

Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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Our thoughts are with the Queen and members of the Royal family following the death today of The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

Out and About Again

Out and about again, well if all goes to plan, we should be out walking again together as a group on Wednesday 14th April commencing from the Information Centre in Sunnyhurst Wood Darwen. This event is currently fully booked. The new rules will allow us to walk again as a group, providing we follow the strict guidelines that are required.

Setting off from Sunnyhurst Woods, then climbing up passing the golf club and around our local Winter Hill. We then drop down to Tockholes Road and on to pass St Stephens Church before field paths are followed heading off towards Bradley Farm. The return route is along the Witton Weavers Way and back up to Tockholes to arrive at Weasel Lane and then onto Sunnyhurst Wood.

The Guidelines

These are the new guidelines that allow group walking to be undertaken and what we must do to be classed as a COVID-19 secure organisation.

- The current restrictions will be explained at the start of the walk and why any additional walkers that have come along without advance booking will **not** be able to participate.
- The walks are for **existing** members only and the number on the walk is limited to 20. All places must be booked in advance. If you cannot attend, please let us know ASAP.
- If showing any symptoms of COVID 19 on the day **do not** attend the walk.
- You must carry your own masks and hand gel. When you enter any indoor premise, you must wear a face covering unless exempt.
- A record of who is attending the walk will be kept for 21 days to support the NHS contact tracing. This will be only name and a contact number.
- A risk assessment will be completed for every walk and a copy will be kept for 12 months after the date of the walk.
- Follow the government guidelines on social contact and physical distancing, by maintaining a physical distance of 2m, wherever practicable and no less than 1m when walking on roads in strict single file. Always walk behind the leader, unless directed otherwise Avoid touching gates and stile, if possible.
- On narrow paths have consideration for other walkers by maintaining social distancing.

The Countryside Code

A new, refreshed Countryside Code was launched by Natural England and Natural Resources Wales, on the 1st April. This update of the Code coincides with the 70th anniversary of the creation of the founding booklet which was published back in 1951.

More people are enjoying the outdoors than ever before, the code has been revised to help people enjoy countryside in a safe and respectful way.

The key changes to the Countryside Code include:

- New advice for people to ‘be nice, say hello, share the space’ as well as ‘enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory’.
- A reminder not to feed livestock, horses, or wild animals.
- To stay on marked footpaths, even if they are muddy, to protect crops and wildlife.
- Information on permissions to do certain outdoor activities, such as wild swimming.
- Clearer rules for dog walkers to take home dog poo and use their own bin if there are no public waste bins.
- A refreshed tone of voice, creating a guide for the public rather than a list of rules – recognising the significant health and wellbeing benefits of spending time in nature.
- New wording to make clear that the code applies to all our natural places, including parks and waterways, coast and countryside.



National Trails



Access land



Permissive Path

Get to know the signs and symbols that you will come across when out and about walking and follow the countryside code.

The New Countryside Code

Your guide to enjoying parks and waterways, coast and countryside

Respect everyone

- be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside
- leave gates and property as you find them
- do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking
- be nice, say hello, share the space
- follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available.

Protect the environment

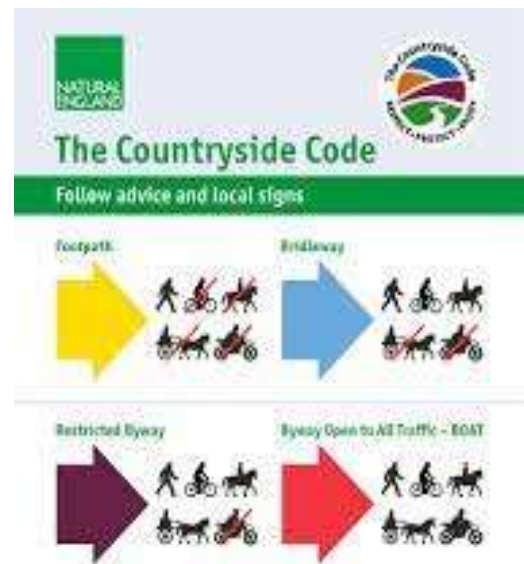
- take your litter home – leave no trace of your visit.
- take care with BBQs and do not light fires.
- always keep dogs under control and in sight.
- dog poo – bag it and bin it – any public waste bin will do.
- care for nature – do not cause damage or disturbance.

Enjoy the outdoors

- check your route and local conditions.
- plan your adventure – know what to expect and what you can do.
- enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory.

The new code also contains examples of the signs and symbols giving advice and information.

For the full code visit the www.gov.uk/countryside-code



Not Just a Path

When is a path not a path? Answer when it's a Drove Road, Cairned Route or one of the many other names for a way across the landscape.

Footpaths have been a means of getting from one place to the next and at a time way back in the depths of history were routes to carry out the basic of human function- obtaining food, enabling travel for trade or as a passage for religious reasons or a ceremony.

In today's leisure filled world, we walk paths for their scenic beauty or for the challenge that they provide as we fulfil a healthy lifestyle. There are now many different names for the humble path. Names such as Monks Road, Coffin Trail, Cairned Paths and Drove Roads are all classed as public rights of way.

A monks road emanated out from the monastery or abbey and would initially have developed as the way the monks would travel on to visit their far-off distant properties or pastures to tend to their flocks. The coffin trails were, as their name implies, established when routes were created between distant hamlets to transport the recently deceased to the village church burial ground. They were established at a time when it was important for the body to be placed in hallowed ground and are mainly found in rural areas.



The Monks Road on the route to Arncliffe

The cairned route would be the way to follow over rough terrain where it would be difficult to establish a visible mark on the ground. Locally gathered stones and boulders would be placed in a series of mounds to indicate the way across rough, open, windswept countryside. The prolific appearance of these cairns placed in inappropriate places has resulted in the Lake District and other National Park Authorities having to remove many of these cairns on some popular routes up some mountain and across fells. As many walkers

will know a cairn is always a godsend when the mist swirls all around. It's reassuring presence will make a walker relieved just to see it but if there are too many it can cause confusion and be very misleading as a route off the fell in poor weather conditions. Some of the cairns on the summits in the Lake District have grown in both size and complexity.



The Cairn on the top of Lingmell Lake District

The drover's roads were followed by herdsmen driving their cattle and sheep from the high pasture lands down to the valleys and on to markets throughout the country. Hamlets, folds or small towns were established at the drover's roads intersections and where refreshments and lodgings were required for the drovers.

Many of the old pack horse routes that crisscrossed the country allowing early manufactured goods and materials to be transported have now become public footpaths and bridleways. A good local example of one of these old highways is 'Limersgate' as it zigzags its way around the moorland of Darwen, following the contours and avoiding steep hills.



'Limersgate' as it approaches the Print Shop Darwen

So the next time you walk along a footpath, spare a thought for the travellers who will have gone along that route before and witnessed the same sights as you. If only these paths could share their tales?

Eleanor

Ogham and the Lunar Tree Calendar - Part 2

Willow, 5th Moon of the Celtic Year (April 15 – May 12)

The Willow moon was known to the Celts as Saille, pronounced Sahl-yeh. This Saille symbol is representative of knowledge and spiritual growth. Being connected with the moon it helps keep in touch with life's rhythms. Willow is concerned with flexibility, adaptability and wisdom gained from adversity. Its bark has been used for hundreds of years in medicine for pain relief. Its branches are soaked and softened for basket weaving.

The Willow grows best when there is lots of rain, and in Lancashire there is no shortage of that at this time of year. When nourished it grows rapidly. Just cutting off a stem and pushing it into damp ground will enable it to root and grow. A Willow planted near your home will help ward away danger, particularly the type that stems from natural disaster such as flooding or storms. They offer protection and are often found planted near cemeteries.



Willow overhanging a riverbank.

Much like the Alder, Willows are pioneer trees and they have huge spreading roots which help to stop soil erosion along banks in their natural, watery habitats.

Species of willow which may be found in the British Isles are - White Willow (*Salix alba*) a weeping willow that feeds and protects wildlife; the Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*) so-named because its gnarled trunk can split as it grows is one of the largest willows and its leaves are popular with moth caterpillars.



White Willow



Catkins on the Osier Willow Tree

Osier Willow (*Salix viminalis*) strong, neat and bendy is best used for basket weaving and it can decontaminate soils it is planted in; Goat Willow, *Salix caprea* also known as the pussy willow, the male catkins of the goat willow look like a cat's paws. It supports lots of wildlife, including the elusive and regal purple emperor butterfly.



Leaves of the White Willow

Whilst out walking try to identify a Willow tree between the 15th of April and the 12th of May.

Jean G

Pussy Willows

Rhyme by H.G.C. Marsh Lambert from 'Bo Peep's Big Nursery Story Book'

When furry buds are all about
Upon the pussy willows,
The fairy folk soon find it out
And use it for their pillows.

Then busy are the Browne Men,
Those downy buds they take,
And turn them inside out, and then
Such cosy caps they make.

Those fluffy little buds of fur
An Elf's wife simply loves...
And so he takes them home to her
To make their winter gloves.

Submitted by Pesto Cenorr

April Rain Song

by Langston Hughes

Let the rain kiss you
Let the rain beat upon your head with silver liquid drops.
Let the rain sing you a lullaby
The rain makes still pools on the sidewalk
The rain makes running pools in the gutter
The rain plays a little sleep song on our roof at night
And I love the rain.



April Showers on a walk around the Grane

The Peak and Northern Footpath Society

As you walk around our local moors you may have noticed large green signs indicating the way and wondered who are the Peak and Northern Footpath Society?



The PNFS sign on Darwen Moor

The Society can trace its roots to a meeting held on the 16th August 1894 in the Young Men's Christian Association Hall, Peter Manchester. It is now the oldest surviving regional footpath society in the UK.

The Peak & Northern Footpaths Society has a long and proud history in the provision and maintenance of signposts, bridges, etc. The signposts are probably the society's most enduring items, as some are over 100 years old. They began erecting the metal signposts, or notices as they were initially called, in 1905. Twenty have survived from before WW1 and are a lasting tribute to both the durability of cast iron and the design skills of Rowland Mower of New Mills. The current total of over 499 signposts, 8 fingerposts, 5 plaques and 2 toposcopes provide a long-lasting service to all walkers. Visit their website to view the locations of these all these signs and more about the Society [PNFS: Welcome to the PNFS \(peakandnorthern.org.uk\)](http://PNFS: Welcome to the PNFS (peakandnorthern.org.uk))

Despite the protection in law, footpaths would be diverted or extinguished to the detriment of the public without the constant monitoring and vigilance that the PNFS and other charitable organisations provide. The frustration of finding the way blocked or overgrown, of having someone telling you that you shouldn't be on their land, or a misleading notice that has no legal status are all things that the Society will look into. It is PNFS members who have been dealing with problems like these throughout their long and distinguished history.

Michael C