

Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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New Year Resolutions

Most of us try and make New Year Resolutions, where with good intentions we set ourselves objectives that we very soon break. We make our resolutions negative _ "I must stop eating cakes" or "I must cut down on eating chocolate". One of the biggest reason people fail to keep their resolutions is because they are not specific enough. For example, you might resolve to "exercise more" or "get out walking more". These are easy ways for you to fail, as they lack a way to mark any progress and are unlikely to keep you motivated throughout the year.

Instead, try making your goals specific, like walking 50 miles a month and then increase that to 100 per month or circle on the calendar the intended date for losing 10 pounds.

In the grey months of January, the last thing you need is to drain your energy further by setting up battles with yourself. It is at this period in January that many of us fail in our quest to change our lifestyle. If you break a resolution you feel very much deflated, which is not a good way to start off your year.

What we need to do is try and make a wish list. This involves writing down a list of say up to 30 things that you would like to do or achieve in the year ahead. In these days of lockdown and restrictions what we all need are things to look forward to. They do not need to be *too* ambitious, just things that will make you feel positive and improve your self-esteem.

Here are a few suggestions to get you going:

See a Kingfisher *Often seen on a canal walk*

Learn to identify five butterflies *Books are available*

Go for a picnic *Don't forget the blanket to spread out*

Walk under a waterfall *Slightly more tricky*

Ride on a steam train *The East Lancs Railway is close*

Walk a beach and search for sea glass *A trip to St Annes*

Learn to identify 5 constellations *Sky at Night Book*

Spot an Otter *They have been sighted at Brockholes*

Eat Fish and Chips at the Seaside *St Annes again*

The list can be endless and you should include things that will be challenging and yet achievable once lock down has been lifted. If you miss out on some carry them over to next year.

Stay Positive.

Michael C

A Short Philosophy of Birds

A blackbird sits perched on a wall, eyes glittering beak bright yellow. Watch him carefully. What can you learn from him? Surely, we would be much more content!

In stories and legends, birds are often the bearers of knowledge, messages or new ideas.

Athena, the Greek Goddess of wisdom, has a bird for her emblem: the little owl, with its bright, golden eyes. Storks, graceful birds much loved by parents everywhere, were said to bring babies into people's homes. Then there is the white dove with an olive branch in its beak symbolising hope, and the agile swallow whose return heralds the arrival of spring each year.

I received the book *A Short Philosophy of Birds* written by Dubois and Rousseau as a Christmas present and after reading the above extracts included in the introduction I was hooked. What lessons can birds teach us? I am now reading about vulnerability, equality, rhythms of nature, our sense of direction, being free, why we travel, living life to the fullest and simple pleasures through the wisdom to be drawn from our feathered friends.

I am doing this one day at a time, chapter by chapter, for 24 days whilst I observe the birds in my garden and reflect on how life is at the moment.

This is good preparation for the rest of the year to come and the Big Garden Birdwatch 29 - 31 January 2021.

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/>



Barbara S

The Canal and River Trust

The second in a series of articles covering countryside and environmental charities that require our help and support.

The Canal and River Trust is a charity that look after and brings to life 2,000 miles of waterways. The story as a charity is rooted in the history of the waterways themselves. The Trust was launched in 2012, taking over the guardianship of the British Waterways' canals, rivers, reservoirs and docks in England and Wales - and heralding the next chapter in the regrowth of the waterways.

Our local waterways are:

The Leeds & Liverpool Canal at 127 miles and a bit, is the longest canal in Britain built as a single waterway. Leaving Liverpool, the canal passes through East Lancashire and then crosses Pennine countryside and picturesque villages on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales before reaching Leeds.



The Lancaster Canal links Preston to Kendal and is one of the country's few coastal canals. Built along the natural lie of the land it offers 41 miles of lock free cruising - the longest stretch in the country. There is a branch off that leads into the docks at Glasson.



The Trust offers the opportunities for volunteers to become involved in all aspects of community works from helping with towpath maintenance and repairs, vegetation management, habitat creation and litter picking. There are also openings to become a volunteer lockkeeper to operate, after training, the locks along the canal. The possibilities for working with other groups in an educational capacity are also available.

Get involved at [About Us | Canal & River Trust](#)

Michael C

Winter's Wrath

by Patricia L. Cisco

Winter's sleep so close to death,
piercing with his arctic breath.

Brittle, naked limbs stretch high
in the icy pewter sky.

Bitter chill and stinging wind,
quiet earth grows grey and grim.

Polar pillows full of snow
hover over valleys low.

Veils of frozen crystal falls,
cascade over mountain walls.

Squalls and drifts of sparkling white,
glistening brilliance in the night.

Winter, with his wicked wrath,
leaves blinding beauty in his path!

Winter's Embrace

by Patricia L. Cisco

Shimmering lakes of silvery ice
welcomes skaters' scarring slice.

Hills adorned in lacy white
watch children sleigh into the night.

In the brilliant pristine light,
snow birds in tall trees take flight.

Evergreens draped in capes of snow,
their heavy branches hanging low,
blanket earth as north winds blow.

Winter's dance is quite a show,
an ice-kissed, dazzling, magical place,
transformed by winter's cold embrace!

A contribution from Pesto Cenorr

Alfred Wainwright

This week marks the 30th anniversary of the death of A.W. MBE who passed away on 21st January 1991. His lasting legacy of the seven volumes of the Pictorial Guide to the Lakeland Fells will live on forever.

Aw've worn my bits o' shoon away

by Edwin Waugh

Edwin Waugh (1817 – 1890), poet, son of a shoemaker, was born in Rochdale, Lancashire, and, after a little schooling, became apprenticed to a printer. His best work was, perhaps, his Lancashire dialect songs, collected as *Poems and Songs* (1859), which brought him great local fame. Waugh's Well was built in 1866 to commemorate him at the now derelict Foe Edge Farm, on Scout Moor, where he spent much time writing, on the moors above Rossendale.

The following are the first few verses from one of his dialect poems.

Aw've worn my bits o' shoon away,
Wi' roving up an' deawn,
To see yon moorlan' valleys, an'
Yon little country teawn:
Aw've Worn My Bits O' Shoon Away
The dule tak shoon, and stockings too!
My heart feels warm an' fain
An', if aw trudge it bar-fuut, lads,
Aw'll see yon teawn again!

It's what care I for cities grand,—
We never shall agree;
Aw'd rayther live where th' layrock sings,—
A country teawn for me!
A country teawn, where one can meet
Wi' friends, an' neighbours known;
Where one can lounge i'th market-place,
An' see the meadows mown.

Yon rollin' hills are very fine,
At th' end o' sweet July;
Yon woodland' cloofs, an' valleys green,—
The bonnist under th' sky;
Yon dainty rindles, dancin' deawn
Fro' th' meawntains into th' plain;—
As soon as th' new moon rises, lads,
Aw'd off to th' moors again!

There's jolly lads among yon hills,
An' in yon country teawn;
They'n far moor sense than preawder folk,—
Aw'll peawnd it for a creawn;
They're wick an' warm at wark an' fun,
Wherever they may go,—
The primest breed o' lads i'th world,—
Good luck attend 'em o'!

A contribution from Alan S

The Haigh Hall Walk

These are the details for the walk around Haigh Country Park, pronounced "Hay", which was to be held on Saturday 23rd January. When circumstances permit you may wish to explore this area.

Starting from the Red Rock Bridge No 63, which is situated on the B5239 on the outskirts of Standish, you can access the Leeds-Liverpool canal and then follow the towpath to the iron trellis bridge no 60 before taking the driveway from Hall Lane directly into the country park.

For our route we would leave the canal at the next bridge, the Arch Bridge No 62, called on the OS map Pendlebury Bridge. This part of the canal was originally the southern section of the Lancaster Canal and when the canal was not completed it was incorporated into the Leeds Liverpool Canal. At 127 miles the Leeds Liverpool Canal is the longest canal in Northern England and was used to carry wheat, sugar, stone and coal. Once at the bridge now turn right at follow Pendlebury Lane and then alongside the River Douglas, using paths, tracks, quiet roads, and the old railway line, a cobbled path, a railway bridge and the iron trellis Haigh Park Bridge No 60 over the canal we reach the main drive leading to the hall.

It may be possible to follow the path along the disused Lancashire Union Railway from Pendlebury Lane (opening in the 1860s, the railway line ran between the St Helens Railway and Adlington but closed 100 years later) or paths along the River Douglas!

The name **Haigh** comes from the Anglo-Saxon word Haga meaning an enclosure or a secure area for livestock. The earliest recorded inhabitants of the Hall were the Norreys family who lived there at least as early as 1193.

The Bradshages arrived at Haigh when Sir William married Lady Mabel Norreys. According to local legend the Mab Cross is named after Lady Mabel Bradshaigh. The legend from 1295, recorded in a family history published in 1645, says that when Sir William Bradshaigh, her husband, failed to return from the crusades she married a Welsh knight. When Bradshaigh unexpectedly returned from a ten-year

campaign, he murdered his wife's new husband in Newton-le-Willows while he was trying to escape. Lady Mabel did penance for her bigamy by walking from Haigh Hall to Mab Cross in Wigan "bare footed and bare legged" once a week for as long as she lived. In another version of the legend, recorded by Norris of Speke in 1564, the Welsh knight is named as Henry Teuther, Sir William is absent for seven years on pilgrimage rather than a crusade and the penance involving the cross is not mentioned.

Sir Roger Bradshaigh died in 1770 without leaving an heir and the Estate passed to the Lindsays through a great niece, Elizabeth, who married Alexander Lyndsay. Their son, James, built the second and current hall on the site in 1827. It was given to the council 120 years later. The older hall was enlarged during the time of Elizabeth 1, but fell into neglect.

Mab is one of four stone crosses originally used as waymarkers along the medieval route from Wigan to Chorley.

There are many walks around the country park from Blue 1 mile, Green 1.8 miles to Red 5.6 miles plus an Historic Route. Expect to see a lily pond, stone lion, walled gardens, arboretum, swan pond (think mussels), Mowpin Lodge, cricket pitch, laundry house, remains of cottages, kennels and the coal washing station, Hall Lane Lodge, the disused railway line and Whelley loop line, several plantations, Monks Hill geological outcrop, Yellow Brook, Great Sough ancient monument, Bottling Wood, plantation gates and lodges, remains of a pond and 18th century canal, Devil's Canyon quarry, Haigh Hall, Stables Courtyard and stocks. Under normal circumstances - a café, toilets, craft shop, art gallery and bar.



After you have finished exploring the grounds leave by School Lane and across field paths to Pendlebury Lane and return to the car park along the canal.

Barbara S

The World of Geocaching

As once more we have to walk from the front door, or at the very most take a short drive to enjoy a walk, and we are walking the same areas over and over again why not try to find a geocache?

What is a geocache? Wikipedia states that geocaching is an outdoor recreational activity, using a GPS to hide and seek containers, called geocaches at specific locations marked by coordinates all over the world. A typical cache is a waterproof container containing a logbook, hopefully a pen or pencil. The larger ones might have small toys for children (big and small) to swap. The geocacher signs the logbook with their username and date and returns the container exactly where they found it. Then you can log your finds on www.geocaching.com.

The first documented placement of a geocache is May 3, 2000 by Dave Ulmer of Beaver Creek, Oregon and within 3 days the cache had been found twice. In the early days, the “first to find” was often rewarded with large swaps such as books and videos.

Geocaching is free to do! You do need to register at geocaching.com site with an email and username. Mine is Nance2112 (there is a prize if you can work out why!). You can then look for geocaches anywhere in the world!! The free and basic membership does not allow access to all geocaches, but enough to see if you like it or not.

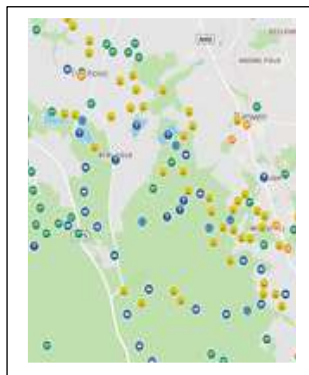
If you find you like this hobby, you can upgrade to premium for full access. I pay £7.99 a quarter for my membership.

The snapshots below show the difference between a basic and premium membership in the Tockholes / Darwen Moors area – I will say more about the different symbols later.

Basic Edition (Free)



Premium Edition (£7.99/Qt)



How to geocache in 6 easy steps.

- You will need a GPS device (or smart phone with a geocaching app. C:geo is the most popular one.) - don't forget batteries
- Find a cache near you on geocaching.com – don't forget to register!
- Choose a cache and enter the co-ordinates into your GPS, or download straight onto your phone app.
- Follow your GPS towards the spot - then use your wits to find it
- Fill out the logbook and return the cache to its hiding place.
- Log your find on geocaching.com and pick your next one!

So, let's look at a basic geocache near Darwen Moors – one called Darren Mushroom7a – it has a green symbol – meaning I haven't found it yet. Click on the green box to open the 'cache page' which tells you all you need to know to find the cache. The top of the page tells you who 'owns' the cache – that is who is responsible for placing and maintaining the cache. Also the difficulty and terrain scores, which are 1 – 5, 5 being the hardest, so this one is a 2/2.5 so should be fairly easy. It is a 'small' cache, so small Tupperware, empty 35m film case size possibly, and it was hidden in 2016 it was also last found in December 2019 so no guarantee it is still there! The grid references are next to input into your gadget or your app. Then a general description of the cache and a hint to help you find it. (Some people consider that cheating). You are good to go and look for the cache. Looking at people's previous log entries can help you find them as well. The log entries are at the bottom of the cache page.

So as I have not yet found this one, I had better venture out ☺



In a later edition – did I find the cache, what all the symbols mean, and my favourite caches – so far!

Jane C