

Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

Volume 3 Issue 47

25th November 2022

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 The Tolkein Trail
- 2 Thrushes / Waxwing
- 3 Aladdin Review
- 4 Walkers Christmas Gifts
- 5 Poets and Walking

The Tolkein Trail

While this weather may restrict our walking it does allow us to explore new routes and make plans for walks that we might accomplish next year or as soon as the weather starts to improve. The Tolkien Trails is one walk that I would recommend you experience. A walking guide detailing the route is now available online, from many of the public houses in the Ribble Valley or from the Warm and Dry Shop in Whalley.

This stunning Lancashire walk is filled with the history that inspired JRR Tolkien. The Tolkien Trail is a picturesque walk through the Ribble Valley landscapes and is popular with fans of The Lord of the Rings and avid walkers alike. The trail encompasses historic buildings and landmarks whilst you walk in the footsteps of the infamous writer.

Starting in the village of Hurst Green, the trail takes you past the famous Stonyhurst College where J. R. R. Tolkien spent many years staying at a guest house in the college grounds and writing the book trilogy.

Tolkien was renowned for his love of nature and wooded landscapes and the countryside around Stonyhurst is a stunning example of that - to the extent that various names in 'The Lord of the Rings' are similar to those found locally.



The Original Cromwell Bridge

Other aspects of the walk include some local history, with a bridge, named 'Devil's Bridge' which you walk along that was supposedly used by Oliver Cromwell during his march from Skipton to intercept the Royalists at the Battle of Preston in 1648. Among the sights on the trail are a part-Medieval barn, a 19th century observatory and the 18th century Hodder Place, a former school which was originally the home of a mill owner. Another landmark is Hacking Hall which was occupied by the de Hacking family from at least 1200. You will also pass a stone aqueduct, historic buildings not to mention the fact that you will be totally emersed within the stunning Bowland landscapes and riverside stretches of the River Ribble.

This walk is a must for your list of walks to complete and if you have enjoyed it once then enjoy it again.

Eleanor

Thrushes

By Siegfried Sassoon

Tossed on the glittering air they soar and skim,
Whose voices make the emptiness of light
A windy palace. Quavering from the brim
Of dawn, and bold with song at edge of night,

They clutch their leafy pinnacles and sing
Scornful of man, and from his toils aloof
Whose heart's a haunted woodland whispering;
Whose thoughts return on tempest-baffled wing;
Who hears the cry of God in everything,
And storms the gate of nothingness for proof.



Song Thrush

The **Song Thrush** is familiar and popular garden songbird whose numbers have declined markedly on farmland and in towns and cities. It's smaller and browner than a mistle thrush with smaller spotting. Its habit of repeating song phrases distinguishes it from singing blackbirds. It likes to eat snails which it breaks into by smashing them against a stone with a flick of the head. They can also be seen pulling worms from a lawn and well as feeding on windfall apples.

Pesto Cenorr

Waxwing

By Robert Francis

Four Tao philosophers as cedar waxwings
chat on a February berry bush
in sun, and I am one.

Such merriment and such sobriety—
the small wild fruit on the tall stalk—
was this not always my true style?

Above an elegance of snow, beneath
a silk-blue sky a brotherhood of four
birds. Can you mistake us?

To sun, to feast, and to converse
and all together—for this I have abandoned
all my other lives.



Waxwing

The **waxwing** is a plump bird, which is slightly smaller than a starling. It has a prominent crest. It is reddish-brown with a black throat, a small black mask round its eye, yellow and white in the wings and a yellow-tipped tail. It does not breed in the UK, but is a winter visitor, in some years in larger numbers, They eat Berries, particularly rowan and hawthorn, but also cotoneaster and rose.

Aladdin Review

On a cold, dark night in November a group of eight friends of Spring Vale Ramblers approached a well-lit building in the heart of Darwen. They had come together to review and experience the excitement that is the Performing Arts. (Well, we had our arms twisted)

So, before you are entitled to express an opinion, you really do need to be able to answer the basic questions.

Who were we here to see? St Cuthbert's Amateur Dramatic Society or SCADS . A group of individuals who have been working together for 24 years, uniting people from school, church with experienced performers to continually evolve into the troupe of merry members that we witnessed on that exciting night.



Cast Members on Stage

The group doesn't just do pantomimes once a year but they also cover murder mystery and quiz nights, in fact it seems they will do anything for a laugh (well within reason) to bring the wider community together.

So, after being greeted warmly by door staff who quickly encouraged us to support the Darwen Food Larder by buying raffle tickets, we were escorted to our seats by delightful front of house young helpers. A ripple of apprehension and anticipation went around backstage when members of the cast realised that the PRESS were in town. But it was only us!!!

We would shortly be treated to an outstanding show performed by brilliant amateurs both young and old.

The lights faded, talented musicians struck up the opening chords drawing us all in and we were soon transported off into the land of make believe.

Our journey into SCADS version of ALADDIN had begun. Directed, written and adapted by Martyn Pugh, it warmed to the local audiences by incorporating familiar businesses and landmarks. It quickly became clear that this was going to be a professional performance that would be fast moving, colourful, with fabulous and imaginative backdrops, whisking us away to Old Peking, the Neva Wong Chippy, and even flying on a Magic Carpet!

All of the costumes were Fab-u-lous as Craig would say but how Widow Twankey controlled her skirts without knocking anyone over beats me. The flash bang wallops of the Slave of the Ring and Genie of the Lamp kept us all on our toes. We were even treated to a flying carpet and colourful dragons. We were all drawn into shouting "*it's behind you*" when the ghost appeared or "*Hello Wishee Washee*" when encouraged, or indeed hailed on by the extravert exuberance of Widow Twankey. It certainly incorporated all elements of the best in pantomime even down to the hesitant cuteness of the very young performers who stole the show during dance elements.

It was great to see one of our very own treading the boards as we have heard so much about it over the year. Dressed in traditional Chinese costume complete with chopsticks, sisters Marge and Moira Wong put in a sterling performance, whilst also adding yet another takeaway to Darwen!



Moira Wong aka Jane C and Marge Wong aka Lois F

Just to confirm that Spring Vale Ramblers DID NOT steal the lucky Bingo table (he he) and we are all so looking forward to next year's production. Whatever you choose to do, bring it on!!!

Glenda B. The Press.

Walkers Christmas Gifts

Christmas is fast approaching and now is the time to make those subtle hints for stocking fillers. All of the items that I have highlighted can be purchased for under £30, just leave this page open and maybe someone in your life may take the initiative.



Map Case

A special protective map cover. It is water repellent which means that when rambling or walking in the rain a map can still be easily used. It fits Ordnance Survey maps as well as other types. It has a Velcro closure and a carry strap which is



Go Walking Book

This is a book called 'Yes I do have a retirement plan...I plan on going walking'. It is actually a plain notebook with 118 lined pages where you can plan your next walk, take notes while walking or write about your latest walk with details of the route.



Electric Scarf

Stay warm and cosy with this heated neck scarf. It has adjustable temperature settings which are great for keeping you warm and improving circulation. USB powered, you can even plug it into a power bank when you are out and about on a long winter walk.



Beanie with Head Torch

This Beanie Cap incorporates a bright 4 beam detachable LED torch. This allows for removal enabling washing and charging. The brightness of the LED beanie hat can be changed by simply touching for the 3 brightness levels, ideal for those evening walks.



Picnic Blanket

These fashionable and compact picnic blankets fold down a size that will fit in the palm of your hand. This makes them easy to pack and carry and so different from other bulky picnic blankets. They are also waterproof on one side and form a larger area than the usual sit mat.



Boot Dryers

Water will find its way into your boots. Yes, a waterproof membrane, such as Gore-Tex, will help to keep your feet dry. But there is a great big hole in the top of your boots, so if you accidentally end up walking through a bog, or you get caught out without your waterproof trousers the water runs down into your boots. This device dries your boots in 8-10 hrs without the use of electricity.

Michael C

Poets and Walking

Over the seasons Ramblers Gems has brought you a selection of poems from distinguished poets as well as the lesser-known ones but all with a countryside theme and it is hoped that this selection inspired you to think and reflect on our natural world, the wondrous flora and fauna that abounds and the beautiful diverse landscapes that make up the British Isles.

When you set off on your next country walk, try to identify first if there is a particular area that is renowned and linked to a well known poet or creative writer. It is thought that a number of these individuals took inspiration from the countryside around them. Alfred Lord Tennyson marched up to the top of the Downs near where he lived and after taking in deep breathes of fresh air whilst looking over the English Channel he penned the Charge of the Light Brigade. He became Poet Laureate for over 40 years during Queen Victoria's reign.

Our own Northern Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy is better known for her writing of the poem the Lancaster Witches. She was inspired by the notorious 1612 witch trials which included 8 women and 2 men from the area around Pendle charged with having brought about the deaths of 10 people by witchcraft. Basing the decision on the testimony of a 9 year old daughter of one of the accused all but one were found guilty and hanged. Today the route that was travelled from Barrowford to Lancaster is commemorated by ten posts along the length of the route carrying words of this unhappy event. Two more shorter trails have been established again inspired by Duffy's writing. It is hoped that by walking one of the routes and reading the words along the way you will experience more fully the story and be able to relate to the bleakness of the original stories.



Discover Carol Ann Duffy poems on the Lancashire Witch Trail

A current northern Poet Laureate from Yorkshire is Simon Armitage one of the nation's best known wordsmiths. When out walking in the wild moorland you may come across his words physically embedded in the Pennine Landscape. Since 2012 some of that work can be found in the Stanza Stones Trail starting from Marsden, West Yorkshire to Ilkley a journey of 47 miles. The route contains 6 huge stones each engraved roughly with an Armitage poem entitled Snow, Rain, Mist, Dew, Puddle and Beck. These stones are now marked on OS maps.



Poems along the Stanza Trail

Sometimes poets have used the fine walks, natural weather conditions and extensive landscapes around them to inspire their writings. An example would be Christina Rossetti who was so moved by the calmness and beauty of the Lake District that she wrote The Lambs of Grasmere and In The Bleak Midwinter. Her work outlines the harshness of the Lake District with starved and thinned lambs but visitors to this area will equally remember it for its easy ridge walks. Summits can be easily reached and there are a number of pubs in easy access.

So next time you are choosing a walk, covering the same areas of our talented creative ancestors of the past. see if their talent and spirit rubs off on you. Then sit, take pen to paper and try to just write a few lines inspired by what you have seen and experienced. You may be pleasantly surprised at the creative works that flow. Then share your new found skill with us all by sending them off to Ramblers Gems.

Go be inspired and get creative.

Glenda B