

# Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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## Lest we forget

It is at this time of year when we all remember the thousands and thousands of men and women who gave their lives during the two World Wars to ensure that we continue to enjoy the freedom that we all recognise today. Up and down the country from the smallest village war memorial to the large ornate structures people stood in silence to remember the fallen and even in the time of restrictions the nation still managed to pay their respects.

The early syllabus, the programme of Spring Vale Ramblers walks, gives us a little insight into the effect that the wars had on everyone and how thoughts of goodwill were expressed.

1915 No Syllabus available.

1916 Our united prayer is that this terrible scourge of war may soon be ended and our lads, who have "Borne the burden and heat of the day" may return safe and sound to the arms of their loved ones, who yearn for their safety and welfare.

1917 J.H. Entwistle The War has taken toll of his useful life.

1917 David Tattersall confined to hospital somewhere in France.

1917 To those of our Ramblers and friends who are still in the field of strife we wish immunity from sickness and wounds and a speedy return to our ranks as of yore.

1918 To the Ramblers in far off places we send a hearty greeting and a hope that the march may soon be homeward and that a lasting peace may be our inheritance.

1919 We wish all our members who have borne the burden and heat of the day a most speedy and complete recovery.

1919 We are glad to welcome home some of our old Ramblers and amongst them is our old Secretary David Tattersall returning home somewhat shattered in health.

1920 We heartily welcome those of our numbers who have returned from foreign service and we sincerely wish them every good wish as they enter again into a more peaceful atmosphere.

The 1939 to 1945 syllabuses do not record direct references to the members who were serving gallantly in the Second World War. They do contain details of the charitable events the Class was organising and the effect disruptions that the war was having on the home front.



## Three men in a bog - Part 1

I recently wrote about what equipment to take on a long walk. This article recalls the memories I have on my attempt at the Pennine Way long distant walk undertaken in 1978. I embarked on this walk adventure with my brother Phil and a friend Dave. But first, a brief history regarding the origins of the Pennine Way.

The journalist and rambler Tom Stephenson proposed the concept in 1935, lobbying parliament for an official trail. Originally planned to end at Wooler in Northumberland, but it was extended to end in Kirk Yetholm in Scotland. An opening ceremony took place on Malham Moor in April 1965. The signage and route feasibility were checked by groups of 4/5 soldiers, each walking a 15mile section. This operation was completed in one day. At 268 miles it is the single longest inland path. The highest point is Cross Fell in Cumbria at 2930ft. The 'Spine Race' record, Kirk Yetholm to Edale was set in July 2020 at 2 days 13 hrs and 34 mins. Most people take at least 14 days!

What follows is a selection of happenings that occurred along the journey. It was a unanimous decision to commence the walk because Dave had done it before and said he 'knew the way' and we all found Wainwright's descriptions from his book rather amusing.

Starting on Friday 1st September we arrived at the 'superior' Youth Hostel, Rowland Cote, in Edale. Depending on size and facilities, hostels were graded 'simple', 'standard' or 'superior'. Rowland Cote was obviously 'superior', as it was large, had piped music, chocolate dispensing machines and lots of children with suitcases blocking the entrance. They were on an adventure holiday pony-trekking around the area. The three of us shared a six bed dormitory with a man and his two sons. One of the sons went to bed with a woolly hat pulled down over his ears and I later discovered why. His dad was a prolific purveyor of snoring styles. I eventually dragged my mattress and bedding into the corridor, probably getting about 4 hrs of sleep.



Rowland Cote YH Edale



Me at Crowden YH Glossop

We left Crowden YH on Sunday morning, but after a steady half-hour climb up to Laddow Rocks, Dave realised he had left his shoes at the hostel! Minus his pack he yomped back down the long hill and returned in 20 mins. Now we were down on schedule (never have one) so Dave set a mean pace across the dreadful mud and peat desolation of Black Hill. At a road crossing we had a cup of tea at a snack bar displaying a sign stating 'Ministry of Food approved-Functions catered for'.

Outside the Marsden YH about 20 German teenagers were sitting on the steps. It took AGES to sign them all in, and all the lower bunks had GONE! The teachers had little control and the evening meal was chaotic. We complained saying "We've walked here from ....." then discover that the man we were sat next to is on the Yorkshire YHA committee. In the morning there is thick mist to contend with and we resort to using a compass to get back on the route. We can only hear the traffic on the M62 as we cross about 60ft above it on a narrow footbridge in full mist.



Above Blackstone Edge  
On the left Marsden YH

The woman warden at Mankinholes YH shows us a small room full of all kinds of walking gear. Has it been left behind as people try to lighten their packs? In the morning at 07.30 she bursts into our dormitory and flings open the window with "God, it stinks in here!"

To be continued in the next issue 29.

Alan R

## Forgotten Books

I wonder if you have heard of the 'History of the old Independent Chapel Tockholes, near Blackburn Lancashire' or 'About two centuries and a half of nonconformity in Tockholes'. I will be incredibly surprised if any of you have read it! The original book was published by John Heywood, Manchester before 1923 and written by Benjamin Nightingale, Congregational Minister, Farnworth with a preface dated November 1886.

I must confess that I have only scanned through some of the 248 pages. What led me to this book – *Tockholes, Silk Hall, Thomas Fawcett*.

The Township of *Tockholes* is situated about three and a half miles on the road leading from Blackburn to Bolton through Belmont. The earliest known document which includes the name of Tockholes is circa 1227. In 1650 the number of families in Tockholes was about 40. Most residents were farmers but in later centuries coal mining and hand-loom weaving were listed occupations.

The Richardson family, who long resided in Tockholes, were once extensive manufacturers of silk. Ralph lived at *Silk Hall*, so called because it served as a warehouse for their goods. The cottage known as Dye House points to its original use.

In the mid-1800s the Whit-Tuesday festivities took place and services were held in the chapel but the road leading from Rock Inn to *Silk Hall* was one mass of stalls, and, as may be expected, sin and intemperance abounded.

I mention *Silk Hall* because my Fawcett ancestors lived there in the Dye House in the 1860s. Silk Hall Fold consisted of three cottages, a large lecture room, a farmhouse, a manse, and another cottage detached from the other block of buildings, formerly called "Dye House", more recently Rose Cottage.



Silk Hall Tockholes

The Chapel was formed in 1662 when the Act of Uniformity was passed and parishioners not willing to conform were forced out of the Church of England. For 10 years dissenters had to meet in secret being afraid of punishment, a favourite meeting spot being on Winter Hill. Relief came in 1672 when the Declaration of Indulgence granted religious freedom to all including the Independents of Tockholes who obtained a licence to erect a meeting house. They erected their own chapel in 1710 and a building remains on the same site to this day. The corner stones of the current building were laid on 8th May 1880. There is a sign over the east side porch containing the following inscription: - "Church formed A.D. 1662. Former Chapel built A.D. 1710. Rebuilt A.D. 1880.



Old Independent Chapel Tockholes

In Mr Nightingale's book it states that the pulpit (in the chapel of 1880) is the most striking object, meeting one, on entering the chapel. It rests upon ornamental walnut columns, is finely upholstered, and made of best pitch pine, and is the workmanship of Mr. T. Fawcett, formerly of Tockholes On the 1881 census I have Thomas (Haigh) Fawcett, a joiner and builder, aged 45; his wife Mary Ann (Barton) and eight children now living in Blackburn. The 1861 census shows the family living at Silk Hall and the children born in Tockholes were William 1861, Hugh 1862 and Mary A 1865. Emma Jane was born in Blackburn in 1868 and she is my direct ancestor.

William and Hugh moved to Duluth, Minnesota where Hugh continued in the construction industry and is famous for the public buildings that his company built. Mary Anne married Henry Gregson in 1887. They had one daughter Amelia in 1888. Mary Anne was only 24 when she was buried in Tockholes on 24th July 1889.

My family history continues, and I have yet to plan and pioneer a walk that will take me past Silk Hall, Tockholes Chapel and other historic locations around Tockholes but I think the Weavers Way and a couple of reservoirs might be a good start!

**Barbara S**



## The Panopticons

Scattered around the East Lancashire countryside are some spectacular and amazing art installations that are definitely worth making the centre piece of a walk. These are the Panopticons and were a creative activity originated by the Mid Pennine Art and East Lancashire Environmental Arts Network. An international competition overseen by the Royal Institute of British Architects was organised with artists, architects and designers invited to submit ideas for the creation of a series of large scale permanent structures on high points across the rural countryside of Pennine Lancashire. The pieces were originally designed to attract people into the countryside and enjoy the stunning landscapes that surrounds them all.

We have over the years visited the following Panopticons incorporating them into a walk of about 8 miles. They make them a marvellous focal point for any walk and it is especially pleasing to note when members state they had heard about the works of art but had never actually visited them. These walks allowed them to experience the sculptures closeup and in greater detail.

### The Singing Ringing Tree

This is an elegant structure comprising of galvanised steel tubes stands high on a hilltop called Crown Point and keeps watch over the town of Burnley far below. This is a noisy sculpture for when the wind hits the piece in a certain direction the acoustics makes it ring and sing like a gleeful symphony of chords and lilts. From another direction a melancholic two-tone dirge is produced. The view from here looks down onto the Colne Valley with its endless rows of terraces houses surrounded now by a modern conurbation. Pendle Hill dominates the mid ground with the distant peaks of Ingleborough and Whernside on the far horizon.



The Singing Ring Tree Crown Point Burnley

### The Halo

The Halo stands majestically at Top 'O Slate, an old quarry and former landfill site above the town of Haslingden. The sculpture looks like a flying saucer and you half expect the alien ET to be exploring around its base. It is a giant steel dish mounted on a tripod and festooned with LEDs. When dusk arrives, the lights begin to glow an unearthly blue green making the landmark visible for miles around. It is possible to walk to here from Haslingden and designed to get you up there for sunset making a safe return journey back into town.



The Halo above Haslingden

### The Atom

This Panopticon sits on the wild remote hillside above Wycoller near to the Lancashire/Yorkshire border drawing its inspiration from the literary legends who lived in the nearby town of Haworth, which lies just over the hill. The Bronte sisters Anne, Emily and Charlotte all loved the area around Wycoller and often walked between the two places. The Atom is an exciting, enclosed space with circular open windows overlooking panoramic views down to the Ribble Valley and Pendle Hill.



The Atom above Wycoller

Michael C

## Historic Paths

The current campaign to discover lost historic paths actively being pursued by the Ramblers has recently been featured in the national press, bringing awareness of the situation to a wider audience. Many people will have fond childhood memories of “secret” paths which they and their friends knew about and walked all the time, perhaps using them as shortcuts to school or play areas. It must have been a complete surprise to many of these children to discover that their parents also knew these paths for as children they also walked these “secret” paths.

Over the years all parts of the British Isles have been surveyed and detailed on historic maps. Some of these “secret” paths may well have been documented and appeared within them. However, there are many that were not transferred across when the National Parks and Countryside Act of 1948 made it a requirement to record all public rights of way onto a new definitive map detailing them all with a short statement and their own unique reference number. Maps periodically get updated and each time there is a tendency for them only to feature the official footpaths. This means that some of these old historic or secret paths start to get lost, forgotten and under used. The current campaign by the Ramblers is attempting to make these unrecorded historic paths official and eventually recorded on the definitive map, so that they are not lost forever. The current deadline of 2026, the cut-off date to allow this to happen, is a rapidly approaching and there is still a lot of work that needs to be done.

Many people who have lived in Darwen all their lives will be aware of how much of the eastern side of the town has changed over the years. There are many paths, maybe not all official ones that have disappeared with the abundance of the recent housing developments. My grandparents lived on Carr Street and on Sundays with my parents, I visited them. After our visit, we would walk along Turncroft Road to join a footpath passing Turncroft Hall through woodland and fields emerging onto Pole Lane, just before the short row of cottages known as Stork Street. The final section passed through a gate and descended stone steps onto Pole Lane. Alas, the housing developments between Pole Lane and Marsh House Lane have wiped out any trace of this path.

During the recent campaign volunteers have discovered over 49,000 mile of paths which could be lost forever. The next step is to collect the evidence needed to submit applications in order to restore them for future generations.

**Tony C**

## A Remarkable Journey

While we are on our walks we often come across strange brick structures seemingly not connected to anything around and also wrought iron gates in the middle of fields which are too narrow to allow stock though, but difficult to imagine who or what would use these remote access points. A little bit of internet research reveals that these, along with many more structures, are associated with the Thirlmere Aqueduct.



This remarkable feat of civil engineering was built to carry approximately 55,000,000 gallons (250,000 m<sup>3</sup>) per day of water from the Thirlmere Reservoir in the Lake District to Manchester. The construction of the reservoir and the 96 mile aqueduct was authorised by the Manchester Waterworks Act of Parliament. The first phase was completed in 1897. The first water to arrive in Manchester from the Lake District was marked with an official ceremony on 13 October 1894.

It is the longest gravity-fed aqueduct in the country, with no pumps along its entire route. The water flows at a speed of 4 miles per hour, taking just over a day to reach the city. The level of the aqueduct drops by approximately 20 inches per mile (30 cm/km) of its length. Its most common form of construction is cut-and-cover, which consists of a "D" section concrete covered channel, approximately 7.1 feet (2.2 m) wide and between 7.1 feet (2.2 m) and 7.9 feet (2.4 m) high.

The unusual structures we come across are access points for maintenance or underground chambers where the aqueduct changes from a concrete channel into a pipeline. The wrought iron gates are there to allow maintenance crews to inspect the line of the route on foot. Standing by the gate you are directly above the line of the aqueduct with millions of litres of water flowing only metres below your feet.

**Michael C**