

# Ramblers Gems



A Spring Vale Rambling Class Publication

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### Syllabus now available

The 2022 Syllabus of walks published by the Class is now available. The annual membership fee to Spring Vale Ramblers is only £5.00. The new season is due to start on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2022 with a walk around the reservoirs at Hurstwood, Burnley.

To obtain your copy and become a member of this historic club send a cheque for £5 to the Secretary. Details of the address are contained within the website. Alternatively join us on a walk and pay cash.

We still have 2 more winter walks remaining in our 2021 season, always weather permitting. On the 19<sup>th</sup> February we meet at Sabden Car Park BB7 9EB and on the 5<sup>th</sup> March meet at Anglezarke Reservoir Car Park PR6 9DQ both meet at 11.00am.

**Glenda B Secretary**

## Deadline Abolished

On the 16<sup>th</sup> February the UK government announced that the 2026 deadline to register historic paths is to be abolished in England.

This is great news for walkers, following years of campaigning by the Ramblers, it will ensure that more people can connect with nature for generations to come. It gives more time to save the most important and useful paths, ensuring they're added back to the definitive map and protected for the future.

The deadline of January 2026 meant that any paths not applied for by that date would no longer be able to be added to maps based on historical evidence and risked being lost forever.

In 2020, thousands of supporters searched for lost paths, and discovered over 49,000 miles of potential unrecorded rights of way in England and Wales. Since then, a dedicated team of volunteers worked tirelessly to prioritise the paths that would be the most useful additions to the definitive map. Resources were developed to support the volunteers in researching the historic evidence needed and making applications to local authorities.

The removal of the 2026 deadline in England, which had already been announced for Wales back in 2018, gives more time to save the most important and useful paths, ensuring that they are added to the definitive map and protected for future generations. The deadline cancellation will also help to ease the pressure on under-resourced local authorities, who need to process all the claims for missing rights of way.

**Michael C**

## A Moorland Landscape

Peat is the defining characteristic of our local moorland. There is often a thin layer of very black soil over a layer of pure peat, which may be many feet deep, above a base of very poor clay-like soil, which helps keep the water in. This means that the ground is usually wet to boggy in winter and rarely entirely dry even in summer. The soil pH is mainly always acid although when 'islands' of shallow moorland peat form in pockets of limestone the soil may be neutral.

Moorlands formed after the wild woodland was first cleared from places in the northern part of the country, like the West Pennine Moors, the Peak District and the North Yorkshire Moors approx. 10,000 years ago, to use for agriculture. The woodland never recovered on the high ground as it did in the valley due to soil erosion. The naturally high rainfall in these steep exposed areas meant that much of the soil was washed away into rivers, where it ended up creating the fertile soils in the valleys, leaving behind bare moors where only nature's survivors such as the sphagnum moss or sedges could survive.



Where these plants grew, there was a natural turnover as plants died and were replaced by younger ones and their remains slowly built up over thousands of years to form peat. They didn't rot down to form humus/soil because in the boggy condition's plants cannot decompose completely, like it does in a compost heap because there is no oxygen for the beneficial bacteria to work. The plants remain only partly decomposed- making peat. In a few places peat is still being laid down, but in the main it's a vanishing resource.

The plants you are most likely to notice straight away on many of our moors is heather. It grows in huge carpets of pink or purple – it's a classic survivor in conditions that never dry out completely,

with full sun and can cope with any amount of wind and exposure.

From the early nineteenth century moorlands were managed by regularly burning off parts of the heather in a controlled rotation, so that there were always several areas of different ages of heather growth. Young heather has plenty of the soft, tender, new shoots that grouse and sheep feed on: as the plants age they grow taller and bushier, providing a protective cover for nesting birds.

However, since the soft tips are needed for feeding, areas of young heather have to be close to the breeding grounds. By the time heather reaches 10 to 12 years old it is too bare and woody to provide much cover or useful food, so it is burnt off to encourage it to regenerate.



Control burning is one thing and is an essential part of upland land management. What is not acceptable is the wanton act of causing moorland fires by wilful or thoughtless acts. This was the case with the large moorland fire that devastated a large part of Darwen Moor back in May 2020. The area has shown some evidence of regeneration, but the deep burn that occurred will take years to re-establish the biodiversity that once existed.

When you venture into these places go tentatively at first. All paths seem to look the same, and none look like they do on the map. Most of these areas are classed as Open Access Land and do not show all of the footpaths that may traverse this terrain. Look out for vehicle tracks made by the landowner that may cross land, for these provide an easier means to walk across the land.

SVRC have several walks in our new 2022 season that will explore this amazing landscape.

**Michael C**

## What Walkers Say and What they mean

“Not far now”  
*No idea how far*

“This way”  
*Possibly this way*

“Cows are as afraid of us as we are of them”  
*I am much more scared than I'm prepared to admit*



“Just checking the map”  
*We're totally lost now*

“Pretty sure that's a Hawthorn”  
*I haven't a clue what that is*

“Morning”  
*I am normal, but let's not talk*

“Crisps?”  
*Taste the plain so I don't have to*

“Let's see if they do food”  
*We're having a pint here*

“I've got a bit of chaffing”  
*My underpants are rubbing*

“Imagine if I'd dropped the car key.”  
*I can't find my keys anywhere*

“Fancy a cuppa”  
*I'll probably get a pint instead*

**Janet S**

## Trees by Walter de la Mere

Of all the trees in England,  
Her sweet three corners in,  
Only the Ash, the bonnie Ash  
Burns fierce while it is green.

Of all the trees in England,  
From sea to sea again,  
The Willow loveliest stoops her boughs  
Beneath the driving rain.

Of all the trees in England,  
Past frankincense and myrrh,  
There's none for smell, of bloom and smoke,  
Like Lime and Juniper.

Of all the trees in England,  
Oak, Elder, Elm and Thorn,  
The Yew alone burns lamps of peace  
For them that lie forlorn.

**Pesto Cenorr**

## Wanderings by Walter de la Mere

Wide are the meadows of night,  
And daisies are shining there,  
Tossing their lovely dews,  
Lustrous and fair;

And through these sweet fields go,  
Wanderers amid the stars --  
Venus, Mercury, Uranus, Neptune,  
Saturn, Jupiter, Mars.

Tired in their silver, they move,  
And circling, whisper and say,  
Fair are the blossoming meads of delight  
Through which we stray.

**Pesto Cenorr**

## The Ogham Ash

Ash trees have always had mystical and religious significance. In some European cultures, ash wood is burned because the smoke is thought to ward off evil spirits. The ash is referred to as the "**Tree of Life**" from which humanity sprang in Norse mythology. It is said to connect us to the heavens and the underworld,

This tall and elegant tree can be found in many areas of lowland Britain and Ireland, in woodland and standing alone. It grows tall and wide with many straight branches. The wood of the ash tree has many uses and because of its durable yet light weight, straight lengths and consistent width it is a favourite wood for walking poles and quarter staffs. (The surname Ashpole is derived from this use). It can also be used as timber supports and was used in ancient times for building roundhouses.

Ash is the ruler of the 3<sup>rd</sup> lunar month from 18<sup>th</sup> February until the 17<sup>th</sup> March. Its powers are protection, health, courage and matters concerning the sea. It is represented by the Ogham letter N – Nion.

When working with lengths of Ash the outer skin is easily stripped away and the creamy heartwood seasons faster than many other woods with a minimum of cracking, thus indicating the durable nature of the wood and consequently a reliable prop. Working with, and handling, Ash can be very therapeutic.

In the early summer months, the branches of the Ash tree are heavily laden with seed pods known as ash keys. By a natural transition of thought the Ash tree may be able to assist you to unlock the secrets of your own physical strength to support you on your journey, upheld by the power of the World Tree.



Ash is a very easy tree to recognize in winter even when its long, feathery leaves have fallen. Bunches of single, brown winged seeds known as samara or ash keys, still cling below the branches and don't fall until spring. Walk closer and you'll see large buds of purest black along the sides and tips of the twigs.

The black buds seen so clearly in winter break into flower in late April, before the leaves arrive and are very attractive to the spring pollinating insects. Because of its great strength, lightness and elasticity, it was, and is, used to build the framework of the beautiful British Morgan sports cars.



The main use for ash timber nowadays is for fuel as it makes a wonderful log for burning, lasting a long time and giving virtually no smoke or spitting, even when burned green. The grey ash left behind is a fine source of potash for gardeners.

Make a staff from a stout ashen branch (with the tree's permission). *It will bring the properties of strength, protection, caring, communication and courage to your home, walks and rituals.* Ash wood still makes the best oars – a piece of timber large enough to make a good-sized oar would take about twenty years to grow.

Ash may act in healing and soothing problems with digestion, bladder and bowel disorders. The chemical glucoside fraxin, contained in all parts of the plant has been proved to have anti-inflammatory properties, probably because of its inhibitory effect on 5-HETE (a fatty acid) production. The leaves are at their freshest in June and that is a good time to pick and dry them.

Ash, called 'Uisinn' in Gaelic - 'Ask' in Norse and 'Esh' in Celtic - is the tree known as 'The World Tree Yggdrasil' (pronounced igg-drah-sill).

Jean G



## Don't be Afraid, Be Prepared

After whetting your appetite with a few types of phobias in issue 6, I was pleased to receive these further examples of other phobias from our contributor Barbara. She suggests a number of remedies some of which, would you believe, are going walking with Spring Vale Rambling Class which is what I would recommend and just what the doctor ordered!!

**Achluophobia:** Fear of darkness - always bring a torch or head torch but SVRC aim to finish by 4pm at the latest!

**Anthrophobia:** Fear of flowers – avoid a bluebell of summer meadow walk

**Atychiphobia:** Fear of failure – something all walks' leaders have now and again and new walkers may have (not being able to keep up or manage the distance)

**Botanophobia:** Fear of plants – or having to walk with an expert who knows it all and can't resist sharing – even SVRC have to use apps to identify them sometimes.

**Chionophobia:** Fear of snow – helped by having some cleats and a good walking pole.

**Cynophobia:** Fear of dogs – remember others may not know that your dog is really friendly when he charges towards them.

**Dendrophobia:** Fear of trees – some of our ramblers talk to trees and can tell if a wood is friendly or hostile. Some may ask for permission to walk through the woods but not necessarily out loud.

**Hydrophobia:** Fear of water – but only when crossing brooks and using steppingstones.



**Lilapsophobia:** Fear of tornadoes and hurricanes – SVRC don't usually walk during storms although we have been known to do this on an AGM walk!

**Genophobia:** Fear of knees – but mainly when we are going downhill, down steps or on wet limestone.

**Mysophobia:** Fear of dirt and germs – just bring wipes and gel.



**Obesophobia:** Fear of gaining weight – walking regularly with Spring Vale Ramblers will help to reduce weight gain.

**Ombrophobia:** Fear of rain – sorry it is Lancashire, just wear the right clothing.

**Ophidiophobia:** Fear of snakes – never seen one on a Spring Vale Ramblers hike.

**Ornithophobia:** Fear of birds – they are usually high in the sky, singing in the trees or watching us warily and ready to make their escape.

**Wiccaphobia:** Fear of witches and witchcraft – only good friendly white witches who use magic for benevolent purposes or without malicious intent will be found on SVRC walks.

Exposure-based treatments are the first-line approach in the treatment of phobias. In this type of treatment, you are gradually and progressively exposed to what you fear. You might start by just thinking about your phobia trigger and then move slowly toward looking at images of the object and finally being near the object in real life.

Walking with Spring Vale Ramblers Class may expose you to your phobia/s but walking with us will certainly contribute to your treatment!

**Glenda B**