

# Ramblers Gems

A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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## A Trip to Millers Dale

I would like to recount the epic trip taken by the Class to Millers Dale and Buxton on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 1905. The account is based on abridged details published within *The Rambler* 1905.

The Midland Railway Company had arranged the trip at a fare of 2s 9d (14 pence) and 750 ramblers joined the outing. Two features did mar the day. The first being the Railway authority did not provide sufficient accommodation for the number of persons booked and secondly the train was late departing. (*Things haven't changed a lot*)

Within minutes of alighting from the train at Millers Dale station, the ramblers were filing through the gateway that opens onto the beauties of the River Wye. This was a private road, opened at weekends, but offered a route to the romantic scenery beyond. The way was difficult and varied alternating between crag and dell, rugged limestone and pleasant turf. After about a mile the group arrived at Wornhill Springs, where a large volume of water springs suddenly out of the ground, cascading down to join the River Wye. Caverns and potholes are all around and once over the head of the spring the route turns left to cross a natural limestone bridge. What then followed was a fairly stiff

climb over fallen tree trunks and limestone boulders before reaching Chee Dale. The chasm viewed from the top of the sloping footpath was a sight to behold. The abrupt descent using handrail and steps was carefully negotiated, hemmed in on all sides by magnificent walls of limestone. Forging ahead and after a rough climb, the party rested opposite Chee Tor, a mighty headland, rising 200 feet perpendicular from the river bank.

After the whole area was fully explored and greatly photographed, time was pressing and so the party scrambled out of the gorge, the overhanging cliff sending a shiver through the stoutest heart as they toiled under its shadow. The whole group reflected on the grim Nature that was at home. The route after Chee Dale led across the river where the railway viaduct spans the gorge and then followed closely the river before coming onto open countryside and woodland. The way now was much wider here and it allowed divided friends to freely converse with each other, eventually coming upon the highway leading back to Buxton. A mile stone on the roadside indicated that it was three miles back along a dusty limestone road to Buxton and a waiting tea.

The route is now the Monsal Trail and follows the now disused railway track from Millers Dale.

**Michael C**



## Stone of Faith

From local walks around Great Harwood to Lancashire wide walks with Spring Vale Rambling Class plus Coach Rambles with the NE Lancs Area I have been to some exciting places. On my own I have been to the Outer Hebrides, Orkney, Shetlands, Arran and Argyll and Bute. With friends Perthshire, Anglesey and Northumberland have been enjoyed.

So how do I pick one to write about? I love coastal walks and this one was challenging to say the least. I think I qualified for my mountain goat badge to reach this beach and sit by these rocks enjoying my lunch. If this beach was anywhere except at the end of a road on a remote Scottish island it would be very well known indeed

It is on the west coast of Harris in the Outer Hebrides. It lies at the end of a 12 mile long single track B road. The journey along the B887 is almost as noteworthy as the beach itself; it takes you past the brick tower of an old whaling station and to the imposing 19th century Amhuinnsuidhe Castle, home of the 7th Earl of Dunmore, past what is thought to be the most remote tennis court in the UK.

Bunabhainneadar Tennis Court was visited by Andy Murray's mum Judy. In May 2017 the same year I was here so was Tim Henman. Watch the New Jaguar XF Sportbrake 'Journey to Wimbledon with Tim Henman' on YouTube  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qn-NJFkez4I>.

That aside,

I love Huisinish or Hushinish because it is such a remote place. I also love it because the predominant rock type is a Lewisian Gneiss a metamorphic rock which is astonishingly up to 3 billion years old, making it the oldest rock in Britain. It was used by the Megalithic cultures to construct monuments such as the Callanish stone circle on the Isle of Lewis and that might be another article for Ramblers Gems!

This Gneiss has been prized by fishermen for centuries and they would not leave port without it.

*Quote...The 'Stone of Faith' helps the being to see past worry, indecision and doubt, bringing a more promising and hopeful outlook. Lewisian lifts the mood, awakens feelings of hopefulness and brings a touch of sparkle to the spirit. It is a stone that encourages the being to have a little faith in the magic of life. Unquote.*

I carry a piece in my rucksack at all times!

**Barbara S**



## The Smell of the Countryside

Many people will have come across some of the poets of bygone times waxing lyrically about the colours and scents of the British countryside. Much as they are a delight to behold, they don't necessarily tell the whole story. For example, the smell of sweaty feet may not necessarily emanate from the rambler beside you (more of that later).

Many will be familiar with Wild Garlic (Ramsons) which covers many woodland floors in Spring. The scent of course is unmistakable – although some find it overpowering. There is no difference of opinion however when it comes to the fungi Stinkhorn, which appears in the autumn in woodlands and hedgerows. Its name is apt, as it exudes a smell reminiscent of rotting flesh, designed to attract flies, which will carry the spores away to spread the fungi.

Say the word Geranium and most people will immediately think of the house plant, Scented Geranium, but although it is related to the Geranium family it is actually a Pelargonium. The true Geraniums include the Wild Cranesbill and Storksills, one of which appears in gardens – Herb Robert. Some weeds are quite attractive, but this does not apply to Herb Robert, although it does have small purple red flowers. Anyone digging it up however may well wish they hadn't bothered, as when disturbed, even when just brushing against it, for it gives an odour which many describe as like sweaty feet!

Tony C



Ramson or Wild Garlic



Herb Robert

## Answers to the Crossword

### Across

3. Rivington
5. Kissing
7. Greenhill
8. Haversack
9. Boots
10. Ribchester
11. Jubilee Tower
12. Hurstgreen
16. Scone
17. Stiles
18. Routes
19. Uphill

### Down

1. Poles
2. Penyghent
4. Ingleborough
6. Flask
13. Rambling
14. Ribble
15. Newchurch

## Well Said

“We do not go to the green woods and crystal waters to rough it, we go to smooth it. We get it rough enough at home, in towns and cities”.

- G. W. Sears

“Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The wind will blow their freshness into you and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like falling leaves”

- John Muir

## The Witton Weavers Way

The Witton Weavers Way is a long-distance 32 mile trail of discovery that sits on our doorstep and is well worth exploring, for it is full of contrast and surprise. Along the way you will discover and be able to explore Lancashire's history, passing weavers cottages, Tudor Halls, Victorian estates, historic villages, and walk on Roman roads. The industrial, agricultural and religious history is complemented by beautiful scenery.

Lancashire was at the centre of the cotton industry in Victorian times, and the mill towns of Blackburn & Darwen were known throughout the world as important centres of cotton cloth manufacturing. The towns were the workshops of the world, however 100 years before; handloom weavers working from home dominated this area. Their distinctive stone built cottages, with many upstairs windows, are now the nucleus of the hamlets and villages found throughout the West Pennine Moors.

The Witton Weavers Way can be completed in two days, however, within the 32 miles; for those requiring a less of a challenge there are also four shorter circular walks that can each be completed in a day.

The 4 walks are named after jobs associated within the cotton industry which turned raw cotton into cloth. These walks are the Beamers, Reelers, Tacklers & Warpners trails. Although the official start point is Witton Country Park, hence the name, the walk can be joined at many alternative points along their route. The Witton Weavers Way is marked on OS Explorer Map 287 (West Pennine Moors) and the individual trails are available in leaflets form.

For information:

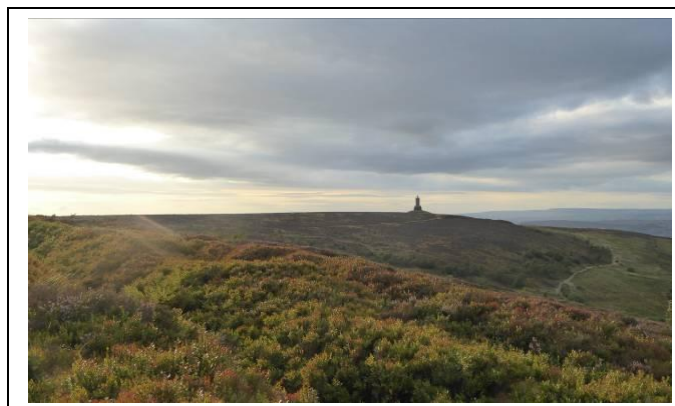
The **Beamer** is the operative who carried and fitted new beams holding the warp threads to the looms.

The **Reeler** is an operator of the machine that wound the yarn onto the spools.

The **Tackler** was the supervisor in a textile mill responsible for the working of a number of power looms and the weavers who operated them.

The **Warper** is the operator who wound threads from a lot of different bobbins onto a "warp beam", which is the one large bobbin at the back of the loom.

**Alan R**



Higher Hill Tockholes

## Walk the Pennine Bridleway

The month of June sees celebrations for **National Trails Day**. Now, if like me, the mind is willing and wishing but the thought of tackling a long-distance trail is very daunting there is another way i.e. by joining a local walking group and doing small sections at a time.

National Trails are long distance walks through some of the very best landscapes the UK has to offer. They are special – they have been designated by the Government and are managed to a set of Quality Standards that set them above other routes. You will find the trails well waymarked with the distinctive acorn symbol. Each trail is looked after by a dedicated officer often with teams of volunteers.

The first Trail was the Pennine Way, opened in 1965 and now we have the Pennine Bridleway which I am featuring in this article.

On the Pennine Bridleway you follow ancient packhorse routes, drovers' roads, and newly created bridleways through the magnificent Pennines. The Pennine Bridleway, designed for horse riders and cyclists, but suitable for walkers, runs for 205 miles (330 Km) through the dramatic Pennine hills from Derbyshire to Cumbria.

I may not have walked the whole Way but since I joined Spring Vale Rambling Class I have been introduced to various sections of it and hopefully one day I will have done all of it albeit in small sections and over a long period of time. I have walked sections further afield with NE Lancs Coach Rambles (Derbyshire and Cumbria), friends and family but these are not covered here.

How many of these places have SVRC visited and taken in sections of the Pennine Bridleway? You will be surprised, but these walks soon mount up.

1. The seven-mile circular route from Clapham.
2. Next is Austwick & Feizor woodlands. The pretty Dales villages of Austwick and Feizor sit either side of the Oxenber and Wharfe woodland. The woodland is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). We always find our way to Elaine's Tea Room at Feizor for a well deserved cup of tea.
3. Settle Loop, 10 mile circular. I have not walked the Loop but I have walked locally at Stainforth, Langcliffe, Catrigger Force, Victoria's Cave and Malham.

4. The Pennine Bridleway crosses the famous Leeds Liverpool Canal at Salterforth near Barnoldswick in Lancashire.

5. Wycoller village & Country Park. Wycoller Country Park is one of the prettiest Country Parks in Lancashire. The area is famous for its association with the Brontë sisters. Here you may have walked sections of the Bronte Way and the Pendle Way.

6. Widdop Reservoir, Hebden Bridge. Widdop Reservoir is located on the eastern side of the Mary Towneley Loop, in a relatively remote, open moorland setting. Just down the road is the Pack Horse Inn. The Pennine Bridleway meets the Pennine Way here.

7. The village of Hurstwood is only a short distance from the Pennine Bridleway. From the village there are many paths to explore the surrounding countryside, including the Hurstwood Cant Clough Reservoirs.

8. The hamlet of Hebden Bridge developed in late medieval times as a river crossing and meeting point of packhorse routes. The network of historic packhorse routes criss-crossing the hills and valleys have left the area with an enviable selection of bridleways and nearby Hardcastle Crag.

9. Stoodley Pike - The 121 ft high monument of Stoodley Pike is visible from miles around. It was designed by local architect James Green in 1854 and the building was completed in 1856 when peace was declared at the end of the Crimean War.

10. Hollingworth Lake - Hollingworth Lake is a 130 acre reservoir constructed in 1801 to supply water for the Rochdale Canal.

For me tackling a long-distance trail is like reading a good book. You do not have to do it in one sitting or a few long sessions. It can be split up into all its small chapters/locations. It is not about the time taken or the distance covered. It is about the journey and what you see and experience along the way! Pick a chapter from the 10 listed above, simply take your time, follow the Acorn, enjoy the journey and walk with Spring Vale Rambling Class who will guide you on some great walks visiting villages and local features that link to the Pennine Bridleway.

Barbara S

NATIONAL TRAILS

