

Ramblers Gems



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Thank you to our contributors and you the reader

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Clarion House

If you are walking in the Roughlee area of Pendle on a Sunday afternoon, then the ideal place to call in for a cuppa is Clarion House.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Clarion Houses had popped up in many rural areas. They were linked to cycling clubs, and some provided accommodation as well as refreshments. In 1897, a Clarion House opened at Bucklow Hill, near Tatton Park in Cheshire. Further Clarion Houses were built at Colne, Burnley and in the Ribble valley.

The Clarion Houses were built as a non-profit making co-operative with any excess money to be used in spreading the word of socialism. It was planned in the hope that others would take it as a model of how society as a whole ought to be organised. Visitors could come and witness how people - lots of people - were prepared to devote their lives to the Clarion movement for no personal gain.

In essence, the house was a meeting and resting place for workers from nearby mills and factories, who had come up into the countryside around Pendle Hill to escape the grime and noise of increasingly congested towns such as Colne and Brierfield. It was the third such house in the area, two previous rented sites (a terrace at Thorneyholme Square and Nabs Farm at Roughlee) proved to be unsatisfactory. In late 1911 the Nelson Independent Labour Party Land Society secured a low-interest loan for £350 from the Nelson Weavers' Association. At the time this was a large amount of money but was indicative of the strength of commitment to supporting recreation for ordinary people. The house opened its doors in the summer of 1912 and has remained popular ever since.

The Clarion House at Roughlee is the last remaining one in the country and is still a meeting place for cyclists and ramblers and provides a monument to the Clarion Society that provided fellowship and community to the working people.



Clarion House on Jenny Lane Newchurch in Pendle

Alan R

The Silverdale Hoard

In the last issue of Ramblers Gems, I wrote about the Cuerdale Hoard, and following this I was informed about another such find in the vicinity of Silverdale. Sometime around the year 905 AD, an unknown Viking hid a collection of silver valuables. The hoard was covered over, but the owner never returned, and it lay undiscovered for over a thousand years. Some of the artifacts of the Cuerdale Hoard are very similar to the Silverdale one. Why were both of these valuable hoards never reclaimed? Were the owners of these hoards killed in battle against the Saxons, leaving the silver undiscovered for a millennium?

It's worth putting the date of this burial into a national context. In 901 the Norse Vikings were thrown out of Dublin. They sailed straight across the Irish sea to settle in the areas of the Wirral, Chester and Lancashire. Two years earlier the Saxon king Alfred the Great had died. He was succeeded by his son, Edward the Elder who continued to rule the Saxon territories in the south of England.

Edward's sister, Aethelflaed was queen of Saxon Mercia, which extended up as far as the river Mersey. Lancashire was part of the Danelaw with the Danish Vikings of York being the dominant force in the area. For the next twenty years a series of battles would be fought between the Vikings and the Saxon armies of Edward and Aethelflaed, and many of the men of Lancashire would be caught up in them.



The Jorvic Viking Centre York

In 2011 Darren Webster was out in field near Silverdale with his metal detector, when the device started to bleep loudly. On discovering the hoard, he contacted the Portable Antiquities Scheme at the Museum of Lancashire. The hoard was classed as 'treasure' and the landowner and finder shared equally in the money paid for it. The Museum of Lancashire raised the required amount, and it is now the proud permanent home of the Silverdale Hoard. The museum experts reported that the arm rings show styles developed in Ireland but represent a mixing of forms and techniques from across the Viking world. The three arm rings that are nested, (placed inside each other) are particularly impressive.



One of the decorated bracelets from the Silverdale Hoard

The hoard consists of 201 items in total, many of the coins date from King Alfred's reign, some were minted by the Saxons and others are Viking copies. There is even a silver plated coin – a deliberate forgery made from a cheaper metal! Other coins are from the Frankish kingdoms of France, and some from Islamic regions, including one from Baghdad. One piece of jewellery is made from Islamic coins twisted together, which is similar to a piece discovered in the Cuerdale Hoard.

A large collection of the treasures from the Silverdale Hoard are on loan and now on display at the Jorvic Viking Centre in York. It is well worth a visit to see this remarkable find. You just never know what is buried beneath your feet while out walking in the local countryside. This is why you might see me exploring freshly dug moles hills. These tiny animals may just unearth the next hoard.

Michael C

The Meanings of *Birds'*

Part 2 – The Sparrow

The sparrow is probably one of the most common birds in the world. The two most common species of the bird are the tree sparrow and the house sparrow. These little creatures can be found in Africa, Asia, Europe, Australia, and the Americas. All Sparrows are songbirds. They're highly creative in how they manoeuvre and camouflage themselves.

Symbol of love: In Greek mythology, the sparrow was one of the birds associated with Aphrodite, the goddess of love. The sparrow symbolized the spiritual connection found in true love. Ironically, the sparrow is widely regarded in science as one of the most lustful birds.

In native European folklore, it is a bad omen if a sparrow flies into someone's house. This is considered a sign of impending death. In Kent, a person who caught a sparrow had to kill it to prevent their parents' death.

In Indonesian folklore, a sparrow flying into someone's home symbolized good luck. If the bird built a nest in the home, it meant that a wedding would happen in the home soon.

The Sparrow is a remarkably busy bird. When they're not foraging, they build nests and safeguard their chicks. It seems never-ending, but Sparrow likes the activity. Keeping things orderly improves the quality of life for the birds and acts as a model for humans. Vigilance and fastidiousness are two key meanings for Sparrow, as is a gentle reminder - "small" doesn't mean useless, powerless, or unimportant in the grand scheme.



Tree Sparrow in Flight

Like most members of the Finch family (some 400+ species strong), Sparrow is a social creature. They love having communal spaces in old buildings and sheds. Gatherings of Sparrows illustrate the saying, "there is power in numbers." A predator coming upon a large flutter of Sparrows can find them remarkably intimidating. Sparrows instinctively live and move together. With this behaviour in mind, Sparrow symbolism includes community cooperation, friendship, harmony, and the power of "tribe."

Among Sailors, there was a tradition of getting a Sparrow tattoo before a voyage. It became an emblem for protection at sea.

Sparrow Tattoo



While a creature of the Air Element, Sparrows have a relationship with Water and Earth. They clean off in puddles wherever they can, and dust bath themselves on dry soil. When the Sparrow Spirit Animal wings its way into your life, happiness follows. It's time to simplify, return to your roots, and celebrate community.

Some Native Americans saw Sparrow as being a kind friend to everyday people. Legend has it Sparrow is the spirit of a deceased Elder. As an Ancestor, Sparrow could move between heaven and earth bearing messages.

In East Asia, Sparrows are auspicious birds. Seeing them means spring has arrived and with the season, joy. Having a Sparrow nest near your home attracts good fortune. It represents hope, rejuvenation, and pleasant companionship.

Romans associated Sparrow with Venus, the Goddess of Love. Among the Celts, Sparrow represented ancestral wisdom and intelligence. As in Indonesia, the Celts felt having a Sparrow come into your home was a positive sign, preceding excellent news or a positive change in fate. In the Bible, God had a soft spot for Sparrows. Not one Sparrow falls to the ground without God's sanction (Matthew 10:29). The Sparrow portrays how much God values creation, down to the tiniest creature.

Jean G

All the Colours of the Rainbow

As we are out and about rambling now is the time when we start to spot lots of wildflowers and the meadows come to life. From deciduous woods, moorlands, meadows, windswept hilltops, shingle beaches, marshes and riverbanks there is so much colourful flora to see and enjoy if you look a little closer.

The first to arrive are the ones in the woodlands before the canopy is covered in leaves and blocks out a lot of the sunlight. Next colour appears in the verges alongside our lanes, roads and motorways. Cream flowers are often the first we spot.

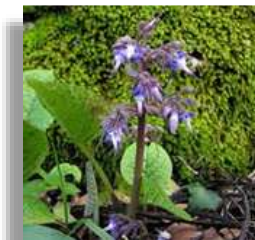
Each plant has its unique method of attracting pollinators or distributing its seed. On a walk these plants will jog our memory and remind us of years gone by. Some have myths and legends that linger from an ancient past when all flowers conveyed a message.

Here are just a few starting with our primroses, cowslips, wood anemone. At the moment the pungent perfume of the abundant wild garlic is ever present as we pass through woodlands. A beam of sunshine through the canopy of an ancient wood will open the white flowers of the early flowering wood anemone – Spring Wood at Whalley is full of them.

Shady hedgerows in May foam with the green and white of cow parsley. From compacted pastures to garden lawns, the Anglo-Saxon 'Day's Eye' is sure to appear.

On a recent ramble through the Cold Kirby we spotted some Abraham, Isaac and Jacob near Rievaulx Abbey and Sutton Bank on the Cleveland Way – a very rare plant this far north.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob



In the area around the River Dove near Ashbourne there was plenty of wild white saxifrage. We walked along side fields of dandelions. Ladies smock or

cuckoo flower, or milkmaids in the meadows swayed on the breeze and the male orange tip fluttered by. I grow garlic mustard/hedgerow mustard in my garden for this delicate butterfly. The brilliant-yellow flower of Kingscup lights up the marshes and woodland streams in early spring so you need to tread carefully.

Wild Saxifrage



Grasswood, Grassington and other areas (Whalley Spring Wood) are well known for their carpets of heavenly scented bluebells. Can you spot a native English one from the invasive Spanish one or the hybrid?

We need to look out for the cornflower in the traditional meadows at Bell Syke, Slaidburn. You may spot the traditional favourite of scented flowers the lily of the valley among the limestone pavements of the Pennines but beware this is among the common plants that are dangerous to dogs and cats.

The tall and pink, foxgloves will be lighting up woodland and bracken slopes in early summer and they are irresistible to bees. I see these walking from Walla Crag to Ashness packhorse bridge each summer. Then in autumn along comes the teasle. It pops up in cleared ground such as brownfield sites. There are so many more to seek out before then. The lady's bedstraw, meadow cranesbill, water avens, field scabious, bird's foot trefoil ragged robin, musk mallow, the rare bee and the early purple orchids and field poppies

Water Avens



I will tell you all about meadows in another issue. I am off to find my wildflower book and download a wildflower ID App to the mobile!

Barbara S

Furness Abbey -A hidden gem

Most ramblers may be aware of but may not have made a visit to this intriguing piece of architecture in our region as it is truly a hidden gem. The Abbots' "Sunday best name" is the Abbey of Saint Mary of Furness. It lies in a secluded steep sided valley in the very southern part of the Furness peninsula, and it was this very geography which added to its importance for it developed into the second most important abbey in the country at the time, Fountain Abbey in Yorkshire being the first.

Originally lying in the county of Lancashire between the waters of Morecambe Bay, the undrained lands of South Cumbria and the wild rugged hills of the Lakeland Fells, this Abbey developed by relying upon its own local resources and its strength lay in its very isolation.

With a ready supply of fresh water, access to more than enough timber and local stone the construction of the different buildings was relatively easy. Roads to the north meant inland communication was not too difficult. Access by sea to the Isle of Man and Ireland was protected by Walney Island standing guard over the harbour.

Furness was the first and most important foundation of the Savigniac Order. A small group of these monks came to Tulketh in Preston initially but after only 3 years they abandoned their buildings and came to Furness to establish the Abbey. The first abbot was Ewan d'Avranches and the Savigniacs established 12 more houses in England and Wales with a further 1 on the Isle of Man and 2 in Ireland. After 20 years the order eventually amalgamated with the much larger Order of the Cistercians.



An overview of the Abbey ruins



The Cloisters from the west tower

For 400 years Furness Abbey enjoyed substantial privileges, possessions and wealth, having a major influence on both regional and national affairs. The Order attached to the Abbey fell into the usual two groups the White Monks or Choir Monks and lay brothers. The White Monks spent their time in prayer, reading and study as well as routine daily service. Manual labour was undertaken by the lay brothers who were usually illiterate as they were from a poor background and operated as a sort of go between with the White Monks and the outside world.

The strength of the Abbey shifted over time, and it had to be flexible to meet its needs during continually changing times. At different points in its history, it managed large areas in the Pennines, at Ribblesdale, Ingleborough, Whernside, Borrowdale and Cockermouth as well as right across the Lake District. The fact that being able to call upon churches, corn mills, fulling mills, iron mines, forges, quarries, castles, tanning mills, oyster beds, fishing beds, seafowl and eggs, rabbit warrens, salt pans, peat areas and farming land for sheep and cattle meant that they were very self-sufficient.

The Abbey dominated the region and its independence was extremely rare among monasteries at this time. The Abbot was almost like a Feudal Lord which allowed him to establish a military, political and administrative responsibility that shaped the region and allowed him to influence this whole area with his views.

This was not to go unnoticed by Henry VIII when he passed his Act for the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536 but more of that in a later edition!!

Glenda B