

## Darwen Tower

All present and correct bar one and attentive of the walk introduction while Mr Bean is parking and some of us watch our toes, then a full Jury departs, noticing the Tower high up and in the East as we seemingly illogically head West and downhill into the darkness that is Roddlesworth Woods. Down the wide track to Halliwell Bridge then uphill, a rather stiff climb rough underfoot in places. A dog walker and at least 9 (nine) dogs makes way and we come out into the light at some ruins which are the outline of what was once a manor house owned by the Hollinshead family and the mysterious wishing well, a small spooky building containing a water fountain of a lions head just visible through the windows despite the darkness, if you don't mind getting your feet wet or bitten by midges.



Picture by Graham

Out of the trees and onto the moors, a walk of 2 halves, sharing Cartridge Hill with young horses and shorn sheep, we follow the wide path gently upwards then steeper to the gate while behind us panoramic views materialise to the benefit of those who remember to look. Into the wind and into the Lyons Den, now a small oasis of shapely trees in a desert of wind

stretched grass, once according to legend the lair of John Lyons, a miner, a hermit, a wild man with red hair – sounds like Mick Hucknall, him and his band Simply Red performing on stage at Lytham Proms this very evening, his curly red hair blowing in the sea breeze for most of the gig and then the drizzle dampening it down during the encore.

Silhouetted on the horizon in the distance looking like Thunderbird 3 beckoning us onward and upward, the Jubilee Tower also known as Darwen Tower stands clean and proud currently under renovation almost completed. Holding onto our hats, 360 degree views the town of Blackburn looking compact, Darwen smaller still, the India mill chimney a remnant of days gone by. It's all downhill from here, a steep slope and a helping hand for one and the loan of a stick as we aren't all mountain goats. The drizzle arrives for the encore, a half mile stretch of mostly level track back to the start. A double 6 room in the Royal Arms, finishing with a mix-up at the bar, 2 doing a runner and 1 unhappy landlady.

Mike