

WINTER HILL SCRAPBOOK.

Compiled by Dave Lane

VOLUME 3



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Fireclay on (and under) Winter Hill.

In earlier volumes, mention has been made of fireclay (sometimes known as Seat-earth) being found below (and sometimes in a tiny layer above) coal seams. This material is especially relevant as in earlier days, it played a considerable role in the industries and ventures that sprung up on and around Winter Hill.

Fireclay is a grey muddy clay. It usually lies below most coal seams and on Winter Hill many of the mining ventures were specifically for fireclay - with coal being almost a by-product. Coal was formed by compression of decaying vegetation existing in swamp-like areas. The fireclay represents the sediment or soil in which the swamp vegetation grew.

The clay is rich in alumina content and is an excellent material for the manufacture of firebricks used in kilns and smelting. The clay was also used in the making of salt-glazed pipes and sanitary-ware until the late 1950's when it was superseded by more modern materials. There were a number of sanitary product manufacturers in Horwich earlier in the 19th & 20th centuries all using the clay mined from underneath Winter Hill.

You can still find the remains of some of the brickworks on the Hill, with perhaps the one at Hole Bottom being the most easily accessible. Firebricks still remain there, all made from the local clay. An excellent example of locally made firebricks can be found right at the summit of Winter Hill where a number are stacked next to - and on top of - the boundary wall adjacent to the most southerly radio mast. A photo of the wall can be seen on the next page.

In several places on the Hill, the fireclay can be seen on the surface. The best example I have recently seen, is in a small "shakehole" (formed by the collapse of an underground adit tunnel) about 300 yards to the rear of Sportsmans cottage and around 50 yards from the boundary wall on the top bank of the nearby stream. The grey clay can be found on the sides of the hole and can be taken home, moulded and baked. The collapsed adit tunnel used to exit on the banks of the nearby stream but is now totally filled in and covered in vegetation. It is clearly marked on mine abandonment plans.

All of the coal seams on Winter Hill are underlain with a seam of fireclay.



Firebricks near to the most southerly radio mast on top of Winter Hill.



The layer of grey fireclay can be clearly seen below the coal seam. This picture was taken under the summit of Winter Hill fairly close to the moorland road leading to the TV mast. This tunnel is now not accessible and this may be the last picture you ever see of it.

The Cranberries Where are they?

Since writing the earlier volumes, a number people have contacted me enquiring about the exact locations of various types of plants growing on the Hill. Where specific plants are numerous, I have given exact locations, where they are rare, I have been deliberately vague! By far the most asked question is "Exactly where are the cranberries on Winter Hill"? I'm still not prepared to disclose exactly where they are - but the photo below of the flower of the cranberry may help. Bear in mind that the flower and stem are only just over an inch high. Once you've seen a cranberry flower in real life you'll recognise it instantly anywhere.

The flowers appear between late May and early July and if you often walk on the very top of Winter Hill I'm willing to bet that at sometime or another you'll have passed within 10 foot of them! When you've found the cranberries, then you can start looking for the Cloud Berries!



The flower of the cranberry. The petals curl backwards towards stem. The leaves are those tiny insignificant things on the bottom left of the photo.

If you can't find the cranberries OR the Cloud Berries, then there are simply acres of whimberries for you to pick! Bon Appetit.

More about the Lichens of Winter Hill.

Probably one of the most ignored organisms on Winter Hill are the lichens in all its different guises. The grasses, mosses, shrubs and trees are all too obvious to most observers, but somehow the lichens get overlooked or ignored by most folk interested in the plant life of the area. You tend to only take note of them, once they've been pointed out.

Lichens can exist in the most unlikely places even in spots where no other plant life grows - such as directly on the surface of rocks or bricks. They are complex plants rather than being simple as most people imagine, and are something of a mini ecosystem consisting of at least two life-forms, a fungus and a photosynthetic partner which is usually an algae (but can be others things as well). Lichens can exist in extreme environments and often grow under conditions that other plant life cannot tolerate.



"Weathering" on walls and rocks usually turns out to be lichen growth on closer inspection. Carrying a tiny hand lens when you go walking on Winter Hill can prove

more interesting than you imagine - although you sometimes feel a real fool kneeling down to use it near other people.

There are many different types of lichen, a number of which can be seen right on the very top of Winter Hill, the most obvious ones being the "crustose" or "parmelia" ones growing on the walls and stones. These come in many colours, usually grey, slightly green, brown or even orange, perhaps even black dotted - and different species seem to inhabit different areas on different parts of the hill. Most of the ancient walls on the Hill seem to have coloured blotches - usually put down to "weathering" - are in fact lichens upon closer inspection.

Forms of the "reindeer moss" types of lichens, "pixie cup" lichens are all to be found on top of the Hill. Perhaps the most colourful variety to search for is the "British soldier", a bright red tipped member of the "cladonia" family which is easily spotted from June onwards on Winter Hill. All of these types of lichens can be found within 100 yards of the Hole Bottom brickworks. In this vicinity I have also spotted a lichen I have never ever seen anywhere else in the area, it grows on one of the bricks which once formed the inside of one of the brick kilns, a sort of melted looking stone.



If anyone can identify this lichen for me I'd love to hear from you!



Two photo's of "British Soldier" types of lichen - fairly common in the Hole Bottom area. The name originated with the red caps worn by British soldiers in earlier centuries. The plants red caps are actually the sexual fruiting structure of the lichen, the apothecia. British soldiers are members of the "Cladonia" family of lichens.





A lichen similar to those found on Winter Hill - although the maximum size I have ever found right at the top is about 1 inch in size. The usual variety found on Winter Hill is "Cladonia Arbuscula".



One of the Pixie Cup varieties, extremely common amongst the heather in many places on Winter Hill. Often grows in close proximity to the British soldiers.



One of the commonest lichens growing on the lower flanks of Winter Hill, Hypogymnia Physodes, usually on tree bark.

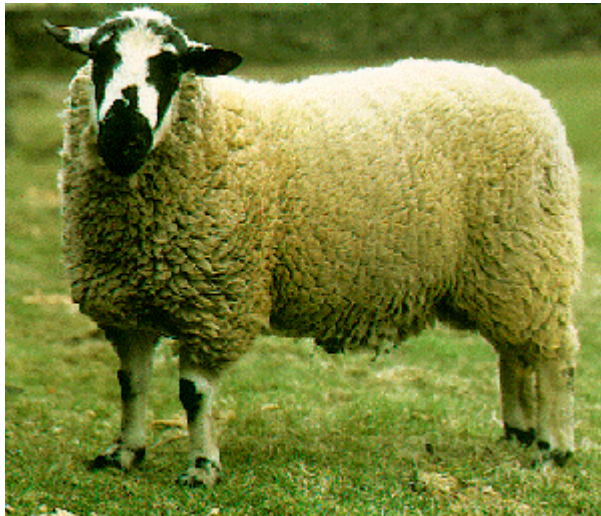
The sheep of Winter Hill.

When most people think of a sheep, they think of ... well a sheep! They all look the same don't they? Actually no they don't - and there are hundreds of different types of sheep in the fields, on the hills and mountains of the British Isles. Different varieties of sheep are grown for different purposes (some for meat, some for wool, others for breeding) and some types fare better in different environments.

Sheep are both a blessing and a curse on Winter Hill. They are a blessing because they look nice, they sound nice, they eat what's left of my butties to save me taking them home and most importantly, they provide a livelihood for local farmers. They are a curse because they seem to eat everything and the Hill looks as it does now, mainly because of the sheep. Unless an area is fenced off, no trees or shrubs grow, they are quickly devoured. Where sheep are present, the vegetation is usually very short and certain plant species are unable to survive the continuous close grazing. The presence of sheep maintains the generally deforested top of Winter Hill.

There are three main varieties of sheep grazing on Winter Hill.

"Derbyshire Gritstone", a mountain and hill variety which is found



mainly in Derbyshire and the Pennine Districts of Lancashire & Yorkshire with a few also found in Wales. They are distinguished by their faces and legs being white with black markings and there is no wool growing on these parts either. They are hornless. Their wool is one of the finest of all grown by the blackfaced type of sheep and it is extensively used in the high quality hosiery business.

Also seen on the Hill is the Swaledale, dark upper face with grey muzzle and a tuft of wool on the forehead. Both sexes are horned. It is found in the fells, moorlands and high ground of the six counties of Northern England and it lives easily in exposed places.



Many Swaledale ewes are used for breeding the very popular Mules, and the finer quality wool from this breed of sheep (the Swaledales that is!) is used for the manufacture of tweeds, rug wool and some of the thicker hand-knitting wools. Much of the wool is of coarse quality but this is ideal for the making of carpets.

The final variety found on the Hill is the Cheviot.



The Cheviot is distinguishable by its erect ears, white face and legs with a ruff of wool behind the ears. There is no wool on the face or legs below the knee or hock. The males are occasionally horned. The wool quality varies from fairly course to quite fine and is used for manufacture into clothing - ranging from rugged sportswear to lighter town suitings. Cheviot wool is also used for making blankets, rugs and hosiery yarns.

You need never again wonder what type the sheep are on Winter Hill! However, just to confuse you, the breeds listed are only those you will find on the Hill itself - in the fields on the lower flanks of the Hill you will also find Mules, Dalesbred and Lonks plus a few other crossbreed varieties.



Dalesbred - distinguishable by its black face with distinct white mark at either side of its nostrils. The legs are also black and white and they have a rounded low set pair of horns. The fleece is tough and springy and is ideal for making carpet yarns. Dalesbred can survive in the bleakest conditions and on the roughest pastures.

The sheep on the upper parts of the hill are free to roam and are brought back down the hill several times a year for mating (known as "tupping") usually around October/early November, lambing around April and for clipping in June/July. They may also be brought off the hill for dipping and worming although some farms dip the flock at clipping time, whilst others delay the dipping for a month or so until a little fleece has re-grown.

Don't forget whilst on the hills, **KEEP YOUR DOG** under control especially at and prior to lambing time. Your dog's hour of freedom could mean the death or abortion of a lamb and a financial loss to the farmer. Be considerate!

More ancient remains from Winter Hill.

In an earlier volume I mentioned that someone had written to me saying that some years ago they had found a flint spear or axe in the vicinity of the Winter Hill Burial Mound. Thanks for the info John McDonald. Several weeks after receiving the information - and after the last volume had been finished a computer scan of the object turned up in my mailbox. Wow what a magnificent find.



This is a five and a half inch long axe head, in what looks like excellent condition. Why is it that everyone else seems to find flint chippings, flint arrowheads, flint axes etc on Winter Hill ... except me! Thanks for the excellent photograph John, you lucky devil!

There are by the way, several well known sites (at least they are well known within archaeological circles) on Winter Hill where flint chippings have been found in some quantities. These would be areas where someone once sat whilst working on a block of flint producing arrowheads, spears, scrapers etc. These sites are marked on copies of a few privately produced maps. I have still found nothing! Any additional photo's of other peoples "finds" would be appreciated.

Millstone Grit - what is it - and how was it formed.

When you look at rocks on the summit of Winter Hill, they all look the same, a dark coloured, rough textured, gritty or sandy rock. The term "grit" is a useful - if non-scientific" - term for a coarse sandstone. There are of course other types of rock around, but by far the most predominant one is the substance known as "millstone grit". The term "millstone grit" does in fact (in geology) refer to a whole "series" of massive and different layers of sandstone's, grits, conglomerates and shales. The type of rock - or the "species" of Millstone Grit - you find on top of Winter Hill is known as "Rough Rock", a coarsely grained stone containing large amounts of feldspar and sparsely pebbly. Lower down the hill a different type of "Millstone Grit" the "Haslingden Flags".

The dark colouring of the rock is due mainly to "weathering" - and the pollution in this industrial area - break a piece open and inside it's a much lighter colour inside. This is a grittier type of the rock than that usually termed "sandstone". Take a look at it under a small hand lens. Are most of the grains are rounded? - if they are, this indicates that they were almost certainly transported by water (or in some cases by wind) which quickly removed the rough edges. If the sample contains only jagged or rough grains, then this indicates that the granules have only been transported by the water over a very short distance without being subjected to "rounding".

The rocks of the area were formed during the Carboniferous period (especially during the Namurian phase of that era), that is somewhere around 290 to 363 million years ago. How do we know this age? We know it by the study of a mixture of geological evidence, the study of the stratigraphic structures, the fossil remains, the study of the radioactive decay rates of rocks and finally by the modern technique of paleomagnetic studies.

Millstone grit consists of rock particles transported by water. Different areas of Winter Hill show massive differences in the sizes of the grains transported and deposited, the size usually indicating the relative strength of the current - the larger particles usually being deposited in strong current flows, with the finer particles settling as the current strength decreased. Different sandstone's or Grits at different places on the Hill show a wide variety of colours and grain sizes. The "Rough Rock" on the top of Winter Hill almost certainly originated as sands or mineral grains - probably brought from as far away as Scandinavia and Greenland - were deposited near the mouth of a massive delta.

Park your car in the car park at Lower House car park (that's the one below the Pigeon Tower at the end of the road leading from Rivington Road). Take the footpath going north from the car park and on the right hand side of the path, drop into the small dry valley. After a few minutes walking, you'll spot some small gritstone or sandstone/mudstone outcrops on your right hand side. Take a look at the rocks. The first thing you'll notice is that the rocks appear to be layered horizontal beds of sediment. This indicates repeated "floods" of varying strengths over a period of time, maybe years - or even centuries, maybe millenia. Different floods deposited different sizes of granules and these can all be seen in the revealed strata. In this particular example, the flows seem to have been of different strengths at different times. Some strata contain large rounded rocks amongst the small grains, other layers are totally graded fine granules. Some layers are very thin, some are much thicker. Perhaps each "layer" represents a major "flood" each year ... your guess is as good as mine as to what the layers actually represent.

The layers of sandstone (or "grits") in this locality show conspicuous signs of "current bedding", indicating that they were deposition in deltaic environments i.e. at a place where a large river delta was depositing the solids brought down by its waters.

How did the granules turn into "rocks"? The various layers of silt and granules were endlessly covered by yet more layers. As they became thicker and thicker, the pressure on them increased, and they became compressed. There were still spaces between the grains or granules. These spaces were however often filled with moisture or water and this, combined with the increased pressure and its associated heat, caused chemical changes in some of the substances within the sediment. The quartz grains remained the same, but if there was any CaCO_3 , $\text{Fe}(\text{OH})_3$ or SiO_2 present, then the warmth and the pressure would precipitate these chemicals and "glue" the deposits together. That is how the "rock" was formed - through compression, water, heat and chemical action. The major "cement" is silica (a form of quartz), others "cements" include calcite (only recognisable with a chemical test) and iron compounds (shown by their rusty red colour). The strength of the "cement" governs how easily grains may be broken away from the rock. Most Winter Hill cements are strong!

Occasionally (VERY occasionally!) plants or trees were swept down these torrents, and these remains formed fossils, but these are rare in most forms of sandstone (or gritstone) in this area. After years of searching I

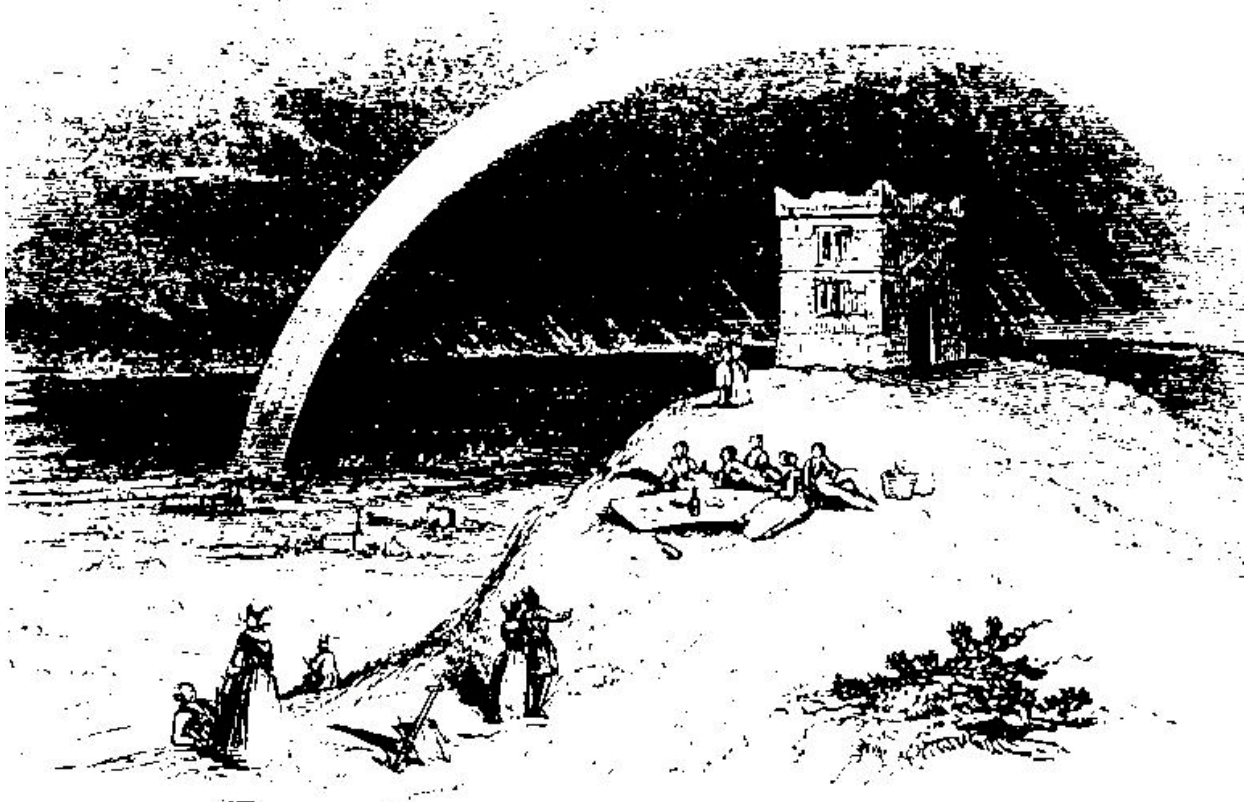
have only found only one such fossil, this being part of a tree trunk - found at Black Hill, north of Anglezarke. It is course possible that "my" fossil came from Winter Hill and was carried to Anglezarke by later glacial action - although as the local glaciers tended to go from North to South this possibility fairly remote!

Don't bother looking for dinosaur fossils Dinosaurs would appear on earth 100 million years later than "our" rocks were formed - and the rocks containing dinosaur fossils were (if they ever existed) in this area, eroded away millions of years ago by either wind, water or ice!

Oh one other thing. Right now, the UK lies at about 53 degrees north of the equator. When our carboniferous and millstone grit series of rocks was being formed, our country lay ON the equator, Winter "Hill" would have been really hot! Over the period since then, plate techtonic movements have moved our Hill (and most of Europe) about 5cms a year northwards, until today - when it reached it's present location.

How time flies!





A Victorian engraving of Rivington Pike. The date is unknown, but it appeared in a book called "England in the Nineteenth Century" page 280. Note the church with the small steeple at the left hand of the Pike



Another Winter Hill Brickworks.

In an earlier volume, a description was given about the Winter Hill Brickwork's at Hole Bottom. This not the only brickwork to have been located on the Hill and in past centuries there were several, many working at the same time. The Hole Bottom brickwork is in an easily accessible place - but some of the other ones are in fairly remote locations.

One of the remote ones is much higher up the hill. To find what remains of it, go up the moorland road from Montcliff towards the TV mast. A few hundred yards before reaching the TV station you will spot a wire fenced off area on the left hand side of the road (this used to be the site of a small wooden hut where the TV station employees used to move to in inclement weather many years ago). Take the track behind the fenced off area, cross over the battered wooden bridge across the ditch and head straight ahead to the brow of the hill. When you get there, look down and you will spot the mounds of the brickwork below. It is easily recognised as the vegetation of the site is different from the surrounding moor.



The view of the brickwork's from half way down the hill. There is no sign of any path or track leading to the site.

Taking a look around the site gives a few clues to exactly what may have been there years ago. There are two mounds on the site both covered in vegetation. Whether these are both the remains of brick kilns or whether the site had only one kiln plus one building cannot be determined without considerable digging. The smaller mound on the left of the picture was almost certainly a kiln for traces of fused brick (those forming the inside of the kiln) can be spotted nearby. There are also two spits of raised earth heading downhill from this mound which I had long suspected as being where the kiln ash and cinders were tipped. On my latest visit to the site a large rabbit/fox or other large animal had very kindly dug a hole into the side of these raised areas exposing solid ash, clinker and cinders. My theory was proved right without having to do any digging around.



The site appears to have manufactured common bricks and perhaps stoneware items as well. There are several piles of bricks lying around and a number of either complete or broken sinks can also be seen.

It seems from looking at the site, that the clay was obtained from the immediate area surrounding the kilns and in several places the rather poor clay is exposed. I can find no traces of any underground entrances although from the surface collapses I suspect that some of the clay may have been taken from just beneath the surface. I have not checked the geology maps for this exact site but there were surface coal outcrops in this vicinity so the brickwork would have its own clay and coal almost on its doorstep this probably being the reason for its isolated position.

The biggest mound on the site, whilst it "may" have been a kiln shows little real evidence of it so far - despite someone having had a dig into it at some time (it wasn't me). Without stripping some of the soil and vegetation off it is impossible to guess any more.

The Bog!

One area of Winter Hill seems to get few visitors whatever the time of year even during the warm days of summer. This is not perhaps surprising for this area appears to have nothing whatsoever to offer anyone and even a map shows nothing more than the words "Winter Hill Springs". Thousands of people walk the footpath between Rivington Pike and the TV mast, and lesser numbers travel between both these places via the Winter Hill Trig point and Noon Hill. Virtually everyone ignores the "empty area" between the two routes.

If you're just intent on getting from point A to point B then there is of course no reason to visit the "empty-quarter" but I have to admit to having a fascination for the place. I love the solitude, the views, the weather, the plants, mosses and lichens that grow there and of course the Bog!

Bogs on Winter Hill come in all shapes and sizes. There is the real muddy bog, the one where one second you're walking on firm ground then within a split second one foot sinks to the thigh in glutinous mud which often has a powerfully bad odour as well. **This** is a normal bog - a trap for the unwary!

Then we have the other type of bog, the "sitting water" bog. This is a place which is an obvious bog, a place where you know that you're going to get your feet wet unless you carefully try to step from one bit of dry or raised grass to the next. The worst that will happen in this type of place is that you just could get wet up to mid calf. This type of bog is also a normal bog!

There is however a different type of bog in many areas surrounding the Winter Hill Springs in the "empty-quarter". This type of bog I class as the "quivering bog" and is an experience not to be missed! I kid you not! These are areas which tend to be fairly flat, well populated by cotton grass in summer, the ground surface appears to be damp or wet and there are considerable clumps of sphagnum moss all over the place. Now this is still a "bog" but you CAN walk on it without getting your feet wet even though it feels decidedly dodgy and a bit "iffy". There is one acid test to see if you've found a "quivering bog". Stand still, keep both feet on the ground but move your BODY up and down fairly rapidly. The surface of the ground around you will start moving up and down in time with your body movements. If you've chosen a particularly good area to do your

strange body movements, the ground ripples will appear all round you to a distance of perhaps up to 10 feet away. It's quite a sight, and boy, does it feel odd!

The explanation as to why this "quivering" or "rippling" happens just may put you off trying in the first place, but what the heck, live dangerously and try it! The quivering bog is liquid glutinous mud but this is topped by a thin layer of fairly firm peat and plant life. The surface is safe enough to walk on and jump up and down on, but your body movements are enough to start movements in the liquid mud beneath, and these movements can affect a considerable area of surface peat around the spot where you are gyrating! This then is the "quivering bog"!

I do all MY gyrating at the edges of this type of bog. I take no responsibility whatsoever if any 20 stone person decides to test the quivering in the MIDDLE of such a bog, just so see if he/she can extend the quivering area to a **20** foot radius! Such a person has to be mentally deficit.



Sphagnum Moss

Whilst you're in the area take a look at the sphagnum mosses. You can't confuse sphagnum with any other type of moss. They are "mat" plants the topmost, live part, consisting of rosettes of densely packed branches facing upwards. The "mat" builds on itself, accumulating an underneath branch depth of several inches or feet, browning and dying close to the surface, decaying lower down. The only "live" part of the plant is the green (they can be other colours too) bit at the top, the dead part of the "stems" are merely used to "wick" up the water to the living part of the plant.

Sphagnum moss can store or hold large amounts of water - if you grab a small handful and squeeze it tightly, large amounts of water will run from it - even in the dry seasons sometimes. Sphagnum moss acts as a sponge and can hold 10 times its own weight in water both internally and in the spaces between the dense foliage. There are 30 different species of sphagnum moss in the British Isles and if you keep your eyes open in the "empty quarter" you should be able to spot at least 6 different types purely from their visual appearance alone, size, colour, composition of rosette etc.



Sphagnum Cristatum

A single sphagnum moss plant is very small but it grows packed together with other sphagnum plants and they provide support for each others tiny stems. This produces a soft spongy carpet which can, on occasions, look like a colourful patchwork, as each kind of sphagnum moss has its own shade of colour ranging from light green, through orange, pink, white and red.

The Coal Mines of Rivington Pike!

In Volume 1 of this Scrapbook, mention was made of two coal mine shafts to the north of Rivington Pike plus a nearby level - all now long since filled in and virtually unseen today.

There are however, other coal mining remains nearer to the Pike - and you can still see the remains!



The photo is a rather poor quality winter aerial view of the area surrounding Rivington Pike, the Pike being upper centre. On the right of the picture can be seen mining remains on the right hand bank of the stream. The "crater" on the right hand side of the road going up to the Pike at the base of Brown Hill is an old mine shaft. Just to the right of extreme bottom centre of the photo are what looks like 3 more pits - but these are in fact the remains of an old farmhouse!.

Surrounding the Pike is a coal outcrop, an area where the coal seam emerged at the surface. In the early 1800's (or even earlier) this coal would have been worked using "bell pits" and it is this type of pit which is clearly evident on the banks of the stream on the right hand side of the photo. The dark oblong shape near the pits is the remains of a stone structure, probably a sheep fold. A further photograph taken at ground level (on the next page) clearly shows the sheepfold (or whatever it was) with the heavily mined ground at the rear of it.

I have no details whatsoever about the pit shaft visible near to the road up to the Pike, nor the ones next to George's Lane at the bottom of the photo.



The "sheepfold" with the coal workings at the rear.

Just when you thought you'd heard everything there was to know about Winter Hill well now I've found THIS on the UFO Information web page at: <http://www.ufoinfo.com/news/humanoid1950.shtml>

21.

Location. Winter Hill, near Bolton, England

Date: 1950

Time: night

The witness, R Chapman sees a dark flat iron shaped object hovering close to the ground. Suddenly out of nowhere a "majestic" being appears. He is tall, well built, with black hair and beard, dark eyes and very pale skin. There is telepathic contact between Chapman and the humanoid for several minutes.

The humanoid then turns around and glides back to the UFO apparently decreasing in size as he did.

After he enters the craft the UFO leaves leaving a vapor trail behind. The witness apparently encounters the same being again at the same location. (No details on that).

HC addendum

Source: Gemini Vol. 1 # 2

Type: B

Not much one can add!



This photo is said to be one on Winter Hill - I suspect it is the Chipmunk which crashed on Smithills Moor.



Winter on Winter Hill!



More Winter Hill mining remains! This view shows the "quarries" at the side of the Rivington to Belmont road (which can be seen at the extreme bottom left of the picture). Pit shafts everywhere! Notice the "tilled" field on the right hand side ... what on earth could have been grown thereAnd when? This site housed a gun emplacement during WW2 used for target practice - firing straight across the road! Hundreds of mortars were recovered from the fields across the road about 20 years ago! Tread carefully!

Matchmoor Riding Centre.

Hidden away on the flanks of Winter Hill is a real "treasure" of the area, the riding school on Matchmoor Lane (Matchmoor Lane is the first road on the right hand side of Georges Lane after leaving the main Horwich Road. It's about 100 yards up the lane hidden away on the left hand side of the road. It's no use looking for the stables for they are partly sunken below the road level and you could easily drive past the place.

After almost two years of watching my grandchildren learn to ride there, I can assure you that this is a real friendly place and everyone seems to be welcome there both adults and children, total beginners and experienced riders. It's been in existence for over 20 years and they have over 30 horses. You can take horse riding lessons there or you can join a "hack" going out in a group into the countryside surrounding the riding centre. On a clear day the views are superb.

They seem to run rides and courses in just about everything, from hacks, class lessons, private lessons, stable management lessons, children's holiday courses, BHS Riding and Road Safety courses and Stage 1, 2 & 3 career courses. They even cater for children's birthday parties.



The horses and ponies used range from Shetlands through to throughbreds with many sure-footed Mountain and Moorland ponies.

The Riding Centre is open all day, every day and you can book a lesson on **01204 693323**. The emphasis is on enjoyment - whether you just want to learn to ride or to improve your existing skills.

The one thing that has always struck me about this place is the friendliness of all who work there - and I take my hat off to the instructor who teaches my grandchildren, she remains cheerful, offers constant encouragement and praise whatever is happening and whatever the weather.

The prices are reasonable :

Half hour hack	£5
Hour hack	£7.50
Half hour group lesson	£7.00
Day hack	£30.00

Yet another ancient find on the Hill!

Following publication of Volume 2 of the Winter Hill Scrapbook I received an email from David Aspinall, who is the person who discovered and wrote about the stone rows on Winter Hill - which are described in this volume of the Scrapbook.

David kindly sent me the pictures shown below. These illustrate a stone scraper found in the vicinity of "his" stone rows. The stone was found by someone else ... who unfortunately does not live in the Bolton area So this picture is probably the only record of the item which will be seen by Boltonians. If YOU have found anything ... send me a picture!





A wonderful old painting of Rivington Pike and Two Lads (Many thanks to Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust, Dept of Heritage Archives for permission to show this copyrighted picture)



Sportsmans Cottage Date unknown

The "Geo-Caches" of Winter Hill.

What is a Geocache? "The basic idea is to have individuals and organizations set up caches all over the world and share the locations of these caches on the internet. GPS users can then use the location coordinates to find the caches. Once found, a cache may provide the visitor with a wide variety of rewards. All the visitor is asked to do is if they get something they should try to leave something for the cache". That's the official description as laid out on the official geo-caching web site at: <http://www.geocaching.com/>

In practice geo-caching involves the finding of hidden containers of various types and sizes by using a hand held GPS (Global Positioning System) unit. These caches are hidden literally all over the world and there are thousands of them all over the UK. Some of them are merely 35mm film canisters with a really TINY visitors book inside These are usually known as "mini cache's". Other caches are substantial plastic containers or old ammunition cases which contain all sorts of gifts and other assorted junk! If you TAKE an item from the cache you MUST replace it with something.

Almost ALL cache's have a visitors book to sign and when you've found a cache it is good manners to log on to the www.geocaching.com web site to leave a message there also. In this way the person who hid the cache in the first place can get instant feedback on his computer as to who has visited it.

There are caches on and around Winter Hill but you'll have to go to the "Hide and Seek a cache" page on the Geocaching website and have a root around to see what is available. As this is being written, I can see caches listed on the top of Winter Hill, Rivington Pike and several nearby. New one's pop up all the time so any list given here would soon be out of date.

Take a look for them! It's great fun, a real excuse to get out in the fresh air and see new places and kids just love it.

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