

Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 The Next Walk
- 2 Slainte Mhath
3. Woodland Crafties / A Fishy Tale
- 4 A Walking AGM
- 5 Longer Walks what to Take?

The Next Walk with Nature and History all around

The next ramble for the Class will be on **Saturday 7th November 2020** starting at **11.00pm**. Meeting at Burrs Country Park Woodhill Road, Bury BL8 1DA. **Walking Distance** 6.5 miles. It will be muddy in places.

Directions: Take the Grane Rd heading to Haslingden and turn right at the Holden Arms heading towards Holcombe Brook passing through Helmshore. At Holcombe Brook traffic lights take the B6214 signposted Bury. Near to Bury town centre, Burrs Country Park is signposted, turn left along Woodhill Road and the Park is found at the end of this road.

These walks are for members only, but you do need to inform Michael the President, that you are attending prior to the walk on 07903 829756 or email svrcramblers@gmail.com to allow him to compile the list of attendees. You **must** book.

This will be a walk starting from the car park at Burrs Country Park in Bury. Burrs Country Park is a popular area and covers countryside once housing the mill complex of the Burr and Higher Woodhill cotton mills. Sculptures on the Irwell Valley Trail are dotted around, and industrial heritage is there to explore. The walk follows the River Irwell and crosses the East Lancashire Heritage railway line. Farm tracks and field paths are traversed and the route arrives at the start of the Kirklees Local Nature Reserve.

This reserve is a safe haven for many bird species and animals as well as an abundance of evidence of the early Industrial Heritage buildings and structures. After the wooded area of the reserve, the route follows the disused railway line of the Bury and Tottington District Railway. This track bed has been converted into a multi-use way and leads back towards Bury and the start of our walk.



Autumn colours on the disused railway line

Michael C

Slainte Mhath!

A few years ago, I went on a coach trip to Blackwaterfoot, on the isle of Arran. Blackwaterfoot is a small village on Drumadoon Bay, at the mouth of the Black Water on the west coast of Arran. It comprises of a collection of buildings focused on the picturesque Blackwaterfoot Harbour, which in turn is where the Clauchan Water drops over natural rock weirs and flows under a stone bridge into the sea. Home to a sandy beach, this small village boasts beautiful views of the Mull of Kintyre. The Kinloch Hotel, overlooking the sea next to the harbour was my home for five days.

My dining room companions on the trip were two ladies from Oswaldtwistle and Accrington. Each evening we tried and compared several gins before our evening meal and Rock Rose became our favourite. A proper gin with lots of juniper on the first sip, lovely floral notes of the rose root and the sweetness of the bilberries. The combination of lemon verbena and Bulgarian juniper give it a lemon sherbet-like finish.



Joining us for the various evening entertainments were Mavis and her daughter Julie who, I soon discovered, were also members of Spring Vale Rambling Class Darwen. Gordon the father-in-law of Pam Maybury, East Lancs Coach Rambles, was also on the trip. It is a small world indeed!

One evening the six of us joined others and we were given the role of 'the jury' partaking in a performance of *The Goatfell Murder*. More than 125 years after the Scotsman, John Laurie, was convicted of killing Edwin Rose on the isle of Arran's Goatfell peak in July 1889, a deadly serious controversy still surrounds a case of "murder in the mountains", a violent death and possible miscarriage of justice that still haunts Scottish hillwalkers to this day. With the benefit of history and hindsight, the case leaves open more questions than it ultimately answered.

Was MURDER most foul carried out or was death caused by an accidental fall? You will need to read *The Goatfell Murder* by Calum Smith to reach your own conclusion.

On our final evening, the five ladies decided to visit the hotel's public bar and having settled ourselves down with a drink we joined the local teams and entered the weekly pub quiz. Several rounds took place, and an eclectic mixture of questions was asked. There was a photographic round of historic sights, buildings and landscapes/sketches of the Arran countryside including Goatfell. Goatfell is the highest of the mountains on Arran and the culminating point of some dramatic granite ridges. Luckily for us, several of these had been presented as evidence during our 'jury service' and we had also toured most of Arran during our week on the island which helped enormously!

I cannot remember the penultimate quiz question, but I can remember the answer was 'Blackburn Rovers'. We won the quiz by a couple of points. The locals were incredibly surprised at being beaten by a team of ladies from East Lancashire. Our prize was £50 and a round of drinks. The Usige Dubh (Blackwater), Damh Bahn (White Stag) ales and other beverages were consumed before we retired for the evening.

Folklore has it that if a man is murdered on Arran his ghost will walk the hills unless his boots are buried at the high-water mark. On my early morning walks I did not discover any boots on the shore line as I explored Drumadoon Point and the King's Cave said to have been the refuge of King Robert the Bruce, where he was inspired by the spider's endeavours to spin a web. I did see deer and plenty of wildlife but very few walkers.



Barbara S

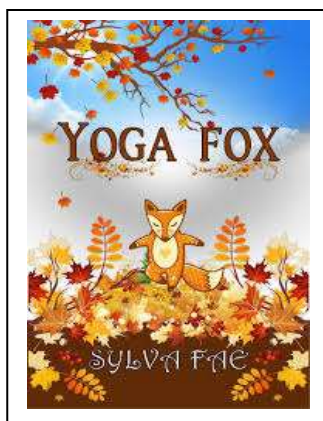
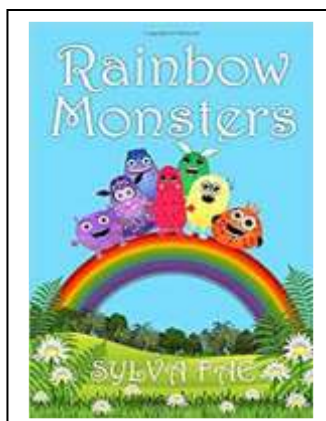
Woodland Crafties

It is only recently that I decided to make a concerted effort to reacquaint myself with my sister in law, the widow of my late brother, it is some 20 years since we were in touch (remiss of me I must add).

I was aware that they had two children, a boy and girl, as I used to take them for rides in the sidecar connected to a motor bike of course, when they were young. However, that little girl now in her 40s has three daughters of her own who have been brought up tree climbing and appreciating the countryside and nature in general. The family now own a section of what was a plantation on the outskirts of Telford in Shropshire, the woodland is divided into four sections of around 7 acres each and comprises a mixture of broadleaf, rhododendron, hazel, holly etc.

The family now run courses on woodland crafts, foraging and campfire weekends. Other likeminded families in other parts of the woods enjoy a variety of activities including Archery, Bushcraft etc. This article is to emphasize the fact that young children are quite capable of surrounding themselves with nature and the natural world whilst keeping up with the Techie world that today's education requires of them.

My niece is a writer and author of childrens' books – some of which are woodland related, writing under the pseudonym – Sylva Fae.



Alan S

A Fishy Tail

The rivers Ribble and the Wyre, have long distance well signed trails along most of their lengths but there is not one for the River Darwen although it is possible to follow parts of the rivers course.

Historically, it may have been an important tributary to the River Ribble particularly in natural history terms. Darwen football club have the nickname the salmons which is apparently named after their salmon coloured shirts, but this choice of colour may itself have been suggested by the local tales of the River Darwen as a one time important salmon breeding river.

It is hard to believe now, but the river once ran through a pristine rural setting and the town of Darwen barely existed until the coming of the industrial revolution. The valley that the town now sits in would have been largely avoided. Indeed, the word Darwen is Celtic in origin and translates roughly as “wet valley”, or “water under the tree roots”. It was only with the coming of the industrial revolution that a wet area like the Darwen valley would have become an attraction (due to the abundance of waterpower) instead of a boggy, wet area to be avoided. It is worth reflecting on the fact that the Romans built their road on the hills to the east of the valley to avoid the wetter valley bottom. The source of the river is upon Cranberry Moss where a couple of small streams meet to become the River Darwen, in the area where Jack Kays reservoir once stood.

In the past when the river was largely untouched it was quite possible that salmon would swim from the Ribble up small tributary rivers like the Darwen to spawn in the shallows quite close to its source. For many years the River Darwen was highly polluted, a dumping ground for all manner of industrial waste, but now due to a lot of hard work and dedication the water quality has improved dramatically. The Environmental Agency now regularly stock the river with a variety of small fish.



Tony C

A Walking AGM

It was a wet afternoon when we assembled at Spring Vale Church to set off on the last of our summer programme of walks. The walk was only the third to be held during this year, what at the start of the season was expected to be an exciting year of events for our 125th year. The pandemic saw an end to that, but we set off observing all our new but vitally important rules.

We had expected the rain to ease off a little as we entered Whitehall Park, but this was not to be. This walk was also down as our Annual General Meeting and there was to be no potato pie tea and pots of steaming tea afterwards. The group gathered in a socially distance semi-circle under the branches of a spreading tree and the meeting commenced. A summary of what had happened during the year and a detailed financial report provided by the treasurer was the order for the meeting. All officials had agreed to remain in office and this was supported by those present. The plans for next year's walk programme were briefly discussed.

The walk continued after this brief stop, first along field paths to Higher Hill Farm and then down Duckshaw Lane to arrive at the houses known as Bold Venture on Bury Fold Lane. A left here took us onto the bridlepath passing Kebbs Cottage and running behind Astley Bank, to eventually arrive at Janet House Farm. It was our intention to walk on past Bold Venture Park, following the path by Robin Hood Cottage to finally arrive at the Sunnyhust area.



Image by Anita D



Image by Anita D

The continuing rain changed our plans and after a quick traverse of the paths within the heavily wooded area of the bottom park it was a unanimous decision to head back to the start point. Our steps were retraced until we reached Bury Fold Lane where we headed down to the paths behind Bury Fold. The route now follows the ancient highway of "Limersgate", passing Print Shop to finally reach Whitehall. This whole area was of great interest to some of our newer members who had never walked around here before. Intrigued to find some of the oldest houses and industrial calico printing connections and not realising that Darwen held so many secret treasures, they said that they would definitely be investigating the history of these listed buildings and generations of Darwen families. It was now only a short trip back to Spring Vale.



Print Shop Darwen

The rain had never stopped and the group arrived back in a rather wet and bedraggled state, but glad to have had the chance of an enjoyable walk, a meeting with friends, if not in close proximity to each other and the completion of the AGM for the 2020 season.

Michael C

Longer Walks-What to Take?

On all walks in Britain, certain items are essential no matter how long or short the walk. Everyone has their own ideas, based on their personal experience, of what travels with them. What follows is not an exhaustive list, just items for your consideration.

I recently came across walk equipment notes made in 1978 and 2010. The first year was a Pennine Way walk from Edale to Hadrian's Wall, with my brother, Phil and a friend, Dave. We set off in early September to do the entire route to Kirk Yetholm in 14 days. However, continuous bad weather, sore feet, bad backs and gastrointestinal problems led to our mutual abandonment at Hadrian's Wall.

After my brother died in 2010, Dave and myself decided to complete the walk from Hadrian's Wall to Kirk Yetholm in the July. We had excellent weather for the 4 days it took complete the walk. Though only just over 30 years separates these walks, a review of equipment reveals significant changes, even allowing for the difference in preparing for 14 day and 4-day trips.

Boots

1978 Boylan (made in Eire), full grain leather, slightly curved sole with steel insert for stiffness, Vibram cleated sole, D-ring lacing, padded ankle area and bellows tongue. Fitting instructions-try in the morning with woollen socks. Apply dubbin, Wet-Pruf or Zug(?) weight 850g. Unfortunately, I later discovered these were then regarded as CLIMBING boots (hence the steel plate for stiffness) and the lack of flexibility led to my progressive foot problems.

2010 Brasher 'Hillmaster' GTX-lightweight (400g) fabric, Vibram sole, D ring lacing, padded ankle, bellows tongue. Worn with 2 pairs of socks, 1 thin, 1 thick, both synthetic. Use Nikwax or Brasher own-brand treatment.

Jacket

1978 'Sprayway' nylon, medium weight (4-8oz per sq. yd.), knee length, bright orange, two outer pockets with flaps, full zip. This had a label inside 'carefully made by Carol' and the date of manufacture. When not raining, which was rare, a 'Greenspot' hip-length jacket with full zip and two zipped outer pockets. The 'Sprayway' would be folded and strapped on top of the pack.

2010 'Sprayway' Gore-Tex jacket, light blue/black, mesh lined, taped seams, 2 outside, 1 inside (map size) zipped pockets. Optional zip-on hood-not carried. Mid-thigh length. Reproofed with Nikwax technology. Weight filled 8kg.

Rucksack

1978 'Karrimor' 65Litre-main plus 2 side pockets on an aluminium frame with carrying bar. Padded hip belt/waist strap. Used with strong polythene liner as only 'showerproof'. Weight filled 18kg.

2010 'Karrimor' Jura 25 litre-shaped polypropylene frame, main, lid pocket and outer map pocket. Padded hip-belt/waist strap. Walking pole attachment straps top and bottom right. Again, used with strong polythene liner, as needed to be reproofed regularly with Nikwax spray.

Clothing

In summary, allowing for different quantities needed for 14 and 4 day walks, it's mainly fabrics which differ. In 1978 the word WOOL appears against vests! shirts, sweaters, socks and trousers. The latter were knee length breeches worn with overknee wool long stockings (nylon reinforced at heel and toe). Oh, and a wool bobble hat and fingerless gloves.

Also, in 1978 waterproof nylon overtrousers with velcro or zip at the ankle. Full knee to ankle gaiters, with full zip at rear, instep elastic and hooks. I have never used overtrousers since; too much of a fuff and make horrible noises!

In 2010-'Helly-Hansen' vests (short and long sleeve), 'Craghoppers' microfleece, 'Icepeak' black stretch trousers with 6 zipped pockets and drawcords at the ankles, a waxed waterproof 'Peaky Blinder' style cap. Ankle gaiters (or 'stop-tous') but no gloves, it being Summer.

In Common

These are really the essential items which should be carried on longer, or more than single day walks. The relevant OS maps, Silva type 54 compass, a waterproof wristwatch (now replaced by phones) whistle and torch, rations-nuts and raisins, Kendal mint cake, Mars bars (getting smaller), wrapped sugary sweets. First Aid kit-various plasters, shell dressing, roller bandage, triangular bandage, safety pins, scissors (can be strong plastic), tweezers, antiseptic wipes, cotton wool balls, surgical gloves. If First Aid trained, a disposable face shield for CPR. Sewing kit, spare laces 140cm, 500ml thermos flask, liquid soap and mini towel, Cash (plus 2p's and 10p's for phone boxes in 1978) credit or debit card, notebook, small diary and a pen.

21st Century Add-Ons

Telescopic walking pole. 'Gelert' sit on mat with cloth cover from a friend and a GPS navigational device if finances permit.

Alan R