

Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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HAPPY
EASTER
TO ALL
OUR
READERS

Walking in Springtime

Walking is a free, fun and sociable exercise that almost everyone can enjoy. Now that Spring is upon us, it's also one of the best ways to keep an eye on nature. Lancashire is a fantastic place to go walking, offering a wide variety of landscapes and environments without the need to travel very far to reach them. With fields, lanes and parks filled to the brim with daffodils and other spring blooms, whether walking on your own or with a group, there are plenty of opportunities to make the most of the spring weather, wildlife and countryside.

Walking groups all over the county will be out enjoying the warmer weather, and they all have a knack for knowing how to find our hidden natural treasures. Bluebells have been spotted early this year so keep an eye out for one of nature's finest displays. Soon fields, footpaths, forests and parks will be sprinkled with shades of violet, indigo and blue as the British Bluebell pops up and joins other spring blooms to greet the balmy weather. The health benefits of walking are endless, and it can make a big difference to your life, both by improving mental and physical wellbeing. Don't walk alone, join Spring Vale Ramblers and enjoy walking in good company at an easy pace.



Glenda B

A Coastal Walk at Cleveleys

At Spring Vale Rambling Class, we don't do many coastal walks as we are limited to approximately 50 miles or one hours driving and coastal walks do tend to be linear!

I love the Fylde Coast and I spend a lot of time on the Wyre too. There are sea views, coastal waders, wildlife, plants, history, legends and lots of interesting sculptures and art installations to discover.

Cleveleys seafront is just over a mile long from end to end. The boundary with Blackpool is at Kingsway in the south (near Anchorsholme Park). Rossall School is at the other end.

The **Sea Swallow** sculpture stands tall, white and graceful on the skyline at Cleveleys seafront. It's visible as a marker from far around. The Sea Swallow sculpture is a 30' tall piece of public art and the key piece from the children's story book. The Sea Swallow is Cleveleys own story which underpins the Mythic Coast. A fairy-tale written by Gareth Thompson blends legend with local features and folklore. It includes the legends of sunken villages inspired by Singleton Thorpe and the petrified forest.

Do you know the story of the sunken village of Singleton Thorpe? True or not, folklore has it that just off the coast of Cleveleys is one of the earliest local examples of relocation because of flooding. It was supposedly sited off Rossall, and it's cobbled road can be seen heading into the waves at a Neap Tide (the lowest tide of the year). To this day, the superstitious fishermen of Fleetwood will return immediately to port if they think they hear the bells of Singleton Thorpe church, tolling from under the waves.



The **petrified forest** - A shadow of a former woodland lies on the beach, submerged by rising tides many centuries ago. Can you find the interpretation sign?

Head north along the promenade (with the sea on your left). At the boundary where Cleveleys meets Blackpool is the **Shipwreck Memorial**. It remembers all of the vessels which have run aground on the Fylde coast. From the mists of time to the most recent wrecking of the Riverdance Ferry in 2008.

Opposite the buildings of Jubilee Leisure Park, you'll find the **Ogre's Paddle**. It's a huge wooden carving on the upper promenade, facing the sea, inscribed with words from the Sea Swallow story book. You can sit on it and take a selfie!

Just beyond the Paddle, opposite Jubilee Gardens, is a rock groyne. On the north side of the groyne, right at the seaward end, when the tide is out you'll see the **Ogre** himself. You'll have to look closely to see him. He usually wears a green coat of seaweed which helps him to blend into the rocks. He does get a proper wash every so often and turns white! But he's got a very kind face...

When the tide is out, you'll not miss **Mary's Shell**. Huge and unmissable, it's on the sand near to the round seafront cafe building. Even when the tide is in, you can usually still see the top of it! Look for the steelwork... poking up through the waves.

There is no written leaflet for the Mystical Trail, and I am not attaching any images to this article. You have to go and look for the artworks and sculptures on your visit and discover the story for yourselves!

The Mythic Coast is an ongoing project conceived by Stephen Broadbent and forms part of a cultural vision for the Wyre Coastline and links to the sea defence works in Cleveleys.



Barbara S

Sand Dunes

by Robert Frost

Sea waves are green and wet,
But up from where they die,
Rise others vaster yet,
And those are brown and dry.

They are the sea made land
To come at the fisher town,
And bury in solid sand
The men she could not drown.

She may know cove and cape,
But she does not know mankind
If by any change of shape,
She hopes to cut off mind.

Men left her a ship to sink:
They can leave her a hut as well;
And be but more free to think
For the one more cast-off shell.



Pesto Cenorr



The Sea

by James Reeves

The sea is a hungry dog,
Giant and grey.
He rolls on the beach all day.
With his clashing teeth and shaggy jaws
Hour upon hour he gnaws
The rumbling, tumbling stones,
And 'Bones, bones, bones, bones!'
The giant sea-dog moans,
Licking his greasy paws.

And when the night wind roars
And the moon rocks in the stormy cloud,
He bounds to his feet and snuffs and sniffs,
Shaking his wet sides over the cliffs,
And howls and hollos long and loud.

But on quiet days in May or June,
When even the grasses on the dune
Play no more their reedy tune,
With his head between his paws
He lies on the sandy shores,
So quiet, so quiet, he scarcely snores.

Pesto Cenorr



April Musings

No one knows for certain how April got its name, but The Romans gave this month the name Aprills, possibly from the Latin verb aperire “to open”. April was that second month of the Roman calendar about 700BC, it became the fourth month about 450 BC when it was lengthened to 29 days. It only got the 30th day in the mid 40 ‘s BC when Julius Caesar produced the Julian calendar.

The Anglo- Saxons called April “eastre-monab”. The feast day of the goddess Eostre, the pagan god of dawn, was held in April and was associated with hares and eggs (according to wikipedia). The Venerable Bede (mid 680 AD), states that the root of the word Easter come from Eostre and latterly eastre-monab has been translated into Paschal Month.

April Traditions and Anniversaries

April Fools Day – no one really knows when this custom began, but it is still going strong today, with a few folk falling for the proposal to put an indoor car park inside Snowdon.

The First of April, some do say,

Is set apart for All Fools Day

But why the people call it so,

Not I, nor they themselves do know.

12th April – Union Flag, commonly known as the Union Jack, became official flag of the UK

Cuckoo Day –Allegedly the cuckoo sings from 14th April (St. Tilburtius Day) to 24th June (St. John’s Day). Should you hear the cuckoo sing on 14th April, you should turn over all the money in your pockets, spit and not look at the ground!.. If you do all this standing on soft ground, you will have lots of good luck. However, if you are standing on hard ground – bad luck will ensue.

Various dates in April are called Cuckoo Day and some places hold “Cuckoo Fairs”. Marsden Cuckoo Day is an annual festival celebrating the arrival of spring, according to legend, Marsdeners used to attempt to prolong the cuckoo’s stay by building a wall around the nest.

In April I open my bill
In May I sing night and day
In June I change my tune
In July far far I fly
In August away I must.

19th April Primrose day – in the late 19th C, the 19th April was celebrated as memory of the Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, who died on this day in 1881. People were encouraged to pay tribute to the statesman by wearing primroses as they were supposedly his favourite flower. However, this was a misunderstanding, the flower was not his favourite. Queen Victoria sent a wreath of primroses to his funeral with a note saying there were “his favourite flowers”, she was however referring to her late husband, Prince Albert.

21st April Queen Elizabeth II Birthday

23rd April – St George’s Day. Where to begin – so much written about St George that it would take up about 5 issues of “Gems”. It is thought he was a Roman officer of Greek descent, who was sentenced to death for not renouncing his Christian faith, in approx. 303 AD. He is immortalised in the legend of St George and the Dragon, and along with England, Ethiopia, Georgia, Catalonia and Aragon in Spain and Moscow have claimed George as their patron saint. The legend of the dragon was first recorded in the 11th C, claims that a dragon was terrorising the city of Silene, Libya when George arrived, two sheep a day were offered to the dragon, but they were not enough, and human sacrifices were offered. The Kings daughter was chosen, and with no one willing to take her place, George slayed the dragon with his lance (Ascalon). The whole city was so amazed they converted to Christianity. It is generally acknowledged that he never set foot in England.

23rd April – Shakespeare’s birthday 1584 and also his death 1613.

23rd April – St Mark’s Eve, when the ghosts of those doomed to die within the year, will be seen to pass into the church prior to St Mark’s Day on the 24th.

26th April – The Chernobyl disaster 1986

Jane C

Dandelions

Don't weed yet! Each dandelion head can have 100 florets and their nectar flow peaks in the late morning. Just eight dandelions provide enough nectar for 15,000 bee visits per day. That is all the excuse I need.

You can make scones from dandelions I have discovered. From root to flower they are very nutritious plants, greens can be eaten raw or cooked and contain large amounts of Vitamin A, C, E, K, and folate. They have more Vitamins A than spinach, more Vitamine C than tomatoes and contain iron, calcium and potassium.

Ingredients

SR flour 350g
Caster sugar 25g
Dandelion flowers, yellow parts only 200g
Vegetable spread 90g
Milk 150ml
Baking powder 1 tsp
Salt pinch.

Method

Step 1– line a baking tray with greaseproof paper, mix flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Add the vegetable spread, rubbing in, until it resembles bread crumbs.

Step 2 – stir in the milk and knead in the dandelion flowers, then mould into a smooth dough

Step 3 – Dust your surface with flour and roll out the dough till approx. 1.5 cm thick, cut out with cutter or top of glass into circles.

Step 4 – transfer onto baking tray, leave 2cm gap, put in fridge for 30 mins to firm up.

Step 5 – give them a brush with milk, bake in oven 220C/200C fan/gas 7 for 15 – 20 mins. Leave to cool, then load with jam and /or cream.

Step 6 – Send to Jane C to test!!

Red Dead Nettle

We tend to associate mimicry in the plant world with orchids, famous for copying the appearance and scent of female bees and flies to tempt the males to visit and pollinate them. Some will lure hungry insect pollinators by mimicking foul-smelling dung or corpses.

The red dead- nettle has found a different way to be sneaky: its hairy, saw-edged leaves resemble those of stinging nettles. It's thought this mimicry helps deter browsing animals. The harmless dead-nettle even grows in the same places as its pain-inducing relative. Two other abundant wayside species, white dead-nettle and yellow archangel, also have lookalike leaves



Red dead-nettle can be found in flower pretty much all year in the British Isles, but is most noticeable in April and May, before it becomes hidden by taller plants. Its hooded flowers are a hit with bumblebees.



Jane C