

Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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Lost Time

The clocks go back this Sunday, 25th October so at 2.00 am remember to turn your clocks back by 1 hour.

We often complain about losing the hour but spare a thought for the country when we lost 11 whole days. Well in the year 1752 this is exactly what happened.

Before 1752, Britain and her Empire followed the Julian calendar, first implemented by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C. However, this calendar had an inbuilt error of 1 day every 128 years, due to a miscalculation of the solar year by 11 minutes. In the 16th century Galileo discovered that the earth travelled around the sun and Pope Gregory, by careful reckoning, recalculated the time of the earth's orbit to be 365 days 6 hours. This affected the date of Easter, traditionally observed on March 21, as it began to move further away from the spring equinox with each passing year.

To solve this problem, the Gregorian calendar was introduced. This is a solar calendar, based on a 365-day year divided into 12 months. Months of 30 or 31 days and leap year every 4 years adding an extra day to February making it 29 days long.

First to adopt the new calendar in 1582 were France, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain. England had a Protestant ruler, Queen Elizabeth I and anything connected with the Pope was rejected. This caused a difference in the calendar which after 150 years resulted in confusion with merchant trading with Europe. (sounds familiar).

Plans to change England's traditional calendar to that of parity with Europe's became a contentious issue for several reasons. However, the most controversial aspect of the change and one that stirred up fears amongst the ordinary working population, was the arbitrary removal of 11 days from the year's calendar,

The Calendar (New Style) Act 1750 introduced the Gregorian calendar to the British Empire, bringing Britain into line with most of Western Europe.

Its introduction was not straightforward and meant that the year 1751 was a short year, lasting just 282 days from 25th March (New Year in the Julian calendar) to 31st December. The year 1752 then began on 1 January. There remained the problem of aligning the calendar in use in England with that in use in Europe. It was necessary to correct it by 11 days: the 'lost days'. It was decided that Wednesday 2nd September 1752 would be followed by Thursday 14th September 1752.

Claims of civil unrest and rioters demanding "Give us our eleven days" may have arisen through a misinterpretation of a painting by William Hogarth entitled: "An Election Entertainment".

Michael C

A Long-Lasting Legacy

As you walk along the track under the canopy of Autumn colours, that is Sunnyhurst Wood Darwen heading from the direction of Falcon Avenue, you will approach the now silted paddling pool. Look to your right for a stone engraved plaque sheltering below the trees. The plaque commemorates the people who built the pool now behind you. The first name on the list is Ellis Gibson. In 1905 Ellis decided to build a shallow lake here in Sunnyhurst Wood and by October 1905 the construction was complete and handed over to Darwen Corporation. The task was undertaken with the help of the volunteer labour of his friends who are the others named on the plaque's inscription. The paddling pool was used in the summer, but also during the winter for ice skating when frozen. The design incorporated the three ornamental stone arched bridges and an artificial waterfall. At the northern end of the pool was a fountain whose waterspout reached to a height of 30 foot. Nothing now remains of this magnificent spectacle.



Walk on further into the Wood passing the bandstand and cross the little bridge to finally reach the Fishing Pond. This is known as the Ellis Gibson Fish Pond. The pond was created in 1904 by Ellis Gibson who stocked it with rainbow trout, at his own expense. It fell into disrepair and was cleaned out and brought back to its original condition in 2008 but again it is currently looking in a sorry state, mainly due to it being silted and overgrown.



Ellis Gibson's name crops up many years earlier, for he was one of the five men that walked across Darwen Moors one Sunday in July 1878, to be confronted by Edmund Bury and Joseph Kay, the game keepers on the moor and tried to prevent the men from accessing the moor. A scuffle ensued and this action instigated the London High Court proceedings to defend a writ against the men from using established paths across the moors. The case was successfully defended and access on to Darwen Moors was assured. This action became known as the Freeing of the Moors and established public access on to this local wild place long before the Peak District Kinder Scout Mass Trespass and the Right to Roam Act of 2000.



Ellis will always be remembered as being one of the men involved in the action of freeing the moors as well as his volunteering role and down to earth approach in providing the fishing pool and paddling pond within Sunnyhurst. Maybe his vested interest was that he was also President of the Darwen Angling Society, he was good at shooting and also a keen amateur sportsman. So, the next time you walk through the Wood bear a thought for the man that helped create it all and gave us the freedom to walk the moors.



Eleanor

Dark Skies

Everyone, I am sure, is a little saddened that the days are shortening and the nights are lengthening. However it will be a time when star gazing comes more to the fore. During the summer months, the nights never fully darkened, particularly towards the northern horizon and even during the winter months, many places suffer from light pollution from artificial lighting such as street lamps etc

There are some areas of UK officially designated as dark skies where there is no light pollution. Of course, even where there is light pollution, the brighter stars and planets are easily observed. In fact there are four planets easily observed at the moment. Anyone peeping out of their window to the East just before dawn can't help but spot bright Venus, the brightest object in the sky, after the sun and moon. Almost directly overhead in the middle of the night is Mars with a faint orange tint.

Shortly after sunset the steady light of Jupiter can be seen in the south. Looking a short distance to the left (east) of Jupiter a fainter but steady point of light can be seen, this is Saturn.

It is this steady light which distinguishes planets from stars - stars only twinkle.



Tony C

Clitheroe Castle

After the Norman invasion and Harold's defeat at the Battle of Hastings the lands around Clitheroe were granted to Robert de Lacy by William the Conqueror. It was Roger de Poitou who chose the site, standing high on a limestone outcrop on which to build his castle and house. The site has clear views along the Ribble Valley and the height and steepness of the slopes on three sides make this an ideal defensive position. It was from this secure location that he was to successfully defend his possessions which stretched from West Lancashire across the county to West Yorkshire.

The original keep at Clitheroe was the smallest in the country but was the first to be built from stone. After the death of a later occupier Henry de Lacy in 1311 the value of the castles income was listed as £24 18s 6d, much of which came from the water mill, the connections to the chapel and rents from the estate farms.

The house adjoining the castle was built in the mid 18th century with many alterations taking place over the years. The old courthouse was restored and refaced, also a new Tudor doorway was added. Some of the constables of Clitheroe Castle came from prominent local families such as Roger Banastre from Altham and Thomas Nowell from Read.



The castle keep remains standing, but the rest of the castle was destroyed in 1649 by Oliver Cromwell's army. The adjoining house now contains Clitheroe Museum and part of the National Sound Archive which stores over 80,00 recordings, many from people whose lives were spent working and living within the Ribble Valley.

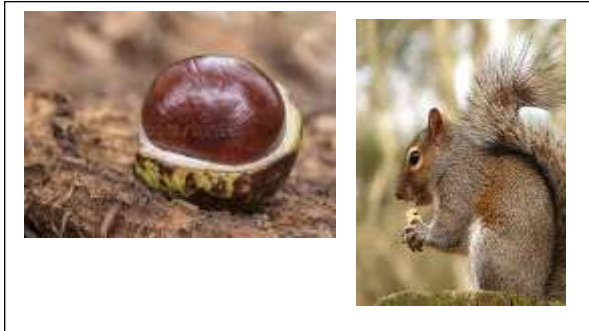
SVRC often commence walks from Clitheroe, but a trip to the Castle and its grounds is well worth a visit to explore and reflecting on its history.

Michael C

An Autumn Journey

As the clocks go back and British Summertime ends at 2.00am on Sunday 25th October the days will get shorter but there is still lots to see and do whilst out on our walks. Slow down and enjoy the Autumn Journey before the start of Winter on the 21st December. Join SVRC on one of the walks included in the Winter Programme.

Collect acorns and other seeds and plant a tree. Then look after it in the months ahead to make a positive contribution to your environment



On mild days, the countryside is draped with gossamer from tiny linyphiid spiders.

Mosses and lichens of all kinds can be found in woods and hedgerows; their velvety evergreen tufts and cushions stand out among the bare wood.

Many plants produce beautiful seed heads, such as hogweed and teasel, which are valuable as food for birds, but also as stems in which insects can overwinter. Do not touch the plants or collect the hogweed seeds.

At this time of year, traditional countryside hedges are full of blackberries, elderberries, rosehips, haws and sloes, forming a supply of food for birds through the winter. Why not plant a shrub for birds? Many birds gather together in small flocks, especially finches and tits. Look out for the starlings performing their spectacular aerial ballets.



Out on the marshes, skeins of geese arrive to spend the winter in Britain. Barnacle geese winter on the north-west coast and brent geese from Siberia find a refuge on our muddy estuaries.

Whooper and Bewick's swans are some of the most spectacular visitors and enliven a misty November day. Wildfowl gather in abundance on lakes and reservoirs. How many different species of wader, duck or goose can you spot?



Unlike the rabbit, brown hares do not burrow so you may spot them crouching in fields at this time of year.

Pinecones are a symbol of autumn. Try a Goggle search 'home decor ideas with pinecones' and have a go. There are lots of ideas on YouTube too.



Here is a link to a booklet of activities and winter spotting to do with young people at home and whilst walking in the countryside. Link to the **BOOKLET** courtesy of The Wildlife Trusts.

Why not include a **Nature Reserve** in your walks! Here is a [LINK](#) to Lancashire and other North West Nature Reserves but please only visit those in your Tier 1, 2 or 3 Area! You may have already visited some of these with Spring Vale Rambling Class!

Barbara S

Longworth Clough

I lived in Egerton for nearly 22 years and was lucky enough to live within a 5-minute walk of the Longworth Clough nature reserve. Over those years I led several walks for Spring Vale Rambling Class in this area and I would like to share with you my acquaintance with this little valley which is worth including in any walk around Egerton and Belmont.

Difficult to believe but the North End of Longworth Clough is in the Blackburn with Darwen Borough and the South section in Bolton MBC.

Longworth Clough supports an outstanding woodland, wetland and grassland area that is rich in wildlife and has since become a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The valley was once part of the estate of Longworth Hall and the seat of the Longworth family, the Hall's earliest mention is in deeds of 1632, no longer in being it lay on the eastern side of the present Longworth Road overlooking the valley and demolished in 1908 for construction of Delph Reservoir. There are records of inhabitants in the clough in 1254 as part of a manor owned by the Lords of Manchester and John de Longworth in 1288 successfully asserted his right to 100 acres of moor in Longworth.

Whilst much of the valley looks very natural many of its features are manmade through industrial activity. A series of water driven mills along the valley dating from before 1608 creating a complex number of waterways of manmade channels or goyts, connecting natural springs, streams and rivers.

The whole of the Longworth Clough was a hive of industrial activity throughout much of the 16th to 19th century from Belmont Print Works at the northern end to the Longworth nature reserve today. The evidence of an earlier cotton mill "Longworth Mill", demolished in 1912, can still be seen as an area of flat land bounded west by Longworth Brook and the east by the footpath to Belmont. Look carefully to the raised land on the eastern side and you will see evidence of the goyt carrying water from a weir upstream. The disused goyt is still a significant feature on the nature reserve today. Walking north on the footpath towards Belmont Paper Mill you will glimpse grazing deer through the trees on your right.

The site drainage of the is not well understood but the resultant groundwater seepages produce patches of rare flora like bog asphodel and sneezewort; also areas of

alder and willow carr, great horsetail and golden saxifrage. Carrs are wetlands that are dominated by shrubs rather than trees. Sessile oak woodland dominates the drier slopes.

Acid grassland on the steeper slopes supports plants like Heath Bedstraw and Tormentil; especially on the banks of the old goyt. In spring yellow Flag Iris and Marsh Marigold give a splendid yellow show. Later in summer Devil's-bit scabious and Knapweed paint the lower meadow in purple and mauve and attract many butterflies.

Longworth Clough is extraordinarily rich in insect life with Dragonflies, damselflies and butterflies including Small Skipper, Large White, Green-veined white, Red Admiral, Peacock, Comma, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Painted Lady and Tortoiseshell.

There is an abundance of birdlife Woodcock, Tawny Owl, Little Owl, Tree Creepers, Wood Warbler and Kingfishers, Black Cap, Grey Wagtails and Sand Martins in summer. Dipper's are often seen feeding in the brook.

Typical fauna that you might spot on your walk include Roe Deer, Weasels and Stoats which are frequently seen in the valley

The river was abundant in trout until about 2003 when an effluent spill from the paper mill and further spills from the sewage works wiped out most of the fish. This resulted in the Dippers and Kingfishers disappearing for about 4 years. The river is recovering slowly with Kingfishers Dippers being quite frequent, small trout are back showing that it is becoming a good clean river.

Make a note when thinking about a new walking area and then take a stroll down this delightful valley you will not be disappointed with what you find.

Longworth Mill circa 1912 now demolished



Michael Mc