

# Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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## Social Prescriptions

The government has now decided that walking and cycling activities, all the activities that we have been enjoying for many a year are good for us all, so have decided to inject some money into various pilot projects across the country.

Social prescriptions, including walking, wheeling and cycling, will be offered by GPs as part of a new trial to improve mental and physical health and reduce disparities across the country, the government announced this week.

The government has awarded £12.7 million in multi-year funding to 11 local authority areas in England. The funding will go towards several pilot projects in each location, including adult cycle training, free bike loans and walking groups. Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council have been offering walking and cycling opportunities in their Refresh programme and have recently produced a [Walking and Cycling Plan 2021-24](#) which makes for interesting reading.

Other government schemes will include all-ability cycling taster days where people who may not have cycled before can try to in a friendly environment or walking and cycling mental health groups where people can connect with their communities as they get active.

The pilots must be delivered alongside improved infrastructure, so people feel safe to cycle and walk.

The 11 local authority areas that will trial social prescriptions are: Bath and North East Somerset, Bradford, Cornwall, Cumbria, Doncaster, Gateshead, Leeds, Nottingham, Plymouth, Suffolk and Staffordshire.

The pilot schemes, are a commitment in the government's Gear Change plan published in 2020, aim to evaluate the impact of cycling and walking on an individual's health, such as reduced GP appointments and reliance on medication due to more physical activity. For the first time, transport, active travel and health officials will work together towards a whole systems approach to health improvement and tackling health disparities.

The Walking and Cycling Minister, Trudy Harrison, said:

*'Walking and cycling has so many benefits – from improving air quality in our communities to reducing congestion on our busiest streets. It also has an enormous positive impact on physical and mental health, which is why we have funded these projects which will get people across the country moving and ease the burden on our NHS'.*

**Glenda B**

## **The Peak District Boundary Walk**

Most people when they decide to accept the personal challenge of undertaking a long distance walk become blinkered with only having to concentrate on getting from A to B. Walkers can become obsessed with that one goal and the beautiful scenery of the areas that they are walking in quite often doesn't register in the individual memories of undertaking the walk. It may all blur into one.

In 2013 after Brian Couzins had completed walks covering every square mile of the Peak District he sat down with a friend, Julie Gough, and they hatched a plot to design a route which was not simply a boundary walk but one that would use local knowledge thus ensuring that they included the most interesting places. It was fine to leave out overgrown areas that didn't offer anything different to look at if there was a prettier and easier alternative.

The route was checked firstly by friends who might have suggestions to add more local interest to the walk and then by Julie as a whole walk to make sure "it all hung together as one walk". The Peak District Boundary Walk as it is known has 20 stages and sets off and ends in the beautiful spa town of Buxton. It covers quiet limestone valleys and bustling mill towns; deep pine forests and challenging canal tunnels; countless reservoirs feed the cities surrounding the trail with most showing off a Victorian grandeur of dams with fake impressive battlements.

But what makes this boundary walk different from any other? This is in recognition to the role that Ethel Haythornthwaite played in establishing this particular National Park and in particular trying to protect its boundaries from the encroaching surrounding cities. Ethel's second husband was an active access campaigner and they used family inheritances to buy up threatened areas. She would ride on horseback around the perimeter identifying which areas should be included within the Park fighting and arguing with lawyers and landowners over every scrap of land.

In the background was a greater goal of wanting to be the first of the UK National Park to be established! They had to beat the Lake District!

To help us on our way I have identified a number of highlights which I will cover in this article and a further article next week. They may not be the most well known ones but they have their own individual beauty or characteristics.

### **South Head and Mount Famine**

Everyone is in a hurry to get to Kinder Scout but quite often these two little hills are overlooked. They rise above Chinley which lies between the Peak Forest and Hayfield and provide walkers with their first real hillwalking thrill. There is more of this to come.

### **Cown Edge**

This particular feature has appeared in a number of TV productions and the very extraordinary curving cliff is used as evidence of a land slip or a meteor crater but actually is only the result of quarrying activities. At the bottom of the "cliffs" lies a cluster of pools which offers an outstanding view across the western edge of Manchester.



**Cown Edge**

### **Alderman's Hill**

Greenfield which stands high near Oldham offers a gateway to a stunning bit of moorland architecture. The natural moorland views across Dovestone Reservoir take in Featherbed Moss, Althing Pike and Saddleworth Moor. Our next challenge takes us across the high-level moorland majesty as we work our way up to Marsden.

But I will leave our route at this point and save the other outstanding beauty spots until next week. We can all join one of our Spring Vale members who undertook this walk

**Glenda B**

## Haunted

We all love a good ghost story and here in Lancashire we have our fair share of haunted homes that we can visit.

### Samlesbury Hall

Samlesbury Hall is situated by the side of the Blackburn to Preston New Road. This Hall has a history packed full of witchcraft, mystery and intrigue! The house was built in 1325 by Gilbert de Southworth and served as the family's primary residence until the beginning of the 1600s. It has served a number of different purposes over the years including a spell as a boarding school for girls in 1850. At least one death has occurred on the property when one of the owners shot himself over money worries and the building certainly has at least a couple of ghostly presences hanging around!

Both staff and visitors have been startled by the sight of a white lady floating down the corridors of Samlesbury Hall. She is believed to be the spirit of Dorothy Southworth but this is not the only ghostly sighting. Samlesbury Hall also has a priest's room dating back to the 1500s that is haunted by one of the priests beheaded by soldiers. Not only does the priest now haunt the room, but from time to time the bloodstain apparently reappears on the wooden floorboards.



### Hoghton Towers

Hoghton Towers, built in 1565, is situated on the Blackburn to Preston Old Road and is a Grade I listed hilltop manor house. The property was built by Thomas Hoghton and is the only true baronial residence in Lancashire. It is full of history and over the years has welcomed many prominent guests, including Charles Dickens, William Shakespeare, King James I, King William III to name but a few.

It is due to all this history that ghost stories are bound to follow! Hoghton Towers is one of the most haunted houses in Britain, with so many paranormal experiences reported over the years a special journal is now kept recording all the supernatural experiences. Beneath the manor are to be found a host of eerie

underground passages and dungeons, believed to have been used during the Lancashire Witch Trials of 1612. As you travel through underground passages, look out for the black dog who haunts the Well House, greet Angry Peter and stare into the painting, where mysterious faces are said to reveal themselves.

The most infamous ghost of Hoghton Tower is the Green Lady, whose apparition can be seen wandering the halls, wearing a luxurious green velvety dress. Even more unsettling is her apparent chuckling as she passes by.



### Dunkenhalgh

The four-star Mercure Dunkenhalgh Hotel is situated on the Blackburn to Clayton le Moors Road and is a luxury getaway set in an old country manor house. The building is deceiving as its history can be traced back to 1285. It came into the hands of the Rishton family who then sold it to the Walmesley family in 1571, and in 1712 came into the ownership of the Petre family. It is known to have at least one ghost, in the form of a young French woman called Lucette.

The story goes, that Lucette was a governess to the Petre family and she was beloved by the family. However, one Christmas a handsome young officer charmed Lucette and she fell head over heels in love with him. His feelings were not so strong in return and he broke her heart. Lucette soon realised that she no longer belonged at Dukenhalgh, but she could not go home to France either. She spent her time wandering in the glades where her lover had abandoned her until one night she threw herself off the bridge into the water below. Since then, she has been said to haunt the hotel and activity always seems to peak around the Christmas season.



### Eleanor

## Ferries on the Ribble

**Dinckley Ferry** was a rowing boat which crossed the river connecting the village of Dinkley to Hurst Green. This ferry across the River Ribble at a point near to Dinkley Hall carried pedestrians across the river between Hurst Green and Dinckley. It enabled workers from Hurst Green and Stonyhurst to work at places like Brockhall hospital (now Brockhall village) and, further on, at Calderstones hospital in Whalley. The ferryman at Dinckley, according to the Post-Lady of Hurst Green, Cecily Holden recalls "... at Trough House Farm lived an Italian family called Corella who operated the Dinckley Ferry in the 1930's".

The ferry was replaced in 1951 by the wonderful Dinckley suspension bridge, which was a great example of LCC architecture. This bridge over the years was damaged many times by trees floating down the Ribble after a storm and crashing into the spanning arch. The suspension bridge was again badly damaged by storm Desmond in 2015 and was closed for several years, before new foundations and a completely new bridge was constructed.

**Hacking Ferry** also referred to as 'Hacking Boat' connected Billington and Whalley to Stonyhurst and Hurst Green and was used to ferry people across the Ribble where it joins the Calder opposite Hacking Hall. The old syllabuses of Spring Vale Rambling Class give details of the Class walking from Langho on a Saturday and using the ferry to get to Hurst Green or Stonyhurst and even to Great Mitton across the Calder, a welcome relief from their five-and-a-half days working in the cotton mills. The ferry began operating in 1686 but was not very reliable. The last Hacking Ferry boat was taken out of service in 1938 but was still used occasionally until 1955.



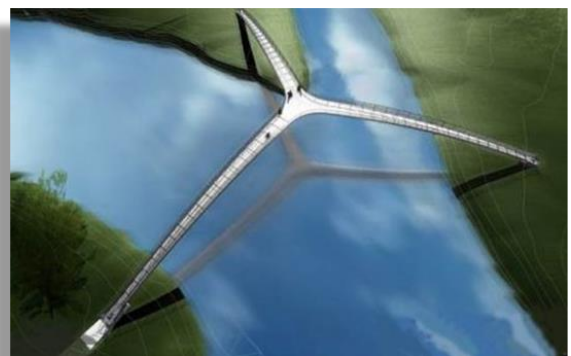
Hacking Ferry

The last boat was built in the 1920s and was a flat-bottomed boat with seats along the sides. Mr Michael Jackson, a former Ribble Valley Council chief executive discovered it decaying in a barn while out rambling and had it restored. It was on display at the Clitheroe Castle Museum but took up too much space and is now in the possession of the Ribble Valley Borough Council.

Standing on the Billington side of the river a passenger had to shout for the farmer or his wife to ferry them across the Ribble at the cost of a few coppers. It is reputed that dogs were sometimes left to swim across to avoid payment. A long chain acted as an anchor

The Hacking Ferry began in the 17th century and was set up by Richard Shireburn of the Shireburn family of Stonyhurst in order to get his people from the local community to the church on the other side of the River Ribble. It would have originally been used mainly on a Sunday in its early years but over the centuries it became more established and useful. His son, Richard Shireburn, continued it and by the 20th century – certainly by the 1930s – it had transferred from something that a landed person controlled to being a boatman's operation and the boatman charged a toll to take people across.

Back in 2001 it was proposed that a bridge would be built where the Rivers Ribble and Calder join, at the point where the Hacking Ferry used to cross. It was to have three legs and would have taken pedestrians from one side of the Ribble to the far side of the Calder, as well as on to the land which begins as the two rivers fork. These plans were never adopted and were eventually abandoned due to the financial climate.



The proposed bridge at Hacking crossing the Rivers Ribble and Calder

Michael C

## Autumn is here

This summer we were hit by a record-breaking heatwave with temperatures soaring above 40C for the first time. Although it looks like there is still plenty more hot weather to come, now that we are past the summer solstice the days are gradually shortening and the leaves will eventually fall from the trees. This can only mean one thing: autumn is coming.

The first day of Autumn can fall on two different dates, depending on whether you use the meteorological or the astronomical definition. Autumn is also the time of year that Keats called the 'Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness', autumn is a season famous for its harvest times, turning leaves, cooling temperatures and darkening nights.

There are two different dates when autumn could be said to begin. Autumn, as defined by the Earth's orbit around the Sun, begins on the equinox which falls on 22 or 23 September. However, to record climate data, it is important to have set dates that can be compared, so meteorological autumn always begins on 1 September.

The word equinox comes from the Latin *equi* (meaning equal) and *nox* (meaning night) accounting for the equinox marking the time when day and night are of equal length. We will now begin to notice that the nights start to draw in, for after the autumn equinox, the nights are longer than the days, until this is reversed at the spring equinox.



One of the most stunning signs of autumn is the turning of the leaves. The shorter days are a sign to trees to begin to prepare for winter. During winter there is not enough light for photosynthesis to occur, so as the days shorten throughout autumn, the trees begin to close down their food production systems and reduce the amount of chlorophyll in their leaves.



Chlorophyll is the chemical which makes tree leaves green and as it declines other chemicals become more prominent in the leaves. These are responsible for the vibrant ambers, reds and yellows of autumn. The chemicals responsible are types of flavonoids, carotenoids and anthocyanins. These chemicals are the same ones that give carrots (beta-carotenes) and egg yolks (luteins) their colours?

### Autumn Quotes

"The heat of autumn is different from the heat of summer. One ripens apples, the other turns them to cider."

**Jane Hirshfield, *The Heat of Autumn***

"It's the first day of autumn! A time of hot chocolatey mornings, and toasty marshmallow evenings, and, best of all, leaping into leaves!"

**Winnie the Pooh In Pooh's Grand Adventure**

"Love the trees until their leaves fall off, then encourage them to try again next year."

**Chad Sugg**

**Michael C**