

Ramblers Gems



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All in June

by William Henry Davies

A week ago, I had a fire
To warm my feet, my hands and face;
Cold winds, that never make a friend,
Crept in and out of every place.

Today the fields are rich in grass,
And buttercups in thousands grow;
I'll show the world where I have been--
With gold-dust seen on either shoe.

Till to my garden back I come,
Where bumble-bees for hours and hours
Sit on their soft, fat, velvet bums,
To wriggle out of hollow flowers.

A contribution by Pesto Cennor

The Ethels

You've heard of the Munros in Scotland and the Lake District Wainwrights. Now there's a new hill walking challenge for the summits of the Peak District – the 'Ethels'!

The Ethels are all the Peak District hilltops over 400m above sea level and some of the significant lower prominent hills that stand out in their own right. There are 95 in total – enough to keep the keenest hill walkers busy for many months to come.

The Sixers Only 4 hills with summits over 600m, all on the Kinder Plateau.

The Fivers These comprise of 27 other hills with a summit of 500m or more.

Sub-Fivers 37 other hills with summits at 400m or more and 27 prominent hills lower than 400m with character.

The Council for the Preservation of Rural England (Peak District and South Yorkshire) has named them the Ethels in tribute to the charity's founder, the pioneering environmentalist Ethel Haythornthwaite. Mapped and listed on a new smartphone app it was released to coincide with their 97th birthday in May 2021. The app is named Ethel Ready is a convenient way of recording the ones you have walked.

But who was Ethel Haythornthwaite? Ethel created the charity in 1924 at age 22 in recognition of the beautiful countryside near her Sheffield home, after her husband Captain Henry Gallimore was killed in the First World War. She helped protect wild areas like Longshaw and Blackmoor from development by organising their purchase for public access. She was also a key figure in creating the Peak District as Britain's first national park seventy years ago.

Michael C.

Nature in June

As we are out and about again here are some of the things to look out for in the month of June.

June is the best month for orchids. Common spotted, heath spotted, and pyramidal orchids are fairly common on road banks and in old grassland. This is also the month of the dog-rose and the honeysuckle, which scent the air on warm evenings, attracting moths of all sizes such as the swallowtail and brimstone.



Bee Orchid

Butterflies include common blues, meadow browns and large skippers on downland and road verges.

If you're lucky you may see glow worms on hedge banks and along woodland rides, especially in limestone areas.

In the garden leaf-cutter bees carve circles from leaves to create their nests. What has six legs but can't walk? A dragonfly! Chasers, as their name suggests, are fast and feisty dragonflies, zipping low over marshes, pools and ditches in hot pursuit of prey or (in the case of males) territorial rivals.



Dragonfly –
four spotted chaser

Birds to look out for are pied wagtails and spotted flycatchers busy feeding their families. There are many other species such as Swallows, Swifts, House Martins, Northern Wheatears and Willow Warblers. Most bats give birth now, almost invariably to a single pup.

On heaths and moorland, stonechat families scold from the gorse clumps and it's worth looking in sheltered spots for adders (be careful as these are poisonous) and common lizards.

In meadows you might spot butterflies and early summer flowers in these wildlife havens. Traditional meadows are cut for hay in summer to provide winter food for animals. This management leads to a great diversity of plants and animals. Just before they are cut is a great time to visit as they are at their best. Great burnet and foxgloves are amongst the suite of wildflowers that can be seen this month.



Foxgloves

Butterflies are abundant now. Spot them early in the morning whilst they rest with wings open to warm up in the sun. Some butterflies love flower nectar, while others prefer to eat sugar from a rotting fruit.

Light summer evenings are ideal for watching badgers, especially the cubs. Most were born underground in February, or March further north, so are now 3-4 months old.



A young Badger

Despite all the rain that we have had over the last months, we still need to conserve water for the summer months ahead. Install a water butt or recycle your bathwater for watering your garden plants.

Jean G

The Art of Composition

Taking a great photograph can seem a simple task: just point and shoot but to capture a shot that stands out from the rest takes a lot more than that. The list is endless from choosing the right subject and setting and ensuring a cool composition, to finding the best light and making use of all the camera's capabilities.

Here are a few of the fundamentals to master the art of composition that apply equally to a conventional camera or a camera phone.

Choose a strong Focal Point

The focal point of a photo is the main point of interest. It could be anything from a tree, to a building, to a person (or their eyes). Finding a strong focal point is one of the fundamental steps of how to take great photos. So, when you're planning out or setting up a shot, you should stop and ask yourself, "What do I want viewers to focus on?"



Follow the rules of thirds

Instead of positioning the focal point in the centre of your shot, it can make for a more interesting composition if you follow the Rule of Thirds. This rule states that you should place the most important elements in your photos off centre. Imagine there's a nine-square grid in front of your shot. That means two lines divide your frame into thirds vertically, and two lines divide it into thirds horizontally. You should place the subject and other important elements in your shot along these lines or at one of the four points where they intersect. This is one of the easiest ways to learn how to take a better photograph. Instead of having all your portraits look like mugshots, using this guideline can help you find a better balance between the main subject and background.



Use leading lines

Leading lines are line shapes in your shot that can help guide a viewer's eyes to the focal point. They can be anything that creates a line in your photo, like roads, fences, buildings, long hallways, trees, or shadows.



Put a little thought into perspective

Perspective has a massive impact on the composition of any photo. By simply changing the angle or distance you shoot from, you can totally change the mood and meaning of your images. One simple way to see that is by shooting the same subject from above and below. A bird's-eye view can make a person in your shot seem small, while shooting from below can make it look like the same person is now towering over you. Shooting from far away can make a person look insignificant, while getting up close and having them fill the frame can convey a sense of power.

Create depth

Finding ways to convey depth is another important step. If you ignore this rule, your photos can end up feeling very flat and boring. The best way to convey depth is to include some elements in the foreground, middle ground, and background. So, for example, instead of shooting your portraits with the person standing up against a wall, bring them closer to the camera, or find a better background with some depth.



Frame your Shot

Framing is another technique that can help improve the look of your photos. It involves finding something that can act as a natural frame for your composition, and then shooting so your subject is inside it. Some examples include a doorway, an archway, some foliage, or a tree and an arching branch. This type of framing can help direct the viewer's attention to your focal point.

Michael C

On the Track

Preston to Longridge

This is my eighth in a series of articles on the once thriving railway routes throughout Lancashire that later would become redundant. The Preston and Longridge Railway was primarily planned and built to carry stone from the quarries on Longridge Fell into Preston where it could be distributed. Longridge stone was used to build Liverpool Docks and Bolton Parish Church, as well as flagship buildings in Preston such as the Town Hall, the Harris Library and St. Walburge's Church.

When the railway was opened in 1840, wagons travelled down the steep incline into Preston by gravity, reaching speeds of 40 mph. Horses then pulled the wagons back up the track to Longridge. In 1846 the first steam trains were used to replace the horses.

In 1846 it was planned to extend the line from Grimsargh into Yorkshire. The line was intended to run east through Hurst Green and Mitton to Whalley where it would head north through Clitheroe and Chatburn to join the Leeds Bradford Extension Railway at Skipton. This line would then be able to carry passengers into the spa towns of Harrogate and Knaresborough and Yorkshire passengers could travel to the seaside resorts along the Lancashire coast like Blackpool. This proposal was thrown out by the House of Lords due to opposition from Lancashire landowners. Work on a cutting was started before the project was cancelled and there is still evidence of this on the ground near to Trough House, in the Hurst Green area.

As well as being used for transporting stone there was also a passenger service with stations at Longridge, Grimsargh, Gammul Lane and Deepdale Road. Longridge Station was reopened in 2010 as a heritage centre, café and business centre. The original station building has been retained with a new glass extension built out onto the old platform.

Currently, this old line is only used for recreational purposes near to Preston centre and as far as Red Scar. This is a link onto the Guild Wheel and creates a much needed walking and cycling way out of Preston into the surrounding countryside. Hopefully, a way can be found to extend this route to Longridge.

Eleanor

Monastic Houses (Part 2)

I have previously led the circular walk to Sawley Abbey from Downham for SVRC so in April this year I took the opportunity to check out the route and spend a little longer exploring the Abbey.

Sawley Abbey

The Cistercian Monastery was founded in January 1147 by William De Percy and colonised by monks from Newminster Abbey in Northumberland.

In the 1280's it seemed likely that the monks would abandon the site: they claimed that poor harvests, marshy ground, and the inhospitable climate made life at Sawley untenable. In 1296 Stanlaw Abbey in Cheshire was refounded at Whalley, nine miles from Sawley, and the two Cistercian houses immediately quarrelled. Their lands adjoined and they squabbled over grain supplies and fishing rights in the river Ribble. The feuding officially ended in 1305, but the monks of Sawley, the senior foundation, continued to feel aggrieved. Sawley was considerably poorer than Whalley: it was impoverished by litigation, the 'cruel and inhuman spoliation' that accompanied Scottish raids about 1320, and the expense of providing board and lodging to travellers – unlike many Cistercian houses it lay on a busy main road.

Although never particularly wealthy, the Abbey survived for almost 400 years until its suppression in 1536 during the reign of King Henry VIII. The last two abbots of Sawley were both put to death. Thomas Bolton, as a consequence of his resistance to the dissolution and William Trafford for alleged involvement in the Pilgrimage of Grace. In March 2009, Sawley Abbey was featured in the first episode of series 3 of the TV series The Tudors. There are several information boards describing the Abbey, the Refectory and the Abbey Church and it is a great place for a picnic or a mid-walk rest.



Barbara S

A stroll in and under the Yorkshire Dales Part 1

As lockdown restrictions eased and the weather appeared to be on the turn for the better, I along with two friends, Anne and Nick, decided that a day in limestone country was needed. We planned to visit Settle, it was market day, grab some lunch and then visit Ingleborough Cave. The recent rain would only enhance the formations in the cave and also the stream running through can become thunderous! Taking the back road to Settle, it was joyous to see Pen y Ghent appear on the approach to Wigglesworth. It was like renewing an old acquaintance, then the massive form of Ingleborough also popped into view.

Following a brief tour around the market - its not what it was, and the charity shops - no bargains to be found, we walked down to the hydro on the River Ribble. Settle Hydro was built in 2009 on a former mill site, and is powered by water drawn from the Ribble, via a sluice and down an Archimedes Screw back into the river. Electricity is generated by the falling water rotating around the screw. The generated electricity powers the apartments at Bridge End Mill and the remaining 85% (approx.) is supplied to the National Grid.



The Fish Ladder part of the Hydro Scheme on the River Ribble at Settle

As my favourite cafe in Settle has new owners, which have yet to be tested! we decided to move on to Feizor and of course Elaine's Tea Room, where we had a light lunch (with cake). It was pleasing to see Elaine's so busy with walkers, cyclists, locals and those arriving by car (including us).

Moving on to Clapham the real focus of the day started, we paid our £1 to walk through the natural trail up to the cave. You can see where this money is going with new information boards at regular intervals, covering the Farrer family, the lake, flora and fauna, and the geology of the area. Also, some new picnic tables have been added and extra viewpoints cleared along the way.

Leaving the nature trail, the last quarter of a mile to the cave is on a good track, with glorious views up to Long Lane on the right and the fells beyond. We duly paid our £9.50, received our self-guided leaflet (no groups -covid) and put on a hard hat. The show part of the cave is about a quarter of a mile long, and there are two areas where it is necessary to stoop to avoid getting a bashed head.



The route to the Ingleborough Cave

The track is easy to follow and well lit. We were incredibly lucky, as my brother is the guide there, he met us just inside the cave and he gave us the full tour. This included the history, geology and exploration of the cave all of which will be explained in the next edition.



Jane C

The entrance to the Cave