

Ramblers Gems

A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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The Rambling Bug

The street where I live is a typical early fifties housing development with a mixture of semi detached houses. However in the first days of the Coronavirus lock down it became very busy with dog walkers, couples and family groups walking along the avenue. On one of the Bank Holidays I decided to take the dogs up to Darwen Tower. I have never seen so many people undertaking this walk, since the Tower Centenary of a few years ago. There is no doubt that a lot of people have rediscovered walking in the great outdoors. Indeed one of the guidelines during the lockdown was to get outside for 1 hours exercise and many people have discovered local walking routes that they didn't even know existed.

It would be nice to think that when people can meet in groups again and it may be some time, they may decide to join their local rambling group, having caught the rambling bug. Let's hope they boost our numbers by joining Spring Vale Ramblers and come with us to enjoy a countryside walk

Tony C

Rambling On *continued from Issue 8*

Evening rambles are not new to us, for they were first tried in 1928, but details of the walks or on what days they were organised were never published within the syllabus. Now the evening walks form a large part of our summer programme and are enjoyed by sometimes a completely different set of members than the weekend walks.

A Wednesday walking programme was introduced in 2001 and ran for a number years, but failed to get fully established. In order to maintain the continuity throughout the whole year, winter walking was organised from 1980 with initially one per month from November through to March. It was decided in 2018 that these walks would be extended to two per month during this winter period. It is only occasionally that bad weather prevents us from enjoying a crisp and fresh, if sometimes wet, winter walk.

A written record in the form of the syllabus has been printed every year since the formation of the Class 125 years ago. These small booklets not only provided proof of membership, but also make available a unique record of the dates and walks that have been undertaken over the years. The detail contained within the syllabus make it possible to follow on a map more or less the route that the ramblers would have taken as they travelled and explored the surrounding countryside.

The 21st century caught up with us and in 2003 the website was established. This provided new possibilities to advertise and promote the Class to a wider audience. To view earlier issues of our newsletter Rambling Gems check out our website on <http://www.springvaleramblers.co.uk/> and click on the News Page to view all the published editions.

A Darwen to Mellor Walk

This is an account of a Ramble undertaken by the Class on Saturday 15th April 1933 and was published in the local newspaper The Darwen Advertiser

For their second ramble on Saturday the Spring Vale Ramblers took a whole day, it being Easter time. The district covered lay between Darwen and Mellor touching Sunnyhurst Wood, Winter Hill, Tockholes, Stanworth Wood, Feniscowles, Hoghton Bottoms, Salmesbury Bottoms, Samlesbury Hall, Myerscough Smithy, Balderstone, Mellor Brook and Mellor.

This attractive itinerary could not fail to satisfy the most fastidious Rambler with historical and botanical inclinations. The weather was ideal when the party of 30 met at Falcon Avenue entrance to Sunnyhurst Wood at 9-30 am in good spirits and commenced the ramble by following the path with the lodge on the left, arriving at the bridge over the stream near the Dingle. We took the path to the right keeping the stream on the left and passed by Earnsdale Farm. Following along the edge of the Wood we went through the wicket gate leading over Winter Hill by Carr Hall.

It was February 1902 that the General Committee appointed to decide on how to celebrate the coronation of King Edward VII, met. The Committee had been considerably augmented and the Mayor Alderman John Tomlinson, presided. The Mayor put forth his suggestion of securing Sunnyhurst Wood for the town as a Memorial. He estimated that it would cost about £2000, the idea was so popular that £2737 was subscribed "to acquire the Wood for the ease and enjoyment of the inhabitants forever" as may be seen on the bridge near the Superintendent's house. Several landowners had to be consulted, viz.. Messrs A.T Eccles, Halliwell Bros, Varleys, Wilkinson, Potter, Smithson and Eccles Shorrock and the Corporation, who owned much land as a watershed. One writer has said that timber is more useful than gold; that we could do without gold, but scarcely without timber.

It is interesting to take a walk through the Wood at this time of year and note the various kinds of buds as they expand. The beech with its brown scales; the sycamore with its leaves pushing through; the horse chestnut with its large sticky buds and the elm, unfolding; the birch with its small green buds now bursting, the mountain ash is well forward and is

showing its flower buds; the hawthorn will soon follow suit. The oak and ash are not showing yet. Leaving the Wood the ramblers went by Carr Hall and arrived at the summit of Winter Hill about 900ft, where a short rest was made. Resuming we went down the other side of the hill, following the wall side and came to Weasel Lane. Looking over the wall on the right we saw all that remains of Tottering Temple and were reminded of the old couplet:-

"Theer's Duck 'Aw, Cotton 'Aw, Silk Aw,
An' Weasel i'th' waw;
An' Totterin' Temple aboon 'em 'aw"

Continuing down the lane, Weasel Farm is passed and we came to the highway. Going to the right we turned to the left and went down by Silk Hall (1764) and along the fields coming onto the lane near Tockholes Church. Going to our left we went through the wicket gate at the farm and down the fields. Hereabouts it is said that the skirmish took place between the Royalists and the Parliamentarians (1642-3), the field is known as "Kill Field" and in a well in 1826 cannon balls and remains of horses were found. Crossing the stream (Shaw Brook) by the stepping stones, we made across to Shaw Farm. Going through the yard we followed the track to Cocker Fold. Going behind here and crossing the field, we later went over the railway. Descending we arrive at the stepping stones in Stanworth Clough. Crossing them we make our way up the steep wooded bank and on reaching the top had a brief rest. Resuming, we left the wood and went diagonally across the field by the fence. Following this, we passed Stanworth Hall, now a farmyard, and proceeded down to the canal.

To be continued



The bridge over the Leeds Liverpool canal at the Sun Paper Mill Feniscowles

In Praise of Comfy Boots

Whether it's a challenging ramble,
Or a gentle amble.
A leisurely walk
With a friend for a talk.
A steep rocky climb
That takes some time.
Pasture, woodland, coast or scree,
Your comfy boots get you home for tea!

Julie C



A SVRC member walking her dog through
Sunnyhurst Wood Darwen in the 1950, but who is
it?



Worth a Closer Look

As the Spring has turned to Summer, one of the most easily identifiable plants is the Foxglove it seems to be everywhere, woodlands, hedgerows, field edges often in large stands. It has also become a popular garden plant and if a good number are growing together you often get a variety of colours. Everyone is familiar with the red Foxglove but you may also get cream coloured and various shades of red. The foxglove is so familiar to everybody that many people will not even give them a second look. However, anyone taking a closer look is often struck by the attractive patterns inside the trumpet like petals. These are not for our benefit of course but to guide pollinating bees to the nectar.

Tony C



Foxgloves Galore



Tea and Cakes

The 27th June 2020 was to be the Tea and Cake Walk in the Scorton area of Lancashire but the Coronavirus had its way and this was not to be! I am pleased to report that 4 of our members decided that we should not have this celebration taken away from us. So here you are let's share these virtually and soon perhaps for real. Enjoy.

Cakes by Jane C, Maggie A, Glenda B and Kathryn P



Footpath Improvements

During 2014 Nigel Brooke (Hyndburn Ramblers) and I develop a walk 'Mad March Hares' for the Seasonal Walks from Great Harwood programme. On that walk there were three stiles that caused me an issue. I have done this walk many times over the years and the stiles remained the same. In February this year (2020) I did a recce and led a similar walk for SVRC and the stile at the top of the Black Hill had been replaced with a kissing gate but the other two were still the same if not worse. I have just done the walk again and to my surprise the other two stiles have now been replaced with a metal kissing gate and a swing gate but the Hyndburn Clog way markers are missing. Luckily I have some.

Barbara S



Before during recce and winter walk



New gate Top of Black Hill

Another location that has seen an improvement to the right of way network is in the Downham area. Previously if you wanted to travel the one mile from Chatburn to Downham you had to walk the whole distance on the narrow busy country lane. But no more. For a new section of right of way, suitable for horse, cycle and walker has been created running parallel to the road. The new route starts on the left, just after the bridge over the bypass road and continues on a newly constructed hard surface path for over two third of a mile. New gates and barriers have been installed to a high standard as well as the planting of a new wildlife hedge.

The new route allows for a safer 4 mile walk starting from the car park in Downham and following field paths to skirt around Warsaw Hill, where Whistle Down the Wind was filmed. The route now descends into Chatburn and returns to Downham along the new route.



The new track to Downham



The view of Pendle Hill from the track