

Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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A Local Packhorse Trail

In the 16th-18th centuries, Darwen was at the crossroads of several packhorse trails that crisscrossed the region. These were narrow, steep and winding, being totally unsuitable for wheeled traffic. Much earlier, the Roman XX (20th) Legion had built a road from Manchester to Ribchester and onward to Hadrian's Wall. However, due to frequent marauding attacks by local brigands they constructed few East to West roads. The packhorse trails were developed to enable trains of packhorses and mules, sometimes as many as 40 or 50 animals to carry stone, malt, wool, cloth, corn, lime and salt from its source to where it was needed for trade. The animals carried panniers slung in pairs over their backs, hence the need for bridleways to be wider than footpaths and the bridges were built without parapets.

Sometimes the bridleways took to the higher ground to go around towns and villages, or they would follow the lower contours to avoid steep inclines, either up or down. Local historians have tried to piece together what would have been a rough track from the heavily wooded Rossendale Forest to the coast. We often use most of these trails during our club walks, without realising.

One such example, named 'Limersgate' traversed from Haslingden Grane into the Darwen valley, over to Tockholes and on towards Preston. The trail entered Darwen at Pickup Bank Heights, and down into Hoddlesden via Long Hey Lane, past Holker House (1591), and over Heys Lane, crossing Roman Road. It then dropped down Pole Lane to Sough, crossing the River Darwen by a ford at Clough, and climbing to pass White Hall (1557). The trail then dropped into Print Shop crossing Bury Fold and past Kebbs Cottage to Radfield Head, thence into the wooded valley that became Bold Venture Park.



The Old Bridge at Cadshaw

The carters and carriers who oversaw the packhorses and mules, overnights in Inns at strategic distances along the trails. Such Inns had names like Packhorse, Bayhorse or Carriers Inn which identified their principal customers. The trains travelled at a relative fast pace for it might take them only one or two days to cross Lancashire from East to West, as the average daily distances covered would be 15-20 miles dependent upon the terrain. Pennine Lancashire and Calderdale have the highest proportion of footpaths per square mile in the country.

Current suggestions are for some footpaths to be uprated to bridleways where suitable, to enable more routes, especially circular ones to be available to horse riders and cyclists. So, we may yet see another expansion of the bridleway routes in our area, but for recreational rather than commercial reasons.

Alan R

Wordsearch

Words can be forwards, backwards, diagonal, upwards, downwards.

Name: _____

Created with TheTeachersCorner.net Word Search Maker

Spring Vale Rambling Class 2020 Season

U	M	L	X	H	Q	L	F	P	Q	X	I	T	X	D	A	U	V	O	T	Q	O	G	C	V	X	D	M	D	R
X	W	I	G	R	R	M	Z	N	N	W	N	M	M	U	Z	O	W	N	E	J	H	H	T	X	N	Z	E	R	Z
F	J	A	K	X	X	X	O	U	M	F	H	D	L	S	X	M	W	E	C	S	N	E	K	U	N	L	E	M	Y
D	X	P	O	Z	X	T	B	U	W	X	Y	L	E	J	X	L	C	F	B	C	E	R	K	E	O	H	Q	E	M
B	I	R	I	A	H	S	T	X	X	I	H	A	I	B	Z	N	W	G	V	W	Q	W	D	Q	N	V	O	M	M
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E	V	G	U	Q	T	S	H	G	F	N	I	X	N	O	I	T	A	V	F	R	E	N	K	H	J	E	Y	E	U
D	J	O	N	Z	A	E	L	L	A	C	I	G	O	L	O	E	G	K	C	L	B	D	M	S	I	T	F	R	T
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N	D	X	B	H	G	C	T	K	B	L	B	T	N	E	X	K	O	Q	A	R	I	W	A	L	H	D	C	I	D
R	E	F	I	T	U	Z	L	Q	K	A	I	A	I	R	M	H	T	Q	F	S	I	W	F	T	P	T	V	P	B
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G	M	C	W	X	C	K	U	I	P	T	C	P	N	X	Q	D	U	S	A	E	F	R	C	H	W	K	V	B	C
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O	Q	V	K	A	O	P	Z	V	L	A	W	M	M	B	U	J	I	B	A	V	Z	I	Y	J	C	L	S	K	Z
N	L	R	T	L	M	O	J	R	E	L	T	S	I	W	T	N	E	U	N	F	M	D	P	N	J	S	T	U	Y
R	O	F	R	E	K	G	U	E	P	U	Z	O	B	C	W	G	L	B	A	S	O	T	D	B	D	M	E	E	A
L	M	I	Q	B	V	B	P	I	J	C	R	J	B	N	K	N	Q	X	C	B	J	Z	T	O	B	N	Q	I	G

HISTORICAL
MEMBERSHIP
WALKLEADERS
HODDLESDEN
HOUGHTON
HERITAGE
RESERVOIR

BOTANICAL
CELEBRATION
SUNNYHURST
WHEELTON
RIVINGTON
EXPLORER

GEOLOGICAL
JTFIELDING
SMITHILLS
ENTWISTLE
WHERNSIDE
MAP

SCENICAL
TOCKHOLES
RODDLESWORTH
WADDINGTON
COUNTRYSIDE
INGLEWHITE

Walking in South Lakeland

This is a report of the Good Friday walk undertaken on 17th April 1987 written by Tom Johnstone.

A full coach of happy chattering ramblers left Darwen on a glorious sunny Good Friday, bound for walks in the Newby Bridge, Cartmel and Grange areas of South Lakeland.

At Newby Bridge the party for the longer ramble left the coach and walked up the road to take the first turning on the right signposted Canny Hill. In a few hundred yards a path on the right is signposted Backbarrow which leads onto low bracken covered fells of Old Backbarrow. Passing through a gate, the open fell stretched out before us and following the track soon to take its left-hand fork we headed for a gate in the wall ahead on top of the first hill. Through the gate, over the rise and into a small valley, we took the left hand of the path and made for the wall ahead.

A rest here gave us a chance to look down on the “dolly blue” works and the Haverthwaite lakeside steam railway with a train just pulling away from the station. Crossing a stile, the hardest part of our ramble lay ahead in the next few hundred yards, but climbing slowly over rough ground and following a not too well defined path, we headed for the observation post on Hard Crag Hill where we took our lunch.

The views at this point were excellent, looking north the Coniston range of mountains stood out clearly, on our right was the large expanse of Cartmell Fell while on our left we looked down the Leven valley to the coast.



Bigland Tarn

After lunch we took the track away from the tower which bears right on reaching the main path and soon came to the road at a gate. Crossing over, a track

through Turn Haw Wood led to Bigland Tarn, a fishing retreat with riding stables close by. The path followed the tarn along its western side and in front of Bigland House to a stile in the corner. Continuing forward and slightly uphill on Bigland Height a brief rest was taken to admire the tarn below and its various species of wild fowl; we were lucky to see a heron arrive on the tarn bank.

The path followed the wall on our right and going down reached a gate leading into High Striberswood. The path through alder trees with blue bell, wood anemones and wild daffodils in flower was very pleasing. At the end of the wood we passed through a gate to bear left up to the house at Grassgarth with a stream and a gorgeous display of daffodils behind it. The path at this point passed through the front garden of the house and soon reached the road where a right turn was made and then in 100 yards a left turn was made through a gate into a field.

Continuing slowly and passing Nancy Tarn on our right, a gate opposite led to a grassy path over a rise and down to the edge of a wood. We took the left fork of the path here between wood and wall and down to a farm track. Then we turned right and passed between the scattered buildings of a typical Lakeland farm called Speel Bank and in a few hundred yards turned left through a gate to follow straight ahead through gates and stiles to reach Burns Farm. Once through the farmyard we took the first track on our left passing in front of caravans and around the edge of Low Field Wood. A ladder stile on the left led into the field, over a stream and then bearing right we followed the edge of Tram Wood slightly uphill to a farm gate leading into a lane bedecked with wild primroses.

The modernised houses of Hill were soon reached and a few moments rest here gave us chance to admire the quiet surroundings. Down the track and a left at the road took us past Walton Hall Farm and in a few hundred yards a signpost at a stile on our right showed the way into and through Parkwood. We emerge on to the delightful Cartmel racecourse with the Priory in the background, after a good rest and a look around the village and Priory the party splits, some going over the Hospice and others at a lower level around the golf course. The views from both paths over Morecambe Bay and the Lakeland Fells were well worth the extra effort. We soon reached Grange and a stroll along the promenade made a fitting end to an excellent day.

Alum Scar

Spring Vale Ramblers have for many year walked through Alum House Woods, passing Alum Scar at Pleasington. We usually set off from Meins Road, on the outskirts of Blackburn. The route crosses Arley Brook then around the back of Woodfold Hall to enter the woods from the north side. The return route is via Yellow Hill and Billinge Wood back to Meins Road. What is little known as we pass through this delightful wood is the history that surrounds the area. Alum is a chemical used principally in the textile industry for fixing dyes. It is not found in a natural state in Britain but can be manufactured from some types of shale rock. This is the type of rock that was found within the quarry. During the medieval period in Britain alum was imported, mostly from Italy. Domestic production began in the north of England in the early 17th century.



The Pleasington alum works is a rare surviving example of one of the earliest largely undisturbed inland alum works in the country and is the sole surviving example of an early 17th to late 18th century alum site in north west England. It contains substantial surface remains of the quarrying and tipping activities and will also contain buried remains of features associated with the other alum producing processes such as calcination and steeping.

The alum quarry is located on the right-hand side within the woodland to the south of Alum House Brook and includes remains of the alum quarries and associated features from the early 17th to late 18th century Pleasington alum works. The whole site is now overgrown but surface remains of quarry floor working areas, test pits, roadways, spoil tips and tip runs, and also contain buried remains of features such as steeping pits, the alum house and associated buildings, and early quarry faces.

Alum was first quarried at Pleasington in 1609 when the landowner, Sir Richard Houghton, employed the German mining engineer Anthony Snyder to commence operations. By the end of the first year only some five to seven tons of alum had been produced but its limited transport costs to the nearby tawers and dyers of Bolton, Wigan and Coppull led to a rapid increase in demand and by 1614 Sir Richard was granted the privilege of making alum for 21 years and of exporting 500 tons a year.

Three years later, whilst visiting Sir Richard's home at Houghton Towers, King James I took the opportunity to view the alum mines, during his infamous visit to the Houghton Tower.

Although the precise date when alum manufacture ceased at Pleasington is unknown, reference to alum workers in the Blackburn parish registers in 1771 indicates that the site must have continued production towards the end of the 18th century.



The industry flourished in the north for 200 years until the mid-19th century when it was overtaken by new techniques using shale from coal mining, whilst after 1880 aluminium sulphate replaced alum for most industrial purposes.

On future walks when you pass this area you will be able to appreciate the history of our surrounding as well as enjoying the peace and tranquillity of the woods.

Michael C

Harriers and Falcons

Despite the best efforts of gamekeepers, hen harriers and peregrine falcons can still be seen flying wild in the Forest of Bowland. This Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is often visited by Spring Vale Rambling Class, particularly undertaking walks from Dunsop Bridge.



Walking north out from Dunsop Bridge up the valley alongside the River Dunsop, then taking the left track (north west) takes you into the Brennand Valley. Here you have a good chance of seeing many of the birds of prey.

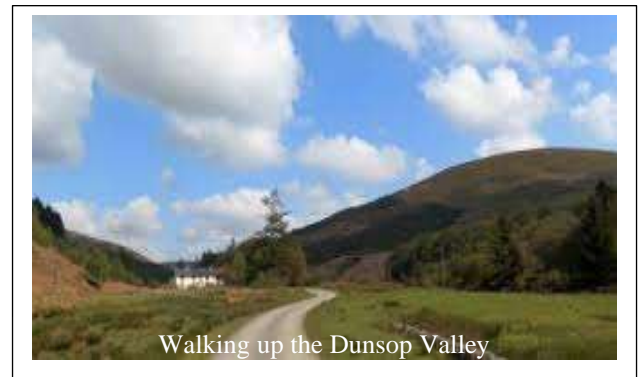


As well as the aforementioned hen harriers and peregrines, buzzards, merlins and even the re-introduced red kites are also present in this area. Red Kites, which were once so common all over Britain that they were regarded vermin, have been reintroduced to many areas of the country. They are one of the easiest birds of prey to identify. Their wings seem disproportionately long, but it is usually their forked tail which stands out. With buzzards, it is usually their distinctive call which first identifies them, described as a mewing sound. Male Hen Harriers have a grey appearance, the female being

brown with a white rump. They fly with their wings held in a distinctive 'V' shape.



Shortly after passing Brennand Farm the track bends northeast away from the River Brennand across open moorland. After about a mile, the track drops down to Whitendale Farm and then meets up with another track where we turn right to follow it in a southerly direction. We are now alongside the Whitendale River, which we follow to meet our outward route.



This route is about 8 miles long and does cross wild open moorland. As a matter of interest, the Whitendale River joins the Brennand River to become the River Dunsop which then meets the River Hodder on the southern edge of Dunsop Bridge which then flows on to meet the River Ribble at Great Mitton.

Tony C