

Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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For further information or to submit a contribution email: svrcramblers@gmail.com Web Site <http://www.springvaleramblers.co.uk/>

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A Jubilee Year



On 6th February this year Her Majesty the Queen became the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth. On this Jubilee Weekend we send our congratulations for this incredible achievement.

A Platinum Beacon



Images from last Thursday nights lighting of the Platinum Beacon at the Darwen Jubilee Tower. Thanks to Anita for the photos.

Glenda B

June Jottings

The sixth month of the year in the Julian and Gregorian calendars, is named after the Roman goddess Juna, the goddess of marriage. Plutarch (Greek philosopher, AD 100ish) implied that June was favourable for weddings, resulting in long and happy unions. *Any SVRC members care to comment??*

In the Northern Hemisphere, the summer solstice occurs in June, – the day with the most daylight hours. Tuesday June 21st, 2022. Solstices occur when the sun is at its greatest distance from the equator and is derived from two Latin words: “sol” meaning sun and “sister” to cause to stand still.

The Summer solstice, also called “Litha” marks the first day of summer, on or about 21st June.

Picture taken from BCC – Children’s newsround page!!

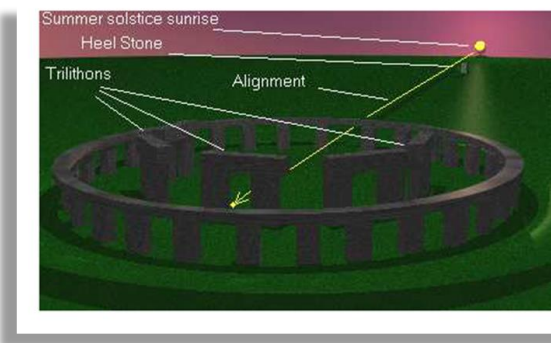


Stonehenge – constructed around 3000BC to 2000BC, is a UNESCO world heritage site and synonymous with the Summer Solstice. There is not enough space to cover all the details properly here, but there is lots to discover on the internet.



How it was built and for what purpose remain open to debate, specifically that many of the stones and their arrangements including the “heel stone” are aligned to the sunset of the winter solstice and the sunrise of the summer solstice. Some researchers have suggested that Stonehenge was a place of healing – like a prehistoric equivalent of Lourdes. This theory is based on bones found in graves in the area, some with trauma and birth deformities. Modern techniques allow these bones to be dated and their origins identified, they include a teenage boy from 1550BC from the Mediterranean, and a metal worker from 2300BC from the foothills of the German Alps.

The Heel Stone, also known as the “Friars Heel” or “Sun-stone” lies northeast of the circle about 16 feet tall. At the summer solstice an observer standing within the stone circle looking northeast would see the sun rise in the direction of the Heel Stone.



There are plenty of folk lore stories surrounding Stonehenge and its construction, most involving witches, wizards and the devil!! Far too many in fact for this short article. Might include some in a future Ramblers Gems.

Midsummers Day – nothing to do with murders in a picturesque sleepy fictitious county!!

Traditionally this was celebrated after the longest day, on or around the 24th of June and was associated with witches, magic, fairies in pre Christian times. Bonfires were lit to ward off evil spirits and to give strength to the sun, people would jump through the fire – the highest height achieved being a marker to the height of the harvest that year. As with many pagan festivals the early Church commandeered them, and the day was re-dedicated as the Feast of St John the Baptist.

Jane C

The Devil's Bridge

Spanning the River Lune to the south and east of Kirkby Lonsdale is Devil's Bridge. This magnificent three-arched bridge probably dates from the 12th or 13th century and is now a scheduled ancient monument.



A popular haunt for motorcycle enthusiasts who congregate at weekends in the adjoining parking area to discuss all things mechanical over a mug of hot tea and a bacon butty. Devil's Bridge was once the only bridge over the Lune for miles and formed part of the busy west-bound route into the town.



At the apex of the bridge, there's a deep impression in the stone – often referred to as the devil's handprint. The folk tale surrounding the handprint tells of an old woman who lived on the banks of the Lune with a few animals. One night her cow strayed across the river and would not be tempted back, no matter how much she coaxed and implored. The devil appeared to her, offering to build a bridge in exchange for the soul of the first body to cross it. The devil constructed the bridge with his own hands, leaving a print in the wet stone. The next day the woman met the devil at the bridge and agreed to fulfil her part of the bargain. She took a bun from her bag and threw it across the bridge, whereupon her small dog raced across to retrieve it. The devil, in a fit of rage at being outwitted, howled in anger and vanished in a cloud of brimstone.

Our walk took us up to Wood End Farm and cottage, the old bridleway to Sellet Mill which was more like stream walking even on St George's Day after a very long dry spell! Then fields to Sellet Hall and Hosticle Lane to St Michael the Archangel, Whittington with its 15C tower. For 800 years this has been a holy place and stands on the site of an eleventh century motte and bailey castle. A good lunch stop.



Taking a footpath between fields of lambs to Low Hall we joined Burrow Mill Lane (track) to the bank of the Lune and returned to Devil's Bridge via some narrow and challenging stretches of footpath and a few awkward stiles. A great six-mile walk where mosses, lichens, wildflowers, mushrooms including emerging Alfred's Cakes, hedgerows, woods, swallows, a kestrel, egret, three herons, sand martins, ducklings and one black lamb were spotted.

We extended the walk with a two-mile loop, via the Radical Steps, into Kirby Lonsdale town where blackcurrant and liquorice ice creams were enjoyed. You can't buy happiness, but you can buy ice cream and that's kind of the same thing! Beware Ruskin's View is closed due to a devastating land slide.



Barbara S

LILIES OF THE VALLEY

By Clara Eveline Ramskill

Like the first gleam of the spear heads
Which Cadmus' warriors bore.
Who sprang from the teeth of the dragon
Sown on the Theban shore,
Are the first green shoots of the lily
As they come through the brown earth's crust
To spring into light and beauty
From their prison in the dust.

Caressed by the sun and the showers
They grow in their purity,
And unfold from their dainty bosoms
Their blossoms for you and me.
They teach us many lessons
These fragile flowers of the vale,
And bring us beautiful music
In their perfumed bells so pale.

Hark! in the sweet, spring morning,
When the soft, south breezes blow!
They are singing a jubilant chorus
In a merry measure, though low.
But when the purple shadows
Of evening begin to fall
From the lilies drowsily closing
Comes the sweetest music of all.

Soft as a ring-dove's cooing,
Tender as mother's song,
Sweet as the nightingale's echo
The woods and the hills among;
Like the chant of a fairy chorus
Under a sunset sky,
Is the song in the garden at evening—
Is the lilies' lullaby.

Pesto Cenorr



Clara Eveline Ramskill is considered as one of the youngest of Blackburn's poets, having been born in Blackburn in the year 1880.

Lily of the valley is the favourite flower of Queen Elizabeth II. These delicate blooms are harder than you might think and they're a permanent feature of the floral displays at Buckingham Palace.

Pesto Cenorr

DESCENT FROM SCAWFELL PIKE TO SPRINKLING TARN.

AN EPISODE IN A DAY'S RAMBLE.

By John Walker

And now with careful tread we crept along
Adown that mighty hill, whose bare, bleak head
So oft is capped with fleecy clouds, which hide
Its uncouth nakedness. Anon we reached
That deep, dark tarn, whose waters blue reflect
The craggy peaks, high tow'ring to the sky.
Here, then, we paused awhile, and converse held
With two whose kindly sympathy of thought
Had added double charm to scenes so dear.
But now, stern business and the world's deep cares,
Call them away from Nature's loveliness
To scenes of turmoil and incessant strife.
We parted, sweetly interchanging thought
Most precious to the sympathetic ear.
They wound their way, with easy tread, across
The narrow vale, by Sprinkling Tarn, where once,
In days of old, the wolf and wild boar came
To quench their thirst. We watched them gently rise
The narrow brow, which looks o'er Rosset Ghyll;
And when the top they reached, a farewell shout
Proclaimed the final parting. We replied,
With voice loud-pitched, and kerchief waving high.
The mocking Spirits of the hills caught up
The ringing sound, and in a chorus grand,
High-toned and musical, made answer wild,
With loud and wonderful reverberation,
As if ten thousand organs had essayed,
In weird-like tones, to echo what we said.
Surprised and pleased at what we heard, we called
Again in varied tones and blended voice.
Ever the mocking Spirits, in reply,
Sent back the sound, loud pealing musically,
As if they sought with magic melody
To chain us to the ground whereon we stood.
By this, the sun, low-sinking in the west,
Spoke gently to us, of the time of night
Ere we should reach our temporary home.
We turned away, yet loth to leave a spot
Where Nature spoke unto her roving sons,
In tones so wild, so wonderful, and sweet.



The poet John Walker was born in Blackburn on October 29th, 1845, he would later become a journalist for the Blackburn Times.

Pesto Cenorr

Wild River Swimming

Swimming in your local river can be a magical experience, especially if you're lucky enough to live in an area where the water is clean. You'll get to know the resident wildlife. Perhaps kingfishers or dippers frequent your spot; you might, if you're very lucky, see water voles, otters, or even a beaver or two. The changing seasons are especially evident to those who float and view the world from water level.

It pays to know and understand your local rivers which will of course vary according to its geography, conditions and time of year. Upland rivers tend to flow fast over rocky terrain. Downstream, where a more mature river meanders through a flatter landscape, conditions are very different and it might take many hours for flood water to make its way down.



Wild river swimming in our own local Lancashire rivers is currently not to be recommended as they are considered to be unsafe.

The good news is that The Ribble Rivers Trust has recently launched a new Safe to Splash campaign which aims to secure bathing water status for the local paddling hotspot on River Ribble at Edisford Bridge, Clitheroe.

The River Ribble Trust is an environmental charity, which looks after over 750 square miles of the Ribble catchment and 3,479 miles of watercourse, this new campaign for Bathing Water Status is the first step of improving water quality for local wildlife and human communities. This campaign also hopes to raise awareness of rivers, their value as part of a balanced ecosystem, and their importance to local communities.

The Ribble at Edisford is a popular picnic, bathing, swimming, paddling, fishing, and water sports spot. This makes Edisford Bridge an ideal candidate for Bathing Water Status. Many people come from miles around to paddle in the Ribble's waters at this point. However, like 86 per cent of England's rivers, the Ribble sadly fails to meet the criteria needed for 'good' ecological status or chemical status. In an area like the Ribble Valley there are multiple contributing factors affecting water quality, including agricultural pollution, sewage pollution, and pollution from homes including septic tanks and misconnected drains and appliances.



The risks to consider when swimming in any open water include:

- The shock of cold water can make swimming difficult and increase the difficulty in getting out of the water.
- Lack of safety equipment and increased difficulty for rescue
- The depth of the water – this changes and is unpredictable
- Underwater objects and hazards may not be visible
- Obstacles or other people in the water
- Strong currents can rapidly sweep people away
- Uneven banks and riverbeds
- Water quality, e.g. toxic algal blooms and industrial/agricultural pollution.

Michael C