

Ramblers Gems



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My Walking Playlist

To me, walking is a way of pressing the restart button. It takes my mind away from all the stresses of daily life. My mind is totally calm when I walk as I simply let things happen around me, observing quietly as if to remind me of everything I take for granted. I never walk and listen to music, but I do when I am out and having a quiet moment let the mind wander and try and recall musical pieces that I enjoy.

Walking is, interestingly, quite a common theme in music. It can be a metaphor for many different things in life: It can be a journey, it can be a means to an end, or maybe even a form of meditation. Many artists have come up with amazing walking songs with different messages. Some encourage you to keep moving, while others offer a different perspective on the activity.

Check out this list containing 16 of some of the best songs about walking and get inspired to create your own.

1. "Walking On Sunshine" by Katrina & The Waves
2. "I Walk the Line" by Johnny Cash
3. "Walk on the Water" by Creedence Clearwater Revival
4. "Walk a Thin Line" by Fleetwood Mac
5. "Liberty Walk" by Miley Cyrus
6. "Walk Away" by Donna Summer
7. "You'll Never Walk Alone" by Barbra Streisand
8. "When I Walk Away" by Justin Timberlake
9. "When You Walk Away" by Cher
10. "Walk Away" by Green Day
11. "Walk Like an Egyptian" by The Bangles
12. "Long Walk Home" by Bruce Springsteen
13. "Walk Away" by The Script
14. "I will walk 500 miles" by The Proclaimers
15. "Walking the Dog" by Ruffus Thomas
16. "Walk of Life" by Dire Straits

This list is by no way complete, and I am sure that you will be able to compile an even longer playlist with all your favourite walking songs.

I feel confident that the Walk This Way Choir would be able to dedicate a whole evening of popular songs with this walking theme in mind. I look forward to this performance.

Michael C

December Doodling's

December is the twelfth and final month of the year in the Julian and Gregorian calendars. December got its name from the Latin word Decem meaning ten as it was originally the tenth month.

Anglo-Saxons referred to December – January as Geolamanoab or Winter Monath or Yule Monath due to the custom of burning the yule log around this time. Oak was the wood of choice as it was believed to be the most likely to draw the sun back to the earth. The mistletoe, the white berried evergreen which grows on oak and other trees such as poplars was thought to guard the tree from evil. It also has strong link to fertility which probably explains why couples still kiss under the mistletoe.



In Roman Times the feast of Saturnalia began around the 17th December, in honour of the God of Agriculture. Originally just a day event but grew into a seven day orgy (!) of feasting, merrymaking, present exchanges and gambling. . It was customary to appoint a master of the revels, this reappeared in England as the Lord of Misrule who presides over the Christmas celebrations.

A lot of December customs and traditions have disappeared or been swallowed up by Christmas festivities.

Though 25 December is the day Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the date itself and several of the customs we've come to associate with Christmas are actually thought to have evolved from pagan traditions celebrating midwinter and the turn of the year. In many cultures and societies, midwinter is a time when festivals of light are held, with feasting and festivities to brighten the darkest days.

In particular, we know that people in parts of Britain thousands of years ago were marking the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, which falls around 21 December. This occasion was very important to the people who built and used Stonehenge, with the sun setting between the two tallest stones that make up the trilithon at the head of the inner horseshoe.



There's quite persuasive evidence that thousands of years ago, people were having a good old knees-up in the bleak months of winter.'

Medieval people also let rip, with twelve full days of festivities reaching a crescendo on 6 January, with Twelfth Night and the Epiphany. The name Christmas (Christ's Mass) was first recorded in England in 1038.

December weather lore, beliefs, and sayings

A mild December precedes a cold snap later in the winter.

A green December fills the graveyard!! *Harsh!*

A green Christmas = a white Easter

If Christmas day be bright and clear
There'll be two winters in the year.



December Superstitions

Marry on December third...for all the grief you ever heard.

On Christmas Eve, all animals can talk. However, it is bad luck to test this superstition.

Good luck will come to the home where a fire is kept burning throughout the Christmas season..... *Not this year!!*

Jane C

The Magic of Holly

With evergreen leaves and brilliant red berries, hollies stand out in the winter landscape. This led to mythical significance among many peoples in ancient times.



Druids attributed magical powers to the plant and associated it with immortality. These beliefs made felling a holly bad luck but cutting boughs of holly to hang around the house in the winter months was believed to provide shelter for woodland spirits. The grateful “fairies” would bestow good luck upon the home’s inhabitants. Pagan Druids believed that leaves of holly were sacred and offered protection against evil spirits so wore holly in their hair.

In Celtic-based traditions lies the legend of the battle between the Oak King and the Holly King. These two mighty rulers fight for supremacy as the Wheel of the Year turns each season. At the Winter Solstice, or Yule, the Oak King conquers the Holly King, and then reigns until Midsummer, or Litha. Once the Summer Solstice arrives, the Holly King returns to do battle with the old king and defeats him. In some legends the battle takes place at the Equinoxes, so that the Oak King is at his strongest during Midsummer, or Litha, and the Holly King is dominant during Yule.



Ancient Romans associated holly with Saturn, the god of agriculture, fertility and harvest. They decorated their homes with holly wreaths during the festival of Saturnalia, celebrated on 17th December. Saturnalia was the pagan precursor to the modern-day celebration of Christmas. The writings of Roman naturalist Pliny tell us that Holly, if planted near a house or farm, repelled poison, and defended it from lightning and

witchcraft; that the flowers cause water to freeze; and that the wood, if thrown at any animal, even without touching it, had the property of compelling the animal to return and lie down by it. This quality extended to control of horses, and until the 18th century, many whips used by coachmen were made from holly branches.

Early Christians maintained Christ’s crown of thorns was made from holly and that the berries, originally white, turned red, symbolizing the blood shed during his crucifixion. The words of the traditional folk Christmas carol, “The Holly and the Ivy,” reference that symbolism.

Holly has played a fabled role in romance. It was believed a man who carried a bag of holly leaves and berries would have a better chance of attracting a woman. An unmarried woman who placed a holly leaf under her pillow would dream dreams filled with images of her future husband. A gift of holly to newlyweds bestowed a blessing for a happy and fruitful marriage.



European *mythology* associated *holly* with thunder gods such as Thor and Taranis. In Ireland people would plant holly around their homes where they would act as hedgerows and protect the home and animals from ill luck or evil. Holly was also considered a powerful tree due to the fact that it was an evergreen and could withstand the onslaught of the cold winter months.

There were taboos against cutting down a whole tree to obstruct witches who ran along the tops of hedges. Farmers used their distinctive evergreen shapes to establish lines of sight during winter ploughing.

Colour in the winter landscape is still as magical today as it was to the ancients, earning hollies an eternal place in gardens and a continuing role in many holiday celebrations. So, whatever your beliefs, do decorate your halls with boughs of holly! Then settle down and read *The Holly King & The Oak King: A Pagan Children's Tale*, by J C Artemisia and Dani Chase.

Barbara S

WINTER DUSK

by *Walter de la Mare*

Dark frost was in the air without,
The dusk was still with cold and gloom,
When less than even a shadow came
And stood within the room.

But of the three around the fire,
None turned a questioning head to look,
Still read a clear voice, on and on,
Still stooped they o'er their book.

The children watched their mother's eyes
Moving on softly line to line;
It seemed to listen too—that shade,
Yet made no outward sign.

The fire-flames crooned a tiny song,
No cold wind stirred the wintry tree;
The children both in Faërie dreamed
Beside their mother's knee.

And nearer yet that spirit drew
Above that heedless one, intent
Only on what the simple words
Of her small story meant.

No voiceless sorrow grieved her mind
No memory her bosom stirred,
Nor dreamed she, as she read to two,
'Twas surely three who heard.

Yet when, the story done, she smiled
From face to face, serene and clear,
A love, half dread, sprang up, as she
Leaned close and drew them near.



Submitted by **Pesto Cenorr**

The Pedestrian Code of Conduct

Everyone is fully aware of the rules which are in place for people driving on the road, but people may not be aware of the informal rules of engagement as to how people behave in relation to each other when out walking. These are based on standard practice and many people may not be aware of them until they visit another country with a different standard practice and then end up bumping into each other! On such an occasion at least, life can be fun.

Keeping to the right

In USA and Canada people do keep to the right as they do in Taiwan and France.

Keeping to the left

People in Japan however walk on the left and there is a tendency to follow this rule in Australia and New Zealand. In Hong Kong there is a slight tendency to keep left.

But in the UK, we have no such strict "ruling". We have our own category tending not to have a preference but that doesn't mean we bump into each other! We don't use a single file traffic line, but we still manage to negotiate our way effectively using body language, eye contact or other cues to signal our intentions and we politely notice other's intentions to respond accordingly.

However, what you will find if this fails, is that a well-known shuffle develops between people which is almost combative! You move left to avoid only to find that they have moved to their right. Stalemate. Oops. So you move right only to find that they have moved to their left. Stalemate again! Oops. I am not sure how many times you would do this before you stop but what I am aware of is that if you come from the North, you are more likely to burst out laughing aloud by this point.

Happy walking



Glenda B

Sizergh Castle

Spring Vale Rambling Class have visited Sizergh Castle several times over the last few years. We have parked adjacent to the Stickland Arms and walked up through the grounds passing the impressive U shaped entrance before continuing on through the estate. If you have never visited the house and garden then it is well worth making the effort to explore. The gardens and café are open most days, but the house is closed until the end of March 2023 check out their website for full details of opening times.

The massive 60-ft pele tower at the heart of Sizergh – built by the Strickland family in c.1350 – is striking evidence of its origins as a defensive stronghold during the frequent border raids which long troubled this part of the country. Sizergh has been associated with the Strickland family since 1239 when the heiress Elizabeth Deincourt married Sir William de Strickland. The most imposing part of the building to survive from the medieval period is the massive tower used to contain the family apartment or solar, positioned at one end of a great hall. At the battle of Agincourt in 1415, Sir Thomas Strickland carried the banner of St George.



The entrance courtyard

The mid-1550s saw the start of a major rebuilding campaign to transform the medieval house into a fashionable Elizabethan residence. This was the work of Walter Strickland who raised the hall to the first floor and added two wings. Between 1558 and 1585, the interior was fitted out with some of the finest carved and inlaid decoration ever to be seen in the north of England. A remarkable series of oak-panelled rooms culminates in the magnificent Inlaid Chamber, commissioned by Walter Strickland's widow, Alice, in the 1570s.

The last major alterations at Sizergh took place in 1897-1902, when, among much modernisation, a neo-Gothic carriage entrance and internal staircase replaced the earlier 18th century external stairway to the front door. It was Lt Cdr Thomas Hornyold-Strickland who gave the house with all of the contents as well as the 1500 acre estate to the National Trust in 1950

The Gardens

The oldest part of the garden is the terraced lawn that extends south westwards from the house, bounded on one side by a brick faced fruit wall and on the other by a stone retaining wall. This area was laid out in the mid-18th century after the brick wall had been built in 1739.



The remainder of the present garden to the east and north was created in 1926-8. A formal terrace was constructed on the embankment, with steps leading down to a small lake. An area to the north was laid out as a rock garden, with blocks of local water-worn limestone and connected by a series of pools and streams flowing out from the main catchment pond to eventually run into the lake.

The gardens have been planted out so that no matter what time of year you choose to visit, there is always plenty to catch your eye with a striking feature or a stunning colour combination.



Go and experience a great day out exploring the house and gardens and after, enjoy a cuppa in the café.

Michael C