

Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our Readers.

Ramblers Gems will be taking a short break over the Christmas and New Year period, and we hope to be back again in 2022.

I would like to thank all of our members who have contributed by supplying short articles and photographs. The contents of the articles have been extremely varied and have given all of our members an insight into the interests of the authors when we are not out walking together. Nature, ornithology, history, poetry, humour, architecture to name but a few. Using your amazing efforts, we have been able to publish a five-page magazine for 51 weeks. Thank you.

Michael C The Editor

Just for Fun

Try your hand at solving these puzzles and riddles

1. Charlotte decided to walk to the local wood, 10 miles away. As she set off her dog ran from her side heading to the wood at a constant speed of 8 miles per hour. As soon as the dog reached the wood, it started the return journey to Charlotte, keeping to the same speed. The dog continued this behaviour until Charlotte reached the wood. If Charlotte kept to a constant speed of 4 mph, how far did the dog run?
2. One word follows the first word below and precedes the second to make two new words. What is it?

CRESCENT WALK

3. Unravel the following

Wo^{king}ods

4. Unravel the following

Walk

It

5. Unravel the following

STEP PETS PETS

The answers will appear in the next edition

Michael C

Let's go fly a Kite

On a recent ramble in the Knaresborough area, we were treated to the sight of a number of Red Kites. During all the time we were watching, each bird soared and glided effortlessly without ever flapping their wings once. Up until less than 30 years ago Red Kites were restricted to a handful of places in mid Wales, although they were once widespread throughout Britain. Similar, to all birds of prey, they were heavily persecuted, which drove them almost to extinction. They have been reintroduced to many areas of Britain; the birds being brought over from Scandinavia where they are common. It really has been a conservation success story and in the area around Harrogate and Knaresborough in Yorkshire they have now become well established.

Although when first spotted they could easily have been mistaken for buzzards, it is their forked tail which identifies them. If the tail is not easy to see - look at the wings, for they seem to be too large and out of place on the bird- even slightly raggedy looking.

They are birds of prey and will hunt small mammals and rabbits, although they will also feed on carrion (dead animals) like roadkill animals even frogs and worms.

Although their nest consists mainly of sticks and twigs, they will also use wool, moss, hair and even paper and rags. In fact, Shakespeare refers to this in his 'Winter's Tale' where he warns "when the Kite builds, look to lesser linen"

I am quite sure that in future years, we will see Red Kites on Spring Vale walks. In case you're wondering the child's toy is named after the bird.



Tony C

The Christmas Holly

by Eliza Cook - 1818-1889

The holly! the holly! oh, twine it with bay—
Come give the holly a song;
For it helps to drive stern winter away,
With his garment so sombre and long.
It peeps through the trees with its berries of red,
And its leaves of burnish'd green,
When the flowers and fruits have long been dead,
And not even the daisy is seen,
Then sing to the holly, the Christmas holly,
That hangs over peasant and king:
While we laugh and carouse 'neath its glitt'ring boughs,
To the Christmas holly we'll sing.

The gale may whistle, and frost may come,
To fetter the gurgling rill;
The woods may be bare, and the warblers dumb—
But the holly is beautiful still.
In the revel and light of princely halls,
The bright holly-branch is found;
And its shadow falls on the lowliest walls,
While the brimming horn goes round.
Then drink to the holly, &c.

The ivy lives long, but its home must be
Where graves and ruins are spread;
There's beauty about the cypress tree,
But it flourishes near the dead:
The laurel the warrior's brow may wreath,
But it tells of tears and blood.
I sing the holly, and who can breathe
Aught of *that* that is not good?
Then sing to the holly, &c.



Pesto Cenorr

Ogham Trees The Elder

Elder (Ruis) is a common sight on waste ground, in hedgerows and scrubby woodland all over the British Isles. It has one of the strongest reputations, of all the Ogham trees, for faery and witch superstitions and magical protection.

Ruler of the 13th Lunar Month from 25th November - 22nd December. Its powers are protection, healing, wisdom, prosperity, sleep and blessings. It represents regeneration and its Ogham letter is R.

The tree grows best in slightly damp, fertile but neutral soil which is disturbed – so you often find it by roadsides and along banks where there are rabbits, badgers and foxes and in cemeteries. Wherever it once grew, the space was considered to be sacred as it is protected by the Elder Mother. It can grow to about 30ft, but to attain this rare size it needs plenty of light.

In late spring it is easily recognised for its huge saucers of white flowers, anything up to 9 ins across. This head is actually a cluster of tiny white petalled, yellow centred flowers which are much sort after for elderflower cordial, syrup or champagne. Elderflower fritters are elderflower heads coated in a light, tempura-style batter, deep-fried until crisp, dredged with icing sugar and lemon juice squeezed over or a fruit syrup such as raspberry.



The wood polishes up to a high shine and can be made into pretty beads. The stems are hollow and filled with a white pith that's easily removed and have been used for centuries to make musical pipes and whistles. The flowers are followed in autumn by masses of small, deep purplish-black berries.

Elder has been part of the healer's medicine chest for hundreds of years – flowers, berries, leaves and bark all finding an important place.

However, the bark is now considered poisonous! 21st century tests on elder berries show that they contain powerful antioxidants which protect cells against damage and may help stimulate the immune system. The berries and leaves have plenty of vitamins A, B and a large amount of vitamin C. They've been used in infusions, cordials and wines to promote long life and good health for centuries.



The tiny florets can be dried and used as a tea - mixed hot with honey and some dried peppermint leaves or a drop of peppermint oil and then strained, they are perfect for the relief of colds, sore-throats or flu.

The Elder Mother - Elf Mother - Ellhorn the Wisewoman (who certainly is not a wicked witch) makes her shelter among the roots and protects the land nearby. It is still considered highly unlucky to cut down the tree. If you **MUST** do it, ask permission respectfully of the tree and explain why it's necessary! Give the spirit time to move before cutting and **NEVER** bring the wood into the house to burn! The only time that you may cut branches to burn without permission is on Twelfth Night (Jan 6th) and then only if you spit on the ground near the roots and into the hearth three times!



Jean G

Disappearing Landmarks

The following article is an extract from *The Rambler* 1906 written by our founder and leader J.T. Fielding and was one of a series entitled *Disappearing Landmarks*

The Cunliffe estate is well known between Little Harwood and Langho, as witnessed by the Higher and Lower Cunliffe farms and the quarries today. In the reign of Henry VIII., Cunliffe estate was mortgaged to the ancestor of Sir Thomas Walmsley and by foreclosure was lost to the Cunliffes in Elizabeth's reign. Having lost the estate at Billington, they then settled at Hollins near Accrington. During the period of the Commonwealth this house was in turn plundered and wrecked because of the opposition the owner showed to the Commonwealth. Thus, forced to quit Hollins the Cunliffes at last came to Wycoller, and remained more or less in possession until 1819, when the Hall fell into the hands of creditors.

Neglect and time wrought havoc with the structure and now it stands a heap of ruins, recording a chequered history, once interesting, though painful. Traces of a wonderful old fireplace are still to be found at one end of the Hall. The fireplace is acknowledged to be one of the best of its class in the whole district. It is detached from the wall and is built in the fashion of Henry VI's time, having stone benches all the way around so that full use was made of the complete Inglenook. The family manuscripts record how the Cunliffes kept open house 12 days at Christmas; how the long tables groaned under their loads of eatables, which included boiled and roast beef, fat geese, pudding, and beer, and how the common breakfast portions consisted of *frumerty* and new milk (this substance is today called in some districts "*Frumerty*") (*Ed This is a type of porridge, a thick boiled grain dish.*) We can still picture evenings of mirth around the central huge fireplace and how many tales were told and love vows exchange during the long winter months.

Alas! And alack that such places should disappear.



Nelson on the 1846 OS map 6 inch to the mile



The fireplace at Wycoller Hall

The mushroom growth of the town of Nelson has also been the means of changing the contours of the district in more ways than one at one. At one time not many years ago, Walverden was the joy and delight of both the aged and be young who be took themselves to its confines and spent hours of happiness in its shady recesses. The encouragement of the builder has led to much alterations and it has been during the last 14 to 15 years greatly shorn of its former beauty. Nevertheless, there still remains nooks and corners sufficient to remind us of scenes that were once so fair.

The scene depicted in our illustration is that of the lower portion of Walverden as it appeared some 20 years ago. This particular spot was always a favourite with the children. It's pathways, its bridges, its hillsides and its dells resounded with their merry voices from early morn till dewy eve, but the despoiler has been at work and through the extensions of commerce, the builder's hands have relentlessly broken former charms, and not a vestige remains of the original scene.



The Old Footbridge Walverden circa 1850

Michael C

Kettlewell A Short History

The village of Kettlewell sits on the River Wharfe approximately midway between the larger village of Grassington and the more remote village of Buckden. The name Kettlewell is Anglo Saxon and comes from Cetel Wella which means a bubbling spring or stream, and signs of these ancient settlers farming methods can still be seen in terraced fields to be found on the south side of the village. There has also been traces of Brigantines and Roman occupation around several sectors of the village.

There is a long history of continuous settlement in this valley and Kettlewell is mentioned in the Domesday Book. There was once a busy and important Thursday Market that took place in the square opposite the Kings Head Inn, mainly selling corn and every year three fairs were held in the village, one of which was a hiring fair where men and women came from as far away as Westmorland to be hired into all manner of employment. In 1410 King Henry gave license to Ralph Earl of Westmorland to enclose 300 acres of land for hunting and a deer park. This was called Scale Park and is on the Park Rash Road over to Coverdale.

Cotton and lead mining played an important part in the history of the village. Lead mining brought prosperity to the village in the 17th century but closed in the late 19th century. One of the most profitable was Old Providence which was worked by the Kettlewell Mining Co. In 1838 Kettlewell boasted a cotton mill, three blacksmiths, two joiners, five inns, two shoemakers, a surgeon and a tailor. Opposite today's Village Store stood the corn mill and in the early part of the 19th century this was turned into a cotton mill but was demolished in 1876. The remains of the mill dam are still visible today. One of the most marked features of the area around Kettlewell is its dry-stone walls. These were mainly built in the latter part of the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth century and were built by the landowners and freeholders of the village.



Eleanor

Map That Route

There is no better activity than to 'take a good walk in the country'. But what this means in practical terms can vary enormously. A five mile stroll through the autumn leaves of a wood around Tockholes is a totally different proposition from tackling a strenuous route over a mist shrouded Lakeland fell. Whatever the type of walking, one factor stays the same- you must find your way. Indeed, you cannot enjoy the walk unless you can follow a route easily and competently, hence the abundance of walking guide-books and routes to be downloaded from the internet. Half the people that you meet seem to be clutching one, for there is no doubt that these guides are a very effective way to help people get out onto the footpaths with the minimum of fuss. But they do have their limitations.

To add an extra layer to your walking why not consider the obvious alternative and learn to use a map? With one of the latest Ordnance Survey Explorer or Outdoor Leisure maps you can choose walks from any footpath, the little used ones as well as the well tramped, taking you into places not yet reached by the guidebook writers. Each walk that you design can meet the needs of the moment, its length, how much climbing, views, special places to visit, even to organising a pint of beer at the end of the walk.

Whilst navigating by map takes some effort on your part, most people can become thoroughly competent map navigators, by studying their local area map, following some basic rules and getting out there and having a go.

Competence comes only after lots of practice, when the techniques and the methods become second nature to perform. Try and get your map out on a Spring Vale Ramblers walk, follow the route as it progresses, be observant of the features that you are passing. Compare the position of the church or footbridge to the woodland on the far hill. These points will all help you to improve your ability to read and follow a map. Whilst on the walk don't be afraid to ask the leader for guidance or help in determining exactly where you are on the route.

Glenda B