

# Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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### Look After Your Boots

Cleaning hiking boots – might not sound so attractive, but it's definitely worth it. Why? Because if you look after your hiking boots and clean, condition and waterproof them regularly, then they will last you for longer. When looked after properly, leather is an extremely robust and long-lasting material.

How often should you be giving your walking boots some tender loving care? In an ideal world, after every hiking trip. Having said that, if you have only been out for a short walk in dry conditions, then you obviously don't need to give them a complete overhaul.

What is important is that you never just dump your dirty or damp boots under the stairs or closet. This could have drastic results and permanently damage the material. The leather might dry out, turn brittle and even start to crack. Your boots could even get mouldy. So, don't forget to give them a regular clean.

Using a 'Boot Buddie' at the end of your walk will remove all the caked-on mud prior to arriving back home. Once home here is how to do it right.

If your boots are really dirty, first remove the laces. This will help you get to those difficult-to-reach areas when cleaning your hiking boots. Now use a shoe brush to gently remove all remaining dust and dirt. If the dirt is very stubborn, brush them under warm running water. This is also the best way to get rid of mud and stones in the tread.

Once clean and dry use a good quality waterproofing treatment. The initial waterproofing that was applied when your boots were made will wear off over time. So, it is important that this waterproofing treatment is replaced. There are many available on the market. In wet conditions, the treatment prevents a film of water building up on the outside of the boots. Among other things, that film of water can have a negative effect on breathability.

Apply the waterproofing media, according to the manufacturer's instructions to slightly damp boots as this allows the media to be adsorbed quicker. Don't forget those hard-to-reach corners around the tongue and into the stitching. Use a sponge or soft cloth to apply the conditioner. Leave for a couple of minutes and then wipe off any excess and then buffer. Leave to fully dry before wearing again.

If the boots are sodden inside after walking all day in the rain use old newspaper or kitchen roll to absorb the internal moisture.

**Michael C**

## The Spring Equinox

To the Celts, the Spring Equinox was a time for self-reflection and rebirth. It was a time of new balance in nature after the long winter. It was a time when seeds were sown and new life hatched.

It falls on the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of March. It is the return of life to the earth that is celebrated at Alban Eilir, the time of balance. The Spring Equinox is a solar festival celebrating the time when the day and night are of equal length. It is believed to be related to the northern goddess Eostre or Ostara which, in turn, inspired the Christian festival of Easter.



Spring Equinox - Alban Eilir

The arrival of Spring – the harsh winter is coming to an end, the days are growing longer, the air smells sweeter and the grass is greener so hopefully we all start to feel more cheerful and hopeful. We can witness new life return- like the return of the songbirds, baby ducks and geese on the ponds, and flowers poking up their heads.

Look beyond the commercialism of Easter and consider celebrating in a more traditional way. Plant sunflowers to celebrate the spring equinox and watch for them to bloom within 80 to 120 days, right around the summer solstice! Grow daffodils or add some to a vase to add a bit of zest to your garden or home.

Spring into action and feel motivated. Get rid of the old and work on something new like a project



Celtic Solar Cross

Increase your walking with SVRC and embrace nature more. Try walking on your own or taking a meditation walk to a place that is special to you. Embark on a mini pilgrimage and reflect on the things you are thankful for. A short walk in nature will bring you the peace and mental space we often neglect to make time for. The Ribble Villages walk on the 26<sup>th</sup> March from Waddington will provide an ideal opportunity to put aside your concerns and worries.



Waddington Memorial Cross

I will be making my garden into a homage to spring – green foliage, yellow flowers, and budding twigs. I will introduce lights and colours to represent blue for Air, red for Fire, blue/green for Water (I have a pond), brown for Earth, violet for Spirit and gold to represent the Solar cross.

Write down your concerns, light a fire, burn them and send your cares skywards. Hopefully this should bring us much needed peace, inspiration, and an appreciation of the natural world.

The turn of the seasons has been celebrated by cultures throughout history and you can do this alongside your particular faith and then enjoy the Good Friday and Saturday walks to Hurst Green and Roddlesworth with Tony Culverhouse who is always willing to share his love and knowledge of all things nature with fellow ramblers.

*Wishing you all a wonderful spring.*

**Barbara S**

## Points of Interest

I receive the magazine Country Walking as a “benefit” of my bank account?? I would not normally buy a walking magazine monthly, nor recommend anyone to do so. We do not need to when we have the Ramblers Gems dropping into our inboxes regularly. However, this month “Spring” 2022 has the following articles which some members might find useful.

A very easy approach to reading a map. A reader who had had a bad experience with map reading and a young family was the one chosen to spend the day with a map reading guide. It is written in an easy flowing style and does not contain anything too technical, but does cover; orientation, visualisation, planning and utilising primary features (eg church), secondary features (eg walls, fences) and spot features e.g.(trig points, phone boxes). Subjects such as “handrailing” and working out distances and contours are also covered in a very accessible way.



The second article I found useful was about leading your first walk. A contributor gave their first-hand experience of leading their family (could be tricky) up a Munroe!! The article covers all the usual advice and includes their ten top tips for walk leading:

Plan well, Come prepared, Walk somewhere you love, Bring secret snacks, Don't forget the last person, Keep it real! – don't tell folk “you are nearly there!”, Make sure everyone is prepared with clothing, food etc., Pace the walk appropriately, Know your group and finally stop to admire the view. I would add an eleventh top tip – make sure there is cake to be had at the end of the walk.



**Climbing a Munroe**

*Ed*

*I would always recommend starting with something a little less ambitious than a Scottish Munroe, as these are a mountain over 3000ft high. The Scottish weather can be a little unpredictable at the best of times. Try Pendle Hill or Beacon Fell.*

The final contribution I enjoyed this month was about walking solo and the benefits and enjoyments of being by yourself. The article was written by a female and she covers the anxiety and fear that many women can have when thinking about walking alone.

She goes on to suggest ways to overcome some of these, for example, if you deliberately focus on trying to spot something new along the way it can ease anxiety. The author is a seasoned solo walker who goes on to describe the benefits of solo walking, be that walking at your own pace, stopping when you want, and taking time to discover new paths and landscapes. I often walk by myself and can thoroughly recommend it, just be prepared for a fellow walker to find you talking to a friendly sheep or cow!



**Constance Walsh.**

## What's in a Name

Springvale Rambling Class has its origins in Darwen of course and the name of the town is one of the few surviving Celtic place names in the Northwest. Darwen was in the Brythonic Celtic kingdom of Rheged and the Brythonic language name for oak is "derw" which is linked to Derwent, the ancient spelling for the River Darwen. Most of the place names in the northwest are Anglo Saxon or Viking/Norse in origin. As a walking group we visit many of these places on our rambles.

Although the Saxons were the biggest group of invaders/settlers who occupied the land that would become England after the departure of the Romans, the incomers also consisted of Jutes and Angles. Indeed, England gets its name from the 'Land of Angles'. The Saxons came from the area known as Germany whilst the Angles and Jutes came from what would later become Denmark.

The northwest was settled mostly by the Angles and many place names have their origins there. Some of the names ended in "ingham" or "ham" meaning home. So, a village like Whittingham was the "ham" or home of the "Ingas" the tribe of Hwita. The word Ingas means tribe or family and it is usually associated with a chieftain's name. Melling, for example means the son of, or tribe of Moll or Malla)

The names often became shortened to "ington" or "Ton" meaning a village or homestead. So, a name like Warrington indicates the spot where the sons of Woer made their dwellings.

Other place names point to Angle origin including "worth" - an enclosure, as in Farnworth or "Cot," a cottage as in Huncoat. "Bold" or "botl" meaning a dwelling is familiar in names such as Bootle, Bolton or Parbold.



The View from Parbold Hill

Oswaldtwistle gets its name from Oswald (later St. Oswald) who was King of Northumbria. As the Saxons, Angles and Jutes and their culture became dominant during the seventh century, they began to divide their new lands into separate kingdoms each with their own kings. The Kingdom of Northumbria included Lancashire, Yorkshire and the present-day Northumberland. Oswald was made a saint after helping to convert Northumbria to Christianity (the Saxons, Angles and Jutes were heathens during the early history of Anglo-Saxon England).

Spring Vale Ramblers often visit the Pendle area and obviously Barley and Wheatly get their name from the crops grown there.



Pendle Hill

During the 9<sup>th</sup> century the Vikings from Scandinavia began plundering the coastal towns of England. Eventually they began to establish coastal settlements and within a few decades had begun to take over the North of England. So, many place names in Lancashire and the North have Viking origins. Place names which end in "by" such as Earby (which SVRC will be visiting later in the year) have Viking/Norse origins, as does the northern name for a valley-dale (Rochdale). The Norse name for hill "brekka" appears in such names as Norbreck and Scarisbrick.

The Norse settlers brought with them the practice of pasturing their cattle on the hills in summer. These areas were called "ergs" "args" or "arks" and these names survive in such placenames as Anglezarke, Arkholme, Grimsargh and Goosnargh. Scales, in the Fylde, is purely Norse in its derivation from "skali" a hut or shelter.

The origin of placenames is a fascinating subject and as you research the subject the history and culture of the area comes into focus.

**Tony C**

## The Ribble Valley

The Ribble Valley offers the walker so much, from serious rambling to Sunday strolling. All around is opportunity to explore the hills and dales of Ribble Valley. So whether it's a short walk along the banks of the River Ribble or a more strenuous climb to the top of Pendle Hill, there's something for everyone. If you are looking to enjoy the fresh air, exercise and blow the cobwebs away or just enjoy the awe inspiring landscapes whatever your age or ability, the Valley has plenty to offer. The countryside access right to roam in the Forest of Bowland allows you even more opportunities to walk freely across areas of open and spectacular countryside, giving you some of the roughest and remote walking in the Northwest of England.

The Beacon Fell Country Park consists of 110 hectares (271 acres) of woodland, moorland and farmland. The Beacon Fell summit is 266 metres (873 feet) above sea level and offers spectacular views of the Forest of Bowland and Morecambe Bay. On a clear day it is even possible to see the Isle of Man. There is an abundance of wildlife for those who are prepared to be observant. Rabbits and hares are frequent and are easily spotted. Roe deer are a little more elusive, but patience may well be rewarded! Stoats and weasels can be seen running across the road or clambering over the dry-stone walls. As many as 11 species of dragonflies and damselflies may be seen around the ponds during the summer months.



Beacon Fell

Most famous for its links to the now notorious witch trials of 1612, Pendle Hill and its surrounding towns and villages are a truly bewitching area of Lancashire. History and legend has woven a spell over Pendle. Pendle Hill rises above this ancient hunting ground.

The area was once the home of wolves and wild boar and to this day the landscape is dotted with tiny hamlets and farms. It is still an untamed place, full of mystery and infamous as the home of the Pendle Witches who were tried and executed for witchcraft in 1612. The landscape, carved out by man and by nature is most welcoming to walkers and countryside enthusiasts. There are Long distance walks, such as the 43-mile Pendle Way and parts of the Bronte Way, that combine history with stunning scenery, with plenty of country inns and farmhouse tea shops to provide the most congenial of rest stops.

The market town of Clitheroe is at the heart of the Ribble Valley and has much to offer the visitor and has a long and varied history and culture. In 1825 Clitheroe had 2 Members of Parliament, while Manchester had none, neither did they have a Mayor. At election times, riots were frequent, included the use of knuckle dusters to defeat the opposition. The population became much more settled when secret balloting was instigated. It was usual for the tenants in houses on the burgage plots leading from the main street, to be allowed to have voting rights and to pass their property on to their children or sell the rights to the property.



Clitheroe has one of the smallest castles keeps in the country which stands atop a rocky outcrop. The origins of the castle seem uncertain, but one possibility is that it was erected by Roger de Lacy around 1186 and is possibly on the site of an early Norman fortification built shortly after the Conquest and mentioned in the Domesday Book. The keep is only 20 feet square, with walls 10 feet thick. The stone keep is enclosed within a curtain wall, but only part of this wall now remains. To the south of the keep is a bailey, where domestic buildings serving the keep would have stood. The castle is worth a little time and energy to explore.

**Glenda B**