

Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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It's Time to Change

British Summer Time Ends.

The clocks go back this Sunday 31st October so at 2.00 am remember to turn your clocks back by 1 hour.

You might well be wondering where the summer went, but it really is almost that time of year again - time to put the clocks back ready for the winter.

As the nights grow longer and the temperatures distinctly colder, there's no mistaking the fact that winter is just around the corner.



What is British Summer Time?

British Summer Time is the period where the clocks go forward by an hour. Also known as daylight saving time, it basically means we get more sunlight in the evening.

Clocks go forward at the end of March. This year, they went forward on March 28th, and they'll do the same on March 27th next year.

Why do the clocks go back?

Putting the clocks back ahead of the winter essentially means that people can start and end their workday an hour earlier.

The idea was first proposed in 1895, by New Zealand scientist George Vernon Hudson. Just over 20 years later, during World War I, the German government put clocks forward to conserve energy. Other governments, including Britain, soon did the same.

Almost every year, there's a debate about whether we should change the clocks at all. Those against the practice say it disrupts sleep cycles - with potential implications for health - and that return journeys in the evening are riskier in the dark.

But if we left the clocks where they were, morning journeys may be more dangerous as our mornings would be darker. So, it seems daylight savings time is here to stay for a little longer.

Michael C

History on our doorstep.

Geocaching can take you to some interesting places, places you wouldn't visit or know about. One such place is just off the Grane Road near to The Grey Mare. When driving towards Haslingden from The Grey Mare, as you pass the boundary sign for Rossendale if you glance to your left (as long as you are not driving) you can see the remains of a low red brick building. I always thought this was the remains of a farm building – how wrong I was.



Looking for local geocaches that I have yet to come across, I was surprised to find that one is placed in this building and that it was in fact a “decoy building” used in World War 2.



Beginning in 1940, decoy buildings were used to confuse enemy aircraft as to the location of their targets. These buildings were sophisticated and required a lot of manpower.

They usually fell into 4 categories:

- 1: Dummy aerodromes – day ‘K’ sites and night ‘Q’ sites
- 2: Dummy factories and buildings
- 3: Diversionary fires (SF or ‘Starfish’ sites)
- 4: Simulations of urban lighting (‘QL’ sites)

QL sites were introduced in 1941 as an attempt to deflect bombing away from civilian targets. These sites were placed in clusters usually with a SF site close by. Any surviving sites are now considered sites of national importance.



The building on the Grane Rd., was a decoy site to protect the ROF factory at Lower Darwen, or “The Fuse” as it was known locally. There were approx. 5 more in the area to protect Accrington, but this one was on its own. It was probably manned by the same team. It is listed as a SF/QL site and the remains today were probably the control building. The other buildings having lighting and controlled fires etc to act as decoy.

The site can be easily visited with paths from the road but take care and do not walk over the building as the roof is very fragile. Also be warned occasionally sheep take shelter in it.

I have yet to find the geocache that is hidden there!!

Jane C

The Celtic Halloween

Halloween is also known in Ireland as Samhain, a traditional Celtic holiday that was first celebrated in Ireland around a thousand years ago. Therefore, many Halloween traditions that are now popular are in fact, Irish. The Celts believed that on the eve of the holiday, dead spirits could visit our world. They dressed up in scary outfits and burned bonfires to ward off the evil spirits. Jack-o-lanterns also originate from Ireland, but the Celts made lanterns from turnips, not pumpkins. Ancient traditions come alive in Ireland during spectacular celebrations of all things supernatural in late October.

A couple of the more renowned festivals are:

Puca Festival (October 23–31, 2021)

Puca Festival is one of Ireland's premier Halloween events primarily due to its location. Held in Ireland's historic Boyne Valley, the festivities showcase Meath's and Louth's most mystical sites.

Tlachtga or The Hill of Ward in Meath was the site for druid ceremonies and the first Samhain celebrations. Trim Castle and Drogheda bear many legends and stories about the past. The festival inspired by Irish folklore was named Púca after a mysterious creature that can change the fortunes of anyone who meets it. Over a three night period the Púca Halloween Festival features dazzling light shows, musical events, and interactive experiences in these famous venues.

Derry Halloween (October 29–31, 2021)

Derry Halloween offers a traditional Samhain celebration with a modern twist, filled with ghoulish events and frightful fun. Derry - Londonderry area - is known as the River Foyle not far from Sperrin Mountains, beautiful Wild Atlantic Way and Causeway Coastal Route. Surrounded by 400-year-old walls, Derry celebrates Halloween with a vibrant carnival. The "scares" at Derry Halloween are also intense featuring many haunted houses and haunted walks.



Barbara S

Samhain

(The Celtic Halloween)

by Annie Finch

In the season leaves should love,
since it gives them leave to move
through the wind, towards the ground
they were watching while they hung,
legend says there is a seam
stitching darkness like a name.

Now when dying grasses veil
earth from the sky in one last pale
wave, as autumn dies to bring
winter back, and then the spring,
we who die ourselves can peel
back another kind of veil

that hangs among us like thick smoke.
Tonight at last I feel it shake.
I feel the nights stretching away
thousands long behind the days
till they reach the darkness where
all of me is ancestor.

I move my hand and feel a touch
move with me, and when I brush
my own mind across another,
I am with my mother's mother.
Sure as footsteps in my waiting
self, I find her, and she brings

arms that carry answers for me,
intimate, a waiting bounty.
"Carry me." She leaves this trail
through a shudder of the veil,
and leaves, like amber where she stays,
a gift for her perpetual gaze.

Submitted by Pesto Cenorr



Watching Wildlife

The migrant summer birds have long since left our shore on their long journey south. Indeed, the swift leave in mid-August. The autumn can seem quite a dull period in terms of bird life, for a lot depends on wind patterns as to how soon the winter migrants will start to arrive. There is a definite gap between the leaving of the summer migrants and the arrival of the winter migrants.

Birds such as Bewicks and Whooper Swans will be coming south to these shores, as well as Greylag, Brent and White-Fronted geese. Bewicks breed in the Arctic region of Russia, whilst Whooper Swans breed in Scandinavia, Iceland and even occasionally in Scotland. The various species of geese nest in the Arctic regions of Russia, Canada and Greenland.



It is in our estuaries that most of these birds settle, as the ebb and flow of the tide provides such rich pickings. They also over-winter in inland sites such as the Martin Mere Wildfowl Fowl Reserve near Burscough. In fact, a public footpath skirts the edge of this reserve and Spring Vale Rambling Class have walked it in the past and from which an abundance of birdlife can be observed.

Birdwatchers often use tips to tell closely related species apart - Bewick and Whooper Swans being a good example. Both species of swans have a yellow patch on their bill. The Bewick has a rounded or blunt patch on the bill 'B' for blunt and for Bewick. Whooper Swans on the other hand have a pointed or wedge-shaped patch on their bill 'W' for wedge and for Whooper.

Two over-wintering species of waders are the Bar-tailed and Black Tailed Godwits. If the distance between the 'knee' and the body of the bird seems enough to fit the word 'black' comfortably into it then it is a Black tailed Godwit. If, on the other hand it looks like you can just about fit the word 'bar' between the knee and the body, then it is a Bar-tailed Godwit I hope I have explained this well enough.

Black Tailed Godwit



Redwings (members of the thrush family) also travelled south to Britain to overwinter. When migrating, Redwings tend to travel during the hours of darkness, so if you hear birds calling overhead during the night then they are most certainly Redwings in flight.

On the last Spring Vale ramble at Burrs Country Park, we walked along a section of old canal, when someone noticed that the ducks in the water seemed unusually still.



Then a dark coloured object was spotted moving through the water. It was soon identified as an American Mink. Many years ago, mink were brought to Britain to be breed and raised on mink farms to supply the fur trade. Overtime some escaped and started to breed and spread all over Britain to the detriment of our natural wildlife. Non-native species almost always have a bad effect on the wider environment. Campaigns to eradicate the mink have been largely effective and the mink that we observed may well have been one of the last ones in the wild in Britain.

Tony C

Rissington Churches Walk

Since I moved to live within the beautiful county of Gloucestershire, I have begun to explore the many picturesque villages that this area of the Cotswolds is so renowned for. This memorable walk takes in three historic villages in the heart of North Cotswolds.

Walk distance 8.5 miles Style: Moderate
Start: from the Main Bourton Car Park: Ref SP170209
OS map: OL45 Explorer - The Cotswolds

Walk back to the main entrance, cross the road, turn left then right and onto the Cotswolds Way, or follow signs for Diamond Way which will take you through the Greystone Farm Nature Reserve and onto the Cotswold Way. What now follows is an easy walk across meadows onto the Wyke Rissington road.

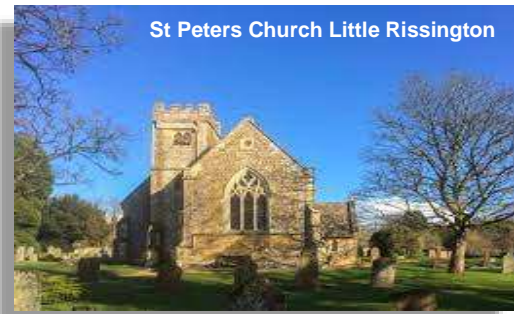
Turn right and follow the narrow village road through Wyke Rissington. The name Wyck Rissington originates from the Saxon 'wic' for a small farm, and 'hrisen dun', meaning a hill overgrown with thickets of wood. The village was mentioned in the Domesday Book as belonging to the Norman knight Roger de Lacy.

A pretty village with a wonderful green and just made for exploring. Continue along the road through to the church dedicated to Saint Lawrence. This 750 year old church is very much worth a visit. The most famous resident of Wyck Rissington was composer Gustav Holst. In 1892, at the age of only 17, Holst became the organist and choirmaster at St Lawrence's church, a post he held for only one year.



Leave the Church by turning left and following the road out of the village, at a right angle bend in the road and continue straight. Climb the hill to the next church at St Peter's at Little Rissington.

St Peters is dedicated to the wartime airfield RAF Little Rissington. The airfield is famous for being a pilot training station and a window in the church is dedicated to the original home of the Red Arrows. The churchyard has a number of military graves of young men from all over the commonwealth who did not go home.



Taking the church path into Little Rissington, follow the road uphill for about 500 metres, at a right angle bend, the indicated lane will lead you directly to Great Rissington. On exiting onto the village road turn left and follow the hill. At the cottages turn right (before reaching the village water pump). In the village centre the Lamb Inn is a compulsory stop, try the Leaping Lamb beer. Follow the road downhill to the 12th century church of St John the Baptist. As you approach you will see a driveway and frontage of a beautiful manor house. The home of Sir Seymore Howard, 1st Baronet and Lord Mayor of London.



Walk through the church yard to the rear of the church, leave by the stile in the bottom left hand corner. The path will take you to the Bourton road. Don't go through to this but turn back into the field and follow a path to Clapton on the Hill Road. turn left towards Clapton and walk uphill for approx. 200 metres, and after this turn right at the next signed path. Follow this straight into Bourton on the Water.

Take a well-earned cup of tea and pasty at the Cornish pasty shop or a pint at any of the pubs and inns there.

Michael Mc