

# Socialscene

Out and about in Oldham

life in Oldham

# Biological beauty and old railways

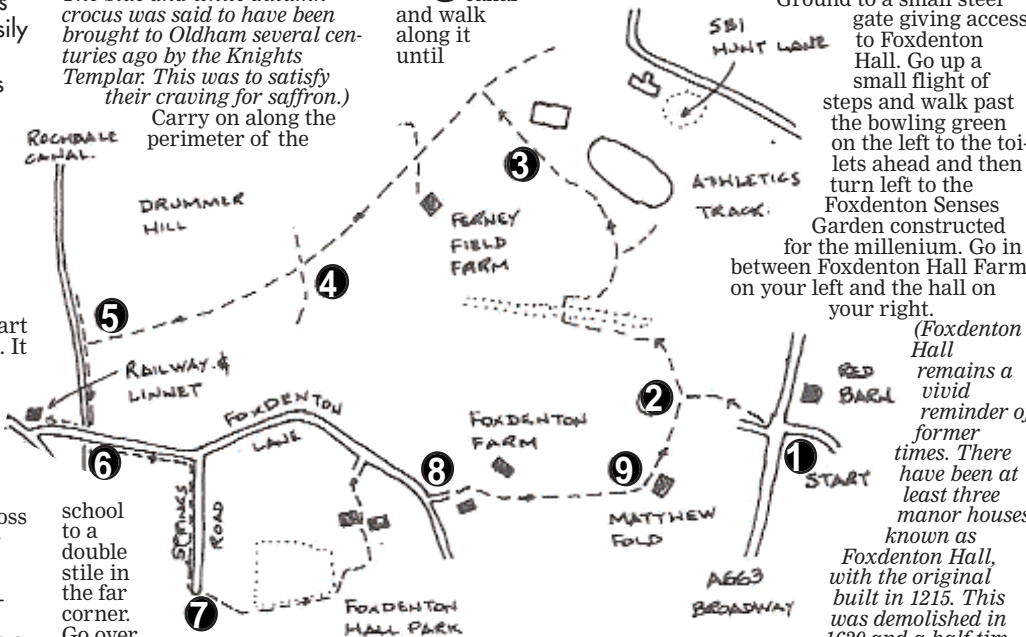
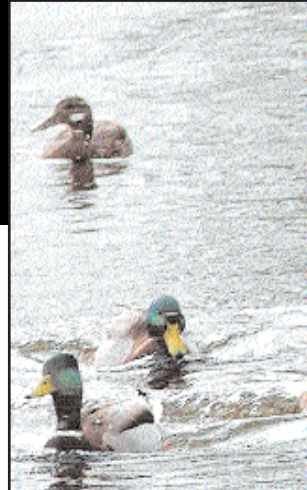
This is our fourth feature in a series of seasonal articles aimed at encouraging people to get out and about, explore the borough and get healthy in the process. The walks are suitable for all age groups. Points of interest, and places to stop for refreshment are highlighted. With the help of the Oldham Ramblers' Association, Oldham Council and Countryside Rangers we hope to reintroduce you to the beauty on our own doorstep.

**Walk:** Foxdenton Hall Circular  
**Distance:** Around 3.5 miles.  
**Time:** Two and a half hours at leisurely pace  
**Calorie burn:** 550+  
**How do I get there?:** This walk starts from near the Red Barn pub on Broadway (A663), Chadderton. This is one of the busiest link roads in the borough and can easily be found on any map.  
**Public transport:** Numerous buses run along Broadway. Call GMPTE on 0161 228 7811 for bus details and times.  
**Parking:** Free parking behind the Red Barn pub.

**T**HIS walk was created by the Oldham Ramblers in 1992 as part of the Chadderton Festival. It is a great way of viewing the history of the industrial revolution in the locality and seeing some areas of special biological importance.  
**1** Start the walk at the Red Barn pub and cross Broadway at the pelican crossing. Go down the footpath at the corner of Milton Drive and, at the bottom, bear left through the trees and follow the brook to a small steel footbridge. (This is the site of the first water-driven cotton mill in Chadderton. The foundations can be seen of the Bank Mill built in 1776 by Thomas Ashton.)  
**2** Carry on straight ahead and at the end of the fence go through the right-hand stile, and then left along the edge of the old railway line. (The original railway, from Middleton Junction to Werneth, was built in 1842 and was the steepest - 1 in 27 - line in Britain.) Cross the Johnny Whitehead bridge and turn right. After 50 metres bear left to a stile in

the corner. Turn left and walk alongside the tall green fencing of the athletics track.  
**3** After around 120 metres look to your right past the corner of the green sports hall across the school playing field to a site of biological importance. (Most of us are used to seeing crocus flowering in the spring, but here there is one that flowers in September and October. The blue and white autumn crocus was said to have been brought to Oldham several centuries ago by the Knights Templar. This was to satisfy their craving for saffron.) Carry on along the perimeter of the

housing estate on your right, bear right to reach a small basin of the Rochdale Canal. (This canal is a site of biological importance and provides vital habitat for wildlife, plants, insects and molluscs.)  
**5** Turn left onto the tow-path of the canal and walk along it until



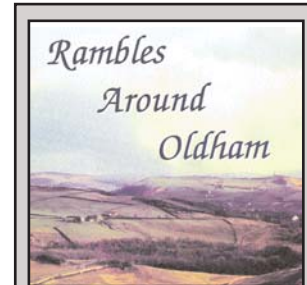
you come to Foxdenton Lane. (A new hydraulically powered lift bridge was built here in June 2001. A picture of the old bridge, that was removed in 1972, can be seen over the bar in the Railway and Linnet if you now fancy some light refreshment.)  
**6** Cross Foxdenton Lane and head left along the lane for about 200 metres, and then turn right into Springs Road and walk to the top.  
**7** Turn left along a wide track with the sewage works on your right. Go

through the stile at the end and cross, diagonally, the Albert Taylor Recreation Ground to a small steel gate giving access to Foxdenton Hall. Go up a small flight of steps and walk past the bowling green on the left to the toilets ahead and then turn left to the Foxdenton Senses Garden constructed for the millennium. Go in between Foxdenton Hall Farm on your left and the hall on your right.

(Foxdenton Hall remains a vivid reminder of former times. There have been at least three manor houses known as Foxdenton Hall, with the original built in 1215. This was demolished in 1620 and a half-timbered stone house built by William Radcliffe. In 1698 the upper part of the house was pulled down and the present house erected in the then popular Renaissance style.)  
 Take time to enjoy the grounds, native trees like beech and sweet chestnut, and wildlife. The cafe may also be open. Finally, carry along the driveway and past the decorative gates back to Foxdenton Lane.  
**8** Turn right onto Foxdenton Lane and head down Horseshoe Lane (about 50 metres up on the left). At the top of this

short lane, bear right across a horse training area to a small gate at the right of Foxdenton Farm. If horses are being trained take the path a few metres ahead and turn right to the same gate. Go through the gate and walk downhill to a small wooden footbridge. Cross the bridge and bear left uphill towards Matthew Fold Farm

**9** At the farm go through the left-hand stile and walk diagonally across the field and downhill. At the bottom of the narrow ditch go over the stile and at the bridge turn right. Go through the trees and steeply uphill to Milton Drive. The Red Barn is now opposite.



This week's walk is an abridged version of a longer walk provided by John Walton of the Oldham group of the Ramblers' Association. It is included in the book 'Rambles Around Oldham' which is available from Braithwaites and tourist information centres at the price of

**The Ramblers**

**Special price for ramblers**

THE Oldham Advertiser has teamed up with the Ramblers' Association to offer readers the chance of saving 20 per cent on their first year's membership. For over 70 years, the association has been working on behalf of walkers everywhere, safeguarding the beauty of the countryside, maintaining paths and increasing access to Britain's landscapes. As a registered charity, the group's work is funded almost entirely by subscriptions and donations... and members get a terrific range of benefits:

- 'Walk Britain' - a year-book and accommodation guide.
- Discretionary discounts in many outdoor stores.
- Quarterly magazine 'Walk'.
- Access to Ordnance Survey map library.
- Free information service.
- Optional membership of a local group, with walks and social activities.

To join, simply complete the coupon below or call 020 7339 8500 quoting "GRM" to pay by credit/debit card. In addition, if you pay by Direct Debit you will receive 13 months membership for the price of 12. Return this coupon to: The Ramblers' Association, Freepost SW15, London SE1 7BR

● I/we would like to join at the special reduced price (tick box) of:

- Single annual membership of £19.20 (normally £24)
- Joint annual membership of £25.60 (normally £32) for two adults at one address

● I/we enclose a cheque made payable to the Ramblers' Association for

● £.....

● Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss (delete as appropriate)

● Initials.....

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(Offer ends June 30, 2005.)

Next week: Don't miss our guide for a scenic walk around a country park

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