

# Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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## Darwen Tower Beacon

As many Darwen residents will know Darwen Tower is back looking like the Tower that we all know and love. The scaffolding has been removed which marks the end of the first phase of the restoration work. All the external improvements, including structural works, are now complete and the contractors are now due to move inside to carry on with the vital restoration work including window replacement, water sealing the floors and internal pointing of the stonework.

The tower was originally built in 1898 by public subscription to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and to mark our rights to roam across the moors. The Tower will be officially reopened on June 2 when it will be the backdrop for a beacon lighting event, as part of the celebrations to mark Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee. This will be the first time that a British monarch has marked a Platinum Jubilee, 70 years as Sovereign.

The Jubilee beacon will be lit at Darwen Tower on the evening of Thursday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The beacon is one of thousands being lit in the UK and the Commonwealth and forms part of the official programme announced by Buckingham Palace for the Jubilee Weekend.

The beacon will be lit by Janet Pearce, a local resident and founder of the Keep Darwen Tidy group, Janet was the winner of a competition to light the Jubilee Beacon at the Tower and was over the moon to have been chosen.

If you are able to attend this once in a lifetime event, then make your way to the Tower on the evening of Thursday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June. The provisional timetable of the proposed happenings on the night are listed below.

- 9.38pm:** Piper
- 9.40pm:** Proclamation by Town Crier
- 9.43pm:** Fanfare on Cornets played by Darwen Brass Band
- 9.45pm:** Lighting of the Beacon by Janet Pearce
- 9.45pm:** Singing of the National Anthem with Darwen Brass Band and raising of Union Flag on top of tower.
- 9.50pm:** Various music and announcements

The event may be cancelled at short notice if bad weather prevails. Please remember that this is a night-time event, and it will be dark on your return, so take a battery torch. Also wrap up warm, wear suitable footwear and watch your step as the paths have not yet been fully repaired. There will be marshals along the route to guide your way. Don't forget to take your flags.

**Glenda B**

## Wildlife Spotting and ID

**Are you looking for a mobile app to identify plants by photo?** If you are a rambler, wildlife explorer, a gardener or just passionate about plants, having a plant identification app installed on your phone can be very handy. There are many mobile apps for this purpose some rated as good and others not worth installing!

In addition to the general plant recognition apps, many others focus particularly on identifying trees, flowers, wildflowers, mushrooms, weeds, edible and medicinal plants, mushrooms, pond, bog plants and many more.

Plant identification apps are useful tools for people who frequently go into the wild and wish to differentiate the edible plants from the toxic ones for humans or their dogs but be careful using them to identify edible and medicinal plants and mushrooms as several can look very similar! We recommend a good foraging course for this. We know of a medicinal herbalist based in East Lancashire who does not pick mushrooms and takes a specialist with her, in the autumn, if they are going to pick mushrooms.

I am currently exploring which App will be the most helpful for me. My criteria are FREE, ease of use, plant detection capabilities, and other features that I might find valuable. I am looking for ones that are easy to use for the sole purpose of finding out a plant's name from a photo.

I am relying on reviews until I download one and do a test trial. I have listed a few here but you need to do your own research and perhaps you could give some feedback if you use one so that we can share the best ones between SVRC ramblers. I have an Android phone, but I have included the iOS in brackets.



My first trial will be [Pl@ntNet \(iOS\)](#) - Plant Identification - Pl@ntNet is an application that allows you to identify plants simply by photographing them with your smartphone. Pl@ntNet is also a great citizen science project: all the plants you photograph are collected and analysed by scientists around the world to better understand the evolution of plant biodiversity and to better preserve it.

Second will be [LeafSnap \(iOS\)](#) – Plant Identification – LeafSnap can currently recognize 90% of all known species of plants and trees, covering most of the species you will encounter in every country on Earth.

Third will be [PlantSnap \(iOS\)](#) – Identify Plants, Flowers, Trees & More – Instantly identify over 600,000 types of plants: flowers, trees, succulents, mushrooms, cacti and more! Learn how to take care of plants: PlantSnap now teaches you how to grow and care for your plants. They have added gardening tips and advice for tens of thousands of plant species too.

Lastly, I will test [Google Lens \(iOS\)](#) - this App lets you search what you see, get things done faster, and understand the world around you—using just your camera or a photo. Apparently, you get lots of irritating blue ‘TIP’ pop-up boxes!

If you don't fancy downloading an App Tony Culverhouse is brilliant at identifying flora and fauna and Michael Counter has a plant App on his phone! (Ed Michael's App is [PictureThis](#) )

If you prefer old fashioned hard copies, there are lots of charts online. I have used some of these with children & families on nature activities! As an ex-Wildlife Watch Leader for The Wildlife Trust and an RSPB Explorer Leader these are my go-to webpages. Wildlife Watch [Spotter Sheets](#), RSPB [Fun, Learning, Activites and Games](#) for kids and families but The Woodland Trust Nature Detectives site has been taken down.



**Barbara S**

## The May Fairy

The Estate of Cicely Mary Barker

My buds, they cluster small and green;  
The sunshine gaineth heat:  
Soon shall the hawthorn tree be clothed  
As with a snowy sheet.

O magic sight, the hedge is white,  
My scent is very sweet;  
And lo, where I am come indeed,  
The Spring and Summer meet.



## The Lady's-Smock Fairy

The Estate of Cicely Mary Barker

Where the grass is damp and green,  
Where the shallow streams are flowing,  
Where the cowslip buds are showing,  
I am seen.

Dainty as a fairy's frock,  
White or mauve, of elfin sewing,  
'Tis the meadow-maiden growing—  
Lady's-smock.



Pesto Cennor

## The Lords-and-Ladies Fairy

The Estate of Cicely Mary Barker

Here's the song of Lords-and-Ladies  
(in the damp and shade he grows):  
I have neither bells nor petals,  
like the foxglove or the rose.  
Through the length and breadth of England,  
many flowers you may see—  
Petals, bells, and cups in plenty—  
but there's no one else like me.

In the hot-house dwells my kinsman,  
Arum-lily, white and fine;  
I am not so tall and stately,  
but the quaintest hood is mine;  
And my glossy leaves are handsome;  
I've a spike to make you stare;  
And my berries are a glory in September. (BUT  
BEWARE!)

*(The Wild Arum has other names beside Lords-and-Ladies, such as Cuckoo-Pint and Jack-in-the-Pulpit.)*



Contribution by Pesto Cennor

## Sherborne Park Walk

The previous week saw me walking in a completely different countryside than my usual Yorkshire Dale or Ribble Valley vistas. I was down in the Cotswolds AONB with its rolling hills and grassland which harbour thatched medieval villages, churches and stately homes all built with the distinctive local yellow limestone. This route describes the 4.5 mile walk Michael Mc and myself took around the National Trust estate of Sherborne Park.

The walk commenced from the NT car park at Northfield Barn and followed field footpaths with extensive views down on to the Sherborne and Windrush valley. The River Windrush which has an average depth of only ten inches is a renowned trout fishing river, meanders its way through some charming unspoiled fields and natural woodland before joining the Thames, for its journey to London and the sea.



The way reaches a quiet country lane, and we head down to the crossroads and then follow on up the hill to the Ewepen Buildings. These, as the name implies were used to shelter sheep and are still utilised for this purpose today. The route now follows the estate tracks around the deer park, passing an old overgrown football pitch with traditional wooden changing rooms. Our way now drops gently down through mature woodland to enter the end of the village of Sherborne, by the memorial to the fallen of World War I. It was here that the village shop offered tea and cakes and it would have been rude not to participate, so we did, sitting on the lawn with the sun shining down.



After our leisurely break, it was a final short pull uphill back to the car park. This time our route passed the Sherborne water meadows. The meadows were an idea developed in the early 17th Century to produce large amounts of lush grass in the early spring for sheep to graze. The winter flood waters stopped the ground from freezing allowing the grass to grow earlier. The flooding with silt added natural fertiliser to the soil. Over the years meadows were ploughed up to grow crops, but in the early 1990s the National Trust started restoration, opening the channels and restoring the sluice gates, and this has created not just good grazing but also habitat for many species.



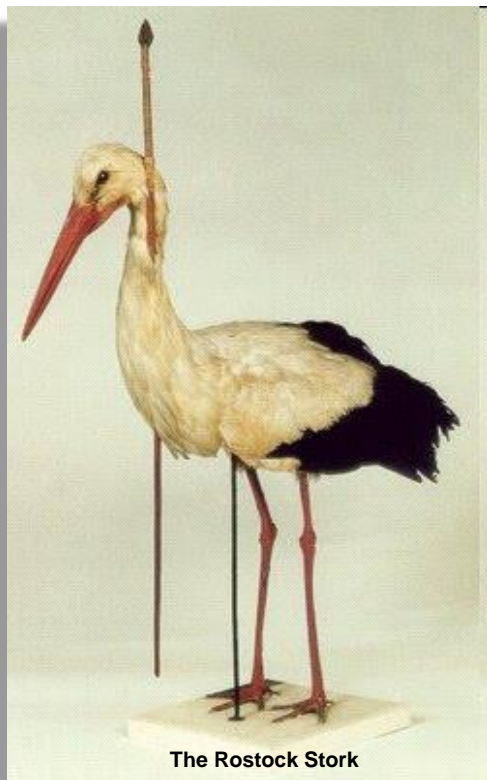
**Sherborne House** is the large country house that sits at the centre of the estate. The now privately owned Grade II\* listed building, once owned by the Dutton family has been converted into luxury flats. The current house was rebuilt in 1829–1834 for John Dutton, 2nd Baron Sherborne by Lewis Wyatt. The house reproduces the style of the earlier 17th-century building, has a square plan with a central courtyard and a three-storey façade. The surrounding estate was bequeathed to the National Trust on the death of the seventh Lord Sherborne in 1982.



**Michael C**

## Bird Migration

On display within the University of Rostock Museum in Germany is a very curious specimen. It is a preserved white stork that was shot by a wildfowl hunter in 1822, somewhere in northern Germany. What is so strange about this specimen is that when the hunter went to collect the bird that he had just shot, he noticed with amazement that it had a spear or arrow through its neck. He took the bird to a local museum where the projectile was identified as a hunting spear/arrow used by native hunters in Central Africa. The bird had survived being potential prey in Africa and had flown on its spring migration north, only to be shot again in Germany.



Further reports surfaced of other white storks carrying similar African weaponry. This was at a time when scientists were still trying to figure out why some birds disappeared in winter, whilst others appeared permanently over the centuries. Some very bizarre theories have been put forward over the years by philosophers and scientists alike. The truth is that apart from very rare instances, science is never constant, but is subject to challenge and changes with new information coming to light.

In the 1700s scientist Charles Morton estimated that when birds disappeared during the various season, they flew to the moon- the journey of 60 days. Another theory was that some birds changed into other animals. Barnacle geese, for example were so named because it was widely believed that they hatched from Barnacles during winter. We now know that they arrive here from Greenland for winter, but in early centuries nobody knew about bird migration. Birds come to Britain from further north during winter, because our winters are not as severe as in their breeding grounds. Similarly, birds migrate north to Britain in the spring, because of an abundance in food supplies and breeding sites. These include swallows and sand martins which because they are frequently seen flying over water during autumn, were once believed to sleep in the mud at the bottom of ponds until the spring, instead of, as we now know, they migrate South.



It was occurrences like the stork with the African spear/arrow through its neck that made people realise that many birds travel, sometimes involving great distances on their migration. It is only by the studying and monitoring of the bird migration routes that we can gain a better understanding and try to alleviate any problems connected with these migrating birds. Swifts, which migrate north to Britain for the summer have shown a decline in recent years. It was by constant observing of bird migration patterns that it was discovered the reason for the reduction in certain bird populations was due to the illegal shooting for sport, of birds passing through many Mediterranean countries on their migration routes.

**Tony C**