

THE WALK

In the quiet churchyard of St John the Evangelist, Hurst Green there is a striking obelisk memorial dedicated to one Ikutaro Sugi, a "Japanese Subject" who died in October 1905 at the age of 30.

How did such a comparatively young man from Japan come to die in the Ribble Valley. What was his story? Local inquiry yielded no results.

However there was a significant piece of information on the memorial - that he was an "assistant commissioner in the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs. (CIMC). A web search put us on to Bristol University where a team was investigating the vast archive of the CIMC. The Maritime Customs was a branch of the Imperial Chinese government that was mainly staffed by foreign personnel. At its head was the remarkable Ulster man

Sir Robert Hart who directed the work of the service as inspector-general for a period of 44 years (1864-1908). Through Professor Bickers and Dr Weipin Tsai at Bristol we were able to ascertain that Ikutaro (noting that name on memorial and death certificate had been mistranscribed) had been recruited into the service as a translator and teacher in 1898 working in Peking (Beijing). Later he came to England in late 1900.

In 1902 he underwent a "severe operation" at St Thomas's, London. It seemed that ill health dogged Sugi throughout his last years. By June 1905 he was receiving treatment for TB in Southport. From here on October 18, 1905, he wrote one of his last letters. In it he shows that he had no hope of getting better and that while he had strength he would "go back to Stonyhurst (sic) while I can still travel". Less than two weeks later he died at Fairfield House, close by the college. His funeral took place on Thursday, November 2, 1905.

And yet while this has given some answers, it has not given them all as the Stonyhurst connection is not fully understood. Hopefully one day it will be revealed. As Professor Bickers noted: "This is a sad little story" but some solace may be derived from the fact that Sugi's resting place is in one of the loveliest corners of England. This short walk explores the village, the grounds of Stonyhurst and some of the nearby countryside.

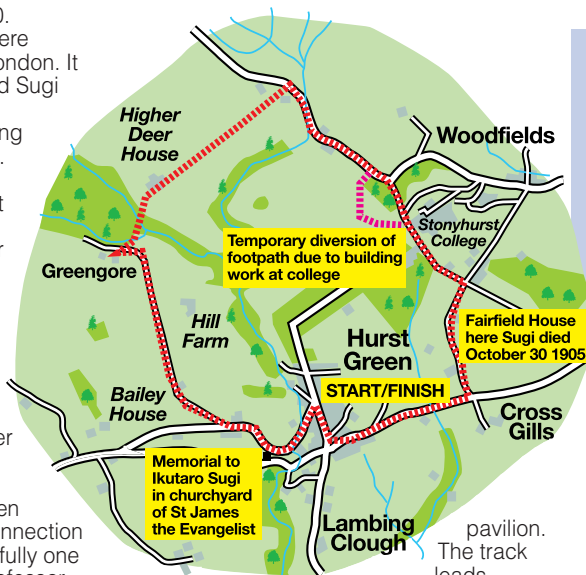
Directions: The walk starts along the road towards Clitheroe for some 700m. Then turn left along the drive leading up to Fair Field. Here, in late October 1905, Ikutaro Sugi died after a long and painful illness. Follow the track to the right of the house and then through a gate into the grounds of Stonyhurst College. Across the cricket field there is a handsome



HUNTING LODGE:
Greengore



A stroll to Sugi stone



Memorial to Ikutaro Sugi in churchyard of St James the Evangelist

around to a farm building. Here turn left. This track will bring you quickly to Stonyhurst College itself. The right of way crosses the main entrance with the drive and ornamental ponds on the left. Keep ahead passing college houses on the left to arrive at a lane. Turn left. [At present there is a footpath diversion in place by the college due to building works. See map] After passing Stockbridge Cottages on the left reach the drive of Higher Deer House, also on the left, its public footpath sign somewhat concealed by foliage in the summer. Walk down the farm track for 800m and through the farm (aided by

Start: Roadside parking opposite the war memorial on Hurst Green, Avenue Road, off B6243 between Longridge and Clitheroe

Summary: Distance: 5k 3m

Time: 1 1/2 hours

Terrain: Very easy in general, with a short climb away from Dean Brook.

yellow waymark arrows) taking a footpath across a field to Deer House Wood. Drop down to Dean Brook, cross the footbridge and climb the steep side valley to reach a fence, which is crossed by ladder stile. The path edges around the wood and after another ladder stile, reaches a stile in a wall. Cross this onto a broad farm track. From this point you may wish to take a short detour to admire the former royal hunting lodge of Greengore a little way to the right. The route now turns left and follow the track as it bends to the right. Keep on this as it reaches tarmac on its descent towards the village. After 900m 15 minutes turn left at the lane. After 250m this brings you round to a lane leading to the rear of the church. Sugi-san's memorial is not far from this entrance. After paying your respects return to the lane to follow it down a pretty dell and then up into the village. Turn right to return to the car.

● Walk by John Griffiths and Bob Clare. Hit www.lancashirewalks.com for more walks exploring the diversity of the



WALK ON THE WYRESIDE with Len Blacow

During a recent edition of the excellent Autumnwatch television series, the presenters encouraged us to visit the coast to enjoy the spectacle provided by flocks of wintering birds as they fly along the shore.

Here on the Fylde Coast we are blessed with two of Britain's major estuaries, the Ribble and Morecambe Bay and both attract huge numbers of wintering birds.

Pick a day with a high tide above nine metres, get to the coast two to three hours before high water and let the tide bring the birds to you.

The best places to visit are Rossall, Fleetwood and the Over Wyre coast between Knott End and Pilling, as well as Lytham, Fairhaven and St Annes beach. Each of the sites have their attractions, the Ribble has large numbers of wigeon, pintail, black tailed godwit and knot.

St Annes beach has large numbers of oystercatcher and bar tailed godwit.

Rossall has eider, ringed plover and sanderling, the Over Wyre coast has flocks of pink footed geese, oystercatcher, lapwing, curlew and red-shank.

The weekends of December 5/6 and 19/20 have suitable tides, or you can join Wyre's Countryside Rangers at Lane Ends, Pilling, on Thursday, December 31, for a last birdwatch of the year. Meet us at the car park at 9am, wrap up well and bring your binoculars.

On Friday, December 11, we will be walking around Scorton, while on Sunday, December 13, we will be walking around Bleasdale singing carols as we go. Also on the 13th we have a Christmas Festival at the Wyre Estuary Country Park (for information about this event only please ring 01253 857890).

On Monday, December 28, we will be holding our annual post Christmas walk, again at the Wyre Estuary Country Park.

For full details of all our walks and activities please call 01995 602125, email countryside@wyrebc.gov.uk or hit www.wyrebc.gov.uk/find/activewyre



The Wyre estuary from Knott End

Alpine Centre Waterproofs from The North Face and Columbia
Boots from Alt-Berg, Meindl & Zamberlan
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