

Ramblers Gems

A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

Volume 1, Issue 16

21st August 2020

For further information or to submit a contribution email: svrcramblers@gmail.com

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Compass or GPS

A compass is a light, portable tool that accomplishes one function – it indicates the direction of magnetic north. It's inexpensive and doesn't require a power source. A compass is not difficult to use, though some training and practice is required. With a map and a little skill, a compass is perfect for fell walking, but for field and countryside work it can be cumbersome to use. How can a compass help you if you are lost? If you are completely disoriented and without a map, a compass can't do much more than tell you which way is north. A compass is useful only when you are prepared to use it correctly. It's most useful when used with the OS map and doesn't take long to learn how to use it correctly.

A GPS device is a receiver for the Global Positioning System, a network of two dozen satellites that orbit the earth. The system was originally developed for use by the U.S. military, but is now available to everyone. A GPS receiver uses signals from this satellite network to compute its own location. In addition to telling you where you are in terms of longitude, latitude and altitude, a GPS device can track your movement. A GPS device can store a large number of maps and show you your position in real time on a map. Many smart mobile phones now come complete with the GPS

system of mapping. The GPS's ability to show your path on a map is the electronic equivalent of a map and compass. A GPS can provide vital information when you are traveling through remote places, telling you where you have been, where you are and where you are going. It also records walking distance, average speeds and other useful information. You will have to learn how to use a GPS device, but once you do it is superior in many ways to a traditional compass. One of the disadvantages of a GPS is that it is an electronic device requiring batteries to work and it can malfunction. The device must be able to pick up a satellite signal and if under trees and even heavy clouds the signal may be blocked, rendering the GPS inoperable.

These two items should be part of the essential items that every serious walk leader brings with them on a ramble. The bottom line is that a GPS device is great for navigating you on a prepared route, or for confirmation that your map reading skills are correct, but it must also be backed up by a map and compass and the skill of how to use them together. When your survival is at stake, the map and compass are indispensable



Michael C

River Lune Ramble Saga

My first attempt to prepare a walk in the River Lune area around Kirkby Lonsdale was a disaster so I decided to have a rethink and try again. My walking companion Howard Ashworth had planned an alternative Lune Ramble route. We set off from Devil's Bridge heading North via the Casterton Golf Club, Casterton School and Casterton Hall. Gosh the route was incredibly muddy and it is raining!

We make our way to Lowfields Lane and Low Beckfoot Farm where Howard had assured me that there was a bridleway across the River Lune. There is a bridleway marked on the OS map. There is a bridleway that takes you down to the Lune and there is a bridleway on the opposite side of the Lune. We walk down the bridleway but there is no way of crossing the River Lune at this point.

We now have to turn left on the footpath heading towards Kirby Lonsdale with the Lune on our right and lots of huge tree trunks adjacent to the path which I note will make excellent seating for a coach ramblers' lunch stop. Up ahead we spy a huge old stone bridge ahead of us crossing the Lune and my spirits are lifted. As we walk closer to the bridge we meet two dog walkers and ask them where the bridge goes. We are informed that this is part of a private road leading from the farm and across private land, but that local people often chance it if the gates are not locked. It is nearly always locked during the lambing season. The public footpath continued along the Lune and but then circles back to rejoin Lowfields Lane, a lane we had just walked across, we realise we are now at a bit of a dead end.



*Underley Bridge across the River Lune
Not a public right of way*

I am with Howard so of course we chance it over the bridge through the private grounds and reach the lane as quickly as we can. The rest of the walk is lovely and free from further mishaps, walking via Underlay Park, Ladies Well and Ruskin's View into Kirby Lonsdale.

The official coach ramble was on the following Sunday and with map in hand I set off on our D walk. I cannot relax as we start the walk but people are getting too far ahead of me, the rain, mud and huge puddles soon distract me. The terrain was worse than the week before and the nearer we get to Beckfoot the more concerned I become about the gate being locked. After the lunch stop under a slight drizzle and a lovely lucky rainbow, I brief everyone *'Get to the bridge, go over it but do not stop. Follow the track around until you arrive safely at the lane. Do not stop, take photos or dilly dally!'* I send the back-marker ahead to get everyone through the gate and decide I will go last to deal with any angry farmer or landowner! All this took ages. Everyone ignored me and stopped as it is such an interesting bridge. Where was Howard when I need him? He had gone on the different walk.

With the bridge now behind us I could relax and enjoy the rest of the walk. I sacrificed only one walker facedown into the mud that day and had to lend her my spare tracksuit bottoms when we go back to the coach. She could not have sat down without a change of clothes. Her clothes never had time to dry as it was a day of sunshine and showers. I enjoyed a pint or two in Kirby Lonsdale relieved that my first led walk was over. Would I do that route again? No, because to follow the Country Code and find an official crossing I would have to do a 10 – 12 mile B walk! That is not for me.

Barbara S



Kirkby Lonsdale Main Street

Walks with a difference

After the article about the Teddy Bears Picnic I began to think of all the other themed walks and events that Spring Vale Rambling Class has organised over the years. As a group we have always tried to be imaginative and offer variety and interest to the walks programme. Walks have been arranged for their floral interest as the Orchid walk from Mosses Gate Country Park Bolton, often led by Eric Hatton due to his extensive knowledge of flowers. Country Parks and Nature Reserves have also been a popular starting point and many a ramble has been around the RSPB reserve at Leighton Moss. Tony C. Recently a cheesy walk took place around the Lancashire cheese production area in the region of Garstang and a second walk was planned for this year from Inglewhite, but that was not to be.



Spring Vale Ramblers

History walks have proven to be popular events with details presented on the local history of Whalley, Oswaldtwistle and Tockholes. The series of Halls walks would fall in to this category. The research element of these rambles can be stimulating as facts and figures are compiled. The Mystery Ramble provided a walk where the route was unknown, only the start point given. The walk would incorporate several interesting destinations enroute and when halted a prepared description would be presented. A variation to this theme was known as the Call my Bluff walks. These walks involved the rambler having to decide from a selection of three possible answers which of the obscure facts was true. The walk would stop at various locations along the route and the indistinct questions posed. Spring Vale Ramblers

have also organised treasure hunt walks where a series of cryptic clues had been prepared, with the answers being revealed by observation as the walk progressed. These tended to be very quiet walks as everyone would concentrate on looking for the answers.

Walks that are now proving to be well-liked are the Tea and Cake walk. These rambles usually finish at a well respected cafe where first class refreshments are enjoyed. As a way to honour our loyal and past members, memorial walks have recently been introduced. We have sometimes used the legacy donated by the member to provide the refreshment at the end of the walk.

For a period of forty years from the early fifties it was the tradition to organise two annual trips known as "The Ride Out". This was a day out using a hired coach to transport the ramblers to destinations a little further afield than our usual places. The day would involve a pick up from behind Woolworths, the coach journey through the countryside, the route was always on A and B roads as this was before the extensive motorway network had been full developed. A lunch stop was arranged, after which a short walk was organised and on return a tea stop had been booked before the journey home. These were full days of eating and walking, but a most enjoyable day out. These trips were also a chance for the senior members to rejoin the group and have a right old catch up. These walk have currently stopped due to rising coach hire prices and falling membership.



Spring Vale Ramblers

Michael C

Windmill and Fairy Walk

This walk of approximately 7 miles was led by Maureen & Don Rishton some years ago, and was repeated in June 2018. The route starts from the lay-by at the bottom of Sparrow Hill on the A5209 on the road to Parbold.

Leave the lay-by over the stile and follow the path on the field edge, at the paths junction, take the right hand route across a further field, to pass close to the large pond and join a road. Now turn left, and with care follow the road between rather grand houses to the first road off to the left. This area is known as Robin Hood, and has some interesting property names, such as Boggart House, and Boar's Den farm.

At the junction turn left onto High Moor lane and after about 100 yards at the footpath sign on the right, follow the overgrown track into woodland. (In 2018 this path was impassable, and we had to resort to taking to the field edge on the right, as this was our only option). At the end of the footpath, turn left onto the road up to Hill House Fold. Here you become aware of having climbed steadily onto High Moor, the communication mast over to your left is a staggering 157 metres above sea level! Take a footpath off to the right of the main track and follow this alongside large fields at Wrights Coverts until Dwerry House is reached. The path now goes through a small wood to the right of the house, to follow a woodland path, heading west towards Harrock Hill. Quarrying in this area produced Harrock Hill Gritstone, resistant to weathering and used extensively for many buildings in the Wigan area. In the woodland of bracken and birch the gaunt remains of a windmill are stumbled upon. Built on solid rock, it was active in the late 18th century, but it had fallen into disuse by the mid 19th century. Lunch could be taken here.



After leaving the windmill, head back down to the woodland path and then continue along a field path in the direction of the communication tower. Once onto the access road now follow this down to the right which leads onto the magnificent driveway from Harrock Hall to High Moor Lane. At the road turn right passing the High Moor restaurant and after about 300 yards cross the road and turn left down a track behind houses. Follow the fenced path between fields then a woodland track until the A5209 is reached. Cross this main road with care, and go left and when the pavement ends climb over the stile and follow this route to eventually reach Wood Lane. Go right and left immediately down another lane cross the railway at a level crossing and continue to the bridge over the canal to walk along the towpath.

The towpath is followed until the next bridge (No 40). This is now the Douglas Valley. The River Douglas was improved for navigation in 1742. The Leeds-Liverpool Canal was proposed in 1770, but took 46 years to complete at a cost of £1.2 million. This was a colossal sum for a civil engineering project on this scale. It is still the longest single canal in Britain. Stone from local quarries and coal from the Wigan coalfields were its main cargoes. The railway between Wigan and Southport was finished mid-1800s, so the canals heydays were brief. However, pleasure boating has brought a revival to most of Britain's 2000+ miles of canal.

Once at bridge 40 cross over and continue on to re-cross over the railway, following the steadily climbing track. At the junction turn right past houses, and onto a narrow waymarked footpath which eventually reaches the woodland known locally as 'Fairy Glen'. This is a natural steep-sided valley following Sprodley Brook and the way now climbs up through woods with rocky outcrops. Depending on the time of year, there may be Celandines, Wood Anemones, Wood Sorrel, or carpets of Bluebells and Wild Garlic. Later in the year, there are white flowers on loose spikes Enchanters Nightshade. This is a member of the Willow-Herb family and is not related to Deadly Nightshade.

Just follow the main path over footbridges and up steps, before the Glen becomes shallower and you finally join the main A5209. Walk now to the right and the lay-by from which the walk started.

Alan R

The Staveley Tarns

The Lancashire Walking Group had planned a walk around the tarns at Staveley so I asked the leader for the route and he kindly sent it to me.

I think Staveley will probably be just outside the one hour travelling time suggested for SVRC, but notwithstanding, Gill P, another friend Moira and myself headed out on a fine day last month. Parking at Wilf's café near Wheelbase in Staveley (currently free) we started off with a coffee, and then took the Kentmere road out of town as far as Barley Bridge, the footpath is signed between holiday rental cottages and turns into a steepish climb through 3 fields before levelling out, we had a few "admiring the view" stops and were rewarded by glorious views of the Lakeland Fells. At Littlewood Farm, we were greeted by the farmer, we asked if the threatening rain would hold off, to which he replied in true farmer style "Aye, till it rains".

A little bit of road walking brings you to the turn for Birk Field and Potter Tarn. Again, some gentle climbing through textbook lowland Lake District scenery brings you to Potter Tarn. We met two ladies who had already been up and had their daily swim!! Potter Tarn has a dam, overflow and some stepping stones to cross – all successfully negotiated.



Potter Tarn above Staveley

Following the path onto Gurnal Dubs, the second tarn, and our lunch stop. This was a popular area with many families out walking and again swimming in the tarn. This tarn is manmade, again with a dam, and what looks like a boat house.

Our route now took us past Low Tagglesshaw tarn – which is now more of a boggy moss and the site of 4 boundary stones. One stone has a plaque on – stating that the 4 acre site was awarded in perpetuity to the Parish of Strickland Roger by the enclosure act of 1838 for the inhabitants of that and neighbouring parishes for recreation and exercise. We came to the conclusion that it is very poor grazing land and that might have prompted the donation.

The good news is that the way is all downhill now along a good bridleway to Birk Rigg, then through fields to join Potter Fell Road, - where I found a geocache ☺. . Turning right along the road, we discovered a small lending library at the side of the road and after a small amount of walking, we reached Gilpin Bank, here turning left to walk downhill through fields to Braban House and onto Laithwaite Farm. We popped out onto a farm lane, joining quiet back country lanes which took us to Bowston where we picked up the Dales Way. Following the Dales Way along the River Kent was a gentle easy stroll back to the car park and a scone at Will's café.
Walking Distance 8.5 miles



The River Kent on the Dales Way

This walk has a good pull up the fell at the start of the walk, but fantastic views, good lunch stops and an easy return along the river. Don't attempt in mist.

Jane C