

Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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Lest We Forget

We will remember them



Poppy Display Air Shard Imperial War Museum Manchester

'They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old'

This is a familiar quotation to many people, but where does it come from? The answer lies in one of the most famous and yet most obscure poems of the First World War. Laurence Binyon's 'For the Fallen' (1914) is one of the most widely quoted poems of the First World War, and yet how well does anyone know it? Could anyone quote any other lines from it apart from the stanza from which that line is taken?

One of the most interesting but overlooked facts about Binyon's ode to the war dead is how early in the conflict it was written: Binyon wrote 'For the Fallen' in northern Cornwall in September 1914, just one month after the outbreak of the First World War. Binyon wasn't himself a soldier (he was already in his mid-forties when fighting broke out and deemed too old for military service) but 'For the Fallen' has become one of the most important war poems in the English language, thanks in large part to its use at the annual Remembrance Sunday memorial service.

But what of that famous line, 'They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old'? It appears in the fourth stanza:

*"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them".*

Binyon goes on to talk of how the men may have gone from the earthly lives they led, spending time at home with their families, or at work, but he ends the next stanza by saying that the men now 'sleep'. They are at peace.

Michael C

**At the eleventh hour
on the eleventh day of the
eleventh month –
We will remember them.**

Many young members of Spring Vale Rambling Class took up arms and went to fight in the two World Wars (1914-18) and (1939-45) Some did not return; others came home but were not the same men as those who left these shores. They hardly ever talked about their experiences. They tried to forget and by walking in the Lancashire countryside with all its green landscape and familiar moorland it would blank out the horrors of war for a brief period.

DREAMERS

By Siegfried Sassoon

Soldiers are citizens of death's grey land,
Drawing no dividend from time's to-morrows.
In the great hour of destiny they stand,
Each with his feuds, and jealousies, and sorrows.
Soldiers are sworn to action; they must win
Some flaming, fatal climax with their lives.
Soldiers are dreamers; when the guns begin
They think of firelit homes, clean beds and wives.

I see them in foul dug-outs, gnawed by rats,
And in the ruined trenches, lashed with rain,
Dreaming of things they did with balls and bats,
And mocked by hopeless longing to regain
Bank-holidays, and picture shows, and spats,
And going to the office in the train.

Pesto Cenorr



War Greave at Flanders

November

By Elizabeth Coatsworth

November comes
And November goes,
With the last red berries
And the first white snows.

With night coming early,
And dawn coming late,
And ice in the bucket
And frost by the gate.

The fires burn
And the kettles sing,
And earth sinks to rest
Until next spring."

NOVEMBER SUN

By Benita Moore

November sun, November sun
Pale and wan, November sun.
Touching the Autumn woods
With your fingers of mellow gold,
Watching the leaves drift down
Like memories grown old.
November sun, November sun
Seek out the chestnut's vibrant red,
The amber bronze of slender beech
Leaves fluttering to earthly bed.
November sun, November sun
The grey squirrel waits for you,
Gathering beech nuts for her hoard
And preparing her drey anew.
November sun, November sun
I can feel you on my face
And welcome you as a benison
Benign in my garden place.



Pesto Cenorr

Cotswolds Wildflower Meadows

I was driving to the village of Great Barrington in the summer of 2019 when I had to make an almost emergency stop and drive into a field gateway. This was not to avoid another driver but to take in a breathtaking view of the fields by the road. The whole area was filled with bright red field poppies, a view I will never forget. Thankfully I have discovered that it is one repeated every year in the fields all over the Cotswolds.



Cotswold Poppy Fields

“MODERN FARMING PRACTICES AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE COUNTRYSIDE HAS LED TO A MASSIVE 97% DECLINE IN WILDFLOWER MEADOWS SINCE THE 1930S”

I was shocked to learn that the Cotswolds has only about 1.5% of wildflower meadow in its landscape compared to over 40% before the 1930s but plans are being developed within the ANOB to re-establish ever larger areas of new wildflower meadows. This initiative is supported by 11 organisations along with the Cotswold ANOB, National Trust, country estates and other local farming communities. This is all supported by money from the Heritage National Lottery fund which is also supporting just under 6,000 hectares of wildflower meadows and grasslands in nine strategic landscapes across the UK



During the summer of 2021 I began to notice the increased number of farm meadows given over to wildflowers and our local parkland estates Barrington Park, Sherborne Park and Dyrham park are all big supporters of the recovery programme. This gives us the magic of having these colourful meadows on our doorstep.

The National Trust is at the forefront of this initiative and will be followed not only within the Cotswolds but throughout the country. Unsurprisingly wildflower meadows were originally sown in 1982 at the then Prince of Wales' residence at the nearby Highgrove estate. These have gained much acclaim and the estate is increasingly popular with visitors, I can highly recommend a visit to Highgrove's Gardens and the ecological work being done there.



From the dramatic rise of the escarpment to the rolling hills of the Wolds with historic towns and villages, there really is something for everyone. It is a beautiful place to live, and I consider myself extremely lucky to live here.

The Cotswolds has a thriving community and is home to a resident population of 150,000 people however, tourism is an important part of the economy and the AONB is happy to welcome 23 million day visits every year. Of course, all this activity puts pressure on the distinctive landscape, wildlife and heritage – the things that make the Cotswolds special. The Cotswolds element of Save Our Magnificent Meadows has been delivered over three years and has particularly worked in the Cotswold scarp and river valleys. The main focus is not on the management of existing high-quality grassland but the targeting of low-quality and previously wildflower-rich grasslands that often surround and connect these sites. Wildflowers really do not like richly fertilised soil.

I do hope that you get a chance to visit this small part of our beautiful island and experience the flowers, I would target May for the poppies and July for the mixed flower fields.

Michael Mc

A Quiet Corner of the Lakes

Now that Autumn is upon us, our thoughts always turn to colours, rich foods like fruits and berries and of course where would we first think of to go to find these spectacular items? Of course, the Lake District.

But rather than going to the more well-known areas of the Lakes which no doubt will be packed with tourists, I am going to introduce you to the beauties of a lesser known area focussed around Finsthwaite Heights part of the Outlying Fells of Lakeland, north of Newby Bridge.

Some people feel that if you are not going to walk at height when you go to the Lake District, why bother going there at all? But in Autumn you do get some days where the clouds sink below tree line and the wind whips down the valley making climbing high onto the mountains impossible or dangerous. On those days places like Finsthwaite come into their own. Developing an awareness of the beauty of the ground beneath your feet and the spectacle of nature right in front of you makes you so grateful for the diversity of the countryside.

A circular walk from Newby Bridge, taking in the tiny village of Finsthwaite, two tarns, woodlands and there is no climbing as 200m is the furthest height to conquer. Treasures start to reveal themselves as soon as you enter the ancient mixed woodland of Summer House Knott. Tiny, fleshy umbrellas push up through the carpet of red and gold leaves and you find yourselves in the magic world of fungi and it's all down to the mild but damp conditions of Autumn. The closer you look, the more weird and wonderful they get!! A kaleidoscope of reds, yellows, purples, browns and oranges. These together with the flaming hues of the leaves make for a living, throbbing wonderland.



Finsthwaite Tower on Water Side Knot

If you come with your field guidebook you can start to identify the Beefsteak Fungus from the Velvet Shank. The Horn of Plenty, the Amethyst Deceiver and the dumpy Porcini are there to tempt people thinking of their dinner but beware nibbling on mushrooms can be dangerous!



Amethyst Deceiver



The Horn of Plenty



Beefsteak Fungus

Here you will also come across the imposing stone building named Finsthwaite Tower which was dedicated in 1799 to the officers, seamen and marines of the Royal Navy who preserved and protected liberty and commerce. Although the building is very much left to forces of nature, it still stands with elegance and appears to be as rooted in the landscape as any of the sycamore or oak trees around it.

The paths take you through pastureland, quaint cottages and thick deciduous woodland before stumbling onto Low Dam and High Dam. This huge bank was introduced in 1835 to extend the water source for Stott Park Bobbin Mill and offers a tranquil beauty spot. Scots Pines and yellowing Larch trees are interspersed with vibrant red from the berries of the Rowan trees.

If you are still a little unsure if areas such as these can offer you as much excitement as high fell walking then just listen to what Alfred Wainwright advises. "linger in the delectable surroundings here. It is a much nicer place than the over populated Tarn How's".

Before you decide to be tempted with nibbling on a mushroom as part of your fungi foraging, I would advise to follow the code Always seek permission from the landowner. It's illegal to pick fungi from SSSI or nature reserves. Do not pick fungi you do not intend to eat and only for personal consumption. Minimise damage to vegetation. Only collect small proportion of any one species so as not to destroy the ecosystem. Only collect open mushrooms so that the spores have dispersed for future growth.

Glenda B

Clowbridge Reservoir

Taking a break from panto preparations, I recently went on a 3.5 mile ramble around Clowbridge Reservoir near to the village of Dunnockshaw and on to Cromptons Cross in the upper end of the Rossendale Valley. The route was across wonderful moorland if a little undulating and rather ankle snapping at times, but it turned out to be a great walk and I even discovered a geocache. The large reservoir at Clowbridge has an interesting history.

In 1852 the Haslingden and Rawtenstall Waterworks Company was formed and the Act of Parliament which established it also authorised the construction of Hapton Reservoir which was later renamed Clowbridge.

In promoting such an Act a Waterworks Company had to engage the services of a professional witness of some standing. Thomas Hawksley was chosen, as he had lent his name to the promotion of many reservoirs and water schemes. The building of the reservoir was strenuously opposed by owners of factories downstream and the expense of obtaining the Act alone mounted to £585. A small fortune in those days.

In February 1855 the Haslingden and Rawtenstall directors asked Hawksley to prepare working drawings and specifications.

The Chairmans report in August 1855 stated that the contract for the reservoir would be complete in 12 months, unrealistically optimistic in any circumstances. However, eighteen months later he reported that the puddle trench had to be sunk to a greater depth than anticipated and that, as they were unable to raise sufficient capital, work had been suspended. At that stage, £6108 had been expended on the dam plus £7547 for land purchase.



Clowbridge Reservoir



Clowbridge Reservoir

Three years later, the work was resumed, apparently by direct employment of labour, under the direction of Joseph Jackson who had previously built reservoirs for Bolton Waterworks. Loose and wet ground was unearthed in the southern hillside and extending the puddle trench into it was a tedious and difficult operation.

In February 1863, the directors told the shareholders that the reservoir was expected to be complete in the coming spring, having cost to date over £20,000. However, within a month, a massive landslip occurred in the downstream face, extending back beyond the puddle core and pushing it outwards by several feet.

In contrast to the previous dilatory progress, the rectification work was tackled with great dispatch. A contractor, J. Aird and Son was engaged and in next to no time he had over 200 men at work, driving drains into the embankment, depositing a buttress at the toe and rebuilding the slipped portion. By the end of June, the embankment had been restored to the extent that control valves could with confidence be fitted into the outlet tunnel through which the stream had, until then, been allowed to flow unchecked. A further subsidence occurred in July and yet another in February 1864 and it was not until August 1865 that the Chairman was able to report that work had been completed. The reservoir was filling fast, and the district being supplied with water. The final cost of building the dam itself, excluding land and incidental costs was £39225. (Equivalent to £3.8 million at today's prices)

All we see today as you walk around the area is a remote wild landscape that is criss-crossed with footpaths to explore, even the Rossendale Way passes close by.

Jane C