

# Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

Volume 3 Issue 44

4th November 2022

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

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 **Homage to Autumn**
- 2 **Beavers now Official / November**
- 3 **Arnside and Silverdale AONB**
- 4 **Why Bonfire Night?**
- 5 **A Park for Everyone**

## Homage to Autumn

Many people love Autumn for the changing colours of leaves. Trees that were once green explode into beautiful hues of gold, red, and orange. The colours are especially breath-taking in places like the Borrowdale Valley in the Lakes, the woods around Skipton Castle and even closer to home Roddlesworth Plantations, inspiring many people to travel to these spots just to take in the spectacular vistas.

After the heat of the summer, it can be a relief when it finally starts to cool down. Although Autumn only covers three months, each can be so different!

September 2022 was a great month weather-wise, as the warm days start to give way to cool, crisp nights. After months of the hot days, the beginning of Autumn often ushers in cooler breezes that allows you to put away the shorts and summer tee shirts and start to take out and enjoy the longer shirts and trousers.

October started with mild weather and then came the rains and strong winds. The leaves now began their descent from the trees and in some areas trunks and branches were stripped overnight! An intricate tapestry of yellow, reds and orange threads carpet the forest floor that changes in appearance as we walk through the myriad of colour.

Now we are into November the mood changes again, a few trees cling reluctantly to their leaves, refusing to let go of their charges. The larch provides a patchwork of colour in the once all green forest. Early morning mists drift along the valley floors before the weak hazy sunshine disperses the mystical illusion.



Six reasons why Autumn is the best:

There's nothing quite like that crisp sound beneath your feet.

It might be a bit chilly, but an autumn sunrise can be pretty beautiful - especially in Scotland.

Root vegetables are back in season and perfect for homemade soups, stews and Sunday roasts!

If you don't have a fireplace, snuggling under blankets on the sofa with the heating on low is just as good.

We all love the sparkle of Bonfire Night.

As soon as Autumn has been and gone, you can look forward to snow and the festive celebrations!

**Michael C**

## Beavers now Official

In early October The Wildlife Trusts and Beaver Trust celebrated because beavers are now officially recognised as a native species in England and a European protected species. The new law, which came into force at midnight on 1<sup>st</sup> October, is good news for this extraordinary mammal which can do so much to restore wetlands across Britain.

The Wildlife Trusts pioneered the reintroduction of beavers and are now calling for greater clarity and urgency from the Government in relation to the plans for the widespread return of the animals.

The Government published guidance in early September which outlines how beavers might be managed in the future. But both Beaver Trust and The Wildlife Trusts are concerned that it does not give sufficient support to landowners – and that the proposals lack ambition and detail. The charities warn that, in their current form, the plans will not deliver the widespread reintroduction of a species which scientific studies have shown can improve water quality in rivers, stabilise water flows during times of drought and flood, store carbon and boost other wildlife.

A pair of Eurasian beavers, Glen (male) and Dragonfly (female) were introduced to the Lowther Estate in Cumbria in summer 2020, in a licensed, enclosed scientific release. A second licence was agreed for a private site in South Cumbria in 2020. Feasibility studies will be undertaken at other potential sites across the county.



**Maggie A**

## November

by Maggie Dietz

Show's over, folks. And didn't October do  
A bang-up job? Crisp breezes, full-throated cries  
Of migrating geese, low-floating coral moon.

Nothing left but fool's gold in the trees.  
Did I love it enough, the full-throttle foliage,  
While it lasted? Was I dazzled? The bees

Have up and quit their last-ditch flights of forage  
And gone to shiver in their winter clusters.  
Field mice hit the barns, big squirrels gorge

On busted chestnuts. A sky like hardened plaster  
Hovers. The pasty river, its next of kin,  
Coughs up reed grass fat as feather dusters.

Even the swarms of kids have given in  
To winter's big excuse, boxed-in allure:  
TVs ricochet light behind pulled curtains.

The days throw up a closed sign around four.  
The hapless customer who'd wanted something  
Arrives to find lights out, a bolted door.



**Pesto Cenorr**

## Arnside and Silverdale AONB

For many, Lancashire's coastline conjures up images of candyfloss, 'kiss me quick' hats and Blackpool Tower, but the Red Rose county is also home to some outstandingly beautiful rural scenery and unique landscapes.

Tucked away in a secluded corner of Morecambe Bay – where the foothills of the Lakeland Fells meet the rugged limestone coastline of North Lancashire – lies Arnside and Silverdale AONB. This undiscovered enclave is home to dense native woodland, wildflower meadows and extensive nature-rich wetlands

Here you will find stunning limestone pavements, ancient woodlands, intimate meadows, rich wetlands, impressive coastline and magnificent views. Unimproved pasture and the exposed limestone outcrops are rich in rare butterflies and wildflowers such as the High Brown Fritillary and Lady's-slipper orchid. The AONB, in fact, has examples of more than half the flowering plant species in Britain! Morecambe Bay, with its constantly changing channels, sand and mud flats and salt marsh, is internationally important as a vital feeding ground for wading birds and wildfowl in winter and the reedbeds at RSPB Leighton Moss. The Reserve is one of the best places in Britain to hear this secretive bird- the bittern. It is a shy, brown heron that skulks around the water margins, making a resonant 'booming' call from deep within the reeds. You could also see the equally rare bearded tits and marsh harriers as well as ospreys or avocets.



The Arnside and Silverdale AONB is a living, working landscape – a place where people want to live, work and visit. There are almost 10,000 people living in the AONB, mostly in the vibrant communities of Arnside, Silverdale and Warton. There are 2 major landowning estates but other large areas are owned and/or managed by conservation organisations such as RSPB, National Trust and the Wildlife Trusts. Two thirds of the AONB are protected by SSSI and County Wildlife designations.

With stations at Arnside, Silverdale and Carnforth, the AONB is well served by public transport. Visitors are drawn to the area by the panoramic views and spectacular sunsets but most of all they value its tranquillity. With almost 100km of well-maintained footpaths and narrow lanes and byways, walking and cycling are very popular activities and by far the best way to experience the Area's sights and sounds to the full.

Arnside Knott is renowned for its wildlife and a walk to the top to admire stunning views of the surrounding countryside looking across Morecombe Bay and over the southern fell of the Lake District, is a must.



Silverdale lies just across the border from Arnside. Originally a series of scattered farmsteads, Silverdale offers many walks along limestone paths and amongst autumnal woodland. The late comedienne Victoria Wood lived in Silverdale and the village's Gaskell Hall is named after the Victorian novelist Elizabeth Gaskell (1810–1865) who regularly holidayed in Silverdale to escape the summer heat and dust of Manchester. She wrote some of her works at Lindeth Tower, which is situated next to Gibraltar Farm.

The famous 'Viking Hoard' believed to date to around 900AD, was found near Silverdale and is one of the largest Viking hoards ever to be discovered in the UK. The period was a time of intense conflict between the Anglo-Saxons and the Danish settlers of northern England. The Hoard is a collection of over 200 pieces of silver jewellery and coins discovered in 2011. The items were deposited together in and under a lead container buried about 16 inches underground which was found by a metal detectorist.

This area is full of interest at any time of year, but autumn bestows on the landscape a particular beauty that affects all our senses. The leaves crunch under foot, the stunning tree colours as they prepare for winter and the smell of the salt air as the wind blows in from the Bay.

**Michael C**



## Why Bonfire Night?

*Remember, remember*

*The fifth of November*

*Gunpowder, Treason and Plot*

*I see no reason*

*Why Gunpowder treason*

*Should ever be forgot*

Every 5th of November, many people go to see spectacular firework displays, which light up the night with sparkling, whooshing, banging displays of colour. But why do we remember this night each year?

Over 400 years ago, on the night of the 5th of November 1605, 36 barrels of gunpowder were discovered hidden in a storeroom beneath the Palace of Westminster in London. Guards also found a man who called himself John Johnson, who had fuses for lighting the gunpowder in his pockets. He was arrested straight away. Once he was imprisoned, the man was questioned and tortured to try to make him tell the guards everything about the plan. Eventually, he gave in.

The man's real name was Guy Fawkes. Along with a small group of plotters, he had planned to blow up the Houses of Parliament, killing everyone inside, including King James I, and many important nobles. He had hoped that this would spark a Catholic rising in England.

Before the 16th century, England was a Roman Catholic country. However, Henry VIII set up a new Protestant Church of England after the Pope said he could not divorce his first wife Catherine of Aragon. When Mary I became queen she changed England's official religion back to Catholicism. During her reign, many people were executed for refusing to change their religion to match the queen's.

The plan was a simple one: to blow up the Palace of Westminster during the opening of Parliament, killing everyone inside – including King James I and his heir Prince Henry. What the plotters were going to do afterwards is not very clear, but it seems that they planned to lead a Catholic uprising.

It was easy to get the gunpowder. A war with Spain was over and lots were available on the black market. The big problem was to get it to the Palace of Westminster without anybody noticing. A storeroom underneath the House of Lords was rented and Guy

Fawkes pretended to be a servant. There wasn't much security, and it was easy to hide the gunpowder. Now the plotters waited for their chance – the opening of Parliament on 5th November.

On the night of the 4th of November, the king's spies heard of the plot and informed the King. He ordered the Palace of Westminster to be searched and Guy Fawkes was found in the storeroom with a lot of firewood. King James ordered a second more thorough search and around midnight on the 5th of November, they discovered the gunpowder. Guy Fawkes was there too and had fuses with him to light the powder. He was arrested immediately,

To make him share the names of the other plotters, Guy Fawkes was not only questioned but also tortured. It was hoped that the pain would make him talk, and after two days, he gave in. Using the information from Guy Fawkes' confessions and information from spies, all the names of the other plotters were discovered.

On the 8th of November, eight plotters tried to make a last stand against 200 men in Staffordshire. Most of them were either killed or wounded. All the plotters were found guilty and sentenced to a traitor's death, by being hung, drawn and quartered, for their crimes.

The plot became part of England's story almost immediately. People thought that the discovery of this plot and the defeat of the Spanish Armada during Elizabeth I's reign were signs that the English were favoured by God. In January 1606, Parliament passed an Act that meant that every church in England had to hold a special service on the 5th of November each year, and these were often anti-Catholic. In the decades after the plot, other celebrations started to appear as well as the church services. There isn't a lot of evidence, but it seems that they were widespread, and included bonfires, bell ringing and sometimes official artillery gun salutes and fireworks.

From 1673 up to the 19th century, some crowds paraded a model of the Pope through the streets, and put it on a bonfire, symbolising that people still believed bad things about Catholics. However, during the French Revolution, Britain was on the same side as the Pope, and English and Irish Catholics fought for Britain. After this, Guy Fawkes became the villain of Bonfire Night rather than the Pope.

**Eleanor**

## A Park for Everyone

In my series on local parks, the fourth type of recreational space developed grassed areas that would originally have been the site of mills and may still be surrounded by mills today. One such space is Ashton Park in Darwen which is 5.45 acres of land next to Hope Mill which was erected in 1856. Surrounded by the listed India Mill with its renowned giant Italianate chimney the building keeps guard over the park while the peregrines return each year to check that all is as it should be.

The area was a derelict piece of land once owned by Lower Darwen Paper Mill. The land contained 5 lodges /ponds which were a danger to the public, a pit shaft and a number of capped concrete water tanks which hadn't been used in years!

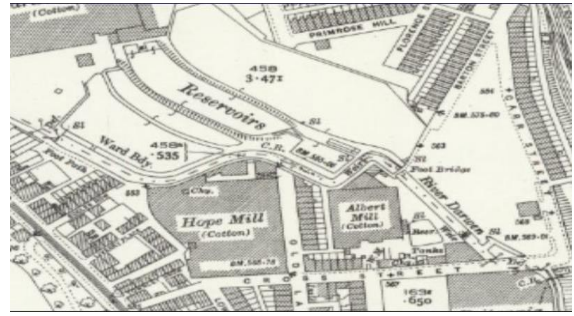
A petition was started to get permission from the local council to change the derelict land into a park. Permission was given, the park was completed and the local mill owners donated the park to the local community in the early 1980's

It was decided to name the park Ashton Park after Thomas Ashton who helped gain rights to walk upon Darwen moorland on the Darwen hills surrounding the town. Although this park is one of the smallest in Darwen, it was felt important to ensure that it was developed to meet the needs of the people who live in the surrounding area.

The mill reservoirs were drained to create green space and naturalised woodland and people felt very strongly that the River Darwen was to be kept flowing around the edge of the park. This enabled it to be used as an overflow for the surviving mill pond.



Ashton Park Darwen



The original Eccles Row with its cobbled streets and steps are still in evidence on the west side of the park. When walking in the area the ruins of terraced streets and houses laid out brings to mind what the people did who lived here and why the lodges and mills were there in the first place. It gives you a good feeling to realise that this derelict land is not being wasted but being put to good use for today's residents!

At present the woodland and lake with its island is home to many different species of wildlife including herons, geese, mallards, and rabbits.

It also contains a children's' play area within the park although Friends of Ashton Park are continually looking to access funding to help keep this up to date. Slides, swings, football posts and seats. As this park is situated right in the heart of the community then it's important that it's even more accessible for the disabled, for parents and prams by making the footpaths more comfortable to walk on.

These small urban parks are a hidden feature of many of our towns. Some are small, others cover a larger area. They may not have a formal garden, an ornamental fountain or an aviary but to the local people they are classed as their park. Their bit of green countryside where they can walk, sit and admire, feel proud and just generally relax. These places are just as important as the larger more grandiose areas and are of no lesser importance to those that love them. It is sometimes a struggle to keep them litter free, they may be prone to vandalism and support needs to be given to the dedicated small number of people who take it upon themselves to love and cherish these oases of tranquility.

I am sure that somewhere near you there is a small park that you can enjoy strolling around and observing nature and wildlife.

Go out and enjoy.

**Glenda B**