

Chair village sits on some historic gems

familywalks

with RON FREETHY



LOOKING at my walking diary of the summer of 2009 I see I was struggling with almost continuous rain. How different things are in 2010. Things may change but in late May I loved the sun on my back as I strolled through one of my favourite villages, which is Chipping.

Getting there: From Clitheroe and East Lancashire follow the B5245 to Longridge. Turn right on minor roads to chipping. There is a car park in the centre of the village.

Maps: OS Landranger 103 Blackburn and Burnley, also 102 Preston and Blackpool.

Walk: 5½ miles

Time: Take most of the day because there is so much to see.



1 From the car park turn left along Church Raikes. Where the narrow road forks, bear right and descend along a steep road. Look out for the former chair and furniture works situated in a dip through which runs Chipping Brook.

Look out for a set of stone steps leading down to the stream and which allowed local people to do their washing. The associated cottages were built for workers in the cotton mill, which was once powered by a waterwheel which still exists. The old mill has more recently been used as a sawmill.

Pass the sawmill on the left and ascend to the old mill lodge,

which is full of wildlife and is an impressive nature reserve. Look left to see the mill lodge and the mountings of the old water wheel.

2 Look carefully to the right about halfway along the lodge path. There is a signpost, at this time of year almost hidden by vegetation. Turn right and almost immediately look for a stile with an arrow inscribed upon it. Cross the stile and bear right.

The next two miles is a visual joy and leads to an area known as Burnslack. Initially the track rises steeply and the obvious hedgerows should be followed closely, ignoring a number of farm gates.

Look out for views of Parlick Pike, which was once on the chain of beacon hills on which

bonfires were lit to warn of invasions. The path leads through a hollow and then up an incline towards Birchen Lee (Birch Wood) Farm. Cross a footbridge to Burnslack.

3 At Birchen Lee Farm turn sharp right and follow the obvious track to Chipping Lawn.

4 Turn right and follow the clear track through the grounds of Leagram Hall, which is visible on the right.

5 Descend from Leagram down to a narrow road and turn right and then right again into Chipping Village. Look out for the old post office and examine a wall plaque. This records that John Brabin once lived in this house. He made his fortune from textiles

and used his profits to found a school and almshouses in 1683. Continue through the village and turn left along the narrow and well named Windy Street. Here are the Brabin almshouses and the old school are found on the left. The almshouses are now privately owned and are kept in fine condition. Return along Windy Street and turn left.

6 Approach the church on the right, which is set on an incline and reached via a set of stone steps and a metal gate.

St Bartholomew's is one of the most

interesting churches in Lancashire and actually dominates the architecture of this fascinating village.

There was a church on the site from at least 1041 but the main construction periods date from 1240. The solid looking tower was built in 1540.

Inside the stained glass is both ancient and modern with a recent window dedicated to the Berry family who ran the chair and furniture works.

From the church return to the car park via the Cobble Corner cafe.

Nab End brought to life on stage

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understand it, was anxious his book wasn't thought of as a 'misery memoir'. He felt that, though it was a truthful book set during hard times, it also contained a lot of laughs.

"What I liked about the book were the relationships — Billy's relationships with his mother and father, and with his friend Harold Watkins. And there are also the figures Billy comes into contact with who 'educate' him, or 'enable' him, in the way that school failed to do.

"His grandmother Bridget, his neighbour in Livingstone Road, Terence Peek — and later Peter Shad, who

furthered Billy's political education. Billy loved his parents and acknowledged that they taught him valuable 'human' lessons, but he was also fortunate to have encountered a series of people who recognised that he had 'something about him', and their counsel meant that he was able to see wider possibilities, options outside of a life in the mills."

A large mill dominates the stage and rotating sets show interiors and exteriors of houses, based on those from the streets of Blackburn. Several cotton bails are also used on stage as props.

Acapella songs underscore parts of the play, including a theme tune I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles for William's mum,

alongside other songs from the period and traditional folk songs about the cotton industry.

Philip Goulding has written over 30 stage plays, 13 of which were with the Coliseum's director Kevin, but he revealed this production has been a particular highlight.

He added: "I've enjoyed it very much. So many great characters, of course; but also the detail of the period, the politics and, importantly, the humour. It was very important to us from the beginning that we honoured the spirit of the book."

● **THE ROAD TO NAB END** — Oldham Coliseum, June 18 to July 10. Tickets from the box office on 0161 624 2829.

TRAVEL

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By ALAN SIMPSON

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» **CUBA:** First Choice (0871 200 4455) offers seven nights' all-inclusive

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» **MALDIVES:** First Choice (0871 200 4455) offers 14 nights' half-board at four-star Vilu Reef from £1,335, saving £255, ex-Manchester June 30.

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