

# Ramblers Gems



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## A Walkers Nightmare

Elephants appear to love wallowing in this semi-liquid, for it cools them down. The material coats their skin and acts as a sunscreen. The coating also provides protection from biting insects. Some butterflies engage in a behaviour called “puddling”. They land on this moist substance and drink the fluid in order to absorb its minerals and perhaps other nutrients. The insects sometimes gather in large numbers as a group.

There is one fish, that can move on land and obtain oxygen while they are out of the water. They spend much of their time on land. They not only build a burrow but also move across it to catch their prey, which includes worms and crustaceans.

To a walker this material is the bane of our winter rambles and is one of the reasons that we would tend to limit our activities to paved or known areas and routes that are free from this substance.

By now you will have guessed what on earth I am talking about, and earth is the key ingredient here. For when earth is combined with water, we get Mud.



The idea for this article came from the numerous walks that I have undertaken recently and encountered many hundreds of metres of thick oozing mud. Narrow lanes are covered with the stuff, sometimes with only a narrow grass stretch to balance a single boot upon.

The entrance to fields where cattle have congregated and milled around destroying the surface is an unsurmountable obstacle that the only answer is it take a risk and attempt to cross. This is either by balancing on one or two stones, which never works, or by taking the side route by the fence trying to avoid the deepest sections, which never works or by taking the plunge and walking straight through the quagmire. The boots are now caked in a thick layer of mud that no matter how much you try to, can never be removed.

I have come to the conclusion that there is no way of avoiding this – the walkers’ nightmare and to still get out and enjoy my winter country walking. So I must surrender myself to the peril and endure the mud.

**Michael C**

## Ideas for Christmas

It is that time of year again and if you are stuck for a Christmas present for a fellow walker then here are a few suggestions for the walkers in your life.

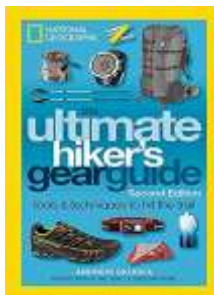
This boot brush is perfect for ensuring that dirt and mud is kept outdoors. The cast iron brush is hard wearing and weather resistant



This stocking filler, a cast pewter zip pull, can be added to a walking jacket or backpack for that personal touch. It comes with a velvet pouch.



The Ultimate Hiker's Gear Guide makes a great gift for the outdoor enthusiast. The book is chock-a-block full of gear recommendations, sample gear lists, and backpacking skills.



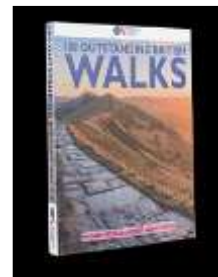
This bag is perfect for carrying muddy boots. It will keep the dirt from out of the car and ruining the carpets.



Here is a practical gift they'll thank you for, the Boot Buddy is a great cleaning tool you can carry anywhere. Simply fill it with water, scrape the mud off the shoes and unlock the water flow, before brushing the footwear clean.



Packed with 100 walking routes from across the UK, this book offers inspiration for all types of ramblers, whether those new to country walking or seasoned hikers. It includes easy-paced short walks, half day rambles and challenging full-day excursions.



The Bushcraft survival kit is a fantastic gift for ramblers who like to be prepared for any occasion. The tin contains 23 vital components and survival instructions,



An especially good gift for walkers who like to get out and about whatever the weather, this hand warmer will keep the cold temperatures at bay. The device is charged from a USB connection.



An excellent way to inspire the next hike or act as a reminder then places visited, this set of three prints represent the UK's top walking spots.



An eco-friendly, pamper-perfect gift for walkers who need a little treat after a long ramble. This set contains creams to ease tired muscles and cool the feet. These natural products are made in Cornwall and are paraben, SLS, and palm oil-free.



I hope these items have given you some inspiration, if anything catches your eye, print off the page put a cross by the side and leave it lying about, and you never know Father Christmas just might get to hear.

**Michael C**

## Ogham and the Reed and Wheat

The Ogham letter Ng is the ruler of the 12<sup>th</sup> Lunar Month which runs from 28<sup>th</sup> October until the 24<sup>th</sup> November. This is a time of Reed for Protection and Wheat for Fertility and responsibility.

To the 'Old Ones', the Druids and the Celts, all things in the natural world represented the connection with life, the gods and the earth. Both reed and wheat were highly revered for their everyday usefulness rather than their magic.

Ogham traditions from various parts of the British Isles differ in their interpretation of several of the plants, and this is most understandable with the Wheat or the Reed - both are wild grasses, both are still cut for the thatched roofing of cottages and both were used for bedding.

They were also used as loose or woven flooring, and have a natural, rich deodorising scent which is released when the straw is trodden or crushed.

The stems of reeds and leaves of rushes were woven into mats and baskets, used as writing quills, and made into whistles. A reed bed whispers and rustles its ancient stories into the wind and reminds us to listen to the ancestors.

Wheat is the cereal staple of bread flour - and bread is a staple of life.

Reed or rush is rarely used in medicine whilst the power of wheat to heal is well known. The heart and embryo of the wheat - the wheat germ - is separated from the husk and kernel being milled for flour. Wheat germ is packed with nutrients and rich in vitamin E, magnesium, phosphorus, thiamine, and zinc. Wheat germ oil is good for the skin - it can help in curing skin conditions like psoriasis and eczema and very helpful for dry skin. It works effectively to heal burns and skin ulcers.



Much of the symbolism and reverence for the reed comes from the Celtic storytellers and later the Welsh bards. **An ear of wheat is a symbol for riches and prosperity.** The all-important circle of corn sowing, harvesting and ploughing worked into the wheel of the year and ceremonies evolved to fall in with the equinoxes.

**The last sheaf of wheat** from the harvest was kept and carried home with the final load to house the 'spirit' of the corn. Final stalks of harvested straw were plaited into a corn dolly, sometimes dressed with life-bringing (or witch repellent) red ribbons and wool and hung in the kitchen or beside the hearth until the next harvest. These often took the shape of a hollow lozenge, the 'spirit' living inside.



- To be sure of seeing the faery-folk on a moonlit night, place seven grains of wheat on a four-leaf clover and place these in a conspicuous place as an offering.
- To be sure that your wheat is absolutely ripe for harvesting, leave cutting until just after the night of that month's full moon.
- For full, heavy stalks of wheat with large ears at the base of the heads, seeds should be planted at the dark of the moon. (Be careful though - there are sayings too which tell of planting at the full moon for a heavy crop!)
- Before planting, put 5 grains of wheat in an undisturbed corner of the field saying ... *“One for the blackbird, One for the crow, One for the mole and Two to grow.”*

A Corn Dolly



Jean G

## Lanky Twang

I have lived all of my life within the boundary of Darwen and now Blackburn and class myself a Darrener and a Lancastrian. You know you are a proper Lancastrian if you know the meaning of the following phrases and it wouldn't surprise you to know that schoolteachers thought children were just weak at spelling. In fact, children were writing things down as they were being pronounced, or as they heard them. Sometimes people wrote words down in a way that they would like other people to say them! Spellings changed from one town to another to heighten their individuality and Lancastrians were renowned for abbreviating words and sentences. Some of the words are officially being used in Scrabble after they added 6,500 new words to the existing quarter of a million words. So, go on and have a go. See how you fair with these local lines!

### 1. Ey up cocker

Meaning hello mate, ey up cocker is commonly used all over Lancashire to greet friends, colleagues and family members.

### 2. Ah'reet cha?

Meaning alright mate. Another greeting to be used - We're friendly in Lancashire you see.

### 3. It's cracking flags

Basically, it's really hot outside. 'Ey ma, its cracking flags outside.'

### 4. Dya want owt?

Meaning, do you want anything?

### 5. Chuffed

A way of describing how pleased you are.

### 6. I'm sweatin' cobs

To sweat excessively.

### 7. It's like Blackpool Illuminations in here

It is currently very bright wherever you are.

### 8. N'owt

An alternative way of saying the word 'nothing'.

### 9. Bob on

Absolutely correct.

### 10. Stop yer mytherin'

Stop making a fuss.

### 11. Bouncing off the ground

It's raining really hard - so much so, it's 'bouncing' off the ground.

### 12. It'll be reet

It will be fine.

### 13. Mek us a brew

A kind invitation to make a cup of tea. The drink that's the key to any Lancashire heart.

### 14. Ginnel

This refers to an alley or pathway.

### 15. Lass

A young lady

### 16. A 'doo'

The Lancashire way of describing an event or party

### 17. Buttie

This is what we like to call a sandwich.

### 18. Chippy tea

An evening meal consisting of chips. Usually coincided with peas, pudding and gravy.

### 19. Blooming eck'

Meaning oh hell.

### 20. Harping on

Going on about something.

### And a few words

**Bew** - cup of tea

**Cack-handed** - not skilful/practical

**Cakehole** - mouth

**Charlie** - a fool

**Dither** - refers to shivering or to tremble

**Do or doo** - party, event, fight;

**Fettle** - fix something

**Gab** - means talk (usually too much)

**How do** - Hello

**Kecks** - trousers

**Lass** - young female

**Oreet** - used when greeting someone

**Reet** gradely - very good

**sken** - to look

**Ta rah** - goodbye

**Use yer loaf** - Use your brain

**Yonder** - over there - some distance away

**Glenda B**

## Cartoons



"For years your teachers kept telling you to settle down and sit still. You can stop now."



This land doesn't belong to you, lad, it belongs to my master. He fought for it, y'know.' 'All right,' replied the rambler, calmly taking off his jacket. 'I'll fight you for it then.'

## Batty Moss Camps

We have scheduled for next year the walk from Ribbleshead up onto the summit of Whernside, the highest of the Three Peaks of Yorkshire. The route will go through the site of the Ribbleshead Railway Construction Site, which is now classed as a Scheduled Monument, then runs parallel to the railway before the line enters the remote Blea Tunnel. The walk then continues on to the mass of Whernside. The Ribbleshead Viaduct spans 400 metres across Batty Moss and famed for its 24 massive stone arches reaching 32 metres above the moor.

The story of the lines construction is one of hardship and bravery. All around are the remains of the temporary camps that sprung up to house the construction workers. The line was built between 1870 and 1875 and was the last of the navy-built railway line in Britain it crosses some of the wildest of Yorkshire countryside. The men needed to build these great engineering works were housed in several sprawling camps with names such as Batty Wife Hole, Sebastopol, and Belgravia. These camps were a bit like Wild West shanty towns with their wooden hut accommodation, boarded lanes and the Saturday night brawling. The camps did however contain schools and even libraries and were to all intents and purposes, actual villages. These settlements were the inspiration for the ITV television series entitled 'Jericho'.



Ribbleshead Viaduct

Many people died during the building of this railway line and their bodies lie in unmarked graves within the small churchyard at Chapel le Dale. The railway stands as their greatest monument thanks to the campaign to keep the line open during the 1980s.

**Eleanor**