

Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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Farewell to Don

A long-time member of Spring Vale Rambling Class Donald John Rishton but known to everyone as Don has rested from the hurry of life on the 1st November. Don and his wife Maureen led walks for us over many years and always loved to explore new and interesting areas of the countryside. His was a life comprehensively lived. A courageous, tireless and modest advocate of fairness and quality of existence and was always on hand to offer advice or help to the local community. Don was a former long-standing Councillor for the Bank Top ward within the Borough of Blackburn with Darwen.

During his early years Don worked within the declining Lancashire cotton industry and was later elected to General Secretary to the General Union of Associated Loom Overlookers in 1990. Don enjoyed music and choral singing and later on in his busy life became a member of the Walk this Way Choir. He will be sadly missed by Maureen, all his family and friends at SVRC.

Michael C

Snowdon Renamed

Mount Snowdon is to be officially renamed after thousands of people signed a petition to have it changed. The Snowdonia National Park Authority has confirmed that Wales' tallest mountain – which stands at an imposing 3,560ft at its highest point – is now to be known by its official Welsh language title, rather than by the English name it has been known as for much of its existence.

The peak will now be known as Yr Wyddfa, which is said to be pronounced like 'er with-va'.

While the English name 'Snowdon' comes from the Old English 'snaw dun' meaning "snow hill", the mountain's new Welsh name 'Yr Wyddfa' means 'the tumulus' or 'the barrow' – which, according to Arthurian legend, could refer to the cairn which was said to have been thrown over the legendary giant Rhitta Gawr after his defeat by King Arthur.

Naomi Jones – Head of Cultural Heritage at the Snowdonia National Park Authority – said: "Many public bodies across Wales have moved to use both the Welsh and English names, or the Welsh name only, when referring to Yr Wyddfa and Eryri. It is hoped that the change in the Authority's approach will be accepted for the benefit of the Welsh language and a mark of respect to our cultural heritage."



Eleanor

Snowdon renamed as Yr Wyddfa

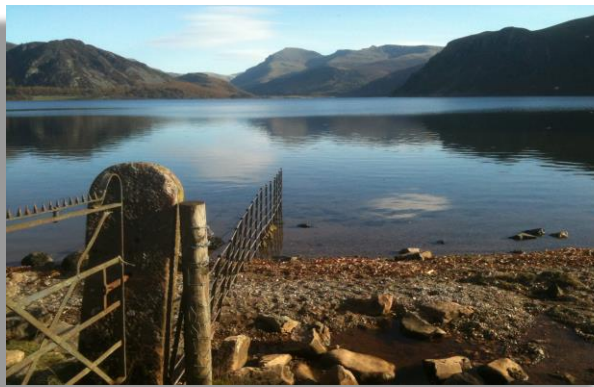
Wild Ennerdale

A new National Nature Reserve was formally created last Tuesday the 15 November by Natural England in Ennerdale, West Cumbria. It will be the largest nature reserve in Cumbria and the 9th largest in England.

The new 'Wild Ennerdale National Nature Reserve' will cover over 3000 hectares of landscape comprising water, forests and mountains. This formal declaration is among the first 'Super NNR's' in England. Super NNRs are recognised for their landscape-scale approach to partnership working. Ennerdale Water is currently a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and will be included in the area designated. Ennerdale Water is an important example of a nutrient-poor lake and in Cumbria is second only to Wastwater for its low productivity. The new NNR will cover most of the valley but not all of it, buildings and other infrastructure will not form part of the reserve.

The Wild Ennerdale Partnership began 20 years ago and has a vision to allow natural processes to shape the ecology and landscapes within the valley. It brings together four organisations: Forestry England, National Trust, United Utilities and Natural England. Work over almost two decades has significantly improved nature recovery in the Ennerdale landscape and sustainable grazing has been promoted across grasslands, forests and open fells.

Wild Ennerdale is a diverse and varied landscape which supports some of our most unique and precious wildlife, including Red Squirrels, the Freshwater Pearl Mussels that dwell in the river there and which can live for 100 years, and the Arctic Charr – a fish that has hung on in the valley since the last Ice Age, Says Tony Juniper, the Chair of Natural England.



Looking across Ennerdale Water



Woodland on the banks of Ennerdale Water

Natural England have been working with partners for some years to improve this already amazing place and its declaration as a National Nature Reserve will enhance the spectacular landscape, wildlife and habitats, safeguarding them for the future while providing space for people to get close to wild Nature. National Nature Reserves are at the very centre of our ambition to create a vibrant national Nature Recovery Network comprised of bigger and better places for both wildlife and people. The Ennerdale partnership is a great example of what we have in mind and shows how working together can achieve that aim.

This announcement demonstrates how the Government is starting to deliver on the Environment Act – a key target of which is to halt the decline in our wildlife populations through a legally binding target for species abundance by 2030. It is most fitting that Wild Ennerdale has become the largest NNR in Cumbria as the county marks the 70th anniversary of the first NNR's back in 1952. National Nature Reserves (NNRs) were established to protect some of England's most important habitats, species and geology, provide 'outdoor laboratories' for research and offer opportunities to the public, volunteers, schools and specialist interest groups to experience wildlife and nature first-hand, along with learning more about nature conservation and benefits for nature and society.

Wild Ennerdale is the 221st site to be formally recognised, with reserves across the country covering over 106,000ha. These 'nature hotspots' are key to restoring nature across England and helping to bring green spaces and wildlife to everyone, including those who live in towns and cities.

Michael C

The Village Blacksmith

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's

Under a spreading chestnut-tree
The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
His face is like the tan;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn to night,
You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,
And sits among his boys;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice,
Singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
Singing in paradise!
He needs must think of her once more,
How in the grave she lies;
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling,—rejoicing,—sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begin,
Each evening sees it close;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought.

Contributor Pesto Cenorr

The Good Old Days

by David Sutton

I'll tell you this, the good old days were cold
November through to March our fire was lit
Mid-afternoon, burned up to warmth by evening
when you could get at it for drying the clothes
And when it hadn't been put out by falls
Of soot or snow, or else my father burning
Shovelfuls of frozen nutty slack
Scrapped from the backyard bunker, or wet logs.



The wind would moan and rattle in the hall.
Doing my homework six feet from the fire
I'd freeze on one side, scorch upon the other
Like one of Dante's sinners. Sunday night
Was bath night; being youngest, I came last
To tepid greasy water, heated up
With kettle, while our ancient oil stove fluttered
Moth wings of warmth against the icy air.

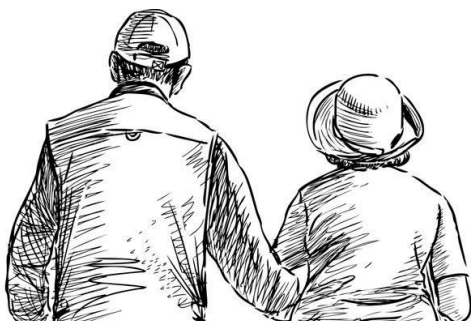
Going to bed, you shivered for ten minutes
in crackling sheets, your feet away
From arctic nether regions, tried again
And then it came, a warmth at last, like none
A coddled generation can imagine
A Stone Age bliss, a blood heat; so you slept,
Waking to winter harvest: sheaves of frost
Heraldic, radiant, on every pane



Alan R

The Perks of being over 60

- People call you at 9 pm and ask did I wake you
- People no longer view you as a hypochondriac.
- There is nothing left to learn the hard way.
- Things you buy now won't wear out.
- You can eat supper at 4 pm
- You can live without sex, but not your glasses.
- Kidnappers are not very interested in you.
- In a hostage situation you are likely to be released first
- No one expects you to run – anywhere
- You get into heated arguments about pension plans.
- You no longer think of speed limits as a challenge.
- You quit trying to hold your stomach in no matter who walks into the room.
- You sing along with music in the lift.
- Your eyes won't get much worse.
- You're spending more time at the clinic than the gym.
- Your joints are a more accurate weather indicator than the Met Office.
- Your secrets are safe with your friends because they can't remember them either.
- Your supply of brain cells is finally down to a manageable size.
- You can't remember who sent you this list.



Alan R

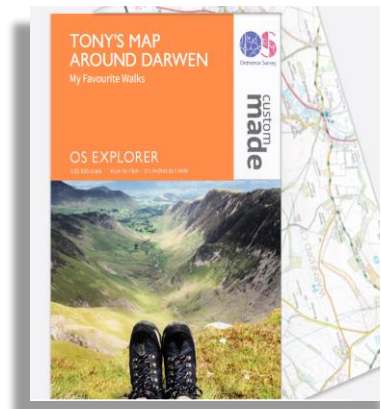
Exploring

I am sure that there have been occasions for most walkers when exploring new areas, to find no sign on the ground of the footpaths that their Ordnance Survey maps shows crossing a field. Now with new technology, it is possible to have the map on your phone, which will tell you if you have wandered off the line of the footpath. It is also easier to carry in your hand, than having to get your paper map and unfold it. Some of the OS "Tourists" maps are massive and you run the risk of taking off in the wind.

However, paper maps, even the large ones, should be studied thoroughly before you set off, even if you have the map on your phone. You should always carry a paper map in your rucksack.

There are now maps becoming available called 'Dinky Maps' which are sections of the larger ones, which can be carried conveniently in the hand (pocket size), though on the same scale. They don't however carry grid references. I have one that covers the Anglezarke Reservoirs area. At the moment these are limited in numbers and cover the more popular areas such as the Lake District or Peak District. The Ordnance Survey offer a custom-made map service where it is possible to purchase a 1:25000 scale map centred around your own area or any area you require. These are priced at £6.99 for a small folded A3 size (42cm x 29cm A3) or £18.99 for a large folded 80cm x 80cm map. They would make an ideal Christmas present for the walker in your life.

Someone like myself, who struggles switching their mobile on and then can't switch it off, paper maps will always be my preferred means of navigating.



As walkers are probably going to move increasingly to the use of phone maps, some outlets are starting to sell off certain of their paper maps at reduced prices though this is also partly as a result of Ordnance Survey producing Explorer Maps which cover a much larger specific area.

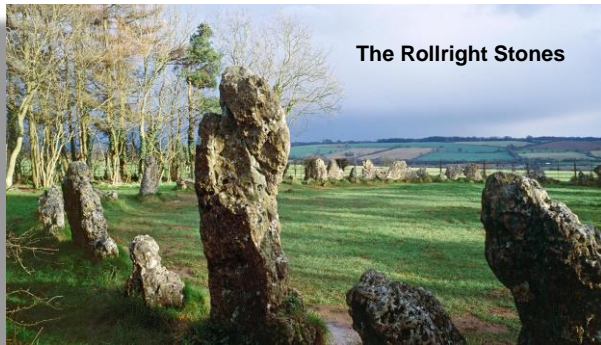
Tony C

Walk Mysterious Britain

As we move deeper into the throws of Winter, our normal habits of walking in the countryside are influenced by the changes in what we see around us and that in turn may shape what we are thinking about.

So, that low cloud that you see rolling down the valley bottom makes you question what is lurking under it? Is it actually a cloud or breath from a dragon! When sitting around a roaring open fire, planning new routes for next years walks, reading maps and coming across the stone circles or place names with magical connections such as The Circle of Strife and Great Hell Gate ask the question “where did that name come from?”

Although not in our immediate area, one such story is the Rollright Stones in the Cotswolds. These concern The King of England at the time, his knights and a witch, Mother Shipton. The King was tricked into believing that if he took seven strides forward and could see the village of Long Compton he would extend his domain.



Of course, he couldn't see the village due to the lay of the land and in line with Mother Shipton's words, the King was immediately turned into the King Stone, a solitary menhir stone. The circle of Knights or King's Men became a circle of stones to the south of the King and Mother Shipton turned herself into an alder tree. But there was an interesting add-on to the myth which was that four of the Knights who were hanging back from the main group as they were planning to overcome the King were turned into a separate quartet of stones called the Whispering Knights! The real story may not be quite as colourful as there are lots of alder trees and the Whispering Knights are actually a burial chamber, or portal dolmen, the oldest of three formations dating back to the Early Neolithic Era.

The King's Men are thought to date back to the Bronze Age and share many similarities to Long Meg and Castlerigg in Cumbria. This proved that even during the Bronze Age people were moving and settling up and down the country. In 1978, Doctor Who came up with a theory, The Stone Of Blood, which of course was based on aliens who could travel about and steal your blood !! ☹

So let's turn to place names. It doesn't take long when reading a map to find hints of mysterious or sinister goings-on connected to devilry. Geological features carry names like the Pulpit, the Beef Tub, a Punch Bowl or the Kneading Trough. All referencing the Dark One.

The Devil's living place is also referred to as Hell's Mouth, Hell Ghyll and Little Hell's Gate which are features such as wide coastal bays, waterfalls and chutes of red scree on Great Gable in Cumbria.

Further sinister connections can be found at Dead Crag on Skiddaw, Cackle Hill in Lincolnshire, Fiendsdale in Lancashire, Witch Crag in Coquetdale, Maggots End and I know of at least three World's Ends. We have Wolfhole Crag in the Forest of Bowland, and Dragon Hill where St George slew the Dragon. Yorkshire doesn't escape this exercise with its Boggle Hole and Boggarts' Roaring Holes on the Yorkshire Coast. We also have an interest in the macabre. Places like Great Hangman, Gallows Lane, Gibbert Hill are all there to entice us to be included in our walks and one, Winter's Gibbert Hill, still carries a Wooden Head, the rest of the effigy, a wooden body has disappeared!!!

So when you are planning the perfect walk, don't forget you need views, a tea shop and a few strange place names that have spooky stories behind them. You just need a bit of research to nail those myths.



Wolfhole Crag in Bowland

Glenda B