

# Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Share a Walk Together**
- 2 Reason to be Cheerful**
- 3 Managing Stress**
- 4 The Christmas Rose /  
A Snowdrop Fairy /  
The NAAONB**
- 5 Walk to Clougha Trig Point**

## Share a Walk Together

As Valentine's Day approaches this Sunday, why not take the opportunity to connect with a loved one. Not all of us are in a cosy bubble with our nearest and dearest or with a favourite person but you can always check in on them with a walking phone call on Valentine's Day and share the sights and sounds of your walks together.

For those lucky enough to be bubbled with their partner, family, or friends, here are a few ways to plan your day and make it special.

### Time together

If you're with that special someone, there's nothing more important than spending quality time together – and of course a walk is perfect!

Leave those screens and distractions behind you and a stroll together will result in some quality time.

Choose the perfect walk of course! The lockdown means we're all staying close to home at the moment, so think about places that hold special memories for you, have lovely views, interesting history or natural features. Perhaps you can find a hidden gem, somewhere nearby where you've not been to before.

A way to gain some brownie points would be to pack a picnic of your valentine's favourite treats. Let's be frank, in our current lockdown situation, even a takeaway coffee feels like a huge treat right now! So, pack a flask of hot chocolate and some fancy cake and stop en route to enjoy this special treat.

We're still in the throes of winter. This can have its advantages so by wrapping up warm and heading out into the early evening might just add something special to your walk. The clear skies that we are experiencing help to deliver some beautiful sunsets or just look up to the sky and gaze at the stars which will add an air of romance.

I know it is hard in this winter weather! But snuggling up on the sofa with some nice food and a movie will feel way more satisfying after a bracing walk together.

I promise!

**Eleanor**

## Reasons to be Cheerful!

At the moment lockdown has being extended to the 8<sup>th</sup> March. I for one am not surprised and I am a little relieved as I am still nervous about exploring our environment and feel safer at home. From 8<sup>th</sup> March we could be engaged in a slow return to 'tiers' or some other initiative as we look forward to Easter weekend. *But what does this mean for walkers?*

- Across the UK, **February temperatures** average a daily high of 7 degrees Celsius (45 degrees Fahrenheit) and a low of 1 °C (34 °F). This current particularly cold spell is due to end and next week should see temperature rise.
- **March temperatures** average a daily high of 10 degrees Celsius (50 degrees Fahrenheit) and a low of 3 °C (37 °F).
- In **January**, the entire UK averages **13 days of rain or snow**, totalling 83 millimetres (**3.3 inches**).
- In **March**, the entire UK averages **12 days of rain or snow**, totalling 64 millimetres (**2.5 inches**).
- On **1<sup>st</sup> February daylight hours** in the UK will be 9 hours 7 minutes.
- By **8<sup>th</sup> March** we will enjoy 11 hours 21 minutes of daylight hours and the 28<sup>th</sup> March the clocks spring forward an hour, increasing the daylight hours to 12 hours 44 minutes.

**It will be getting warmer! It should be drier! And the days will certainly be getting longer!**

**How do we plan?** I have taken a gardening approach to this topic because my 'Gardening Year' book starts in March and ends in February. Nothing can be done about lockdowns and adverse weather so let's start planning and preparing for March...

**January** – is often the coldest month so this is the time to plan ahead, look online for new walk routes near you, overhaul your walking poles, clothes, boots, rucksack, and other gear and get it repaired, cleaned, waterproofed, or replaced. Look online for catalogues and local suppliers.

**February** - We can walk from our front door or take a short car journey to local places and gradually begin to increase our distance, walking speed and perhaps introduce a bit of a climb. Stop, look, listen, smell and touch things on your walks. This is good for your well-being.

*Mindfulness* can be described as the practice of 'paying attention in the present moment'.

Enjoy every moment of your walks through the nature around you.



**Look at the colours, feel the velvety moss, examine the bark**

Look out for how, when, and where to renew your membership of SVRC by purchasing a copy of the 2021-2022 Syllabus. From March, you may not be able to join us on walks if you have not done this!

**March** – As the days lengthen and the sun's rays grow stronger and the sunshine hours are increasing the ground should start to dry out, so I hope our rambling year can get underway. There will be cold strong winds, there may be hail, sleet, snow, or showers but layers of clothing and our overhauled gear should get us comfortably through these. Frost is possible but that is because of the clear daytime skies – think panoramas and great views. Just like gardeners we should take every advantage of dry spells but not be misled into thinking that short periods of warm weather mean spring has finally arrived. Appropriate clothing, footwear, poles, the kit in our rucksacks along with 'realistic' walks will keep us safe until April.

The first walk of our new season is due to take place on 13<sup>th</sup> March from Sunnyhurst Wood Darwen so start preparing now. What is more, some gardeners and allotment holders will tell us that the second week of March is sometimes the driest of the year. I hope so.



**Listen to the roar of water over a waterfall, the tinkle, splash and spray by weirs, and the burble of a stream as it travels along its bed bubbling over rocks and branches.**

**Barbara S**

## Managing Stress

During the current pandemic, stress and anxiety can be fostered by the uncertain future, and the mixed messages that keep appearing in the social media.

Small habits and strategies can be woven into our everyday lives to help, and good news - many of them don't cost a thing!

### Walking with purpose

Walking is one of the simplest of well-being saviours. Giving the walk an extra purpose provides a dose of distraction. A nature walk to tune into the trees, scenery and wildlife around you e.g. Print off the Winter Twigs identification page from the Ramblers Gems Vol 2 Issue 5 and try and identify the tree from its emerging Spring buds. Alternatively use your camera or phone to capture anything unusual or beautiful that you may see and then share your finds. Set an objective to be reached, a circuit or distance to be achieved.....



Walking through woodland can relieve stress.

### Visualising your way to calm

Choose a scene, place or memory that you find comforting. Use your senses to get some detail - look around and note what you see. What can you hear? What smells do you notice? Is there anything you can touch or taste?

All this whilst sitting in a comfortable position, and having taken a few slow, deep breaths.

### Singing or humming

There's science behind singing - vibrations in the throat and ears stimulate the vagus nerve, part of the parasympathetic nervous system (automatically controls functions you don't have to think about) and releases acetylcholine- a 'feel-good' neurotransmitter. Carve out time for a singing break or try just humming a favourite tune for 10 minutes or so.

### Mantra and Yoga

Mantras are associated with meditation practice but can also be personalised to use in stressful situations, to fill you with calm or courage. 'Om' or 'Carpe Diem' are two favourites.

Yoga poses are said to help foster a sense of calm. Attending classes is not necessary- a simple pose at home such as Viparita Karani or legs up the wall pose is popular. Lie on your back on the floor with your bottom next to a wall. Raise your legs so they lean vertically against the wall. Close your eyes and breathe easily for 5 to 10 minutes.



### Writing down your thoughts

Getting thoughts out onto paper can be a highly effective way of relieving stress, especially if they are 'tumbling round on a loop' before bedtime. 'Thought dumping' is best without judgement, censorship (or spelling! Pen and notebook are best, but you could record yourself on your device instead. You never know you might want to submit your work to Ramblers Gems.

Remember if you are really struggling and concerned about your mental health, contact your GP-that's what they are there for.

**Alan R**

## A Christmas Rose

Christmas may have come and gone, but some people might well have the Christmas Rose in flower in their garden. Although the flowers look a little like a rose, they are not related. They are in fact Hellebores and belong to the buttercup family. Hellebores flower early in the year. The Christmas Rose, Hellebores Niger, as its name suggests flowers from December to February. Another hellebore, Hellebore Orientalis flowers from March to April, so not surprisingly it is known as Lenten Rose.



Although hellebores are native plants, they are quite scarce in the wild. They do however occur as garden escapes.

Tony C

## The Snowdrop Fairy

written by Cicely Mary Barker

Deep sleeps the Winter,  
Cold, wet, and grey;  
Surely all the world is dead;  
Spring is far away.  
Wait! the world shall waken;  
It is not dead, for lo,  
The Fair Maids of February  
Stand in the snow!



Contribution from Pesto Cenorr

## The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

An area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) is land that was first designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949). The land is currently safeguarded by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) and protects the land to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. There are 46 AONBs throughout the UK. The National Association for Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is the overriding body whose mission is to support and develop a network of ambitious AONB partnerships with a strong collective voice. This body achieved charitable status in October 2015.

The two AONB's within our immediate area are the Arnside and Silverdale AONB and the Forest of Bowland incorporating Pendle Hill.

**The Arnside and Silverdale AONB** was first designated this status in 1972, sits on the Cumbria/ Lancashire border and is one of the smallest covering only 29 square miles. The area includes stunning limestone pavements and hills such as Arnside Knott and Warton Crag, interspersed with grassland with much of the area being made up of ancient deciduous woodland. The RSPB reserve at Leighton Moss is contained within the area and this is home to the elusive Bittern and Marsh Harrier.

**The Forest of Bowland AONB** is a landscape rich in heritage, with much of its beauty relating to the wild nature of the landscape - itself a result of hundreds, if not thousands of years of human activity. It was the medieval period that perhaps had the greatest impact on the Bowland landscape, for it was during this time the Royal hunting forests were established - the title 'forest' refers to hunting rights, and not to a large expanse of woodland, as we interpret it today. The area was given AONB status in 1964.

Michael C

## Walk to Clougha Trig Point

One walk that I completed in 2020 involved Clougha Pike. The most difficult part of the day was finding Rigg Lane LA2 9EP because the car Satnav kept sending us to the wrong end of the wrong section of the lane! Here is a clue *abode.glowsholdings*.

The name lane is deceptive. It is in fact single track and Birk Bank is a small and popular car park so best to arrive early.

Oh, what a hot day we chose but the visibility was good, and we had amazing views all day. We set off north-east bound along the old quarries to Ottergear Bridge and then along a broad green track at the edge of Access Land (no dogs allowed) where we joined a horrible and wide gravel access road.

We started up hill along the access road but quickly got bored so turned left for a route on a narrower, rocky path through heather. With the River Condor in the valley below us on our left and The Cragg ahead of us we reached a ravine so turned right and struck out up hill. The grassy paths become shooters tracks, very rocky in places and the way uphill was, and is, nearly always very boggy. In order to circumnavigate the boggy patches detours were required and then it was difficult to find our way back onto the tracks through the moorland terrain. Beware there are no marker stakes for this or any other route and no paths marked on maps. We kept climbing upwards past cairns and shooting butts, aiming to meet the 'ugly' new track over the horizon. We eventually reached the Clougha Pike Chambers for our lunch stop. I am not including a photograph of the sculptures, so they will remain a surprise for future walkers.

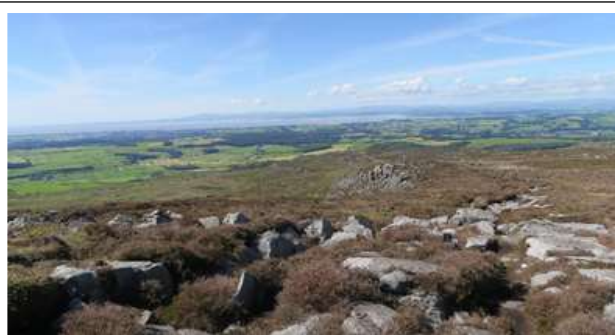


Striding out we eventually reached the Clougha Head trig point and wind shelter where we stopped for a comfort break. I like Trig Points, at least I know where I am and that I am on the right track which is not always the case! Trig points and memorials are the actual reason for this article.

*If you have a favourite walk with a trig point or memorial please send a photograph (preferably including yourself) and a short paragraph about where it is, any history, the date you were there and the height. Who has got to the highest, the most remote, the most popular, the oldest, the most historic?*

The way down from this particular trig point is steep, rocky and a bit of a scramble. I have heard that on exiting one of the kissing gates you can actually miss the path on your left back down to the car park and end up walking an extra 1.5 miles through deep heather, in sunken sheep tracks with rabbit holes, rocks and other tripping hazards. The final section of the walk should follow a little stream in a scenic wooded area that eventually leads back to Birk Bank Car Park. I do not have any photographs of this part of the walk!

This walk, in an area of outstanding natural beauty, is described as a wild walk of 8 miles with 1200ft of ascent in total and the finest viewpoint in the Bowland Fells. This day the distant views were breath-taking and the view west from the top was over Morecambe Bay.



What next? A nearby walk possibly from the Jubilee Tower to Grit Fell and the Ward's Stone, the highest hill in the Forest of Bowland, to bag two more trig points.

**Barbara S**