

# Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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## Tomorrow will be a Good Day

Captain Sir Tom Moore, the Second World War veteran whose walk for charity inspired the nation at the start of the Coronavirus pandemic died on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February after testing positive for Covid-19. The 100-year-old charity fundraiser was taken to hospital on Sunday, after being treated for pneumonia for some time and tested positive for the virus the week before last.

The veteran inspired thousands of people across the country and the world to go the extra mile for the NHS, raising over £33M. He helped so many people discover the joy of walking at a difficult time, and he leaves an incredible legacy, showing all of us the amazing things that can happen when you keep on putting one foot in front of the other.

Thank you, Captain Sir Tom Moore, for being such an inspiration. Tomorrow will be a good day.

## Stand and be Counted

The census is a survey that happens every 10 years and gives a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales. We are all about to be counted again as the next census will take place in England and Wales on Sunday 21 March 2021. Scotland and Northern Ireland are responsible for their own census.

The first census was taken in 1801 and the most recent in 2011. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) collects and analyses all the gathered information making the census unique. There is nothing else that gives so much detail about us all and the society we live in.

The information gathered and collated is used by all kinds of organisations, from local authorities to charities. They use the information to help provide the services we all need, including transport, education and healthcare. Without the census, it would be much more difficult to do this.

We are required to complete the census by law and failing not to or supplying false information could result in a fine of up to £1,000.

The details from all the previous censuses (1841- 1911) are available for viewing at the National Archives in London. For a charge the details are available online. All later censuses remain in the custody of the ONS and remain closed to the public for 100 years after the date they were conducted.

So, watch out for the form coming through your door.

**Michael C**

## The Pike Stones

The Pike Stones are a chambered long cairn, to be found on the edge of the Anglezarke Moors near Rivington at SD 62699 17191

Or at what3words [ticking.highs.eliminate](https://www.what3words.com/?w3w=ticking.highs.eliminate)

It is easily found, although no designated footpath, the Pike Stones lie on open access land, there is a stile and a noticeboard nearby when approaching from Jepson's Gate.

Chambered tombs are burial monuments constructed during the Neolithic periods (3400 – 2400BC). They often comprise linear mounds of stone covering one or more stone lined chambers. It is thought that bodies were not buried in chambered cairns just the bones in pots/urns after the bodies had been left out to the elements.

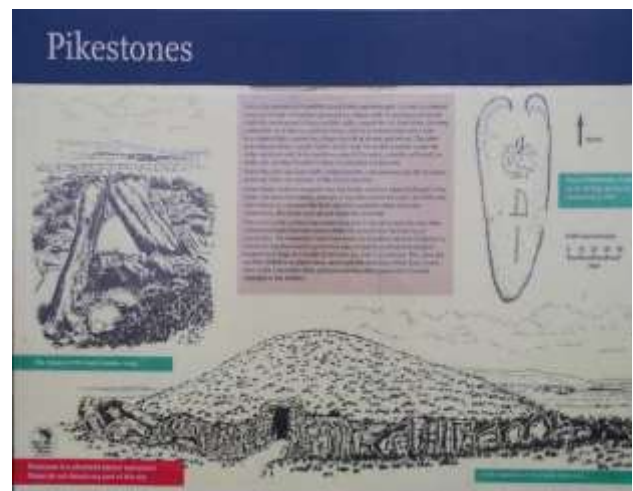
The Rivington and Anglezarke area threw up many historical finds during the 1950's, when several flint tools were found. The Pike Stones are one of four/five known prehistoric sites on the local moors. These are "Round Loaf" a large barrow, which has not been excavated., "Pike Stones", "Noon Hill" on Horwich Moor a ring burial site," Winter Hill Barrow" also on Horwich Moor, which was excavated in the 1960's revealing one piece of flint and a sharpened wooden stake, and "Anglezarke Moor Cairn" found in 1970's which is still under investigation. (Chorley Historical Society).

Pike Stones is located on a low ridge and has extensive views in all directions, except North East. It includes a cairn which has a mound of gritstone and glacial erratics up to 0.4m high which is aligned north-south and is approx. 48m long and 19 m wide reducing to 14m wide at the southern end. Unfortunately, it is surmised that the area was flattened some time ago during stone removal, but enough remains to make it worth a visit. It retains an internal chamber and other features consistent with an entrance. (Historic England)



According to The Megalithic Portal website, the Rivington site is one of only two known Neolithic burial monuments in Lancashire, the other being a barrow on Skelmore Heads near Ulverston (one for future rambles perhaps). This website also reports evidence of graffiti and vandalism in the area!

It is a few years since I visited Pike Stones, but definitely worth a visit. There was an information board near the site giving artists impressions etc, but this may have gone the way of so many. ☹



The original site information board

Jane C

## Jack's Water

When rambling in the area to the South of Darwen, Spring Vale Rambling Class sometimes take in the recently established woodland, Grainings Wood. This Woodland was planted on the site of the old Darwen rubbish tip and footpaths have been created throughout the site.

The former tip was just a stone's throw from Jack Key's reservoir and if my memory serves me correctly the tip was closed in the mid-60s ahead of its scheduled time, due to the pollution of the reservoir, emanating from the rubbish. Although the reservoir was drained several years ago, it used to be a prime fishing site. Today, I doubt whether a rubbish tip would be allowed to be established and operated so close to a reservoir.

There have been various versions of the name of the reservoir down the years (Jack Key's, Jack Kay's, Jack's Key, Jack's Kay) and in one period it was named Whitehall Lake. This was during a time in the early 20th century when the reservoir was being promoted as a leisure facility for sailing craft. I have some old photographs showing jetties stretching out into the water and the large sailing club house. These days are long gone now of course, but I can remember seeing remains of jetties.

The reservoir was fed by a stream emanating on Cranbrook Moss. This stream could legitimately be regarded as being the beginning of the River Darwen. However, on old maps the name "Darwen" is only applied to the water course leaving the reservoir. Of course now that the reservoir no longer exists, the stream from Cranberry Moss must be considered to be the source of the "Darwen."

**Tony C**



## The Ribble Rivers Trust

The fourth in a series of articles covering countryside and environmental charities that require our help and support.

The Ribble Rivers Trust aim to improve, protect and promote the River Ribble for both people and wildlife. The Trust is based in Clitheroe and works with the public and many other organisations to deliver river improvements across the entire Ribble catchment area.

The Ribble catchment covers an area of over 750 square miles and contains more than 3479 miles (5,600 kilometres) of watercourses. As well as the Ribble, the Trust look after the River Calder, River Hodder, River Darwen, and River Douglas sub-catchment which means that they look after all of the rivers, streams, and becks that flow into them.

Today, the Trust has ten Trustees, who volunteer a wide range of skills and experience that are necessary to the function and activities of the Trust. There is also have a great team of employees with a large skills and knowledge base, who are actively delivering projects throughout the Ribble catchment area.

Some of the work undertaken within our walking area are:

The construction of fish passes to avoid old mill weirs on the River Darwen at Hoghton, and on the Hyndburn Brook at Dunkenhall and Oakenshaw. The passes allow the fish to move upriver more freely to spawn.

Working to reduce water contaminations by restoring some of the damaged areas of peat on Pendle Hill this helps to restrict peat run-off into Mearley Brook.

A 10-year Lancashire Woodland Connect campaign to create an expanding network of connected woodlands, by planting thousands of trees.

The Primrose Lodge Blue and Greenway Project is an ambitious project to convert the former Primrose Mill Lodge, within the heart of Clitheroe, into a wildlife friendly and natural open space.

**Michael C**

## Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

by Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

### Contribution from Pesto Cenorr

It has been said that this poem reminds people of the woods at Haigh Hall!



## Frost at Midnight

by Samuel Taylor Coleridge - Final verse...

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,  
Whether the summer clothe the general earth  
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing  
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch  
Of mossy apple-tree, while the night that  
Smokes in the sunthaw; whether the eve-drops fall.  
Heard only in the trances of the blast,  
Or if the secret ministry of frost  
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,  
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

## Here Hunts Heron

Here hunts heron. Here haunts heron.

Huge-hinged heron. Grey-winged weapon.

Eked from iron and wreaked from blue and  
beaked with steel: heron, statue, seeks eel.

Rock still at weir sill. Stone still at weir sill.

Dead still at weir sill. Still still at weir sill.

Until, eelless at weir sill, heron magically...  
unstatues

Out of the water creaks long-legs heron,

old-priest heron, from hereon in all sticks

and planks and rubber-bands, all clanks

and licks and rusty squeaks.

Now heron hauls himself into flight – early aviator,

heavy freighter – and with steady wingbeats

boosts his way through evening

light to roost.

*From The Lost Words. Poem by Robert Macfarlane,*

These poems were written to be read out loud. I have the CD and listen to the poems in the car and on wet days when it is better to stay indoors, I play them as I gaze longingly into the garden. A great way to feel connected with nature.

### Contribution from Pesto Cenorr



Artwork by Jackie Morris.



## Nature Walks in February

If you have been avoiding the ice, snow and rain in January then February is a great time to start your 2021 walking again. There can be much to enjoy along the way as wildlife is stirring.

February is when watching urban wildlife can become even more rewarding as animals head closer to humans, looking for food and warmth.

The first bumblebees emerge on sunny days obtaining nectar from garden plants such as crocuses.

Ladybirds, including two spot and seven spot, will sun themselves in milder spells.

In woods, bluebell leaves are pushing through the soil and under hedges, leaves of wild arum are unfurling. Long maroon and yellow catkins appear on alder trees along rivers and streams.

Sparrowhawks and buzzards begin to establish territories by soaring over woods on clear days. Birdsong begins to grow louder as chaffinches, song thrushes and blackbirds become more vocal and great spotted woodpeckers start to drum.

On wintry evenings, the local reservoir may produce a blizzard of gulls as thousands of the birds fly into roost.

The snowdrop is the flower of February and there are many locations that allow us to see great drifts of nodding white flowers in spectacular settings. Do you have a favourite place where you like to walk to spot snowdrops – why not write a little article for **Ramblers Gems** and tells us about it or send us a photograph...



While most of our greenery is still dormant and even the grass is lacklustre, ferns are surprisingly glossy and verdant at this time of year. It's worth stopping in damp and dark places to study them, if only for a few seconds. The hart's tongue is particularly spectacular and loves old walls. It has long, strap-like leathery fronds and can give a rainforest feel to familiar local woods.

Warmer days may stir frogs and toads into breeding action so, if you have a pond, keep popping out to check it – you should see ripples from frogs or toads diving away at your approach, coupled with excitable croaking. I have often seen frogspawn in still water at the side of footpaths so keep looking.

The great crested grebe's start their incredible mating dance. If your local park has a decent sized lake, you may be able to see the great crested grebes perform their courtship displays.



If it is really mild you might see some cheerful yellow woodland and hedge bank primroses, and these will surely make you feel that spring is on the way!



Jean G