

# Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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**Bookings for the Christmas lunch on Sat 11<sup>th</sup> Dec at The Rock Tockholes can now be made by contacting our Secretary on the email above.**

## Walking in Autumn

Over the past 18 months many of us have spent a lot of time indoors, so walking is a great way to break up your day and boost your mood. Even if it feels cold outside, you can still find joy in an Autumn walk.

Walking in Autumn brings its own pleasures. As the days become shorter it makes it easier to admire the sunrise or sunset. You get to enjoy nature's gems, especially if you take woodland walks and canal walks. The autumn colours are currently at their best. The cooler weather has painted the leaves in bright reds, oranges and yellows; and hills clad in velvety pink and purple heather. The first frosts can add a beauty on the coldest days. Still, even on an overcast day, there's plenty to take in.

This time of year is great to spot birds, because there's less leaf cover to camouflage them, plus there are many species that migrate to the UK for the winter, including fieldfares, redwings, waxwings, bramblings, and some types of geese and swans. When the bracken and other plants wither, it's easier to make out signs of old settlements or rock formations revealing the archaeology and geology usually hidden from view.

If fabulous scenery and tranquil walking routes appeal to you, then autumn is the season to pull on your walking boots. While too many people put their walking kit to the back of the cupboard the minute that summer starts to fade, smart walkers keep on walking.

Most of us could benefit from moving more, and walking is the great year-round activity that can keep you moving and improve your level of fitness. Although the amount of sunshine is reduced you can still benefit by increasing your vitamin D levels from being outdoors.

### Here are 7 reasons to enjoy an Autumn walk

- Fabulous views amid colourful autumn scenery
- Huge panoramas under bright blue skies
- Seasonal wildlife gems
- Less crowded walking routes
- Beautiful misty mornings and golden sunsets
- Kicking up leaves on woodland strolls
- Warming hot chocolate in a country cafe after a day's walking.

**Eleanor**

## **Walking in the South Pennine Park**

When choosing an area to undertake a walk some individuals would never consider that block of the Pennines well known to a reference known as Millstone Grit that sits between the Yorkshire wool towns to the east and the Lancashire cotton mills to the west. Lights from these towns dance in the hollows and peninsulas of the surrounding moors and offer the walker venturing out in this area a welcome sight and a safe harbour when they first come into view after a hard day's walking.

The surrounding plains of Cheshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire are better known for their Roman or Medieval settlements. They are dotted with abbeys, churches, with spires and towers or fields soaked with centuries of blood or manure, where wars were fought, or where rivers or ditches were washed pink with sunsets or dawns. All there on maps and on the ground for you to find.

These same Pennines are also marked with the History of the Industrial Revolution built in areas where thieves, gangsters and murderers hid from justice. When the Industrial Revolution hit and these same steep sided valleys flooded with people looking for work, the mills and terraced houses offered mechanical, black silhouettes and remained dark with every change of light and season.

In more recent times some people believe that these same towns have been officially reshaped with councils removing identities and cultures and replacing them with sterile "new towns". Unfortunately, they are all similar with the same shops, no individuality and no distinct character. Some feel a sense of loss in the valleys themselves. Wealth generated here in the past was used to fight England's foreign wars or was used to establish the trading wealth in the City of London. As life and industry has faded and money is needed from elsewhere to revive these towns some believe that this is no more than the North now deserves.

However, there is one thing that has not disappeared and remains vital to any successful walk. This area offers unique characteristics and a sense of remoteness to the walker when climbing out of the valleys and onto the surrounding hills or more locally known as "being on the tops".

When looking at a local map you can see that the rocks themselves shaped everything in this area. Travel, whether by rivers, road, or rail, walled tracks between isolated farms, hamlets or folds or just tracks that allowed the individual to just get out onto the hills were placed where the rocks allowed them to lie. The whole area is littered with footpaths and bridlepaths and the choice is endless for the walker. In order to get out of the steep sided valley bottoms themselves, paving stones were often required placed like "a ladder up to heaven" going straight up onto the moor to a memorial such as Stoodley Pike.

The area has very few trees, but the ground is shaped and cut into by little rivers and streams which feed down through Cloughs and then eventually open out into one of the many reservoirs which sit on these hilltops. Open moorlands are assigned names like Langfield Common, Walden Moor, Chelburn Moor and Blackstone Edge Fold. These are joined by the line of a roman road, or the Rochdale Way, the Pennine Way or places as the curiously named Aiggin Stone.

The one thing that this whole area offers the walker is choice. If you have an interest in history, nature or just want to get out there in the countryside either in a group or just by yourself then I would suggest that you consider this area as it has a lot to offer. This whole area sits in the newly established South Pennine Park stretching from Darwen in the West, Huddersfield in the East, Oldham in the South and Skipton in the North.

Most people feel that the definition of the word park is somewhere railed off to keep you in, but this new Park leads the way for a place which defies easy definition. It is a diverse place, part-rural, featuring market towns, industrial centres and urban fringes. This Park is more than just the landscape. It is a place with people at its heart.

The South Pennines Park is of international significance. Its unique habitat and ecosystem with wet heath, blanket bogs and heather moorland attracts rare breeds of bird but needs to be carefully managed in order to protect the people living in the area, their livelihoods and health as well as to preserve the very landscape itself.

**Glenda B**

# Sphagnum Moss

by Donald S Murray

Sphagnum moss remembers. It recalls the touchdown of each lark that tumbles down upon its surface, the slightness of that weight recorded in the tendrils of each stem. It anticipates the appetites of flock which graze upon that wasteland when the rare haze of summer-heat crisps heather.

The constant tide and toll of weather. Snow concealing peat and turf like surf, rolling in with weight of dark clouds curving around the bleak horizon.

The persistent smidge of rain blurring the land's muted shades year upon damp year again.

And, too, the heavy trudge of boots which used to stamp upon it in pursuit of sheep or cattle. Or else stumbling back homewards just before the black of night consumed the borders of a bog stretching wide before soles, the perils of a loch, perhaps, where a neighbour drowned.

Sphagnum moss, above all, stores the footsteps of those who are now lost, those residents and denizens of moor for whom moss feels an absence, their drum of feet no longer pounding desolation like a heartbeat any more.

Pesto Cenorr

## Spring Vale Ramblers in the 1930s

This photograph, the origins of which are unknown, was passed to us from Davina, via Graham and Andrew. Many thanks. It is interesting to note that standard attire for walking was a raincoat, necktie, and an assortment of headwear. If anyone has any further information regarding this occasion, please contact us, it would be fascinating to discover more. If you have any old photographs showing our members from times past, then please get in touch.



|            |                 |               |               |              |              |           |
|------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| Fred Croft | J.R. Walsh      | J. Hind       | J.W. Jepson   | ?            | ?            |           |
| Wes Green  | Arthur P Dolton | Albert Almond | Jim Duckworth | Alf Bradshaw | Murry Hasler | Jack Wild |

Spring Vale Ramblers Circa 1930s

## Monastic Houses

### Part 6 - Upholland Priory

In 1307, Sir Robert de Holland founded a small chapel at Upholland dedicated to St Thomas of Canterbury. Three years later, he extended the chapel and had buildings constructed to house a community of canons in a collegiate church. William de Gode was their dean and was in charge of the twelve canons. Their religious life was not as strict as that of monks, but they would have similar duties of prayer, scholarship and caring for the poor and sick. However, all did not go to plan and by 1318 they had abandoned the site, possibly on charges of inappropriate behaviour.

This led Robert de Holland to take the advice of the Bishop of Lichfield to convert the site to a monastic Benedictine priory. It was the largest and last of four Benedictine monasteries to be founded in Lancashire. Thomas of Doncaster, from the priory of St John, was appointed prior in 1319. He had twelve monks under his charge.

Only a small section of sandstone walling beside the Conservative Club remains of the old priory that once dominated life in Upholland.

From the graveyard the priory church is on the right and Priory House is on the left. Under the house and gardens lie the unexcavated remains of Upholland Monastic Priory.



Built in 1307, the remainder has been incorporated into the nearby church of St Thomas the Martyr which was originally the church of the Benedictine Priory at Upholland. It was founded by Sir Robert de Holland and named after the martyred archbishop of Canterbury. Sir Robert was the secretary to Thomas, Earl of Lancaster. Interestingly there is another connection with St Thomas, as Earl Thomas ordered that Robert give the poor of Upholland both a feast and gifts on the annual St Thomas the Martyr's Day.

The small tower of St Thomas the Martyr dates from the fifteenth century; the original intention was for a much bigger tower but unfortunately the money ran out resulting in the present smaller but no less impressive structure.

The fortunes of Sir Robert de Holland were severely curtailed when he backed the wrong side against Edward 11. His reward was to be exiled and reduced to begging on the streets of Flanders. His sad life was cut short on his return to England when the ship sank, and he was drowned.

At the top end of the graveyard is the 'robber's grave'. George Lyons was said to be Lancashire's Robin Hood as he allegedly robbed the rich to give to the poor. You might have to search for his illusive grave so look for 'Nanny'. It is said locally that this legendary rogue was caught stealing bread from the nearby Owl Inn and hanged but another account says he was hanged at Lancaster in April 1815, for an offence of burglary at Westwood Hall, Ince, Wigan.

Upholland is said to experience a lot of paranormal activity. An early 19<sup>th</sup> century journal stated that ten per cent of the houses were haunted and scarcely a field or stile was without a goblin or some other supernatural spirit.

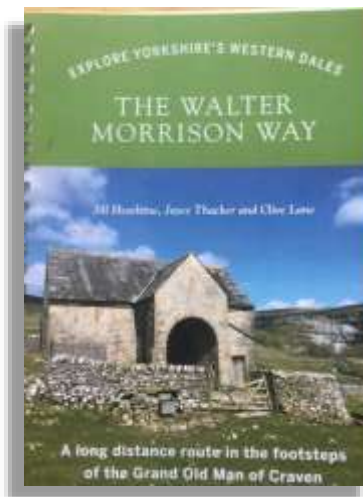
There is a local 5.5 mile walk that starts at Mill House View and takes in narrow paths, footbridges, the golf course, a stony track, Dean Brook, a wood with more footbridges, the River Douglas, four more footbridges, the ancient hamlet of Walthew Green and Rough Park Wood.



Barbara S

## Grand Old Man of Craven

I am always on the lookout for new walking books offering a different insight into familiar walking areas and was pleased to discover this little booklet while drinking tea in a country teashop near to Helwith Bridge. The book is entitled *The Walter Morrison Way* and details a long-distance route following the footsteps of the Grand Old Man of Craven. The *Walter Morrison Way* is a 17-mile route to the western Yorkshire Dales from Conistون Cold to Malham, Settle and Giggleswick, retracing the steps of Walter's favourite paths and connects some of the more notable landmarks in Malhamdale and Craven.



Who was Walter Morrison, I hear you ask? He was born in 1836 and later in life became an MP, a social reformer, and a shrewd businessman. He inherited the Malham Tarn Estate in 1857 and lived at Malham Tarn House for up to eight months a year. The remainder of his time was spent in London and travelling abroad. He was passionate about children's education and as an MP fought for the 1870 Education Act making primary school education available to all children in Britain. He built two schools on the Malham Tarn Estate; one is still in use today as the Kirkby in Malhamdale Primary School.

During his lifetime he generously donated money often anonymously to many good causes both large and small. He donated half of the cost to restore St Michael's church in Kirkby Malham.

Walter died in Sidmouth Devon in 1921 but was brought back to his beloved Malhamdale to be buried at St Michaels Church. This year is the centenary year of his death, and his life and achievements are being celebrated through festivals of exhibition, talks and tours across the Craven area. The walking route was established as a lasting memory to the Grand Old Man of Craven.



The Way is a 17-mile route starting from Coniston Cold and continues to Bell Busk where Walter alighted from the London train to walk to his home overlooking Malham Tarn. The walk now goes on to the quaint village of Kirkby Malham passing St Michael Church where a small stone marks his resting place. Still further up the Dale the route now reaches Malham and then onward up past the Cove providing spectacular views of this stunning landmark, before reaching Malham Tarn. A good friend of Morrison was Charles Kingsley who wrote 'The Water Babies' on one of his visits to Tarn House.

After the Tarn the Way now strikes out across the open Malham Moor, passing Attermire Scar and the Jubilee and Victoria caves. The Victoria Cave was discovered in 1837 the same year Victoria became Queen and contained the fossilised bones of hippos and elephant. As the Way descends into Settle the route passes the Attermire Rifle Range and then provides views across to the Gothic structure of Giggleswick School Chapel with its dome, all paid for by Morrison. The Way follows through the narrow streets of Settle, crossing the River Ribble and then on to finish at Giggleswick.

Copies of the booklet are available from the Folly or Tourist Information Centre in Settle.



**Michael C**