or May Day Eve), wear a wreath or crown of ivy and you will be able to spot any witches in the throng.
- Lay an ivy leaf in a saucer of water on New Year's Eve and leave it until Twelfth Night (Jan 6th). If it has turned black, there will be illness during the year. If it stayed green, the year to come will be happy and prosperous.

**Jean G**

## **Lost Farms of Brinscall Moors**

How often have we walked out from Brinscall Baths or White Coppice Cricket Ground and up onto the moors surrounding Great Hill and stumbled across the ruins of old farmsteads and long forgotten tracks? When checking out the OS map names such as Pimms, Drinkwater and Solomon's Temple are recorded as just some of the forgotten ruins we walk, past without giving a second thought to the families and homesteads that are dotted around this part of Wheelton and Brinscall Moors.

In the space of little more than five square miles there used to be nearly 50 farms, upon which hundreds of men women and children depended. Then almost overnight, the march of 'progress' robbed them of their homes and livelihoods, leaving behind a landscape frozen in time with crumbling buildings and lonely vestiges of human habitation.

A book first published in 2011 entitled 'The Lost Farms of Brinscall Moors' written David Clayton gives a unique journey back in time into the forgotten lives of these lost hill farming communities in this part of Lancashire. The local author David Clayton has fully researched and located all the remains of the old farmsteads, that were the beating heart of life and work for generations of farming folk, and he reveals why it all ended so suddenly. Skilfully combining his intimate knowledge of all the farms and most of the families with testimony from surviving diaries and other documents, he paints an intriguing often poignant picture of a way of life that now exists only as a memory.

The book is presented in the form of a gentle walking tour that can be undertaken either from the comfort of your armchair or by wandering around the ruins. It provides is a journey of exploration and discovery that will appeal to anyone interested in history of both this local area and the county of Lancashire.

The detail and explanations the book contains are far too complex to record here in such a short article but I would recommend that you obtain a copy and read up on the history and lives of people and families from this now forgotten area.

**Glenda B**

## **The Ivy Green By Charles Dickens**

Oh, a dainty plant is the Ivy green,  
That creepeth o'er ruins old!  
Of right choice food are his meals, I ween,  
In his cell so lone and cold.  
The wall must be crumbled, the stone decayed,  
To pleasure his dainty whim:  
And the mouldering dust that years have made  
Is a merry meal for him.  
Creeping where no life is seen,  
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

Fast he stealeth on, though he wears no wings,  
And a staunch old heart has he.  
How closely he twineth, how tight he clings,  
To his friend the huge Oak Tree!  
And slily he traileth along the ground,  
And his leaves he gently waves,  
As he joyously hugs and crawleth round  
The rich mould of dead men's graves.  
Creeping where grim death has been,  
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.

Whole ages have fled and their works decayed,  
And nations have scattered been;  
But the stout old Ivy shall never fade,  
From its hale and hearty green.  
The brave old plant, in its lonely days,  
Shall fatten upon the past:  
For the stateliest building man can raise,  
Is the Ivy's food at last.  
Creeping on, where time has been,  
A rare old plant is the Ivy green.



**Contribution by Pesto Cenorr**

