

Ramblers Gems

A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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Current Restrictions

In England, from Monday 1st June.

The easing of lockdown measures allows more freedom for walkers. However, the advice remains; to limit your contact with others.

New government rules

The rules for contact with others have recently been updated and there are now significant differences between England, Scotland and Wales.

Under the new rules:

People in England can exercise with up to five others from different households provided strict physical distancing guidelines are followed.

At this stage, **all** Spring Vale Ramblers walks will remain suspended. The situation will be monitored closely and our activities will resume only if it is considered safe to do so.

This is based on guidance issued by The Ramblers.



Our Early Years

In the early years of the Class, transportation into the countryside was by the tram and train network. This was both reliable and relatively cheap to use. The tram network was operated by the Boroughs of both Darwen and Blackburn and provided the link from Darwen Circus into Blackburn, out west to Preston New Road, east out as far as Wilpshire, over Sett End and into Hoddlesden or over the hill towards and Accrington. The tram system gave the opportunity for linear routes.

The train would be used to get further afield into the countryside of the Ribble Valley with destinations such as Gisburn, Chatburn and Clitheroe on the Lancashire Yorkshire line and Nelson and Colne on the East Lancashire line. The early syllabus details the affect of the War years and subsequent travel disruption and restrictions that limited the variety of walking destinations that could be reached. The timetables were disrupted and fares increased. Initially the train companies offered a walking tour arrangement that allowed a single ticket to be used from one station and return from a different station for the return journey home. The Syllabus published the train times for pickup from the Spring Vale and Lower Darwen stations both of which are no longer in operation.

It was not until 1948 that the first motor coach trip was organised to transport the ramblers to destinations that were not within easy reach of the rail network. The first trip was to Howarth with a walk arranged to visit Top Withins with sixty six members enjoying the walk. The following year a trip to Grassington was organised and in subsequent years the coach trips proved very popular with at its peak 123 people enjoying the days outing. The coach trip continued until 2009 when due to the rising cost of coach hire and the falling numbers booking, these trips were replaced with car share outings which are cheaper option at present.

Michael

A Brindle circular walk with a Spring Vale twist

As the lockdown slowly begins to unfurl, we felt emboldened to embrace the now permitted freedom of being allowed to drive to exercise. Our journey took us on what felt like a decadent 4 mile drive to the small village of Brindle and the starting point of a local walk that we haven't trodden for probably 25+ years. The approximately 4 mile walk packs in lots of superb views and a surprising connection to the Spring Vale area in Darwen.



Our starting point was the village hall car park. The walk route takes a left out of the car park and along the road to the village school. At the far edge of the school turn right through the gate and follow the footpath down the side of the school. At the side of the school is a rather impressive wooden bear in the small play park which I am sure is much enjoyed by the local children.

Exit the side of the school through a second gate and follow a very obvious path that leads up and to the left. Carry straight on along the path until reaching the road Denham Lane. Carry straight ahead toward the cottages passing an old red telephone box which is now home to a defibrillator and functions as the local book exchange.

Walk on passed the cottages until you reach the bridleway on the right. A short detour along the bridle way to your right reveals an excellent spot for panoramic views of the coast. The stone wall on the right forms the boundary wall of the Brindle Workhouse that stood on this site until it closed over the Christmas break at the end of 1871, with the paupers being transferred to the new workhouse at Eaves Lane in Chorley. At its peak, the workhouse housed between 200 and 300 paupers in harsh conditions. A small plaque on the wall marks the site.

Once you have savoured the views it takes a couple of minutes to retrace your steps back to the road. Upon reaching the road, cross straight over and walk down the farm track. As the farm Lane starts to bend to the right take the stile into the field straight ahead. Cross the field keeping to the edge the next stile is at the far right hand corner of the field. Going over the stile turn right and walk down the field taking in the views of Darwen tower and Winter Hill. The path leads down and then rises up to reach the Leeds Liverpool canal at bridge 85. Turn left along the canal and walk along until you reach the small village of Withnell Fold.

It is at this point of the walk that we find the connection to Darwen and Spring Vale. The area where the mill cottages are was originally named Spring Vale in the 1840's. Apparently a fire had occurred in a Darwen paper mill consequently leaving a skilled and readily available workforce that Mr TB Parke's, owner of the Withnell Fold mill, was keen to employ. Hence the mills village became known as Spring Vale filled with workers from Spring Vale Darwen. Maps of the area in 1844 show the area where the mill workers cottages are was officially recognised as Spring Vale later the area was renamed Withnell Fold.

If you have the time you can detour from the canal and head up into the village of Withnell Fold here you will find a memorial garden built on the area of one of the paper mill lodges just passed the memorial garden is the stocks opposite the mill workers cottages. Although Withnell did have stocks they were not originally sited here. They were moved to where they are now in 1957 as part of the memorial garden.

From the village make your way back to the canal once at the canal look to the right and a footpath sign leads you away from the village and the canal skirting the edge of Withnell nature reserve.

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The paths a little narrow at first and winds up to open fields. The path then leads straight ahead over a number of stiles to bring you to a narrow road called Marsh Lane. Cross directly over the lane to a stile which again leads straight ahead across the fields to High Cop Road.

Turning right here and a short walk along the road will lead back to the village hall and car park. The walk has fairly gentle inclines but rewards with magnificent vistas in every direction. We will definitely not leave it as long before we explore this area again.

Stephanie

Volunteer Week

The week 1st to 7th June is Volunteer Week. As well as helping others, volunteering has been shown to improve volunteers' wellbeing too. This is an ideal time to get chatting to other organisations that you're interested in to find out about their volunteering opportunities. In these difficult times many people have offered their valuable time in all sorts of different ways to help out, not just their neighbours, but also people within the wider community. A big thank you goes to everyone involved in the running of our club and to all the volunteer walk leaders. Without you there would be no club!



The Stocks at Withnell

Lancashire Village Anagrams Answers

Editor: My apologies for all of the errors Must do better

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Sawley | 11 Belmont |
| 2 Rufford | 12 Scorton/Croston |
| 3 Hoghton | 13 Mellor (Sorry typo) |
| 4 Chatburn | 14 Langho |
| 5 Singleton (Sorry typo) | 15 Simonstone |
| 6 Grimsargh | 16 Osbaldeston |
| 7 Wheelton | 17 Whitewell |
| 8 Waddington | 18 Galgate |
| 9 Croston /Scorton (Sorry typo) | 19 Pendleton |
| 10 Ribchester | 20 Chipping |

A bit of a wheeze

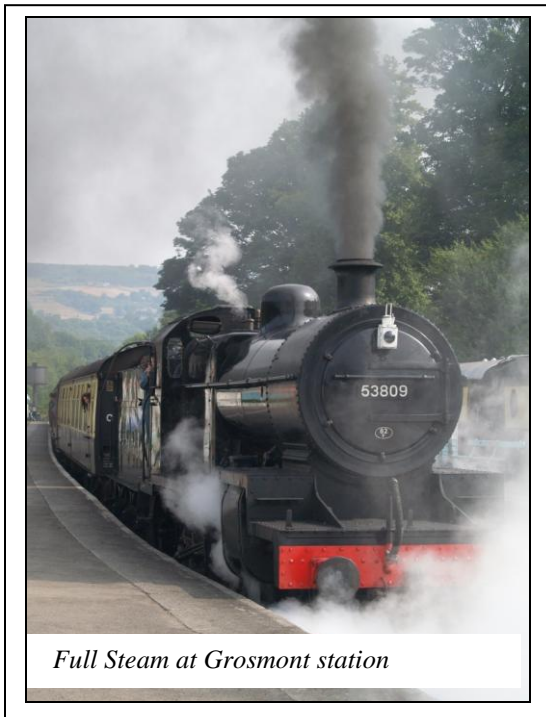
What comes after two straight days of rain in the Lake District? *Monday morning.*

Deserting my day-to-day scramble
When the weather is fine, I will ramble,
Just taking my time
While I'm still in my prime,
But my endpoint is somewhat a gamble.

COAST TO COAST

It was 2005 whilst on one of our Thursday Dales walks that myself and Michael Counter came up with the idea of taking on the Wainwright's 'Coast to Coast' long distance walk, from St Bees Head on the west coast to Robin Hoods Bay on the East coast, a distance of approx. 191 miles.

So the planning started and we opted for July 2006, we unintentionally chose the two hottest weeks of that year, wall to wall sunshine. This article is not intended to be a complete narrative of the whole walk this would be far too long, but merely a snapshot covering the final stage from Grosmont to Robin Hoods Bay.



Full Steam at Grosmont station

Grosmont is the home of the North Yorks Moors railway, a mecca for railway buffs. After an overnight stay in Grosmont we set off the following morning on our last leg of the walk, a fifteen mile stroll to our final destination – Robin Hoods Bay. The route took us out of town on a steady climb up to Sleights Moor within the intriguingly named Eskdale Cum Ugglebarnby CP, as we gained height we had a brief glimpse of Whitby Abbey.. We soon reached High Bride Stones, five ancient standing monoliths then headed for Littlebeck, a small hamlet once the centre of the alum industry (Alum was used for dying as well as making leather supple), leaving Littlebeck we entered the delightful

Little Beck Wood a 65 acre woodland containing the 'Hermitage Cave', a 30 metre high Falling Foss waterfall and the abandoned Midge Hall, it is also a haven for wildlife – deer, badgers, foxes and birdlife.

Emerging from the wood we reached the last of two stretches of moorland on the walk, we were surprised to see a fire appliance and a couple of firefighters deployed to damp down a recent blaze, we soon reached the metalled road when ironically the heavens opened and we were drenched in a flash flood, however the rain stopped as soon as it had started and we dried off pretty quickly and soon reached the final cliff top section on the walk taking us down into Robin Hoods Bay where we dipped our toes (a tradition at both the start and finish) in the North sea and then headed into the Bay Hotel for mandatory pints and to sign the 'walkers' book whilst waiting for the ladies to arrive, further celebratory beers were consumed followed by fish and chips, all in all a great end to the day and the end of a memorable walk.

Alan S



At the start and finish of our walk



The Moorfield Pit Disaster

On a calm November morning in 1883 an explosion occurred underground at the Moorfield Colliery Altham, locally known as Dickie Brig Pit. Sixty eight men and boys lost their lives, fifty three were injured and ninety eight children were left fatherless. It remains as the biggest and worst disaster to have hit North-East Lancashire. The colliery is situated on the right hand side of the A678, the main road to Padiham from Clayton le Moors, with the entrance to the pit being near to the Pilkington Bridge on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.

On the morning of the 7th November 1883, when the first of the men descended the shaft at Moorfield Colliery, they were entering an atmosphere which was primed like a bomb waiting to explode. All the elements were there, ready and waiting. In one of the headings off the No. 2 level, gas was issuing from a fault which cut across the coalface. Four hours later this gas would be ignited to create a flash, which would set off the main explosive element, the coal dust. The coal dust had accumulated over the years, coating the walls, roof and timbers from the working places to the shaft. The working men carried the Davy Safety Lamp with them into the pit and it was this that that would be the fuse setting into motion the terrible events that produced such a disastrous force and catastrophic explosion.

At Moorfield the men cleaned and trimmed their own lamps at home and the lamps would be inspected before the men went down the pit. It was illegal for an ordinary miner to open his lamp underground and risk an explosion, if caught in the act a man could be fined or imprisoned. With this in mind it was still common practice to open a lamp to relight another's lamp.

It has often been asked why there was no mention of the coal dust at the inquest, but the answer is no mystery. The advance of mechanical haulage, and the movement of tubs along the roadways, resulted in the production of vast amounts of fine coal-dust. However, for many years, the danger of this coal-dust went unrecognised by the coal mining industry in those early days.

As we walk along that section of the Leeds and Liverpool canal at Pilkington Bridge we should always spare a thought and a quiet moment of reflection to remember those brave sixty eight men and boys who lost their lives.

A memorial to all those who perished has been established adjacent to the entrance to Moorfield Industrial Estate that now covers the old pit head.

Michael

A Hug

What is a hug and why do we miss them so much? For some they invade their personal space. For many they are a great deal more complicated than just an issue of space. Hugs have been known to be very healthy in giving your body an immunity boost, help reduce stress and induce sleep. How many find comfort in a soft toy or teddy when sleeping alone for whatever reason? Hugging has no side effects. It offers comfort when words cannot be found. It shows you care. There are no batteries to wear out, no insurance needed, they are non taxable and free for ever. It is not limited to only one per person and only once a day.

Hugs are important and at present are not allowed, due to the pandemic. We will have to hope that a solution can soon be found for Covid-19 so we can all hug again.

Maggie

