

Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Brockholes Nature Reserve**
- 2 Perambulation of the Forest**
- 3 The Thrush on the Old Hawthorn
Walking Birds**
- 4 Butterfly Gardens**
- 5 The Right to Roam**

Brockholes Nature Reserve

If you are looking for a different place to walk and explore then look no further and enjoy the delights of this Nature Reserve. Brockholes is a new kind of nature reserve that brims with wildlife, teaches the next generation about the wonders of nature and is just a remarkable place to visit.

This former sand and gravel quarry has been transformed into a natural haven. Fields brimming with orchids and yellow rattle, woods shining bright with bluebells, and tranquil lakes all transport you to a magical wonderland.

Spring sees the beginning of the Brockholes baby boom as lapwings, oystercatchers, redshank and more breed on Meadow Lake and Number 1 Pit. And don't miss a walk through the woodland to admire vast carpets of beautiful bluebells.

In May, whimbrel roost in large numbers, while throughout spring and summer swifts, sand martins and hobbies create fantastic aerial displays over the lakes. As the sun shines, the reserve literally buzzes with insects. Clouds of damselflies rest on leaves and paths, and dragonflies dart across the water. Five and six-spot burnet moths weigh down every flower, while small copper, common blue and comma butterflies seem to flit from every corner. Don't miss the chance to spot the elusive white-letter hairstreak butterfly, which can be seen at Brockholes for just three weeks spanning July and August.

Autumn is the time to see ospreys passing over Brockholes on their way back to Africa, while in winter, the reserve is packed with migratory waders. Winter is also a great time to try and see bitterns as they venture out onto the ice.

But Brockholes isn't just about birds. Brown hares hunker down in the grass and roe deer pick their way through the reserve on foraging trips. Otters have been seen on occasion, and keep your eyes peeled for nosy stoats and weasels peeking up from the long grass.

Of course, you can't visit Brockholes without popping onto the award-winning floating Visitor Village. There are informed volunteers from the Wildlife Trust who are on hand to explain what and where has been seen recently on the site. After you have explored the site there is also an onsite café to enjoy that cup of tea and a bite to eat.

Brockholes is off the M6 motorway at junction 31 or access is from the A59 Clitheroe to Preston Road, just follow the signs. Parking £5 all day.

Michael C

Perambulation of the Forest

William Bowland, 16th Lord of Bowland, has announced a new 'Perambulation' exploring the scenic south-eastern boundary of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in rural Lancashire.

There were Perambulations of Bowland in the 15th and 17th centuries where the Lord's stewards "beat the bounds" mapping the extent of the Forest and the land of the ten manors within the Liberty of Bowland, including the demesne of Slaidburn with its townships of Newton, West Bradford and Grindleton.

The last Perambulation was undertaken by General George Monck, 1st Duke of Albemarle after he was awarded the lordship of Bowland for his role in restoring Charles II to the throne in 1660.

Today, 360 years later, William, 16th Lord of Bowland, has announced a new Perambulation – although this 21st century version will be largely symbolic, taking the form of a guided walk from Slaidburn on **Sunday, October 2**, with all proceeds donated to local charities.

William Bowland together with his heir, Henry of Bowland, will send the group off from the steps of Slaidburn Village Hall and welcome the walkers back at the end of their 10-mile perambulation.

Charities

The places on the walk are free, but participants will be asked to make a voluntary donation, with proceeds being split between Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue Team and Champion Bowland, which awards small grants to help fund community schemes in the Forest of Bowland.



The Route

This challenging circular walk from Slaidburn explores the south-eastern extremities of Bowland, beating the bounds first established under Henry V, Lord King of Bowland (1413-22):

"Then over Bradford and Grindleton moors, to the vaccary of Harrop, which bounds on south-east side of Bolton-by-Bowland."

Starting from the car park in Slaidburn, the route traverses the elevated pastures above the village, climbing gently to Harrop Fold, then more steeply through the woods and onto the summit of Bradford Fell.

Event Format

The walk will take place on **Sunday 2nd October** and will be led by local walk leader Mark Sutcliffe, supported by members of Bowland Mountain Rescue. Members of the Forest of Bowland AONB, Champion Bowland and the Bowland Sustainable Tourism Network will be among the participants.

The group will be limited to 50 people who will walk as one group around a circular route of approximately 10 miles. Places are available on a first come, first served basis via the Bowland-based ticketing platform [Skiddle](#).

Parking will be at Slaidburn Pay & Display car park with the group assembling in front of the village hall. The walk will last approximately five hours, with the group expected to return to Slaidburn between 3 pm and 4pm. Tea, sandwiches and cakes (for a small fee) will be served in the village hall from 3pm for walkers, friends and family. All participants will receive an exclusive commemorative lapel badge.

Michael C

The Thrush on the Old Hawthorn by Ellen Ling

Ellen Ling came to the district of Blackburn in 1875 and resided at Feniscowles



A thrush sings clear on our hawthorn tree,
And I wonder what his song can be,
For be the weather foul or fair,
That bird is sweetly singing there.

As his notes ring out, clear as a bell,
What is his message? Ah, who can tell!
Is he singing of sweet spring days to come,
When he and his mate will build their home?

O he sings so sweet in the old hawthorn,
He waits not for sun, he waits not for dawn,
In the cold dark morn as he trills his song,
He knows that summer will not be long.

So while he is waiting for brighter days,
He cheerily sings to his Maker's praise,
And he brings a message of trust to me,
As he sings his song in the hawthorn tree.

And this is the message he brings to me,
As his notes ring out, so wild and free,
"When thy heart is heavy with care or sorrow,
Trust thou in God for a brighter morrow.

"For Winter will pass, and Summer will come,
And God will watch o'er thy friends and home;
So trust thou in Him, whate'er may betide,
Who cares for the birds for thee will provide."

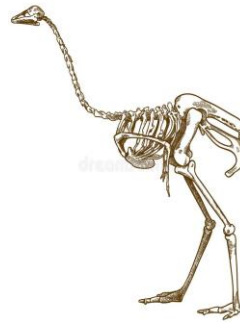
Pesto Cenorr

Walking Birds

When we talk about walkers, we automatically think that we are referring to human beings but this week I started to think if other species walk like we do and extended my search onto the internet. We are aware of monkeys and apes but are there species of birds and if so, why do they walk?

This is what I found.

There are several species of flightless walking birds in the world (including 17 species of penguin) but only a few of them are classed as ratites. Ratites differ from penguins and others as they do not have a bony keel to which flight muscles are attached. Without this to anchor their wing muscles they could not fly even if they were to develop suitable wings. Those birds with this keel are called carinates, whether the flight muscles work or not!



The skeleton of an Ostrich from the Ratites Group of birds



A Kiwi from New Zealand

Most of the ratites are long extinct mainly through hunting. The elephant bird of Madagascar or the moa of New Zealand are examples. Today we have just 10 flightless or walking/running birds - the ostrich, three cassowary birds, two rhea birds, the emu and three types of kiwi.

As ratites move about by walking or running, their main muscles reside in their legs instead of their chest which is where the main strength lies for birds that fly!

These days there is a growing trend and big business in the food market for ratite meat. Ostrich steak appears quite regularly on menus overseas although I haven't tasted it myself.

Glenda B

Butterfly Gardens

It is autumn and the time for planning and planting next year's garden. If you want to attract magical butterflies to your garden, then you need to begin now. Think nectar plants such as heliotrope, phlox, coneflower, catnip and butterfly bushes. You will have seen the popular purple one, but I have a white one and a yellow/orange Sunglow with some flowers yet to blossom this month. I am on the hunt for an orange ball bush (see image) which is an old-fashioned variety.

Butterflies and other pollinators are finally being recognized for the important role they play in ecology.



To create a butterfly garden, you'll need to select an area in full sun and sheltered from high winds. This area should be designated only for butterflies and should not have birdhouses, baths or feeders in it. However, butterflies do like to bathe themselves and drink from shallow puddles of water, so it helps to add a small shallow butterfly bath and feeder.

There are many plants and weeds that attract butterflies. Butterflies have good vision and are attracted to large groups of brightly coloured flowers. They are also attracted to strong scented flower nectar. Butterflies tend to favour plants with flower clusters or large flowers so that they can land safely for a while sucking the sweet nectar out.



Butterflies also like to sun themselves on dark rocks or reflective surfaces, like gazing balls. This helps heat up and dry out their wings so they can fly properly. Most importantly, never use pesticides in a butterfly garden. They are active from spring until frost, so pay attention to plant bloom times so they will be able to enjoy nectar from your butterfly garden all season.

It is not enough to just have plants and weeds that attract butterflies. You will also need to include plants for butterfly eggs and larvae in your butterfly garden too. Butterfly host plants are the specific plants that butterflies lay their eggs on, or near, so that their caterpillar larvae can eat the plant before forming its chrysalis. These plants are basically sacrificial plants that you add to the garden and allow the caterpillars to feast on and grow into healthy butterflies. I encourage hedge mustard, also known as garlic mustard, and in August this year the plants were literally covered in caterpillars munching away. The horseradish plant is grown in a corner of my garden – I only need the roots for cooking.

During butterfly egg laying, the butterfly will flit around to different plants, landing on different leaves and testing them out with its olfactory glands. Once finding the right plant, the female butterfly will lay her eggs, usually on the undersides of leaves but sometimes under loose bark or in mulch near the host plant. Butterfly egg laying depends on the type of butterfly, as do the butterfly host plants. If you want a specific butterfly to visit you have to plant accordingly.

It is easy to find the plants these days because plant labels now carry a symbol. You need to look for this because, for example, not all sedums will attract butterflies! You can also buy seeds from Oxfam. You can find out more at [Butterflies in your garden / RHS Gardening](#)



Barbara S

The Right to Roam

If you find yourself in Tockholes or close to Darwen Golf Club, or indeed anywhere to the north of Darwen Tower and look towards the Tower, you will notice faint lines snaking down through the heather. These have become known as 'desire lines' in certain quarters as they are where walkers have decided to stray off the public footpaths and take shortcuts through the heather. It only takes one or two people to pass through the heather before a faint line is noticeable and others then follow suit, thinking it must be a footpath, and a vicious circle begins.

You can see that there are many of these desire lines, which means that the heather area is slowly reducing in size and that means that many ground nesting birds, including grouse and birds of prey like the vulnerable hen harrier and peregrine falcon, are facing disturbance and loss of nesting sites. Although hen harriers are currently absent from the West Pennine Moors, they are nesting, albeit in low numbers in the Forest of Bowland, which also suffers from 'desire lines'. I am using Darwen Moors as an example. Of course, there are large parts of Darwen Moors are common access land where you can legally wander at will, so we need to positively encourage people not to wander off the public rights of way and disturb the heather.



This is where the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) allowing public access onto open moorland in many parts of upland Britain must be given a lot of thought. I don't like walkers to simply go marching all over upland heather areas. It would be more sensible to interpret the 'right to roam' as meaning all tracks and obvious footpaths becoming legally accessible. (Except, of course, where the track or footpath enters someone's private garden.)



There is also the safety aspect to be taken into consideration. If you are walking alone, in some remote spot and you get into difficulty and you need to call for help, you would, I assume, have told somebody where you are going. The Mountain Rescue Association may assume you have followed a recognised track making finding you a lot easier. Of course, you may know, the what3words, which will pinpoint your exact location, but if you don't, and you have taken the 'right to roam' too literally, you could basically be anywhere off the beaten track, making the task of finding you much more difficult.



The Ramblers began lobbying the major political parties for a commitment to introduce legislation which would give the public a 'right to roam'. This commitment would eventually appear in the Labour Party's 1997 general election manifesto. In 1998, Michael Meacher MP - the then Environment Minister - confirmed this intention in a speech to the House of Commons. The resulting Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) became law on 30 November 2000.

Tony C