

Ramblings

Trafford Ramblers Newsletter

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<http://www.ramblers-trafford.co.uk/>



STOP Press Trafford Ramblers walks programme is restarting. Check the website for details



The Supreme
Leader

Is baffled by this
sign



Have you been walking during lockdown?

Like to walk somewhere new?

We would love you to join us on a Thursday for a few hours on the edges of Greater Manchester or a more local Saturday Stroller. And bring a friend for a taster. Please check our website for our walks programme. <http://www.ramblers-trafford.co.uk/>

Trafford Ramblers Group walks

Ramblers expect that group walks will be able to re-start from 12 April, (Now changed to 29 March!) as long as the government timetable holds. Details of how walks can re-start should be available around 31st March. In the expectation that walks will re-start, and that we will be able to travel beyond our local area, I am putting together a provisional programme for April and May based on proposals put forward by walks leaders - many thanks for these. In addition to Thursday walks, Andy will be trialling a few walks on Mondays to assess the demand for walks on an alternative day. I know he will appreciate your feedback. Additional walks proposals for April, May and June are very welcome. However, there is no pressure to lead walks, or indeed join group walks, unless you feel comfortable about this. I look forward to seeing you whenever that may be.

Rosie. Walks Coordinator

Returning to Trafford Ramblers walks

For complete guidance see Restarting Group Walks: Guidance for Volunteers on the Ramblers website

Also on our Walks Calendar page

A Brief guide

Guidance for walkers

- Always Be prepared for all probable weather.
- Check the contents of your day bag
- Respect social distancing and don't share a lift (or food) except with your household
- Preferably book with the leader beforehand, and register for subsequent (unlikely) contact tracing for Coronavirus

Ramblers Restart: Taking part in Covid safe walks

Walk leaders

- Register your role on "Assemble" and familiarise yourself with available general guidance for all walk leaders
- Plan and risk assess your walk. Preferably by a recce, but not essential. And keep a record.
- Have a maximum number of walkers, less than 30 nationally, our group recommends 12, but any number you find acceptable
- Take a register of all walkers and keep for 3 weeks for contact tracing

Along with your normal kit, carry hand sanitiser and a face mask.

Full details on "Ramblers Restart for Group and WFH Schemes"

Richard

Ramblings

Spring bird life

Nigel Gartside

Having retired in early 2009 I was looking to experience more than just a route march in the hills and, having failed at photography, decided on ornithology instead, still taking me to beautiful isolated countryside and fresh air and exercise but in a more relaxed style. I immediately began to hear the sounds of Avian activity all around me but what was I hearing ?

First 'migratory' bird to put in an appearance is traditionally the Skylark and I heard my first one on February 21st high on the Pennine moors, they are first to return as they only come back from lower levels, sometimes nearer the coast, having left the moors mid November when their food sources diminish.

Listen out for a long loud continuous singing [the male] sometimes up to 250 feet above your head before they parachute down to the ground to forage.



Skylark



Chiffchaff

First of the birds to return from the southern fringes of Europe is the Chiff Chaff, easy to identify as it is one of two birds that sings its own name in a two tone song, listen in any woodland from mid March onward. Its close friend is the Willow Warbler, they look the same but this latter bird sings down the scale starting singing with a flourish and tailing off in a five second song, surprisingly easy to identify if you listen closely !



House Martin

April sees lots of returning birds, Swallows and House Martins among the first, you frequently see these together on a countryside walk, look on telegraph wires, Swallows have the long forked tails; seen a large patch of white ? that is the House Martin, this bird also happy in an urban environment, Swallows much less so.



Swallow



Cuckoo

The true icon of Spring however is the Cuckoo, sadly showing significant decline however very easy to hear the male as its call [the second of the birds that call their name] can be heard from up to a mile away. They arrive about the 22nd April in the north west and can be seen on telegraph wires, fence posts and on tree branches preferring more isolated areas [sorry, never gardens Neil] Resembling a bird of prey they can be difficult to see let alone identify, look for head up, tail up and lowered wings - best of luck !



Golden Plover



Swifts



Wheatear

There are many more of course too numerous to mention here, three final ones that can commonly be seen on walks would be Swifts, arriving from mid May and seen and heard in groups screaming through the air, Golden Plover, a larger bird of high moors in spring and summer; listen for a high pitched whistle call and finally the Wheatear, my personal favourite returnee, frequently seen on top of dry stone walls, the male truly resplendent in grey, black and white with a beige chest and a 'chak-chak' call, happy listening !

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What can you do on open access land?

Open access land is designated for walking and outdoor recreation on foot. This means that **you can go**:

- Walking
- Dog walking
- Running
- Climbing
- Birdwatching

or even have a picnic (as long as you take your rubbish home with you...).

As open access land can cover rural businesses and areas of sensitive wildlife, there are a number of activities that you are **not allowed** to do without the landowner's permission. These include:

- Walking a dog off the lead around livestock (or between 1 March and 31 July)
- Cycling or horse riding
- Water sports, including swimming or taking a boat onto a river, lake or reservoir
- Driving a motorised vehicle
- Lighting fires or camping
- Shooting, foraging or picking flowers
- Using a metal detector
- Taking part in organised games or commercial activities

Interfering with activities of farmers or other landowners

What are the Exceptions to Open Access?

Even on Open Access land, **some areas remain private** - and these are called **excepted land**. You don't have the right to walk on these areas, even if they appear on a map as being in Open Access land.

Excepted land includes...

houses, buildings and the land they're on (such as courtyards)
land used to grow crops
building sites and land that's being developed
parks and gardens
golf courses and racecourses
railways and tramways
working quarries



How to find Open Access land

Open Access land is shown in the countryside by the **person in a circle logo** - which can vary from a brown to a maroon colour.

Open Access land is marked on the **Explorer series OS map** (1:25,000 scale) and appears as a yellow shaded area with the tan coloured thicker line showing the boundary.

Richard

Ramblings

The Hearing Aid Walk. Or what a mistake to make following Terry

On the 18th October 2018 thirteen members set off on a 10 mile walk from Hathersage led by Terry.

It was a good turnout of 13 members on a fine day. Besides Terry, present were Richard, Vicky, Rosie, Rob, Tony, David, Malcolm, Nigel, Judith, Elaine and our photographer Phill, oh and me. There is another person on the picture but I can't for the life of me remember his name.

As was usual in those Covid free days our car share was Terry, David and myself and as was our habit we arrived early in the car park. David wandered off to get himself a coffee at the garage just before we set off on a very pleasant day for the time of year. I looked on Facebook at the pictures which Phill had posted and most of us had a head covering and short sleeves. David was even in shorts.

After a climb upwards we stopped for our normal midmorning drink and snack and the location is captured below.

As we were about to set off after our snacks, David realised he had lost one of his hearing aids. We all had a scout around but to no avail, so we assumed it had been lost earlier or maybe in Hathersage or in the car. So the walk continued and we enjoyed some outstanding views from Stannage Edge on a clear day. It really was a good workout and a great day out.

Once we were home I started to think about the offending hearing aid loss and how it ended up being an expensive day out for David.

Over the weekend I rang David and suggested that we should set off on a recovery expedition on Monday or Tuesday the following week. Neither of us thought we had much hope of finding such a small device but decided to give it a go and enrolled Terry to help in our quest.



When we arrived at Hathersage, David retraced his steps to the garage and asked if a hearing aid had been handed in, but no luck. We set off to retrace our steps up to the coffee stop location. As it was October and leaves had started to fall, we walked slowly kicking over leaves, looking on walls and gate posts in case it had been found and left in plain view. Alas that was not the case and as we sat drinking our coffee we more or less had decided that it was a lost cause. We picked up our rucksacks and giving the area one last scan, David said 'I did walk over here and talk to someone' and as he walked away from the gate he spotted his hearing aid in the grass. He gave it a quick clean, popped it into his ear and it was amazed the battery still had some juice left in it and it was still working. David rang Carol triumphantly to give her the good news and we set off in good spirits for our next adventure. Terry said he knew some other routes from this point, so off we went, David and I trailing in Terry's wake. We reached a point where there was a sort of stile over a fence, which upon reflection was more of a game-keepers step over and a faint path with a cairn in the distance which our glorious leader was convinced was where we should be heading. The path disappeared and we were walking through knee high heather, bog grass and brambles and made it to the cairn only to discover this was just a pile of stones and there was no footpaths. David had his shorts on again and his legs were cut to ribbons whereas my legs were just tired out.

This of course didn't deter Terry as being a former air traffic controller he knew north from south, east from west and even up from down. Pointing to our left, he was convinced (correctly it turned out) that it was the direction we should be heading in. Again we waded through heather, ditches, peat, brambles, and coarse bog grass to finally arrive at a REAL footpath. David's legs were in an even worse state and I was literally on my knees, exhausted, defeated and promising never let Terry lead me astray again.

Finally arriving back at the car having walked about 12 miles, I was glad that David was driving so I could have a sleep on the way home.

The moral of the story is, don't wear your hearing aids on a ramble.

And never ever ever let Terry lead you astray.

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WALKING THE LINE PT2

Crossing Birch road, you are faced with a tangled mass of undergrowth that deters your progress. If you turn left and then right a rutted track takes you along the southern boundary of the line avoiding nature's reclamation habits. My aim being to walk the line I hesitatingly clambered through the growth for a hundred metres or so when it became less troublesome. None the less bramble tentacles (not a botanical term) lay in wait eager to grab the ankle of the unsuspected, and I was unsuspected on numerous occasions!



With little foliage this time of year you can make out the surrounding fields, whereas in the summer it surprisingly closes in on you. Last year I half expected David Bellamy to jump out in his tropical garb. The downside to clearing out the trackway could be to the detriment of the wildlife that has become established over the decades. No doubt voices will speak out for the protection of the natural environment.



The first path that crosses the line ahead south north is Brookheys road, so called though it is only a dirt track from Brookheys Farm (Clare Roes cattery and kennels-free advertising) leading to Ashton road. The Brookheys crossing point left is said to be haunted by a monk who aimlessly wanders these parts; a slice of local folklore that lingers in the imagination. The track opens out for a short stretch making it easier under foot. The width of the trackway or strip of wilderness is approximately twenty metres at this point with the earlier concrete post and wire boundary fencing literally hanging together either side. You can dip into the wilderness from the adjacent south side paths if that is preferred. However, plodding onward along the track bed and approaching Dunham road bridge the area becomes very muddy and swamp like. Drainage ditches along the northern edge have, I assume, not been maintained since the 1980s, especially where the line skirts the fields of Carrington

Moss.



Looking through Dunham bridge west bound. One hundred and fifty metres beyond the bridge is Partington junction. (Left) At this point a line filters off to the south to enter what was Manchester Corporation gas works complex creating a series of sidings. Another went west and north toward what is now the



Carrington industrial complex.

Final bridge crossing over the line south north, name of track unknown but positioned at the top right in the picture of the sidings. The original 1870s line that went to Cadishead was bypassed when the Manchester Ship canal was excavated, and an embankment built to raise the track up to meet the viaduct spanning it. Earth from the excavation was used to gradually lift the lines to over forty feet above the surrounding terrain. The canal required 75ft clearance for shipping to pass unimpeded beneath all bridges.



What became the lower line reverted to sidings and the earlier station closed. A new station opened in 1894 on the upper level close to the Manchester road, the elevation still rising imperceptibly. Again, very few artifacts are to be seen of the former station, almost as though the top layer had been bulldozed leaving mounds of earth. However, a long platform is discernible amongst the undergrowth with the support brickwork peeping through. This is looking west to the Manchester road bridge at the far end.



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Photo taken from a train. The caption read "Looking toward Stockport". If that is correct my photo on the previous page shows the opposite platform being the only remaining example the one in the photo is mainly earth and undergrowth. I cannot verify the pictures exact location without looking at larger scale maps to pore over, if I am not careful I risk the danger of becoming a lost railway anorak.

These were the steps down to the track underpass. I did not take the photo on the right that was courtesy of the "Tinternet". It is the only part of the station that remains as it was when constructed-needs a bit of TLC though. As you approach the station area you cross between the remains of the sides of a bridge that spans the embankment, this supports an underpass now sealed that allowed access to either side. If it were part of the original construction which seems likely then the industry north and south at that time would have been



Above is a shot looking across to the station from the original lower line, on the north side, that became sidings two of which went under the Manchester road and across to the canal docking area.



agriculture.

It is difficult to give the scene above right some meaning without comparison with photographs from pre closure, the web is an especially useful resource, but I failed to locate any suitable shots other than the one below. The image as you can see contains children and is taken in the late 1950s. The web server asked me to answer questions on the efficacy of this photo? It is taken toward the top of the approach road with the station just beyond the building that was the station master's house. It clearly illustrates what it was like before the invasion of the Triffids. The buttress of the viaducts eastern end can be made out in the far distance of the picture bottom right. I was extremely impressed with my first sighting of the remaining viaduct. Some people think it is an eye sore and should be removed. I disagree though something has to happen soon, and that should be its reinstatement as a viable transport and recreational route. The viaduct could be to Cadishead what the pyramids are to Cairo !!.....you get the sentiment.



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Left is the bridge crossing the original track on Manchester road with the present track bed bridge right. On the right the original track heading alongside the embankment terminating at the foot of the viaduct. Several sidings turned off to the right of picture for the dock area.

The river Mersey meandered alongside the newly cut bed of the canal. The stone bridge remains, below right, carried the original line to Cadishead over



the Mersey. The river then flowed beneath the viaduct buttress bottom left. A Lattice girder bridge spanned the gap between viaduct and the rail embankment. On completion of the ship canal the meanders were filled in. A good example of a defunct meander is the approach to Warburton toll bridge. You cross the remains of a small stone bridge close to the toll booth and looking left you can see the wide sweep of the old riverbed alongside the canal embankment.



Don't miss the next enthralling episode entitled Pt 3- Carrington Junction.



Terry



Nether Alderley Old Hall