

Ramblers Gems



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For further information or to submit a contribution email: svrcramblers@gmail.com Web Site <http://www.springvaleramblers.co.uk/>

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Films with an Outdoor Twist

This current lockdown provides us with plenty of time to catch up with all those films that we enjoy or haven't had the chance to see. If you have access to the TV streaming services such as Apple, Amazon Prime or Netflix now is the opportunity to watch those old classic hits or the new independent films that feature the great outdoors.

Here is a list of some great movies for that outdoor inspiration. Not all films will suit everyone, but I have tried to list a wide variety!

A Walk in the Woods (2015) is based on a Bill Bryson's book. This is one of the most iconic "trail books" that made its way onto the big screen. Bill Bryson played Robert Redford hikes in a light-hearted way along the Appalachian Trail .

The Way (2010) This film related to the El Camino de Santiago, the pilgrimage path through Northern Spain and follows a father, Emilio Estevez played by Martin Sheen in search for inner peace after the death of his son.

127 Hours (2010) This is a riveting and true survival story about a rock climber played by James Franco trapped by an arm-crushing fallen boulder in a remote Utah canyon. A nail biting film not for the faint hearted.

Touching the Void (2013) This film is a real cliff hanger. The true story about a pair of climbers attempting to summit an impossible alpine peak in the Peruvian Andes.

Edie (2017), 83-year-old Edie played by Sheila Hancock embarks on an adventure she never got to achieve when younger, climbing the imposing Suilven, a mountain in Scotland.

Wild (2014) This film chronicles, Chyril Strayed played by Reece Witherspoon, on a one thousand and one hundred mile solo hike along the US Pacific Crest Trail. This is undertaken as a way to recover from a recent personal tragedy.

In to the Wild (2007) After graduation from University a top student abandons his possessions, gives away his savings to charity and hitchhikes to Alaska to live in the wilderness.

23 Walks (2020) Two older strangers meet walking their dogs in a North London park, and over the course of twenty-three walks together the romance begins to blossom. But all is not what it seems as their future together may be threatened by the secrets they have withheld.

Other films of note with that outdoor twist: -

Grizzly Man (2005), Six Million Steps (2011), The Way Back (2010). K2: Siren of the Himalayas (2012), The Last Descent (2016).

Enjoy
Eleanor

Robin Red Breast

Christmas is on the horizon and it is certain that everybody will get at least one Christmas card featuring a Robin. The Robin is certainly closely associated with Christmas, even though it is present in peoples gardens throughout the year and is a regular visitor to bird feeders. Birdfeeders, I am afraid, do not show Robins in a particularly good light, as they often bully other birds off the feeders. Despite this they are still popular with the public and anybody with a garden will have had a Robin closely following them around as they do any gardening, especially if you are disturbing the soil. You may notice that they will target very small organisms, in preference to any large worms uncovered.

The tameness of Robins, along with their association with Christmas, is probably the reason why they regularly get voted as the nation's favourite bird. This association with Christmas is believed to have its origins in the early history of the mail service. It is called the Royal Mail because originally only the nobility used the service. Later on, the service was opened up to the general public. At first, local people wouldn't get much mail during the year, but people hit on the idea of sending Christmas greetings to one another through the postal service. It would be one of the few delivery's during the year, something to look forward to. In those early years, postal workers wore a red tunic uniform, so Christmas cards were delivered by the postman 'robins'.

Footnote: birds are often referred to as Robin redbreast and you may think "Hang on, they have orange breasts not red ones", but the colour orange didn't exist until oranges began to be imported into Britain during the 16th century, the colour is named after the fruit not vice versa.



Tony C

A Winter Poem

The fairy cups have fallen now
From off the sturdy oaks,
The beech trees and the elm trees
Have dropped their ruddy cloaks;
The Robin, too, has donned again
His orange breast-knot gay;
The cattle shelter in the stalls
And darkness robs the day.

Anon.

Submitted on behalf of Mavis B

The North Wind Doth Blow

The north wind doth blow,
And we shall have snow,
And what will poor Robin do then,
Poor thing?
He'll sit in a barn,
And to keep himself warm,
Will hide his head under his wing,
Poor thing!

The Robin

His is the sweetest note in all our woods.
The whistle of the meadow-lark is sweet,
The blackbird's rapid chant fills all the vale,
And touchingly sweet the unincumbered song
That the thrush warbles in the green-wood shade;
Yet is the robin still our sweetest bird,
And beautiful as sweet. His ruddy breast
When poised on high, struck by the unrisen sun,

by William Thompson Bacon

Eyam the Plague Village

I first encountered Eyam on 6th July 2014 with NE Lancs Coach Rambles and join the D walk which turned out to be a figure of eight walk from Eyam. Leaving The Square, we followed a pleasant lane for a mile to the village of Stoney Middleton. From here it was a rough track going steeply uphill for about ½ mile to join a lane where we stopped for lunch near the Riley Graves and then descended back to The Square. The second part of our walk took us uphill to Mompesson's Well and on to Sir William Hill Road, then a quiet road and steep track downhill back to the centre of Eyam. I had lots of time before the coach departure, so I went to the Grade 11 listed *Parish Church of St Lawrence* which boasts a Saxon churchyard cross, a Norman font, and a series of 18th-century wall paintings. The Celtic cross dates to the late 8th or early 9th century.

The church is best known for its connection to the outbreak of the Black Death in 1665 and is sometimes referred to as 'the plague church'. When the plague broke out in London, the people of Eyam must have felt safe. However, a load of cloth sent to a local tailor brought the plague germs to Eyam, and within days the first deaths began.

The local rector, a man named William Mompesson, convinced the villagers to quarantine themselves from the outside world and let the plague run its course, preventing the spread of the disease to nearby villages. The sacrifice made by the people of Eyam is commemorated by a modern stained-glass window. A lot of people go to the church to see the 'Plague Window'. The panels show: - The infected cloth arriving in Eyam, The death of the tailor - the first plague victim, Rev. William Mompesson, Thomas Stanley, rector and Mompesson planning the quarantine, The two lovers separated by the quarantine, a 'ring of roses', a reminder that the nursery rhyme had a deadly origin and Mompesson Well, where people from neighbouring villagers left goods for the inhabitants of Eyam to purchase. The window is extremely vivid and tells the tragic and heroic tale of Eyam beautifully.



Above The Riley Graves



Right The Plague Window

After purchasing a leaflet, I followed the town trail from the church to the village green and the open-air church where Rev. Mompesson would preach to his parishioners when most were afraid to worship together in the church.

A few steps from the churchyard are the Plague Cottages, where the deadly disease first broke out. Just beyond the cottages stands Eyam Hall, a beautiful Jacobean manor house, now run by the National Trust.

If you think our two Covid-19 lockdowns of 2020 have been difficult to endure please spare a thought for The Eyam villagers who, rather than flee this wild corner of Derbyshire - and risk spreading the infection - locked themselves away to suffer in isolation. And suffer they did. For 14 months pestilence, pitiless and seemingly random cases, ravaged the village. The church contains the original parish register when 276 people out of the total of 350 inhabitants perished from the infectious disease. They certainly did not benefit from our modern-day comforts either.

If you haven't seen the recent BBC programme 'Coronavirus: What can the 'plague village' of Eyam teach us?' you can find out more here <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-derbyshire-51904810>

If you like a good read, I can recommend 'Year of Wonders' by Geraldine Brookes which through the eyes of a housemaid, provides a detailed account of that fateful year in 1665. I read the book during Lockdown 2 and this has sparked me into writing this article.

Barbara S

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark

In 2016 the Walk this Way Choir based in Darwen decided to have an extended walking weekend to County Clare in the west of Ireland, as a suggestion offered by Mike Cotter, the Choirs founder. Whilst checking out the area with his daughter, Mike had the good fortune to meet a local Doolin resident, Bernard Delaney, who offered to be the weekend's unofficial guide. So, 12 members of the Choir were introduced to one of the world's finest scenic areas The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark and enjoyed a trouble-free meticulously planned 'Mike Cotter' experience.

What is a Geopark? Broadly, a unique protected landscape that together with its people, livelihoods, and cultural traditions, all co-existing with contemporary life. The Global Geopark Network (GGN) is supported by UNESCO and its members include the Hong Kong Islands, Katla volcano on Iceland, the petrified forests of Lesvos, Greece, the Karst plateau of North Vietnam, and the rock paintings of Southern Uruguay.

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark is situated in County Clare, in the West of Ireland. The Burren, the name translates to 'the cliffs of the ruined fort', is a large upland area of limestone, of some 530 sq. km. bordered by the Atlantic to the west. The Cliffs of Moher rise in places to over 700ft and extend for 14 kms along this rugged coastline.



The Burren County Clare Ireland

Over 360 million years ago, a warm tropical sea covered this area. Limestone formed in the seabed, where the remains of sea plants and animals settled leaving fossils to be discovered amongst the rocks. The sea receded, being replaced by a large mud-filled river delta, where sandstone and shale deposits were formed. Over millennia earth movements, glaciers and rainwater have shaped the area into the hills, valleys and coastlines seen today. Thin soils formed and specialised plants flourished. About 6000 years ago, the first farmers began to work these soils and today Burren farmers take pride in sustainable management of the land.

Lisdoonvarna is one of the towns situated in the Burren. It is a Spa town established in the 1850s offering 4 different 'waters' containing either magnesia, iron, sulphur and iodine, all available inside the Victorian pumphouse. In September each year, one of Europe's largest "Matchmaking" events is held in the town, attracting up to 40000 romantic hopefuls, bachelor farmers and revelers. An official fourth-generation Matchmaker oversees the proceedings.

The Wild Atlantic Way is a 1500 mile trail along the West coast of Ireland, from Inishowen, County Donegal, to Kinsale, County Cork. There are many maps and guides available, showing routes which can be taken by vehicle, cycle or on foot, often broken down into manageable sections. One such is the 9 mile section from Liscannor, passing above the Cliffs of Moher and ending in Doolin.

On the Wild Atlantic Way, close to the Cliffs of Moher and a stepping off point (Ferrywise) for the Aran Islands in Galway Bay, is the village of Doolin. Doolin consists of three communities stretched along its 'High Street', these are Roadford, Fitz's Cross and Fisherstreet. The area is the home of traditional Irish music, which is played on most nights in the three inns- McDermotts, McCanns and Fitzs. To ensure a good supply of musicians, all schoolchildren in County Clare must learn at least one of the instruments played in the Irish bands. If you are not a fan, you need to get your drinking in before 9p.m.!

In the next publication I will describe the 4 day visit to the Geopark, with some walks, pub visits, caves, and a boat trip to one of the Aran Islands

Alan R



Cliffs of Moher County Clare Ireland

GENERAL MEETING AT TOP CON: OCT. 7 1960.



The AGM

The above cartoon was used in an exhibition staged throughout June 1985 within the Information Centre Sunnyhurst Wood Darwen. The Club had organised numerous events throughout that year to celebrate its 90th year since formation.

The image came to light as part of a school project prepared by Ann Lawrence, daughter of the late President Brian Lawrence. The cartoon was drawn by Mr H. Entwistle and reflects on the Annual General Meeting held within the Top Con, the Conservative Club at the Bolton Road Darwen on Friday 7th October 1960.

ANSWERS to TRAIL QUIZ

1. The Kala Patthar Trek at (5644.5 m/18519 ft), Annapurna Circuit (5416m/17769 ft), Inca Trail (4215m/13828 ft), Mont Blanc (2584m/8478ft),
2. The Appalachian Trail – Film A Walk in the Woods (2015)
3. Santiago de Compostela
4. 2,426
5. Alfred Wainwright
6. Cross Fell, at 893 metres (2,930 ft) the highest point on the entire path.
7. California - Sierra Nevada mountains that extends from Yosemite to Mt. Whitney
8. Pacific Crest Trail - film Wild (2014)
9. The Great Wall of China
10. Wales Coast Path – 870 miles