

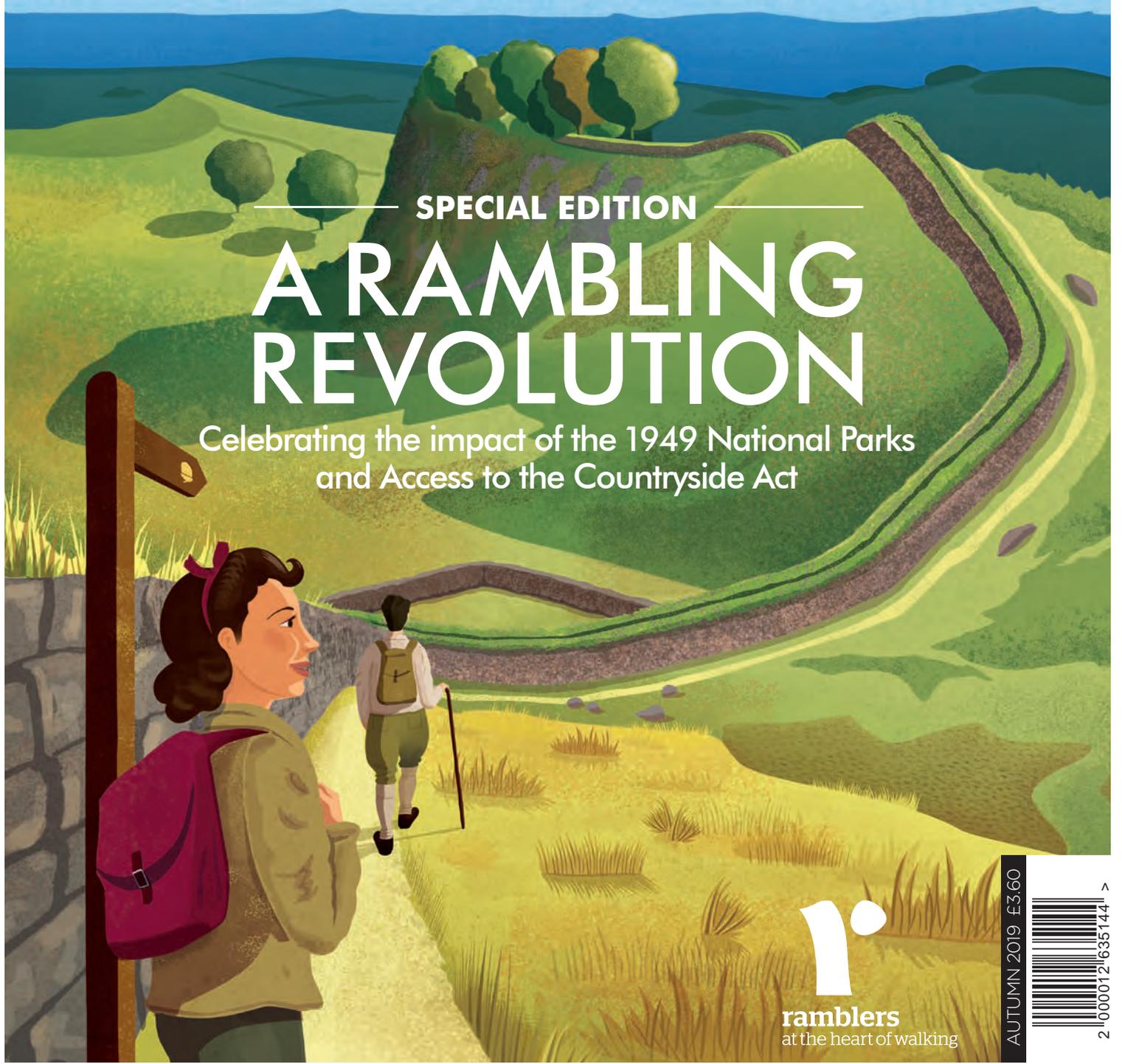
MAGAZINE OF THE RAMBLERS
Britain's walking charity

WALK

SPECIAL EDITION

A RAMBLING REVOLUTION

Celebrating the impact of the 1949 National Parks
and Access to the Countryside Act



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ON THE COVER
Hadrian's Wall – sign up and receive a free downloadable poster of this vintage cover at ramblers.org.uk/1949Act
Illustrator
Chris Andrews

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walk

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at the heart of walking

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 **walk audio** Visually impaired Ramblers members can receive this magazine in audio format.
Email membership@ramblers.zendesk.com

Welcome to walk

Out with my family one summer's evening, we walked through a beautiful stretch of ancient woodland containing one of the best-preserved sections of Offa's Dyke. Located within Plas Power Woods Woodland Trust reserve, near Wrexham, the sense of history here is palpable. The dyke was built under Offa, King of Mercia, in the 8th century, as a defensive structure, to keep out the Welsh, or as a boundary marker. Locals have long come to this tranquil wooded valley, using it as a cut-through or to take exercise. But further along the



Where we've been
Plas Power Woods, Wrexham; Ferring Beach, West Sussex

trail is another historic boundary. In 1858, the Plas Power Estate ordered the construction of a wall – still visible today – to keep the public out. This angered local miners, who visited the site every night to dismantle each section built that day. Eventually, the local militia was drafted in until its completion.

While locals lost out in this case, the appetite nationally for freedom to enjoy vast swaths of privately owned countryside grew and eventually helped to bring about change. In 1932, about 500 ramblers took part in the mass trespass of Kinder Scout in the Peak District, resulting in five men being jailed in a watershed moment for walkers' rights. The Ramblers was set up soon after, campaigning to protect our natural assets and throw them open to the masses – which is why the 1949 Act was, and continues to be, so important, underpinning many of our campaigns today. We hope you enjoy this special issue marking it.

Natalie

Natalie Hoare **Editor**

CONTRIBUTORS



Bradley Mayhew is the co-author of two guides to

Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, as well as guidebooks on Tibet, Bhutan, Central Asia and trekking in Nepal. After living in Montana's Yellowstone County for over a decade, he now splits his time between Kent and southern Chile. **Destination, p64**



Sarah Stirling is an adventure writer and editor and

works for publications including Lonely Planet guides, *The Observer* and magazines such as *Fall-Line Skiing* and *Country Life*. After stints in Pembrokeshire and Chamonix, she now lives in an old miner's cottage in Snowdonia. **The Big Walk, p60**



Andrew McCloy is a writer and journalist specialising in

walking and the outdoors. He is also a freelance access and recreation consultant. Formerly information officer for the Ramblers, he lives in Derbyshire, where he is chair of the Peak District National Park Authority. **A Rambling Revolution, p25**



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Ajay Tegala, Ranger & Conservationist
📍 Wicken Fen Nature Reserve

I am Ajay

This is my outdoors

“Things that you have to search for are that little bit more rewarding and taking that time, having a nice walk, and then actually seeing something amazing is so rewarding.”

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The view from here

Seilebost and Luskentyre Beaches, Isle of Harris

Where Outer Hebrides, Scotland (NG070983).

Maps OS Explorer 455; Landranger 18.

About As celebrations take place marking 70 years since the passing of legislation that established national parks across England and Wales, Ramblers Scotland continues to call for the Scottish Government to consider setting up more national parks in Scotland, where there is local support.

The National Parks (Scotland) Act was passed a year after the Scottish Parliament was formed in 1999, leading to the establishment of Scotland's only national parks to date: Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, and Cairngorms.

The Scottish Campaign for National Parks identified seven potential areas to be designated as new national parks in their 2013 report, *Unfinished Business*, including the Isle of Harris;



PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY

Galloway; the Cheviots; an Argyll and Bute marine park; Glen Affric; Wester Ross; and Glen Coe and Britain's highest mountain, Ben Nevis.

New Ramblers Scotland director, Brendan Paddy, said: 'Our famous landscapes attract millions of visitors to Scotland each year, with walking tourism estimated to generate around £1.26bn annually. However, many rural areas face economic and

environmental challenges – and we believe that in some special places, national park status could support jobs and tourism, while protecting the environment and benefiting outdoor recreation.

'As a first step, we want ministers to lead a strategic review of our existing parks and identify best practice for the future.'

Famed for its tweed, Harris is a spectacular blend of rugged mountains, pristine beaches and rare 'machair' grassland habitats.



THIS SEASON ON FOOT

What's on offer for walkers this autumn



📍 Clockwise from this picture: The River Wye; a listed building in the centre of Kington; Loch Rannoch and Schiehallion in Perth and Kinross; Hailes Abbey

SEPTEMBER

Walking Together Winchcombe

14 SEPTEMBER

Meet Ramblers groups from across Gloucestershire in 'the walking capital of the Cotswolds'. Join local volunteers for short, medium and long walks in rolling countryside, taking in highlights such as Hailes Abbey, Spoonley Wood Roman Villa, Cleeve Hill and St Kenelm's Well. gloucestershireramblers.org.uk/wtwt

High Weald Walking Festival

14-22 SEPTEMBER

With breathtaking views, fascinating history and an extensive network of footpaths and ancient byways, the High Weald AONB in Sussex and Kent is a walker's paradise. Experienced and knowledgeable guides, many of them Ramblers volunteers, will lead more than 45 inspiring walks focusing on wildlife,

wellbeing, local history, archaeology, literature and geology. Suitable for all ages and abilities - and most walks are free. highwealdwalks.org

Kington Walks Festival

19-22 SEPTEMBER

The historic drovers' town of Kington in Herefordshire has more long-distance paths converging on it than almost anywhere else in the UK. This event offers the chance to sample a wide range of walks, covering geology, moorland restoration, ancient battles and historic orchards, as well as walks along Offa's Dyke Path - and the famous Eight Peaks Challenge. **07552 087786;** kingtonwalks.org

Shropshire Way Festival

21-28 SEPTEMBER

This festival celebrates the completion of the 200-mile Shropshire Way Main Route as a long-distance



path with 27 led walks. Each walk takes in part of the Shropshire Way and ranges from two to 22 miles. shropshireway.org.uk

Sidmouth & East Devon Walking Festival

21-27 SEPTEMBER

Discover the Jurassic Coast and surrounding countryside with a choice of three walks each day, or complete the 40-mile East Devon Way, from Lyme Regis to Exmouth, over five days. You can also try

the new Sid Valley Ring, a challenging 13-mile circular walk taking in spectacular coastal views across Lyme Bay. Walks are free but must be booked in advance (coach transfers £6). **01395 516441;** visitsidmouth.co.uk

Bollington Walking Festival

21-29 SEPTEMBER

Explore this historic mill town and surrounding countryside on the edge of Cheshire's Peak District with about 40 walks,



ranging from half a mile to 20 miles. Events include coach and canal trips, walks on astronomy, food and drink, health, history, navigation and wildlife. There's also a folk night, outdoor-themed film





READER PANEL



'I walk with both the Manchester Coach Ramblers and the Manchester Weekend Walkers. Our group has planned numerous hikes this summer, including Ilkley, Grange-over-Sands, Baslow, Clapham and Cartmel.'

**Shelly Chen,
Manchester
Coach Ramblers**

visitchilterns.co.uk,
walkhenley.co.uk

**New Forest Walking Festival
12-27 OCTOBER**

There will be dozens of guided walks, led by knowledgeable local experts, to help visitors discover more about the history, heritage and wildlife of the New Forest National Park. There's a great range to choose from, including family strolls, history hikes, wildlife walks and more.

01590 646650;
newforestnpa.gov.uk

**Essex Walking Festival
26 OCTOBER -
2 NOVEMBER**

Join local Ramblers for their debut walking festival, featuring walks that celebrate the county's diverse water landscapes. Explore rivers, coastline, estuaries, islands, reservoirs, beaches, fens and wetlands.

essexarearamblers.co.uk

NOVEMBER

**Kendal Mountain Festival
14-17 NOVEMBER**

Outdoor enthusiasts from all over the world will gather to enjoy a packed programme of adventure films, lectures and social events dedicated to feats of endurance and exploration in the mountains. You can look forward to film premieres and special guests throughout this long weekend in the Lake District.

mountainfest.co.uk

around Richmond and Swaledale. Choose from 30 graded walks led by knowledgeable guides, with evening talks from popular and emerging authors, such as TV's Yorkshire vet, Julian Norton, author and presenter Peter Owen Jones and travel journalist Dixie Wills.

01748 824243;
booksandboots.org

OCTOBER

**Norfolk Walking & Cycling Festival
1-31 OCTOBER**

Now in its fifth year, there are more events than ever, taking in walking and cycling routes throughout Norfolk's coast, country, fen and forest landscapes.

visitnorfolk.co.uk/wcf

**Dursley Walking Festival
2-6 OCTOBER**

Whether you're looking for a gentle stroll or an energetic hike, you'll find something to suit you with a choice of around 30 walks in the beautiful south Cotswolds.

dursleywelcomeswalkers.org.uk

**Crieff & Strathearn Drivers' Tryst
5-12 OCTOBER**

Celebrating the people who made Crieff the cattle-droving crossroads of Scotland in the 1700s, the modern-day tryst offers 32 guided walks in the stunning scenery of Perth and Kinross. Social events include talks, film, a quiz night and a family ceilidh.

droverstryst.com

**Chilterns Walking Festival
5-20 OCTOBER**

Experience spectacular views, accompanied by expert guides, with a packed programme of walks and activities taking place across the Chilterns AONB. Henley-on-Thames has recently been accredited as a Walkers are Welcome town, and there are various walks starting from the RG9 postcode, including one for the partially sighted and one for mobility-scooter users. Most walks are free or incur a small charge, but must be booked in advance.



night and a pub quiz.

bollingtonwalkingfestival.co.uk

**Ross Walking Festival
27-29 SEPTEMBER**

Try one of 16 guided walks exploring the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean. Walks range from three to nine miles and cover geology, birds, caves and hills. Walkers can also take a ride on a steam train or visit a cider farm. Most walks cost £5 and booking is essential.

walkinginross.co.uk

**Haltwhistle Autumn Walking Festival
28 SEPTEMBER - 6 OCTOBER**

Discover Hadrian's Wall country, Northumberland National Park and the North Pennines AONB, with a choice of 22 guided walks. All are led by volunteers and range from four to 16 miles.

haltwhistlewalkingfestival.org

**Richmond Walking & Book Festival
28 SEPTEMBER - 6 OCTOBER**

Nine days of walks and literary events in and

PHOTOGRAPHY: ALAMY, ISTOCK



Get more online
Discover more autumn walking inspiration at
ramblers.org.uk/go-walking

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MICHI BÜCKERS WITH THE NEW TRAIL 30. Michi is a certified mountain and skiing guide and Deuter brand ambassador. He started his career as a road bike racer. Today his list of outdoor sports is long and he loves to combine all of them.





Front FOOT

Campaigns and news from the world of walking

URBAN WALKING

Falkirk crowned Britain's Best Walking Neighbourhood

Falkirk has walked away with the title of Britain's Best Walking Neighbourhood 2019, following a public vote to identify the most walking-friendly urban areas in the UK.

The Scottish town beat nine other contenders across England, Scotland and Wales to take the title, with an impressive 20% of the vote. Second place went to the south London Borough of Brockley, while Milton Keynes came in a close third, followed by Welsh entry Aberystwyth in fourth place.

'We are really proud that Falkirk has won,' remarked Wraight Shepherd, chair of Stirling, Falkirk and District Ramblers, who nominated Falkirk for the award. 'It's a testament to the commitment of the council working together with local communities that Falkirk has been transformed in recent years into a place that is enjoyable and easy to walk around, building a real culture of walking.'

Known for its iconic horse-head sculptures, The Kelpies, Falkirk stood out

from the competition, thanks in part to its connection to a 617km/383-mile network of well-maintained and signposted paths, as well as several initiatives that aim to prioritise walking.

Taking everyday journeys on foot in Falkirk has been made easier and more enjoyable thanks to efforts by the local authority to widen pavements and create more off-road paths. Well-linked routes around the town's shops, services, bars and restaurants mean people can easily walk to



the places they need to go. Falkirk residents also have great access to nature, with every community well served by parks and green spaces. A planning standard introduced by the council states that every house should be within 400m of an open space, now reduced to 300m for new developments.

'Our vision is of a country truly designed for walking, where everyone is encouraged to walk whenever they set out on a journey, whether they are simply popping to the shops or going to work,' said Vanessa Griffiths, chief executive of the Ramblers. 'Falkirk is a fantastic example of how this can be achieved.'

The Ramblers' Charter for Walking Neighbourhoods outlines steps councils can take to make their neighbourhoods better for walking.



Get involved
Ask your local councillor to sign up at ramblers.org.uk/vote



Kitted out

Christopher Somerville

Our columnist muses on his 'essential' items of outdoor kit...

#17 Spectacle wipers

There's one big pain about gathering the fruits of the hedgerow on an autumn walk if you're a wearer of spectacles. You work your way down a beautiful hedge of blackberries or sloes or elderberries, and you find, invariably, that the best ones are just too high to get at. You hook down the branch with your stick, and bingo!, last night's rain shower descends from the leaves all over your upturned countenance. Your glasses are bespattered. Every autumn I bemoan the fact that no one has invented automatic spectacle wipers. Why not? Cars have had them since 1903. What's so hard about the technology?

Anyway, inspiration has struck. Step forward the shades of 'Philthy Animal' Taylor, late drummer and hell-raiser with metal monsters Motörhead.



In a back-of-the-tour-bus moment on the band's Everything Louder Than Everything Else DVD, Philthy unveils his invention. His 'self-contained keeping cool machine' consists of a

padded headband, with a projecting wire holding a tiny battery-operated propeller. Having adjusted the device an inch or so in front of his face, Philthy switches it on and sits back with a grin of pure pride, his bandmates chuckling through their fag smoke as the breeze of prop-wash stirs his impressive pompadour.

Now come on, British industry! Can't someone adapt Philthy's creation? Two little propellers with tiny chamois leathers attached? You can have the patent for free, provided I can name it. I give you PITAPAT – the Philthy-Inspired Translucency Attainment Perambulating Ablution Thingummybob. Now how's that for conciseness?



SKILLED UP

New awards scheme launched

The first Out There Award scheme has taken place equipping a group of young people aged 18-26 with the skills and confidence to explore Scotland's stunning landscapes and beyond for a lifetime.

The first session took place in Glasgow with a group of eight people participating. Part of Ramblers Scotland's Out There campaign, the free award scheme is taking place in several different locations, including Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Tayside, throughout summer and autumn covering basic navigation, hill safety and route planning during three non-consecutive day sessions.

Everyone who completes the scheme, which is partly funded by Scottish Government's Active Scotland division,

receives a certificate, neck buff and a year's Ramblers membership, plus an introduction to their local young walkers Ramblers group.

Joanna Mitchell, 26, took part in the scheme after hearing about it on Facebook.

'I thoroughly enjoyed it and have already signed up to five walks with the Glasgow Young Walkers, as well as their weekend trip to Gairloch in October,' she said. 'I had wanted to try hillwalking for a while but never knew how to get started. I was a bit nervous and I thought I'd be the least fit person there, but we all brought different experiences of walking and were all there for the shared reason of wanting to learn more about getting into the outdoors and meeting new people to go walking with.'

ramblers.org.uk/OutThereAward

WALK PREP

Are you adventure smart?

An outdoor safety campaign which originated in Wales, and has been supported by Ramblers Cymru for two years, is being rolled out across the UK in a bid to reduce the number of avoidable incidents that rescue and emergency services deal with.

The AdventureSmart campaign promotes



the safe enjoyment of the great outdoors by providing clear safety advice and live information on weather conditions.

Supported by Mountain Rescue England and Wales and other organisations, AdventureSmart has developed key advice centred on three questions: do I have the right gear? Do I know what the weather will be like? Am I confident I have the knowledge/skills for the day?

'We want to help more people get out walking,' said Rebecca Brough, Ramblers Cymru. 'But we want them to be safe, have the right clothing and footwear, and the right knowledge, so they don't get into difficulties.'

adventuresmart.uk

GREEN SPACE

London is world's first 'National Park City'

The UK's capital has become the world's first 'National Park City' under a global initiative to encourage cities around the world to strive to be 'greener, healthier and wilder'.

The mayor of London Sadiq Khan joined individuals and organisations to sign an agreement pledging his commitment to increasing London's green credentials, protecting parks and green spaces, ensuring wildlife is abundant and that children can enjoy and learn outdoors.

London's new status was celebrated with a week-long National Park City Festival of 300 free events encouraging residents to enjoy London's abundant green spaces.

Launched by the National Park City Foundation, in partnership with World Urban Parks and Salzburg Global Seminar, the movement – which is separate from the UK's 15

rural National Parks – aims to name at least 25 National Park Cities by 2025. In the UK, Glasgow and Newcastle upon Tyne are already working to be the next to achieve the status.

Daniel Raven-Ellison, who started the London as a National Park City campaign six years ago, said: 'Inspired by the aims and values of our precious rural national parks, the London National Park City is fundamentally about making life better in the capital through both small everyday things and long-term strategic thinking. It's about lifting our ambitions; going further to make the city greener, healthier and wilder; improving our mental health; cleaning our air; making the city richer in wildlife; freeing children to play and meet friends outdoors; tackling the climate crisis and bringing more joy to the city.' nationalparkcity.london



IN PRINT

Pocket Companion to the Countryside



By Mark Turley (£13.95, Countryside & Marine Media, ISBN 978 1527234093), ciwf.org/pocketcompanion

If you want to impress your walking companions with your endless knowledge of Britain's flora and fauna, this handy volume could easily be concealed in your waterproofs or daypack for furtive fact-checks on the go. And in a clever move away from standard wildlife spotters' guides, it includes a captivating section about farming. Learn how to recognise farm buildings and tractor attachments, sheep maintenance, the life cycle of cows and farming phraseology (know your heifer from your steer) – all in addition to common wildlife species, livestock breeds, crops and fungi that you're likely to encounter on a British countryside ramble.

NEW AUTUMN KIT

Rab switches to Gore-Tex

£280 rab.equipment/uk

Rab's new shell series for autumn and winter features waterproofing from Gore-Tex. And the Rab Kangri GTX Jacket, £280 (women's pictured) looks great for keeping lashing autumn showers at bay, with Gore-Tex Pro three-layer, waterproof fabric, a wired 'mountain' hood, a storm-guarded zipper and a fleecy chin guard.



Ticked off

Lifesystems Tick Repellent, £4.99 lifesystems.co.uk

Alarming news reports over the summer suggest that tick populations are booming. With grassy and wooded areas in southern England and the Scottish Highlands considered highest risk areas, it's a good idea to be prepared. Lifesystems' new DEET-free Tick Repellent contains Saltidin, which is said to work by blocking the insects' receptors. It offers up to eight hours of protection and is suitable for children from as young as two. We recommend repellent use alongside other preventative steps outlined here: bit.ly/RamblersTickAdvice

Use your head torch

£34.99 uk.gpbatteries.com

The USB rechargeable, water-resistant Xplor PHR15 300lm is mounted on a reflective washable head strap and boasts a dazzling 300-lumen lamp that cuts through up to 157 metres of darkness. Its clever brightness control automatically adjusts the head torch's light levels to fit surroundings, enabling hands-free use (it adjusts when map-reading, for example), and batteries promise up to 69 hours' use before needing to be recharged via the handy USB cable provided.



WALK INTO

WINTER ESCAPES

All our holidays include travel from the UK, all local transport, accommodation, tour leader, most meals + free wine on selected holidays
See website



MOVE IT

Step up to slow down

New research shows that walking 9,000 steps delays cognitive decline and the progression of Alzheimer's in people who may be at risk of developing the disease.

A team from Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, USA, carried out the study with 182 participants, whose average age was just over 73 years old and included individuals who were considered at risk because of the levels of amyloid beta (a protein thought to play a role in Alzheimer's) in their brains. During an eight-year period until June 2018, participants sat annual cognitive tests, had between two and five brain scans and wore pedometers for a seven-day period to count the number of steps they took.

The research paper, published in medical journal *JAMA Neurology*, suggests that even

fairly low levels of physical activity were shown to reduce the cognitive decline in older adults.

'Beneficial effects were seen at even modest levels of physical activity but were most prominent at around 8,900 steps,' Reisa Sperling, co-author of the paper and director of the Centre for Alzheimer's Research and Treatment, told the Press Association.

Gemma Cantelo, head of policy and advocacy at the Ramblers, said: 'This study adds to the growing body of evidence about the contribution of walking to happy, healthy ageing. We know from other research that regular exercise, such as 150 minutes of brisk walking each week, can reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's by 45% and dementia overall by around 30%. Being socially active – whether it's walking with a group or family and friends – can also help reduce the risk.'

CELEBRATE

Offa's Dyke passport

To celebrate its 50th birthday, the Offa's Dyke Association has a passport scheme to encourage walkers to collect 12 stamps along the 177-mile national trail. The £5 Offa's Dyke Walkers' Passport and guide to the stamping stations can be bought at tourist information centres along the route or ordered online or by phone in advance. Proceeds go to the Offa's Dyke Conservation Fund. 01547 528753, offasdyke.org.uk



VOLUNTEER ARMY

Volunteers



London's walking and cycling commissioner Will Norman joined Ramblers' CEO Vanessa Griffiths and volunteers from Inner London Ramblers to celebrate a new scheme to improve the Capital Ring and London Loop. Over 100 volunteers have signed up to be guardian rangers or leaders for the two long-distance footpaths orbiting London, aiming to promote their work with borough councils to flag any necessary works.

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INFOGRAPHIC

On the trail

National Trails and Great Trails pass through some of the most stunning and diverse landscapes in Britain and represent a hugely valuable resource that benefits our wellbeing and economy



83m

Visitors per year*



2,500 miles

England and Wales' 15 National Trails

1965

Pennine Way opened

2020

2,795-mile England Coast Path to open



£533m

Spent per year by visitors



£1.6m

Government spend on national trails (3p per person)



↓30%

decline in government spending on NTs in England since 2010

79 miles

Yorkshire Wolds Way is the shortest



630 miles

South West Coast Path is the longest

SOURCE: SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE; SCOTLANDSGREATTRAILS.COM; NATIONAL TRAILS ALLIANCE REPORT MARCH 2019; NATIONALTRAIL.CO.UK; ORDNANCESURVEY.CO.UK; *NATIONAL TRAILS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

NAISMITH'S RULE

Moving with the times

Britain's mapping agency is updating the way it estimates the time taken to walk a particular route, stepping away from the long-established method devised by Scottish mountaineer William Naismith in 1892. Naismith's 127-year-old rule states that walkers should allow one hour for every 5km/three miles and an hour for every 600m/2,000ft of ascent.

But Ordnance Survey plans to revise the way walk times are predicted by using data collected by its smartphone app. It says the addition of an activity-monitoring function to the OS app will enable its one million users to record their walks. This data will then be used to work out general averages

for particular routes, taking into account how steep a route's ascents and descents are.

OS says the revision should help walkers to prepare better and reduce the number of incidents of people being caught out by nightfall.



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CASEWORK FOCUS

Protecting rights of way

The Ramblers engages with landowners and local authorities to try to resolve rights of way issues without recourse to legal action. However, when more intractable cases go to public inquiry or court, we work with legal experts, local authorities and our volunteers to protect walkers' rights

PATH SUCCESSES

Path improvements



West Wiltshire Ramblers have unlocked funding of more than £4,500 to install 26 new kissing gates. Working with Wiltshire Council, parish councils and

local area boards, the path maintenance team completed the first stage in Bromham parish in the spring, improving access to two pathways that provide superb views. 'The footpath has great views of Oliver's Castle and Roundway Hill - iconic local landmarks,' said Dave Yearsley, working party coordinator. Further works will take place in the parishes of Seend, Melksham Without and Dilton Marsh.

Going out of stile



Volunteers from White Cliffs Ramblers have installed 16 self-closing gates, two kissing gates and two timber stile kits to transform access for walkers. Along

Swingfield Street, between Folkestone and Dover, a total of 11 stiles were removed and replaced, creating a large stile-free footpath network. 'None of this work would have been possible without subsidies towards the cost of the gates from Kent County Council, plus the use of their off-road truck for carrying materials to the sites,' said Averil Brice, Kent Ramblers' footpath maintenance officer.

Paths and conservation



South Gwent Ramblers' path maintenance team and Newport City Council have installed a kissing gate and cleared vegetation along rights of way across Newport

Golf Club. This will help walkers safely navigate the routes across the course. South Gwent Ramblers work with the local authority. 'The Newport City Council countryside team wouldn't be able to achieve half as much we do without the help of Ramblers Cymru volunteers,' said Liz Birkinshaw, assistant countryside warden, Newport City Council.

CASE 1

Stamford, Lincolnshire

RESULT SUCCESSFUL

After more than three decades, the persistence of Stamford Ramblers has resulted in a 670-metre public footpath by the River Welland on the edge of Stamford being added to the rights of way network. The application was submitted, based on public use, in April 1987, but Lincolnshire County Council sat on the application for five years and then waited another 25 years before submitting the opposed order to the

Planning Inspectorate for determination. By 2018, the people connected with the original application were unavailable, but Peter Honniball from Stamford Ramblers remained on the case. Evidence materialised from people who could testify to its use during and prior to the 20-year period 1967-1987, including one person 1918-1986. The Inspector found this was evidence of adequate public use, so confirmed the order, adding a path through water meadows and past an ancient priory to the network. The path, however, has been much obstructed in the meantime, leaving the highway authority a major task to make it useable.

CASE 2

Trans Pennine Trail, Sheffield

RESULT SUCCESSFUL



Sheffield Ramblers and several outdoors organisations have successfully persuaded the Secretary of State to confirm a public path creation order, creating a new 479-metre bridleway to form part of the Trans Pennine Trail, connecting Butterthwaite Lane and Loicher Lane in the Ecclesfield district of Sheffield.

The City of Sheffield Council made the order, but an objection was made by the landowner, who said that the proposed bridleway was wider than needed. The matter fell to be determined by an Inspector

on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Sheffield Ramblers supported the order; so did Cycling UK's Right to Ride group, the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society, the British Horse Society, Sustrans, and the Friends of the Trans Pennine Trail. This combined support led the Inspector to find that there was an indisputable need for the bridleway for all types of non-motorised traffic, both for leisure and work purposes. The objectors had argued that given the industrial surroundings, the route was unlikely to be used by horse riders making the 5.5-metre width unnecessary. The Inspector disagreed and found that the full width was already in use by some horse riders, and that the 'splendid long-distance views southwards towards the Peak District' would add to the enjoyment likely to be derived by them and by other non-motorised users. She therefore confirmed the order in May 2019.



Found a path problem?
Report it via the Pathwatch App
ramblers.org.uk/pathwatch



REUSE RECYCLE

Kit out the homeless

Outdoor retailer Ellis Brigham is encouraging customers to donate their unwanted clothing and gear to help the homeless and cut landfill waste. Three Ellis Brigham stores (one in Manchester and two in London) are collecting items for the 2nd Life campaign to pass on to two charities that help those living on the streets. It aims to kit out some of the estimated 320,000 living rough on the UK's streets and stop some of the clothing, said to be worth £140m annually, from being sent to landfill sites. Items

can also be posted (call 0808 164 0600).

Rohan is another outdoor brand involved in a similar scheme. From September this year, walkers can donate their unwanted, good-quality clothing and kit to the nationwide Gift Your Gear campaign at Rohan stores, where it will be provided to UK community organisations, youth groups and charities working with young people in the outdoors. Donors receive a 15% discount on Rohan products as a thank you. gifyourgear.com.

MEMBER BENEFIT

Explore more with the new app

The new and exclusive Ramblers app is designed for people who are passionate about walking and is the only smartphone app to offer a searchable library of 50,000 Ramblers group walks across Great Britain. This is just the beginning – later this year, thousands of independent routes will be added to the list of existing features.

● **Discover Ramblers group walks** – with thousands of group walks across Great Britain each year, there's guaranteed to be a walk to suit everyone. Use the app to search for group

walks locally or join groups further afield.

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- **The latest offers** – receive exclusive offers direct to your mobile.
- **walk magazine** – browse kit reviews, read about overseas walking adventures and plan walks with content from your favourite walking magazine. **Download the free and exclusive Ramblers app from the App Store on Apple, or Google Play for Android and sign up using your membership number.** Join our mobile community today.



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WHAT'S NEW



Manchester Green Trail

MANCHESTER

The Manchester Green Trail has been updated by the Manchester and Salford Ramblers and with the support of Transport for Greater Manchester and Manchester City Council. It's a walking circuit made up of 14 routes that connects many of the green spaces, public parks and tree-lined streets around the city. The routes are now more accessible from public transport.



Kearsney Loop Walk

KENT

A new 2.6-mile path has opened in Dover, thanks to the White Cliffs Ramblers, Dover District Council and the Ministry of Defence (MOD), which owns part of the land. The Kearsney Loop Walk now takes walkers away from a busy road, and is a 'golden key', giving direct access to miles of scenic rural public rights of way.



Historic path saved

SUFFOLK

A strategic 1.5-mile footpath in Suffolk will be added to the definitive map, thanks to a Suffolk Ramblers volunteer. John Andrews used historic evidence to prove the existence of the path running through the parishes of Chevington, Ickworth and Horringer. It will enable people to access countryside south-west of Bury St Edmunds on foot.

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rohan.co.uk

YOUR VIEW

Have your say – and you could win a great prize!

STAR
LETTER



Walking to cope with grief

I read recently in *walk* about how much walking helps after a loss or bereavement. My husband died in November 2015. I had been walking Offa's Dyke in stages with my local group, so, in April 2016, I continued with them on the next stage. Although I was feeling raw and found it difficult to socialise – just wanting to cry as I walked – I shall always be grateful to fellow Ramblers, who would gently ask me how I was doing. They listened to me unloading my grief and anger, and my need to recall the events surrounding my loss. Nearly four years later, I am in a better place and currently walking the Coleridge Way with this group. It was interesting to compare notes with other widows and find we all agreed that walking and being among nature were lifesavers.

Margaret Bradshaw, South Devon Ramblers

For mind, body and soul

While there is no doubt walking has physical benefits, mental health aspects should not be overlooked. We are voluntary walk leaders for a scheme in Burnley and find many of our walkers welcome and enjoy the activities designed to promote both physical and mental health. For example, at the end of walks, people can enjoy a cup of coffee or lunch

together. We organise day trips out and an annual holiday. People who cannot walk distances any more meet up with our leaders for a bite to eat. The social and mental health aspects of walking are equally important.

Elaine and Michael Bates, Burnley



Island has the Wight stuff

I returned home from the Isle of Wight to find the summer edition of *walk*, featuring a cover photo of the path I had been walking on a couple of days before. My love of the Isle of Wight came during 18 years as a walk leader for HF Holidays. I've led over 100 walks on the island and walked the coast path five times. Then in 2017, arthritis took over and I had two hip replacements within four months. During my recovery, I longed to go back and walk on some familiar paths. My energy levels have deteriorated and I can't walk long distances, so decided to select bite-size chunks. I based myself in Yarmouth and mostly used the excellent local bus service to take me to and from walks. I also combined walks with a visit to Osborne House and a ride on the steam train. Not quite the lengthy walks I was used to, but I felt pleased with what I had achieved on this wonderful, pretty, diverse island. I enjoyed my memories and realised that I could still enjoy the walks but at a slower pace. It is truly a Treasure Island for all abilities.

Penny Jamieson, Milton Keynes



Walking challenge among friends

A couple of years ago, I helped signpost the Wakefield Way, a 70-mile walk around Wakefield's rural boundary. In this, my first summer of (early) retirement, I set myself the challenge to walk the whole route. Imagine my surprise when Wakefield Ramblers' programme dropped on the mat – they were to walk the whole 11 sections over the summer. So I now enjoy pleasant company, with the bus numbers and times all organised, as I am fulfilling my challenge of walking the Wakefield Way.

Caroline Slater, Wakefield

50 years of the Cleveland Way
Walkers from Cleveland, Durham City and Northallerton Ramblers on Carlton Moor during a walk in May, to celebrate 50 years of the Cleveland Way.

Moira Tayler, Redcar





Car-free and carefree

I retired recently and gave my car to my nephew. I had needed it for work but was never a keen driver. My friend and I decided to set aside Mondays for walking, and manage to cover a fair amount using only public transport. We decided that an hour's travelling (each way) was our upper limit, as we don't want to spend longer travelling than walking. We are extremely lucky to live in the west of Scotland, and within an hour's reach we have the choice of woodland, river, canal, loch and coastal walks. On the few occasions when we're feeling fit and able to face a bit of a climb, we have the wonderful Beinn Dubh horseshoe route at Luss. And when the weather is less than ideal for walking, we head for Edinburgh (above) and the magnificent museums and galleries. All within an hour. Who needs a car?

Julia Butler, Paisley

Mystery solved

In response to the photo 'What's this?' (*Your View*, summer, p19), the picture is of a 'shooting high seat'. Mainly used for shooting deer, the elevated position ensures that the bullets from a hunter's rifle pass safely into the ground, whether or not they have passed through an unsuspecting deer on the way. If fired at ground level, the bullets from a typical high-powered rifle would remain lethal for many hundreds of yards. Not good news for local ramblers.

Clive Bartley, Warwickshire

Tea-total

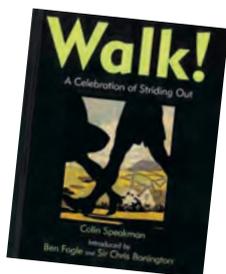
Having cycled in Cambridgeshire, where tea shops are an enigma, I sympathise with Sue Weatherley (*Your View*, summer, p19) and offer this advice: regularly support tea shops that are open; liaise with local pubs, youth hostels and B&Bs to provide an arranged group tea; end some walks near to garden centres or supermarkets that have late-opening cafés; take a camping stove and ask ramblers to carry a mug and teabag and have tea outside!

Jacqueline Mountford-Green, Northallerton Ramblers

Thank you, footpath guardians

I recently joined the Ramblers, having been interested in walking since climbing Pendle Hill with my father as a youngster.

I decided to join after reading the book *Walk!* by Colin Speakman. Until then, I thought the Ramblers was just a group for serious walkers. I didn't realise the hard



work that goes on for me to enjoy walking; not just in the countryside but in urban areas as well. I want

to thank everyone who works tirelessly to keep our footpath network open. Also, a big thank you to Colin Speakman for writing such an interesting book. Glad to be part of it!

Wayne Bowman, Lancashire



On your high horse

I wondered if this is the tallest path marker in the UK? Seen on a path close to Eglwysbach, North Wales last week. My friend nearest the pole is 6ft 11in, so I would guess the sign is 14ft high. We didn't see any people on stilts or giants on horseback passing, but perhaps we picked a quiet time of day!

Martin Steibelt, Kent

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merrell.com Runners-up will win an Adventure Medical Mountain Hiker kit, worth £20. The kit includes first-aid supplies to treat common

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Over to you...

Got something to say? Tell us at walkmag@ramblers.org.uk or write to us at: **walk** magazine, Ramblers, 2nd Floor, Carnelford House, 87-90 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TW. Letters may be edited.



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YOUR SHOTS

Our favourites from our 'protected landscapes' competition...

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FIRLE BEACON, SOUTH DOWNS NP BY JACQUELINE KNIGHTS



WINNER

LAKE DISTRICT AFTER A SUMMER STORM BY MARION STRINGER



LANGDALE, LAKE DISTRICT NP BY WAYNE BEESLEY



THE MANGER, UFFINGTON, NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AONB BY GARY COX



LOW BARNES NATURE RESERVE, DURHAM BY GORAN ERFANI



HEADING TO GRASMERE FROM FAIRFIELD, LAKE DISTRICT NP BY FREDERIK HOLLOWAY



CLOUGHA PIKE, THE FOREST OF BOWLAND AONB BY DAN WEAVER



GRITSTONE EDGES, PEAK DISTRICT NP BY FIONA HAWARD



WIN! A PAIR OF MERRELL MQM FLEX SHOES

For this issue's competition, we'd like you to send us photos from your favourite path or trail and tell us where it is. The sender of our winning photograph will receive a pair of Merrell MQM Flex shoes worth £115. These lightweight shoes have a Gore-Tex waterproof



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How to enter
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Dolomights

Discover the awe-inspiring Dolomites this autumn

Each mountain in the Dolomites is like a piece of art. Le Corbusier called them the most beautiful buildings in the world. He said God built them; I'd say nature did.' The great Italian mountaineer, adventurer and explorer Reinhold Messner can perhaps be excused a little bias when extolling the virtues of his home region of South Tyrol, but he certainly knows a mountain when he sees one.

THE 'OTHER SIDE' OF ITALY

Rest assured, though, you don't have to be a mountaineer to appreciate the Dolomites' unique, snaggle-toothed beauty. With early autumn the ideal time to visit, there's no time like the present to plan your exploration of Europe's most beautiful mountain region.

Slow Holiday experts Inntravel have done all the hard work for you, with their tempting selection of self-guided walking itineraries. And with no luggage to weigh you down (your bags are transported from one charming family-run hotel to the next), and Inntravel's detailed notes to guide you, you don't have to worry about a thing.

From impossibly green high-Alpine pastures to the iconic Drei Zinnen ('three peaks') close to the Austrian border, you'll be treated to glorious scenery and sumptuous views.



Inntravel offers five different self-guided walking holidays – and one cycling holiday – to South Tyrol. Visit inntravel.co.uk or call 01653 617000 to find out more. For more information on the region, visit suedtirol.info/dolomites-unesco



THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

South Tyrol also offers a unique and intriguing fusion of cultures. Italian in name, but predominantly German-speaking and with the Ladin language – dating back to Roman times – still prevalent, this region blends Alpine traditions with Mediterranean flair, particularly in the kitchen. And with the highest concentration of Michelin-starred restaurants in Italy, and former farmers' fare often given an innovative twist – Speck (smoked ham/bacon), mountain cheeses and the half-moon-shaped Schlutzkrapfen pasta parcels are to be found on many menus – you can enjoy top-quality food, often accompanied by delicious local wines.

THE PERFECT TIME TO GO

With the region celebrating its 10th anniversary as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as well as the 150th anniversary of mountaineering, there's no better time to discover these stunning landscapes. September and early October generally bring warm days, cooler nights and sharper views; and with summer's visitors gone, you'll often have the trails to yourselves, making the changing of the autumnal light an almost ethereal experience.

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A RAMBLING REVOLUTION

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the legislation that sought to protect our natural assets and throw them open to the masses. The result of sustained lobbying by pioneers of the national parks' movement, including visionary campaigners from the Ramblers, the 1949 Act safeguarded our rights of way and laid the foundations for national trails and protected landscapes.

But work continues to keep the Act's original ambitions alive

WORDS ANDREW McCLOY ILLUSTRATIONS CHRIS ANDREWS

For most of us today, a Britain without national parks, nature reserves or signposted footpaths is simply inconceivable. Imagine what unchecked development in the countryside would look like, or the open hills declared permanently out of bounds? Remarkably, that was the reality just 70 years ago, until a visionary Act of Parliament changed the landscape and our relationship with it forever. So how did we get to that point?

As the Industrial Revolution gathered pace across Europe during the 19th century, it had a cultural impact that went far beyond the stark new factories and mills. Rapid population growth led to urbanisation and a new working class of people increasingly cut off from the natural world around them. A middle class also began to emerge, but they would use their comparative affluence and leisure time to escape from the crowded towns and cities, often via the new railways that spread rapidly across the countryside. Here, a different sort of revolution was under way. Food production needed to be stepped up to feed the hungry urban masses, but with mechanisation and crop improvements went a series of Enclosure Acts that dramatically changed the nature of land holding and denied access to hitherto common land, driving millions of dispossessed rural poor to the cities.

Meanwhile, a cultural shift among artists, writers and intellectuals was also under way as Romanticism rejected classical forms and railed against the dehumanising effects of industrialisation. Instead, the likes of Turner, Wordsworth and Ruskin celebrated wild beauty and transformed the way we interpret and appreciate the natural world.

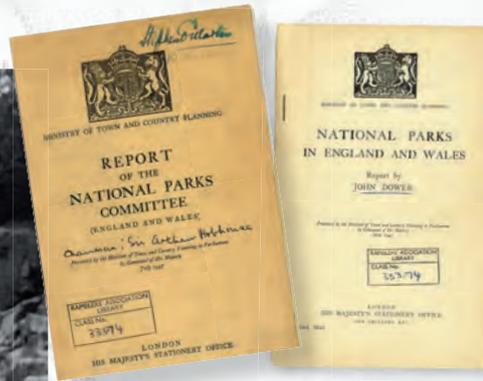
This social upheaval was the backdrop to the 1949 legislation, as 20th-century Britain took stock and developed a growing appetite

‘National parks and access to open and wild places are essential if minds and spirits are to be refreshed and bodies exercised’

both to protect its natural assets and secure a rightful public access to them. At the extreme it was embodied by the Kinder Scout Mass Trespass of 1932, when a group of young people felt so passionately about their right to walk on private moorland in the Peak District that they were prepared to go to prison to achieve it. Elsewhere, there were mass access rallies at Winnats Pass in Derbyshire but, in fact, protests against footpath closures went back much further, including a large demonstration on Winter Hill, above Bolton, in 1896.

Along with the Ramblers, some of our most eminent conservation and access bodies were formed in these years, including the Open Spaces Society, National Trust and the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE). The agenda for change was becoming irresistible.





📍 Clockwise from left: Labour MPs on the proposed route of the Pennine Way in 1948; the Hobhouse and Dower reports; a view of Buttermere and Crummock Water in the Lake District National Park

Realising the dream

Emboldened by this growing public clamour for action, a standing committee to campaign for the creation of national parks was set up (eventually it would become the Campaign for National Parks). It first met in May 1936, the year after the Ramblers' federated groups came together under one name, and was made up of influential groups (alongside the Ramblers), including the Council for the Protection of Rural Wales, Open Spaces Society, Zoological Society, Cyclists' Touring Club, RSPB, Holiday Fellowship, YHA and the National Trust.

The Ramblers quickly honed their campaigning skills, which would be crucial in getting the 1949 Act over the line, producing, among other things, a pamphlet entitled *National Parks: An Appeal to Ramblers, Cyclists, Campers, Hostellers and all who love the Beauty of Britain*. At the organisation's heart were a number of commanding personalities whose tenacity, energy and conviction shines through even today. The Ramblers long-time secretary, Tom Stephenson – probably best known as the architect of the Pennine Way – used his experience as a journalist and press officer to drive the agenda forwards and cultivate political support in Parliament.

When it came to translating the vision, Tom turned to his friend and ally John Dower, Secretary of the Standing Committee on National Parks, and it was his official report in 1945 that became the national parks' blueprint. But there were others at the Ramblers who helped lay the groundwork, most notably the then president Francis Ritchie, who served alongside Tom on a government committee chaired by Sir Arthur Hobhouse, tasked with progressing the new bill. >

Timeline: on the campaign trail

1872

Yellowstone in the USA becomes the world's first national park.

1932

Kinder Scout Mass Trespass leads to the jailing of five ramblers.

1935

Ramblers' Association founded after its federated groups come together.

1936

Ramblers join first meeting of the Standing Committee on National Parks.

1945

John Dower's report advocates national parks, countryside protection and access in England and Wales.

1949

Ramblers celebrate campaign success as National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act passes into law.

1951

First four National Parks are created in the Peak District, the Lake District, Snowdonia and Dartmoor.

1965

Pennine Way, inspired by Ramblers secretary Tom Stephenson, is opened as Britain's first long-distance path (national trail).

1968

Countryside Act creates the Countryside Commission – rights of way to be signposted.

1995

Environment Act makes national park authorities fully

independent with enhanced powers.

2000

Sustained campaigning by the Ramblers helps to win the Countryside and Rights of Way Act and the 'right to roam' on mapped mountain, moor, heath and down.

2002

First national parks in Scotland formally established – Loch Lomond and The Trossachs and Cairngorms.

2003

Ramblers Scotland celebrates the Land Reform Act, which secured responsible access over most areas of land and water in Scotland.

2009

Sustained Ramblers campaign helps to establish the Marine and Coastal Access Act, setting out new England Coast Path National Trail and coastal access.

2010

After a very long campaign, South Downs designated as a national park.

2012

Ramblers Cymru celebrates the opening of the Wales Coast Path – the world's first uninterrupted route along a national coast.

2019

Independent review of England's national parks and AONBs due to report to government in the autumn.

For a more detailed timeline, visit ramblers.org.uk/1949Act

Another was Anglican priest and ardent conservationist HH Symonds, who much later would also be the Ramblers' president.

The Hobhouse Report was published in 1947 and endorsed Dower's recommendations, but even with victory so close, a crowded legislative timetable and an unhelpful civil service threatened to scupper the bill. The Ramblers responded by organising an intensive lobbying of MPs and ministers, bombarding them with letters, resolutions and public meetings. Tom Stephenson even led a three-day walking trip along the intended route of the Pennine Way for a group of MPs, including Barbara Castle and former Chancellor Hugh Dalton, which sparked such huge press interest that the group was followed all the way to the top of Cross Fell by journalists and photographers.

'As press officer at the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, Tom wrote the first statement of intent for the 1949 Act for Minister Lewis Silkin,' explains Kate Ashbrook, chair of the Ramblers' Board of Trustees. 'Tom, with his burning belief in the value of access and wild country, was

uniquely placed to have a major impact on the Act. It was a stroke of genius to lead the parliamentarians on the Pennine Way generating much publicity. He was enormously influential.'

Those same Labour politicians had just enjoyed a landslide election victory in 1945 and it was their modernising legislation, imbued with hope and idealism, that not only reshaped health and education provision and created the modern welfare state, but also – for the first time – delivered a protected and accessible countryside that we hold so dear.

Pioneering and momentous

The campaigning paid off and the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, described by Lewis Silkin as 'the most exciting act of the post-war Parliament', passed into law on 16 December 1949. Most obviously, it paved the way for the creation of national parks in England and Wales. The Peak District was the first to be established on 17 April 1951, closely followed by the Lake District, Snowdonia and Dartmoor.



📍 Above: The hamlet of Keld in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Above right: The pioneering Tom Stephenson

UPDATE

Last year, the government announced an independent review of England's protected landscapes led by Julian Glover, journalist and former special advisor to the Department for Transport. The review, timed to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the 1949 Act, is exploring 'how these iconic landscapes meet our needs in the 21st century'.

Ever since we fought for the 1949 Act, the Ramblers has worked to ensure that the vision of Tom Stephenson, Francis Ritchie and the other national parks' pioneers is fully realised. To this day, our volunteers work with the protected landscapes to achieve this mission. The Ramblers worked in partnership with these volunteers to respond to the review's call for evidence and outline how these special places can be protected and enhanced for future generations of walkers.

Our national trails, national parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) should be viewed and managed, not in isolation, but as a network of habitats and landscapes connected by long-distance routes. With the right management and support, these landscapes and routes could be a national network for nature recovery

Glover Review

Ensuring the vision of those pioneering Ramblers who brought about the landmark protection is carried forward

and wellbeing. Yet funding for trails – the jewel in the crown of our rights of way – fell by 5% this year. National trails, national parks and AONBs need to receive equal recognition, protection and certainty of financial support.

Although resources are under pressure, public access is managed and maintained better in national parks than in many other places. We would like to see this strengthened through a



presumption in favour of responsible public access in all national parks and AONBs. We think that AONBs should have a higher profile for public access within their purposes, so they can play a stronger role in connecting people to nature. We also support schemes – such as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award – that encourage visitors from a variety of backgrounds to appreciate these unique landscapes. Better sustainable transport connections also have an important role to play.

In July 2019, Julian Glover released his interim findings. Many of the Ramblers' messages were reflected – from the need to secure funding for national parks and increase investment in AONBs, to the importance of making the health and wellbeing benefits of the countryside accessible to all. The challenge now is to make that happen. In Glover's words, it is time to 'reignite the fire and vision which brought this system into being in 1949. We need our finest landscapes to be places of natural beauty which look up and outwards to the nation they serve.'

By Alison Hallas, policy and advocacy officer for the Ramblers



John Dower was quite clear about their role: 'National parks are not for any privileged or otherwise restricted section of the population, but for all who come to refresh their minds and spirit, and exercise their bodies in a peaceful setting of natural beauty.' Seventy years later, Britain has 15 popular and much-loved national parks, covering almost 20% of the land area of Wales, a tenth of England and 7% of Scotland, and accounting for over 170 million visitor days and £5 billion spending annually in the rural economy.

On its own, the creation of Britain's national parks was pioneering and momentous, but the 1949 Act went much further and it's all the other component parts, especially when taken together, that make this such a landmark piece of legislation and the Ramblers' role in its delivery so significant.

The 1949 Act also provided for the creation of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), which were identified as naturally beautiful landscapes not suitable for national park designation because of their small size and lack of wildness. The first was the Gower Peninsula in South Wales in 1956, and another 45 followed in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (and 40 National Scenic Areas in Scotland). The Act paved the way for official long-distance paths (now called national trails), of which

'Tom [Stephenson], with his burning belief in the value of access and wild country, was uniquely placed to have a major impact on the Act... He was enormously influential'



the Pennine Way was the first, and it also gave us national nature reserves (NNRs), designed to protect some of our most important habitats.

There are now 224 NNRs in England alone and they include The Wash, Wicken Fen, and Studland and Godlingston Heath. Crucially, the Act also set up the public bodies that would implement these new designations – the National Parks Commission (later the Countryside Commission) and the Nature Conservancy.

Definitive maps and much more

Another vitally important provision resulting from the Act required highway authorities (usually county councils) to carry out a survey of all public rights of way in their area and produce a Definitive Map and Statement. For the first time, there would be a record of where the public was legally allowed to go, which would eventually lead to 140,000 miles of recorded public rights of way in England and Wales, providing the ability to walk recreationally and from one place to another on foot – sometimes via paths that have been walked for thousands of years. These maps have proved to be invaluable in protecting paths from being closed, obstructed and built on.

In the decades after the Act's introduction, however, there were setbacks and inevitably

not all of the original aspirations were fully realised. Apart from in the Peak District, there were few new access agreements. It took almost 20 years to create any long-distance paths, and under-resourced highway authorities and opposition from landowners meant that work to record and map local rights of way was often arduous and slow.

Keeping ambitions alive

Despite this, the Ramblers continues to keep the ambitions of the 1949 Act alive, for instance successfully lobbying to replace the rather toothless joint advisory committees that had been set up to manage each national park with stronger and fully independent boards. Locally, Ramblers groups helped plot the routes of new walking trails like the Pennine Way (as they are doing now for the England Coast Path), and gathered evidence of local paths and other historic routes for recording on the new Definitive Maps.

In 1985, the Forbidden Britain campaign launched, which eventually led to the introduction of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act in 2000, granting walkers the 'right to roam' across 865,000 hectares of mountain, moor, heath and downland. This was swiftly followed by the Land Reform Act 2003, securing responsible access over most areas in Scotland. In 2009, the public won the right to walk along the entire coast of England – efforts of local Ramblers have been invaluable in identifying and mapping the best route of the forthcoming 3,000-mile England Coast Path.

Volunteers have also been working to save an estimated 10,000 miles of forgotten historic routes and get them inscribed on the Definitive Map ahead of a 2026 deadline.

Building on 1949

The Ramblers continues to campaign on the vision of Stephenson, Dower, Ritchie and others in 21st-century Britain, as well as completing some 'unfinished business' from 70 years ago. 'We remain inspired by >

the ambitions of the 1949 Act and continue to build on what it achieved in a way that is relevant to the needs of walkers today and tomorrow,' explains Ramblers' chief executive, Vanessa Griffiths. 'Our Don't Lose Your Way project continues to put historic ways onto the Definitive Map, and our campaigning work on national trails has led to the creation of the England Coast Path. We are also currently campaigning for the Environment Bill to be supported by mandatory targets around connecting

people to nature, an Agriculture Bill that makes public access a public good, and better public transport links to our national parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to improve accessibility.'

One of the great legacies of the 1949 Act

for walkers is the network of 16 national trails that today crisscross England and Wales (and latterly Scotland's 29 Great Trails), and the Ramblers continues to campaign for their upkeep in the face of relentless budget cuts. A similar challenge faces the much-cherished rights of way network – let's not forget the contribution of thousands of Ramblers volunteers playing an enormous role in protecting and maintaining our paths. But now there's the added threat of the 2026 deadline to record historic public paths before they are lost forever. The Ramblers' campaign slogan, Don't Lose Your Way, could equally reflect the organisation's sentiment not to allow the wider achievements of the 1949 Act to be lost or devalued.

From the very early days of protest and lobbying through to connecting people with nature in a modern and ever more urban Britain, the Ramblers were clear, just as John Dower was more than 70 years ago,

that national parks and access to open and wild places are essential if minds and spirits are to be refreshed and bodies exercised.

'The 1949 Act caught the spirit of the time,' reflects Kate Ashbrook. 'The Ramblers was crucial in achieving the Act, and our role remains vital today as we lobby to ensure that our countryside, access and paths are secured and improved for future generations.' ■



Be a Ramblers campaigner

Inspired? We rely on our members to campaign with us and keep the original ambitions of the 1949 Act alive. Sign up and receive a free downloadable vintage poster of the Autumn cover and join the movement: ramblers.org.uk/1949Act



BEFORE 1949

'In a confused state'

A popular Ramblers guide reveals how problematic old footpath laws were

Anyone experiencing problems on a country walk can at least reflect that things were much worse 75 years ago. A best-selling 1944 Ramblers booklet, *Right of Way: Footpath Law for Everyone*, shows just how problematic the old footpath law was and how much was achieved by the 1949 Act and its successors.

The Ramblers initially envisaged printing 1,500 copies but, as the annual report later recorded, 'The demand for it has been almost embarrassing.' It had been 'favourably reviewed in over 100 newspapers and journals', and 17,500 copies were eventually produced, with the best customers being public libraries, local authorities and county planning departments.

For a start, how did you find a footpath?

The walker 'cannot expect to find a sign "Public Footpath"... such indications are the exception not the rule'. Further, 'It is only the most frequently used paths which show any track on the ground.' There were

some footpath survey maps published either by councils or by the Ramblers themselves but 'at present they cover only a small area of the country'.

It went on to say that 'the law relating to maintenance and repair of public rights of way is in a confused state' – with responsibility divided among county, parish and rural district councils. The answer sometimes depended on whether the path existed before 1835 or, in the case of bridges, before 1803. Liability for repair of a stile or other fence crossing was 'often in dispute'.

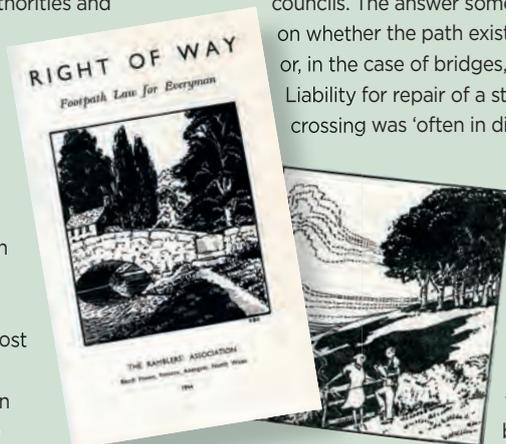
As for obstructions, a parish council had to make a complaint before a rural district council would take action but 'unfortunately,

some parish councils (a minority but still too many) are dominated by people who have an interest in opposing the use of footpaths and this occasionally extends also to the rural council'. The booklet went on to state, perhaps superfluously, 'The presence of a bull in a field can be as effective in preventing use of a path as some more obviously deliberate methods.' County councils had the power to make bye-laws prohibiting the keeping of bulls over a year old in fields traversed by public paths, but the booklet then listed fully 20 counties covering large areas of the countryside where no such bye-laws existed.

Of course, it was still wartime and until the 'invasion scare' receded, defence regulations provided that 'no one could acquire maps on a scale exceeding one inch to the mile without a permit from a chief of police'. Even after this, 'map users were frequently viewed with suspicion', and walkers were advised to 'use their maps openly, with no attempt at concealment'.

As the foreword to the 1944 booklet stated: 'Our highway law has a long history, and in some respects is undoubtedly archaic and in need of reform.' Happily, reform was only five years away.

By Rodney Whittaker



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TEN PLACES

THE GREAT ESCAPE

Britain's national parks encompass some of the country's most important natural assets. But next time you visit one, why not go off the beaten track?

WORDS MATTHEW JONES

Kentmere, Lake District

ABOUT Attracting more than 16.4 million visitors a year, the Lake District is the UK's most popular national park. But if you prefer to wander 'lonely as a cloud', to borrow Lakeland poet William Wordsworth's immortal phrase, try exploring Kentmere. The classic horseshoe route offers the opportunity to bag no fewer than eight Wainwrights.

WALK IT An early start is needed for this long 21km/13-mile circuit, which traverses all the major fells that surround the valley. From Kentmere, climb to the top of the Garburn Pass and turn R, following the undulating ridge to Thornthwaite Crag. Traverse around the head of the valley to Mardale Ill Bell, drop down to the Nan Bield Pass and then back up to Harter Fell and Kentmere Pike. Continue to Shipman Knotts and pick up a track that leads back to Kentmere.

FIND OUT MORE

bit.ly/10PlacesLakeDistrict

2 Iping and Stedham Commons, South Downs

ABOUT Picture-postcard images of the South Downs typically feature chalk cliffs or rolling green hills. Yet there are many other distinctive landscapes within the boundaries of the nation's newest national park – including the lowland heath at Iping and Stedham Commons. This increasingly scarce habitat is home to all sorts of wildlife, and a walk here makes a rewarding day out.

WALK IT The car park off Elsted Road just outside Midhurst gives direct access to footpaths across the two commons. Look out for butterflies among the heather and dragonflies flitting across the ponds. Birds you might spot or hear include the hobby, woodlark, siskin, linnet, lesser redpoll, willow warbler and stonechat.

FIND OUT MORE bit.ly/10PlacesSouthdowns



3 Beinn Mhòr, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs

ABOUT Despite their 22-mile length, the shores of Loch Lomond can get very busy – hardly helped by the fact that the popular West Highland Way runs alongside its eastern edge. Meanwhile, heavy traffic rumbles along the A82 on the opposite shore. Leave it all behind and make for the quiet Cowal Peninsula, a landscape of rugged hills and pretty glens.

WALK IT Beinn Mhòr is the highest point on the peninsula, yet is infrequently climbed. To get there, follow the single track road into Glen Massan until you reach a parking area. Continue heading up the glen on foot, then take the zigzag forestry track to the R, which climbs high above the Allt Coire Mheasan, keeping below the ridge to eventually reach the summit. Retrace your steps to return to the start.

FIND OUT MORE bit.ly/10PlacesLochLomond



4 The Schil, Northumberland

ABOUT Instead of treading in the footsteps of Roman soldiers and modern-day tourists along Hadrian's Wall, soak up the solitude of the Cheviot Hills. For those seeking splendid isolation, The Schil is a spectacular and lonely viewpoint.

WALK IT Start at Hethpool in the beautiful College Valley – admittedly one of the best known areas of the park. You soon leave it behind, however, by picking up St Cuthbert's Way westward. Past the border fence, turn south onto the final section of the Pennine Way – by this stage, rarely busy. Walk along Steer Rig and over Black Hag to reach The Schil. From here, descend to the Mountain Refuge Hut and turn L to drop down steeply to the valley floor.

FIND OUT MORE

bit.ly/10PlacesNorthumberlandNP



5 Glen Feshie, Cairngorms

ABOUT The Cairngorms National Park occupies a vast area of some 4,528 square kilometres, yet many get no further than the Cairn Gorm Mountain ski centre. But a few miles south-west of Aviemore is a beautiful and wild glen of

regenerating ancient Caledonian woodland riven by sparkling burns, where you may be lucky enough to spot golden eagles, red squirrels and even the elusive Scottish wildcat.

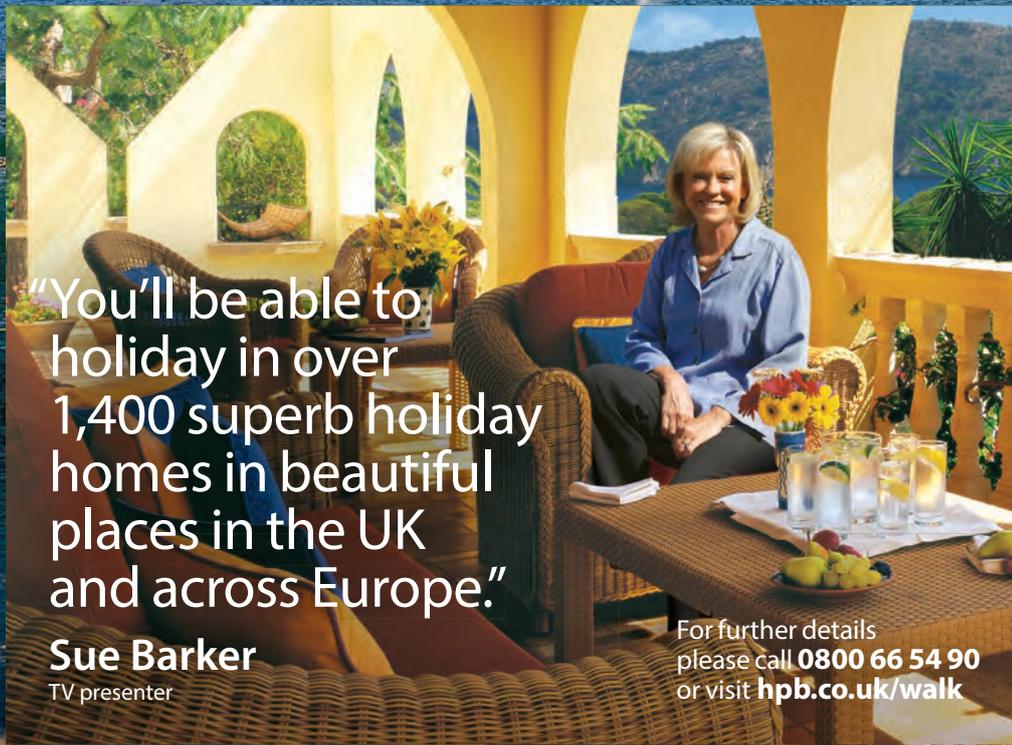
WALK IT Starting from the Glen Feshie car park about 1km from Achlean, this

out-and-back walk heads up the east side of the glen to the stunningly located bothy at Ruigh Aiteachain – an ideal lunch stop. The route climbs gradually through swaths of beautifully scented Scots pine.

FIND OUT MORE

bit.ly/10PlacesCairngormsNP

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Our historic mansion beside Loch Achray in the Scottish Highlands



6 Woody Bay, Exmoor  **ABOUT** Exmoor's dry valleys, rugged moors, serene woodland and exhilarating coastal landscapes ought to make it a real tourist draw. But the park tends to be far quieter than Dartmoor, its noisy neighbour to the south. One of Exmoor's most tranquil and picturesque gems is Woody Bay near Martinhoe, a calm inlet with a rocky

beach, a hidden waterfall and its very own natural swimming hole.

WALK IT Find the lay-by off Sir Robert's Path, which heads east towards the coast from the small settlement at Martinhoe. From here, follow the zigzag track that heads down through woodland, signed 'Martinhoe Manor', to descend to the bay.

FIND OUT MORE
bit.ly/10PlacesExmoorNP

7 Rhinogydd, Snowdonia  **ABOUT** Most Snowdonia walkers make a beeline for the Glyderau, the Carneddau or Snowdon itself. The Rhinogydd, however, deserves greater attention. These rocky, heather-clad hills offer a truly wild walking experience. **WALK IT** Start from Trawsfynydd. Head for the reservoir and cross the footbridge that spans the water. Follow the road right along the shore, before picking up a faint path that heads off L. Cross rough ground and contour around the flanks of Moel y Gyrafolen to reach a col below Foel Penolau. Climb to the summit, then continue beyond to Moel Ysgyfarnogod. Walk the southern flanks of the hill and drop down to a broad track in the valley below, which leads back to the reservoir via a minor road. **FIND OUT MORE**
bit.ly/10PlacesSnowdoniaNP



8 Upper Dove Valley, Peak District

ABOUT Some of the most famous walks in the Peak District, such as the Great Ridge or the ascent of Kinder Scout, have been popular since the earliest days of the Ramblers. But those in search of a more tranquil spot than the Vale of Edale will relish the Upper Dove Valley in the White Peak, where time seems to stand still.

WALK IT Nestled on the Staffordshire-Derbyshire border, this peaceful dale sees relatively few walkers. You can explore its timeless charm from the village of Hollinsclough, following lanes, footpaths and farm tracks up the valley to reach Thirkelow and Fairthorn. From here, turn south and head back down the other side of the valley, along a succession of quiet paths that join farm to farm.

FIND OUT MORE
bit.ly/10PlacesPeakDistrictNP

READER PANEL



'For me, the most enjoyable places to explore are often the paths least travelled, and I love discovering

paths that are infrequently walked. But just above Lewes, in the South Downs, is a lovely circular walk encompassing Southerham Farm, which is managed by Sussex Wildlife Trust, Cliffe Hill with its monument to the Lewes Martyrs, and Mount Caburn with amazing views of the sea in the south and the Sussex Weald in the north.'

Justin Norman,
 East Sussex Ramblers



10 Black Mountain, Brecon Beacons

ABOUT Many visitors to the Brecon Beacons are drawn to its highest peak, Pen y Fan, and on a good day a stream of people will be seen trailing up to the 886m summit. Yet far fewer walkers head for the Black Mountain in the western half of the park, missing out on a wild landscape of sandstone escarpments and shimmering glacial lakes.

WALK IT This invigorating but challenging circular route takes in the ridge of Fan Hir and the summit of Fan Brycheiniog (802m). Start at Glyntawe off the A4067, heading north to ascend the ridge above Llyn y Fan Fawr before swinging south-west at Fan Foel in the direction of Garreg Las, finally picking up a moorland bridleway back to the start.

FIND OUT MORE

bit.ly/10PlacesBreconBeaconsNP

9 Beck Hole, North York Moors

ABOUT The country around Goathland and Beck Hole is a lovely and quiet corner of the North York Moors National Park. Enjoy wild views, see a waterfall and visit an extremely cosy pub.

WALK IT From the Mallyan Spout Hotel, turn R into fields and woodland. Head L at the junction to reach Mallyan Spout. The sure-footed can view the waterfall by scrambling along the stream's edge for a short way. Return to the junction and follow the boardwalk through woodland, across fields and high above the valley, before descending again. Turn L to Beck Hole, where you'll find the tiny Birch Hall Inn. Return along the stream-side path, which leads back to Goathland.

FIND OUT MORE

bit.ly/10PlacesNorthYorkMoors





**WALK
AND
TALK**

Colin Speakman

The prolific writer, walker, public transport campaigner and long-time Ramblers activist on his enduring passion for walking in Yorkshire and the success of the Dales Way, which he helped to establish 50 years ago

WORDS ANDREW McCLOY

How did you develop a lifelong love of walking and exploring the outdoors by public transport?

Growing up as a teenager in smoky Salford, I escaped by cycling into the Peak District and Yorkshire Dales, and was immediately captivated by the Pennine landscape. I continued exploring the Dales, but now also on foot, first as a student at Leeds University and then later a teacher and college lecturer in the city. I went on to work for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and later the Countryside Commission on groundbreaking rural transport and sustainable tourism initiatives. I helped set up the Yorkshire Dales Society (now Friends of the Dales) in 1981 to campaign for the protection of the Dales and help promote this special place. And now, even

after all these years, I still get out on foot at every opportunity. We're lucky enough in West Yorkshire to have the wonderful DalesBus network (dalesbus.org), which makes it easy to enjoy some of the most magnificent walking country in Britain, including opportunities for linear and cross-Dales routes, which are impossible if you are restricted to circular walks by car.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the Dales Way. What role did the Ramblers play in its development?

In 1968 I was access secretary (and later area secretary) for West Riding Ramblers and we realised that the newly passed Countryside Act, which gave local authorities powers to create public access to riversides, provided a great opportunity

to create a continuous walking trail through the Dales. It also allowed us to try to fill in some gaps and omissions on the Definitive Map – which the Ramblers had spent so much time providing evidence for – and improve the overall rights of way network. We plotted a route through the Dales from Ilkley to the source of the River Wharfe, and from there over the watershed to Dent and on to the Lakes. We reckoned about 16km/10 miles of new riverside paths would need to be created to complete the route, but it took plenty of perseverance and negotiation to finally achieve it.

What's particularly special about the Dales Way?

It's a true people's path, which succeeded thanks to the people who walked it and



📍 Clockwise from above: Ribbleshead Viaduct on the Settle-Carlisle railway, which Colin campaigned to keep open; Colin (left) with the late Tom Wilcock, co-creator of the Dales Way, in 1989; Colin is a fan of bus-based guided walks



WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE

> COUNTRY WALK?

Along Langstrothdale from Buckden to Yockenthwaite via Cray, then a return on the Dales Way via Hubberholme.

> CITY WALK?

The Dales Way Leeds link, from Woodhouse via Meanwood Valley to Golden Acre Park. You see grazing cows just a mile from the city centre.

> VIEW?

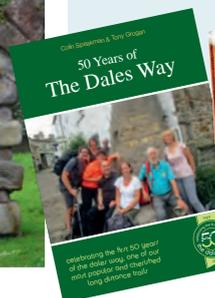
From the church at Middlesmoor in Nidderdale towards Gouthwaite Reservoir.

> KIT?

Yorkshire-made Alt-Berg Malham boots.

> POST-WALK TIPPLE?

A pint of bitter from Dent Brewery (preferably in their tap house in Dent).



taking a week to walk the Dales Way will spend around £1,000, and with up to 4,000 people a year completing it, that's a massive boost to the local economy. In 1991, together with colleagues from the Ramblers and Lakeland Tourist Association, we founded the Dales Way Association (dalesway.org), which is still underpinned by walkers and local businesses, and raises funds for improvement projects along the path.

Why are you so enthusiastic about public transport in the countryside?

Although I can drive and have owned a car in the past, I've chosen to live near a railway station and on a good bus route, so I can get everywhere I want using public transport. I find that not having a car makes me walk more and keeps me fit; and allows me to meet people and take in more of my surroundings when I travel. I campaigned to keep open the Settle-Carlisle railway line when it was threatened with closure in the 1970s and 80s and set up the DalesRail initiative as a result. I also helped establish the Dales and Bowland Community Interest Company, which organises weekend bus services across the Dales, including a bus-based guided walks programme. I feel that a properly funded, integrated and promoted public transport system is the only way to solve the traffic and air pollution problems blighting popular national parks.

You've written almost 60 books.

What's the inspiration?

I guess writing is in my DNA. I enjoy being a wordsmith and the creative satisfaction of ordering a jumble of thoughts and crafting a good story. Writing a successful book is like devising the perfect walk – it needs to have a clear start, defined middle and a satisfying end. Above all, it needs to take you on a journey. Over the years, I've written walking and history books, transport guides, biographies, poems and fiction. I continue to get huge pleasure in the simple art of communicating with other people. The real joy is meeting people who tell you how much they have enjoyed and been influenced by your writing – even in some cases becoming as passionate about walking and the countryside as I have been and remain to this day.

50 Years of the Dales Way by Colin Speakman and Tony Grogan (£4.99, skyware.co.uk) is out now.

What are the benefits of these long-distance paths?

This summer, as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations, we re-enacted the very first group walk along part of what would become the final route, which my co-creator of the Dales Way, the late Tom Wilcock, and I led back on 23 March 1969. It reminded me of the rich cultural experience of walking through the landscape of the Yorkshire Dales and interacting with its villages (and pubs!), sharing good company along the way, and the simple measured and rhythmic pleasure of a long walk. The Dales Way has encouraged so many people to discover and enjoy the national park on foot, but in doing so it's also brought huge economic benefit to the rural communities it passes through. On average, a couple

cared for it. We always envisaged the Dales Way as an attractive low-level route – not a testing upland trail like the Pennine Way, which is more suited to hillwalkers; nor has it been hijacked as a 'challenge walk' like the Yorkshire Three Peaks route. Instead, it's used by people of all ages and abilities, at almost any time of year, who continue to enjoy a leisurely walk of 129km/80 miles from Ilkley to Windermere through such superb scenery as Wharfedale, Langstrothdale, Ribbleshead, Dentdale and Lunedale. New linking sections have been developed from the centres of Leeds, Bradford and Harrogate, so that the Dales Way now provides a walking link from major northern towns and cities into the heart of two of England's premier national parks. What other British walking trail offers that?



DISCOVER

Peak District

Insider knowledge from local experts

WORDS ANDREW McCLOY

The 555 square miles of Britain's first national park is a breathtaking contrast of landscapes, from the rugged upland moors and gritstone crags of the Dark Peak to flower-rich limestone dales in the White Peak further south. It's always been popular, but away from the honeypot sites, the Peak District can be surprisingly quiet, especially around its fringes and on new public access land. So why not discover a new side to an old friend?



Great viewpoint

The view from the top of Axe Edge Moor (above), south-west of Buxton. You can see for miles and really get a sense of scale, as well as appreciate both the Dark and White Peak landscapes.

Seasonal must-do for autumn

Head to the Eastern Moors above the Derwent Valley to watch flocks of migrating thrushes – redwing and fieldfare arrive to enjoy the hawthorn berries.

Festivals and markets

The Peak District is famous for its floral well dressings (May until mid-September), including those at Hartington. And don't miss Bakewell Farmers' Market on the last Saturday of every month.



Awesome adventure

Try rock climbing at Stanage, or for a real 'wow' moment emerge from the Monsal Trail tunnel (above) straight out onto a viaduct high above the River Wye – best enjoyed on a quiet weekday morning or early evening.

Best walkers' pubs and cafés

The Royal Oak at Hurdlow is on the Tissington Trail west of Bakewell, and its hearty meals and local ales make it popular with all outdoor types. The Old Smithy Tearooms at Monyash is on the Limestone Way and a firm walkers' favourite that's open daily until 5pm.

PHOTOGRAPHY: ALAMY, ANDREW SPROULE/ROBERT HARDING

Historic site

The Neolithic chambered tomb of Minninglow, on a hilltop beside the High Peak Trail west of Matlock, has been visited by people for thousands of years and today still has a real sense of history.

Favourite place to walk

Hollins Hill, Chrome Hill and Parkhouse Hill in the upper Dove Valley (see p36) are fantastic for exploring on foot, with all of them opened up to walkers thanks to recent open access rights.



Best museum and gallery

Delve into the Peak District's lead mining legacy, outdoors and on foot, by exploring Lathkill Dale and nearby Magpie Mine (above), where you can also admire the Peak District's historic drystone walls and field patterns.



Wildlife highlights

The limestone dales and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust reserves like Hartington Meadows are great for wild flowers, from rare orchids to colourful banks of bloody cranesbill. Also, look out for brown hares in the open fields.

LOCAL VIEW

Sue Weatherley

Derbyshire Dales Ramblers



'I was born on the edge of the Peak District in 1949, the same year as the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act! My husband and I joined Derbyshire Dales Ramblers over four decades ago and have led walks ever since. I love living in the national park and still discover new things. When it gets busy, we head for quieter corners like the Staffordshire Moorlands, or use the new Peak District Boundary Walk to explore out-of-the-way paths. It's great when visitors join our walks, and I enjoy seeing people discovering this wonderful place for themselves.'

ramblers.org.uk/derbyshire-dales



Over to you...

Tell us why we should discover your local area at walkmag@ramblers.org.uk



Grand Duchy on foot

Walkers are spoilt for choice in Luxembourg's varied landscapes, with three of Europe's leading trails

Europe has thousands of beautiful walking trails, but only a handful have been given special recognition by the European Ramblers Association and issued with Leading Quality Trails – Best of Europe classification. Three of them traverse the surprisingly varied landscapes of Luxembourg – the Mullerthal Trail, the Escapardenne Lee Trail and the Escapardenne Eislek Trail. The Mullerthal Trail passes through a fairy-tale landscape of rocky tors, mossy ravines and crystal-clear lakes, while the Escapardenne trails cross the vast wooded Ardennes plateau.



The Mullerthal Trail

The 112km Mullerthal Trail (below left) consists of one 38km and two 37km loops, each with its own extraordinary character. An ideal base for two of the loops is the medieval town of Echternach, with its distinctive basilica, ancient abbey and Roman villa.

● **Trail 1** follows the course of the Sûre along the German border, passing impressive rock formations to Rosport and Moersdorf with its tiny pilgrimage chapel (Girsterklaus). Continuing down the valley, through Hinkel, the trail then loops back to Echternach via the beautiful Herborn forest.

● **Trail 2** starts with a steep climb up to the Troosknäppchen viewpoint before descending into the Wolleffsschlucht (wolf gorge) to Huel Lee caves. The path leads to Berdorf, with its famous goat cheeses, and onto the Schnellert forest towards Mullerthal. Next stop is the Schiessentümpel waterfall, followed by a 100-metre walk through the Kuelscheier, a narrow tunnel through the rocks (torches advised), before returning to Echternach.

● **Trail 3** can be started in Mullerthal, following the Black Ern towards Beaufort

and its castles (below). Cassero, a traditional blackcurrant liqueur, is made here. The trail then heads through the Hallerbach valley to the picturesque village of Larochette, before continuing through a beech forest back to Mullerthal via the waterfall.

Escapardenne Trail

The 159km Escapardenne Trail straddles the border with Belgium and traverses the scenic Ardennes plateau. Divided into two main paths – the Lee Trail and the Eislek Trail – it offers an almost Alpine hiking experience through forests and undulating mountain paths.

The shorter Escapardenne Lee Trail (53km), between Ettelbruck and Kautenbach, showcases the Grand Duchy's steep paths and rocky ridges through the wooded valley of the Sûre. Best tackled in three challenging days of walking, the trail passes through several villages, which are perfect for a rest stop. A highlight is the viewpoint at Gringlee in Bourscheid-Moulin, overlooking a superb meander in the Sûre (above left).

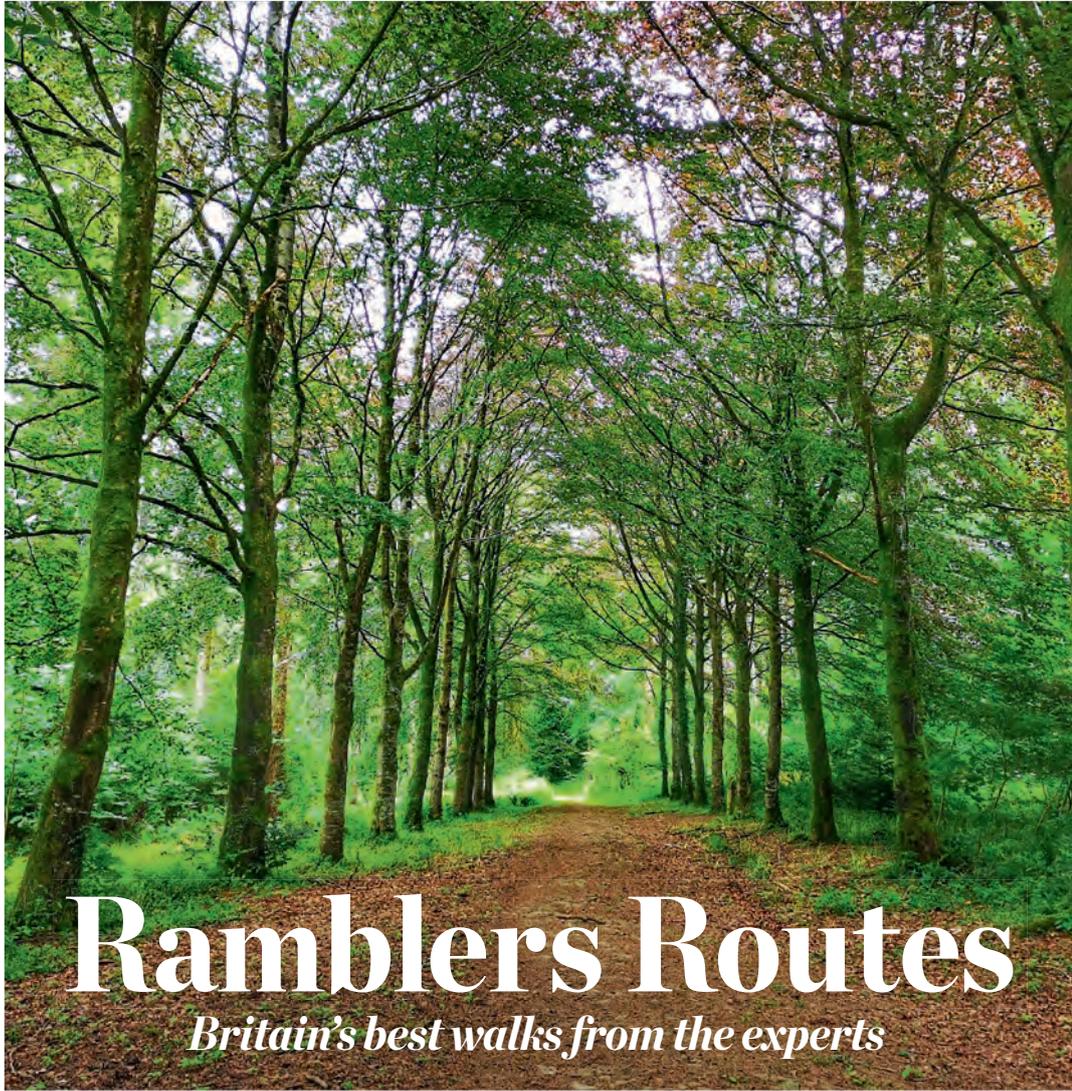
The Lee Trail connects to the cross-border Eislek Trail (106km) in the village of Kautenbach. From here it passes ancient crosses, dry stone walls, Celtic ruins, deep forests and peaceful pastures, offering a challenging but rewarding journey on foot through some wonderfully varied landscapes.



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PHOTOGRAPHY: MATTHEW JONES

Ramblers Routes

Britain's best walks from the experts

- 1 | SCOTLAND**
MULLACH CLACH A' BHLÀIR, CAIRNGORMS
- 2 | NORTH WEST**
THE PIKE STONES, RIVINGTON, LANCASHIRE
- 3 | NORTH EAST**
NIDDERDALE MOORS, NORTH YORKSHIRE
- 4 | WALES**
YR ARAN, SNOWDONIA
- 5 | MIDLANDS**
GRATTON DALE, DERBYSHIRE
- 6 | EAST**
WICKEN & UPWARE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE
- 7 | SOUTH WEST**
EGGESFORD FOREST, DEVON

HOW TO USE YOUR ROUTES

Walk information

Distance, ascent, type of walk and estimated time, based on a pace of roughly two miles an hour, or slower if over hilly terrain.

Our experts

Routes are checked by our experts no longer than three months before publication.

Directions

Left and right are abbreviated to L and R.

Plan your walk

Information on public transport, maps and guidebooks, accommodation and eating and drinking options.

Maps

Follow the route line between the numbered waypoints in the direction indicated. A dashed line indicates an alternative to the main route. Always take the relevant OS map with you.

Grades

Navigation levels are graded **NOVICE**, **EASY**, **MODERATE** or **TECHNICAL**.

Novice and easy routes follow clear paths or features, and require only basic map-reading skills. Moderate and technical routes require map and compass skills, suitable clothing and equipment, and may include pathless stretches across open country.

Fitness levels are graded **EASY**, **LEISURELY**, **MODERATE** or **STRENUOUS**. Easy walks are suitable for families and wheelchair users. Leisurely and moderate routes can include some rough terrain and sustained ascents and descents, and need a reasonable level of fitness. Strenuous routes are physically demanding with steep climbs.

8 | SOUTH EAST

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Mullach Clach a' Bhlàir, Cairngorms

DISTANCE 23.5KM/14½ MILES **ASCENT** 922M/3,024FT
TIME 8 HOURS **TYPE** MOUNTAIN AND MOOR

↓ To download this route and hundreds of others, visit ramblers.org.uk/routes

NAVIGATION LEVEL
MODERATE

FITNESS LEVEL
STRENUOUS

PERFECT FOR
VIEWS

NUMBER OF STILES
NONE



Plan your walk

WHERE A circular walk across Mòine Mhòr and the Munro of Mullach Clach a' Bhlàir.

START/END Achlean car park, 6.75km south of Feshiebridge (NN851985).

TERRAIN Woodland, moorland and mountain paths, short sections of pathless ground.

MAPS OS Explorer OL57; Landranger 36.

GETTING THERE No public transport to the start. ScotRail from Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness to Aviemore. Aviemore Taxis (01479 811111, taxisinaviemore.com) from Aviemore to Achlean.

EATING & DRINKING The Boathouse Restaurant, Loch Insh Outdoor Centre (01540 651394, lochinch.com/at-the-centre/restaurant).

SLEEPING The Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore (01479 810233, cairngorm.com).

VISITOR INFORMATION Aviemore iCentre, 7 The Parade, Grampian Road (01479 810930, visitscotland.com).

GUIDEBOOK *Walking in the Cairngorms* by Ronald Turnbull (£14.95, Cicerone, ISBN 978 1852848866).

LOCAL RAMBLERS GROUP Badenoch & Strathspey (ramblers.org.uk/badenoch-strathspey).

The 1,019-metre summit of Mullach Clach a' Bhlàir is gained via the wild expanse of Mòine Mhòr above gorgeous Glen Feshie in the Cairngorms National Park. This moorland plateau sits at a height of around 930m, which is higher than many Munros. Clear paths and tracks run most of the way, though a little care may be required when crossing Allt Gharbhlach and Allt Fhearnagan

ROUTE BY KEITH FERGUS

1 START From the car park, follow the minor road south towards the cottage of Auchlean. After 0.75km, turn L onto a path marked with a boulder for 'Càrn Bàn Mòr'. At a junction, keep L and climb into woodland. Leave the woodland and follow a well-engineered path ascending east up Càrn Bàn Mòr's western shoulder.

2 Upon reaching the 760m contour, the slopes steepen and a climb of around 250m tops out on the Mòine Mhòr plateau beside a small cairn. Take the L of two paths and make the short, gentle climb (the path quickly disappearing) to the summit of Càrn Bàn Mòr. The top is nondescript, the view is anything but, with spectacular vistas of Braeriach, Cairn Toul and Mullach Clach a' Bhlàir.

3 Retrace steps back to the cairn, then follow a clear path south-east across Mòine Mhòr. It means 'big peat bog' so avoid

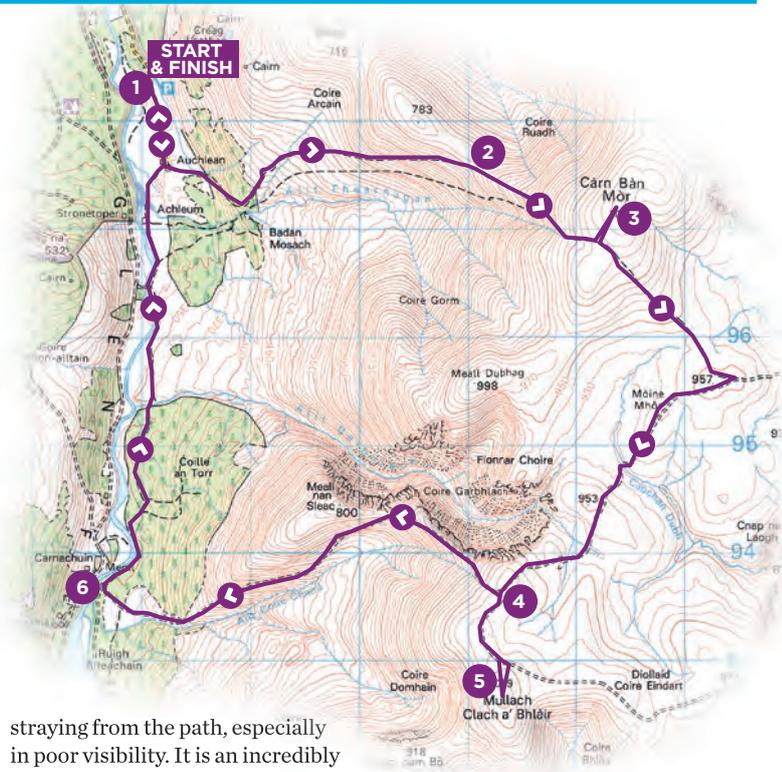
straying from the path, especially in poor visibility. It is an incredibly important habitat, providing rich nutrients for a vast array of insects and birds. Eventually, a wide, firm track is reached and here turn R, following it south-west as it undulates across Mòine Mhòr.

4 After 3.25km, turn L at a junction with a track coming up from Glen Feshie. Continue for another 0.75km to a path on the R marked with a small cairn. A short ascent gains the summit of Mullach Clach a' Bhlàir, itself marked with a cairn and the highest point of the walk. Again, this unremarkable summit grants a stunning panorama across much of the national park.

5 Return to the track at Point 4 and go L, where a steady descent highlights the diversity of the route; the view into Coire Gharbhlach is sensational. A long

descent into Glen Feshie eventually reaches the River Feshie.

6 At a crossroads, turn R and wander through this incredible glen. When the path splits, keep L and continue to a junction. Go R, then, after a few metres, L to reach the Allt Gharbhlach river, which will require care to cross, especially if it is in spate. Once crossed, an excellent path continues for nearly 2km to reach Allt Fhearnagan, near the ruins of Achleum. Again, feet may get wet but, once across, a gate leads out of Glen Feshie, and it is a short walk to Auchlean, then 1km back to the start.



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	3	£43.75	£5.95	£49.70	£10.00		£	
** PLEASE TICK for LENS COLOUR CHOICE: <input type="checkbox"/> Smoke <input type="checkbox"/> Brown/Amber								
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The Pike Stones, Rivington, Lancashire

DISTANCE 10KM/6¼ MILES **ASCENT** 251M/824FT
TIME 3¼ HOURS **TYPE** RESERVOIR, MOOR AND WOOD

↓ To **download this route** and hundreds of others, visit ramblers.org.uk/routes

NAVIGATION LEVEL **EASY** | FITNESS LEVEL **LEISURELY** | PERFECT FOR **VIEWS** | NUMBER OF STILES **3**



Plan your walk

WHERE Lollipop walk from Rivington, near Chorley.

START/END Rivington Foundation Primary School (SD625143).

TERRAIN Lanes, byways, moorland paths and tracks; potentially marshy in places.

MAPS OS Explorer 287; Landranger 109.

GETTING THERE Frequent Stagecoach Gold 125 bus from Bolton and Chorley to Horwich Crown Inn, 2 miles from start (tfgm.com). Free parking at public car park behind school.

EATING & DRINKING The Rivington (01204 691509, rivingtonbowlingclub.co.uk).

SLEEPING Wendover Guest House, Horwich (01204 468400, wendoverguesthouse.co.uk). Bay Horse, Heath Charnock (01257 480309, thebayhorse.co.uk).

VISITOR INFORMATION Bolton Central Library, Le Mans Crescent (01204 334321, visitbolton.com).

GUIDEBOOK *Walking on the West Pennine Moors* by Terry Marsh (£12.95, Cicerone, ISBN 978 1852845803).

LOCAL RAMBLERS GROUP Chorley Ramblers (07854 367305, ramblers.org.uk/chorley).

Designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 2017, the vast West Pennine Moors above Horwich loom over huge, wood-fringed, time-mellowed reservoirs that offer easy waterside walking. This route also diverges along former lead-miners' tracks via deep cloughs to a Neolithic tomb high in these rippling moorlands, where some of Lancashire's oldest woodland is a colourwashed autumnal dream

ROUTE BY NEIL COATES

1 START Return to the road. Descend L to Upper Rivington Dam and here turn R along the 'No Through Road' beside the Rivington club entrance. In 550m, fork L (gates) along a walled track. Advance below the grassy dam, then ahead alongside Yarrow Reservoir to a lane. Turn R to Alance Bridge.

2 Use the bridlegate L into the track up Lead Mines Clough beside the lively Limestone Brook. The clough's name recalls the once thriving industry here, abandoned in 1837. Many remains dapple the woodlands hereabouts. The track shortly changes bank; in a further 200m, fork L to recross on another bridge. Use the handgate (R); then immediately L up the steep, stepped path to the memorial recalling the 1943 crash of a Wellington bomber hereabouts. It's a tranquil site with sublime views to Winter Hill.

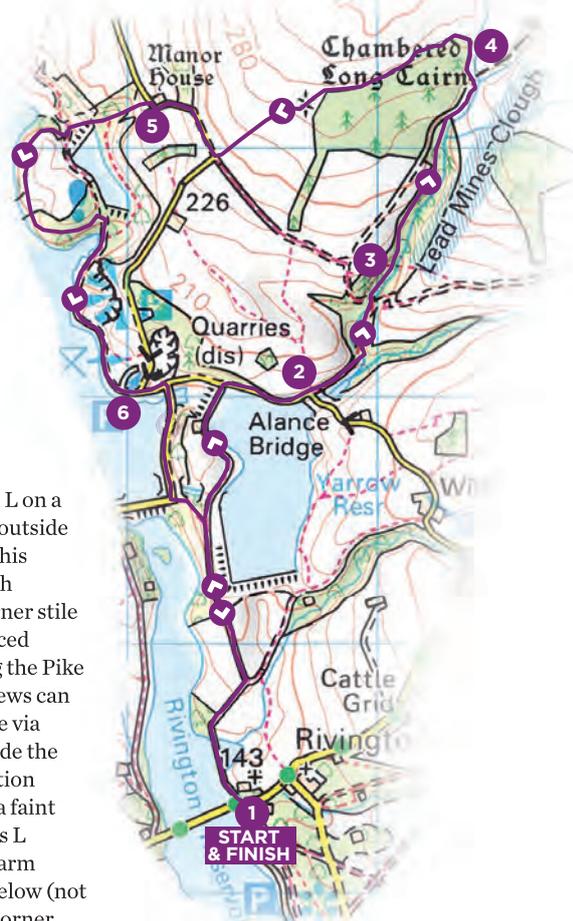
3 Beyond the memorial, follow the continuing narrow path within the top of the woods (*not* into pasture). At the kissing gate (500m), bear R down the track. At the fork, keep L (ignore flat bridge). Before a culvert in 150m, fork L above a tributary beck on a path skirting

the fenced, derelict plantation.

4 At the end, turn L on a moorland path outside the skeletal woods. This tussocky, marshy path reaches (650m) a corner stile (L) into the large fenced enclosure containing the Pike Stones long cairn. Views can be magnificent. Leave via the lower-L stile beside the neglected interpretation board and turn R on a faint grassy path that drifts L towards the distant farm complex soon seen below (not reached). At the off-corner gates, stile and rough parking, turn R along the initially level tarred lane to reach Manor House Farm.

5 Around the sharp-R bend, use the kissing gate (L) and drop to another into woods. Descend steeply to cross a flat bridge; turn L above the beck then bear R to pass below the grassy dam. At the crosstrack, join the stepped path opposite ('Woodland Trail') and loop L with this in woods above Anglezarke Reservoir. At the old tarred road, below High Bullough Dam, drop R to continue above the reservoir on this traffic-free lane.

6 At the car park barrier and hairpin bend (875m), keep R twice to join the pavement beside the reservoir. At the near dam end, turn L up the signed bridleway (wall gap) to meet the outward route below the grassy dam of Yarrow Reservoir. Turn R to retrace the rough lane back to Rivington.



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ARENA
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Nidderdale Moors, North Yorkshire

DISTANCE 15.75KM/9¾ MILES **ASCENT** 540M/1,771FT
TIME 4½ HOURS **TYPE** MOOR

↓ To **download this route** and hundreds of others, visit ramblers.org.uk/routes

NAVIGATION LEVEL
LEISURELY

FITNESS LEVEL
LEISURELY

PERFECT FOR
VIEWS

NUMBER OF STILES
3



Plan your walk

WHERE Circular walk in Nidderdale, North Yorkshire.

START/END Lofthouse Memorial Hall (SE101735).

TERRAIN Moorland tracks, lanes, field paths; several short steep pitches.

MAPS OS Explorer 298; Landranger 99.

GETTING THERE Infrequent summer Sundays and bank holiday bus 821 from Pateley Bridge to Lofthouse and Scar House Reservoir (dalesbus.org). Lofthouse is signposted along minor roads from Pateley Bridge. There's parking at the Memorial Hall.

EATING & DRINKING The Crown, Lofthouse (01423 755206).

SLEEPING The Crown Hotel, Middlesmoor - B&B, cottage and campsite (01423 755204, crownhotel.middlesmoor.co.uk).

VISITOR INFORMATION Nidderdale Plus Community Hub, Station Square, King Street, Pateley Bridge (01423 714953, nidderdaleplus.org.uk).

GUIDEBOOK *Walking in the Yorkshire Dales: The North and East* by Dennis and Jan Kelsall (£12.95, Cicerone, ISBN 978 1852847982).

LOCAL RAMBLERS GROUP Ripon (ramblers.org.uk/ripon).

Nidderdale is the Cinderella of Yorkshire's protected landscapes. Pleasingly secluded and with breathtaking panoramas, this is the upland Dales of yesteryear. This walk explores the moors and characterful hamlets tucked away towards the head of the dale, where you might share the enormous views with curlews, red kites and lapwings

ROUTE BY NEIL COATES

1 **START** Walk R from the Memorial Hall car park and trace the lane up out of Lofthouse. In 800m, you'll pass an upland vineyard (R) on the steep south-facing slope of Backstone Gill. Beyond this the lane steepens around a gradual L-bend; about 550m later a bridleway is signed L at a gate. Take this across the moor, through an intermediate gate and then through a third near the lip of the moor. Bear R along the grassy track to reach a wider stony track at a gate. Turn L to the nearby turreted shooting lodge.

2 Stay on this uneven shooters' road fringing Lofthouse Moor. It undulates through the heather and moor-grass, with ever-better views into the top of Nidderdale. Use gates as you find them, remaining on the widest track that essentially contours along Dale Edge (never drop L on side-tracks). Occasional grouse butts rise from the heather, while random fenced shafts marking old mines also catch the eye. In time, Scar House Reservoir comes into

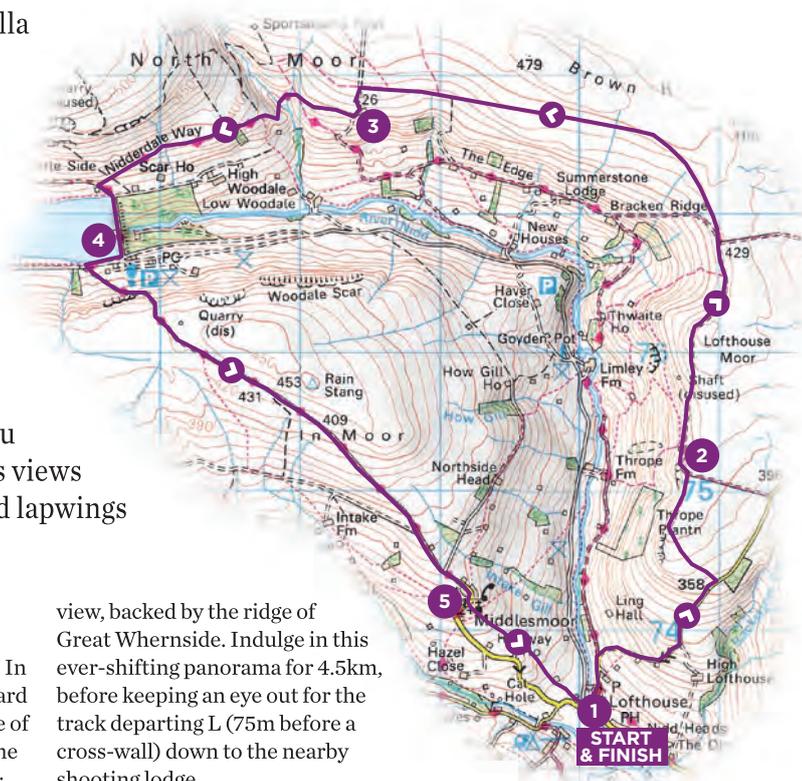
view, backed by the ridge of Great Wherside. Indulge in this ever-shifting panorama for 4.5km, before keeping an eye out for the track departing L (75m before a cross-wall) down to the nearby shooting lodge.

3 Use the gate through the adjacent wall and continue along this lower track, gradually losing height before curling round across two small, tree-speckled cloughs. Rise again, advancing past a small enclosure of firs then heading towards the distant reservoir. From the junction well above the dam, drop to cross it.

4 Scar House Reservoir and its 71m-high dam were completed in 1936. At the far end of the dam, advance to the nearby T-junction. Here, turn R on the reservoir-side lane to pass below the barn. In 275m, turn back L up the rough, stony track, commencing an occasionally very steep climb around bends, through an area of tumbled rocks and crags.

The gradient gradually eases before the crest. It's a matter of staying on this track, from where there are superb views down Nidderdale to Gouthwaite Reservoir.

5 At Middlesmoor village, find the churchyard gates, beside which a long flight of 124 steps drops to a field path to Halfway House Farm. Beyond the farmyard, continue downhill on the path (wall R) via stiles to reach a lane at a sharp bend. Keep ahead into Lofthouse and turn L up past the Crown, back to the car park.



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Yr Aran, Snowdonia

DISTANCE 9.75KM/6 MILES **ASCENT** 763M/2,503FT
TIME 5 HOURS **TYPE** MOUNTAIN

NAVIGATION LEVEL
MODERATE

FITNESS LEVEL
MODERATE

PERFECT FOR
VIEWS

NUMBER OF STILES
NONE

To **download this route** and hundreds of others, visit ramblers.org.uk/routes



Plan your walk

WHERE Circular mountain walk from Nantgwynant.

START/END Pont Bethania car park, Nantgwynant (SH627506).

TERRAIN Watkin Path is easy to follow; rough mountain paths including one rocky descent.

MAPS OS Explorer OL17; Landranger 115.

GETTING THERE From the rail stations in Caernarfon and Betws-y-Coed, there are Snowdon Sherpa buses to Nantgwynant (visitsnowdonia.info).

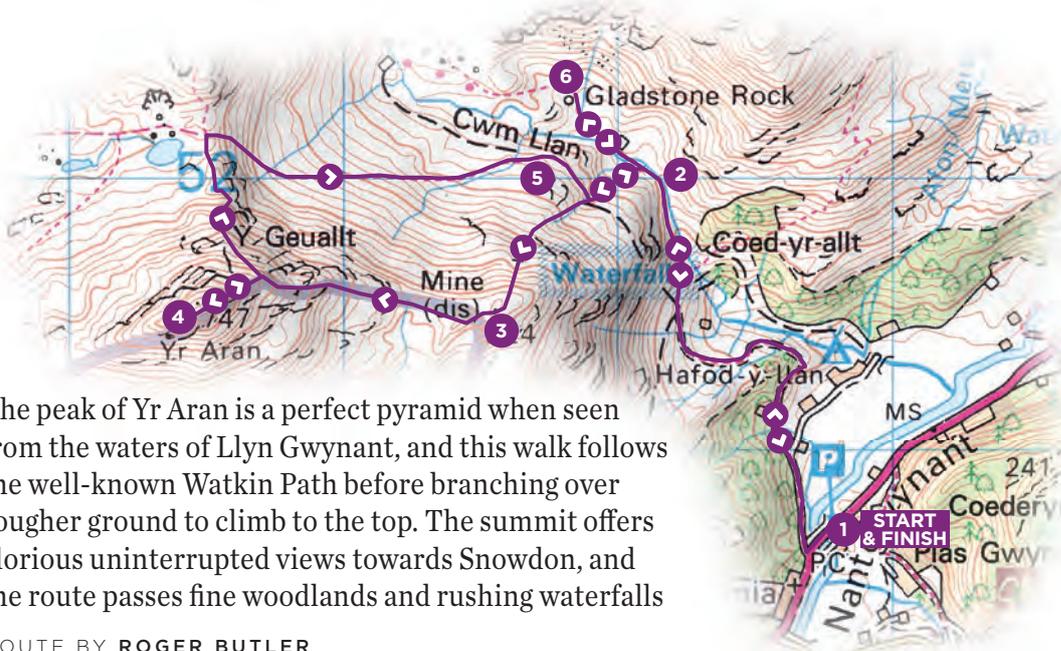
EATING & DRINKING Caffi Gwynant (01766 890855, cafesnowdon.co.uk, closed Mon and Tues). Hebog café/bistro (01766 890400, hebog-beddgelert.co.uk). Tanronnen Inn (01766 890347, tanronnen.co.uk).

SLEEPING YHA Bryn Gwynant (0345 3719108; yha.org.uk). Red Dragon cottages, cabin and pods (01766 890351, reddragonholidays.co.uk).

VISITOR INFORMATION Snowdonia National Park Information Centre, Canolfan Hebog, Beddgelert (01766 890615, seasonal).

GUIDEBOOK *Great Mountain Days in Snowdonia* by Terry Marsh (£18.95, Cicerone, ISBN 978 1852845810).

LOCAL RAMBLERS GROUP Eryri (ramblers.org.uk/eryri).



The peak of Yr Aran is a perfect pyramid when seen from the waters of Llyn Gwynant, and this walk follows the well-known Watkin Path before branching over rougher ground to climb to the top. The summit offers glorious uninterrupted views towards Snowdon, and the route passes fine woodlands and rushing waterfalls

ROUTE BY **ROGER BUTLER**

1 START Leave the car park at Nantgwynant, cross the road and go up the stone steps to join the Watkin Path. This rises through oak woodland, with glimpses to the meadows at the end of Llyn Gwynant, passes through a gate and swings L to climb alongside the waterfalls above the farm at Hafod-y-llan. The broad path is pitched with stone in places and crosses an old incline that once served the nearby former quarries. Go through a gate and continue uphill, with tumbling cascades on the R, until the path levels out by a small, new hydro dam.

2 Leave the main path and turn L, uphill for 300m, on a good path that soon crosses a mining track supported on an old embankment. Continue uphill on a zigzag path, past old workings and one or two ruins, to reach flatter ground on the north side of a sturdy stone wall.

3 Go R for 500m, with the wall on the L, and gradually climb to start of the rocky spur below Yr Aran. A gap in the wall leads to a rough path that runs along the south side of the ridge to the top of Yr Aran. The view from the summit looks north up the long southern ridge of Snowdon – which leads straight to the summit – and down into the great mountain bowl known as Cwm Tregalan. To the south, the Moelwyns fill the skyline beyond the prominent peak of Cnicht and, to the west, Moel Hebog rises above Beddgelert.

4 From the summit, walk back down to the wall and turn L on a rocky path that descends next to the wall, past a pool, and drops down to Bwlch Cwm Llan, by a small lake and old mining spoil. Turn R at a gap in the wall, follow a faint path through outcrops and continue south-east below the crags of Y Geuallt. Fork L after 700m, with

a small stream on the R, and walk down to the track.

5 Turn R for 350m and then go L (on a path used earlier in the walk) to return to the top of the waterfalls. Turn L, cross the bridge over the river and keep on the Watkin Path for 400m to visit the upstanding Gladstone Rock, where a plaque commemorates the speech given here in 1892 by the 83-year-old Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone, when he came to open the path, the first designated footpath in Britain.

6 Return to the waterfalls, past the ruins of a quarry manager's house and some traditional slate fencing, and retrace your steps back to the start.

Report a path problem
 Via the Pathwatch app or at ramblers.org.uk/pathwatch

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Graton Dale, Derbyshire

DISTANCE 13.3KM/8¼ MILES **ASCENT** 307M/1,007FT
TIME 4 HOURS **TYPE** HILL, PASTURE AND VALLEY

-  NAVIGATION LEVEL
EASY
-  FITNESS LEVEL
LEISURELY
-  PERFECT FOR
VIEWS
-  NUMBER OF STILES
5

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Plan your walk

WHERE Circular walk from Pikehall, near Winster.
START/END Minninglow Peak Park free car park/picnic area (SK194581).
TERRAIN Field paths, farm tracks, back lanes, old railway.
MAPS OS Explorer OL24; Landranger 119.

GETTING THERE Hulleys of Baslow 172 bus (not Sundays or bank holidays) from Matlock and Bakewell to Elton, 1 mile east of Point 3 (0871 200 2233, traveline.info). Minninglow picnic area is signed off the A5012 at Pikehall.

EATING & DRINKING The Waterloo Inn, Biggin (01298 84284, waterlooinnbiggin.com).

SLEEPING Graton Grange Farm B&B (01629 653831, grattongrangefarmholidays.com). The Jug and Glass Inn, Hartington (01298 84848, jugandglassinn.com).

VISITOR INFORMATION Visitor Centre, Old Market Hall, Bridge Street, Bakewell (01629 816558, visitpeakdistrict.com).

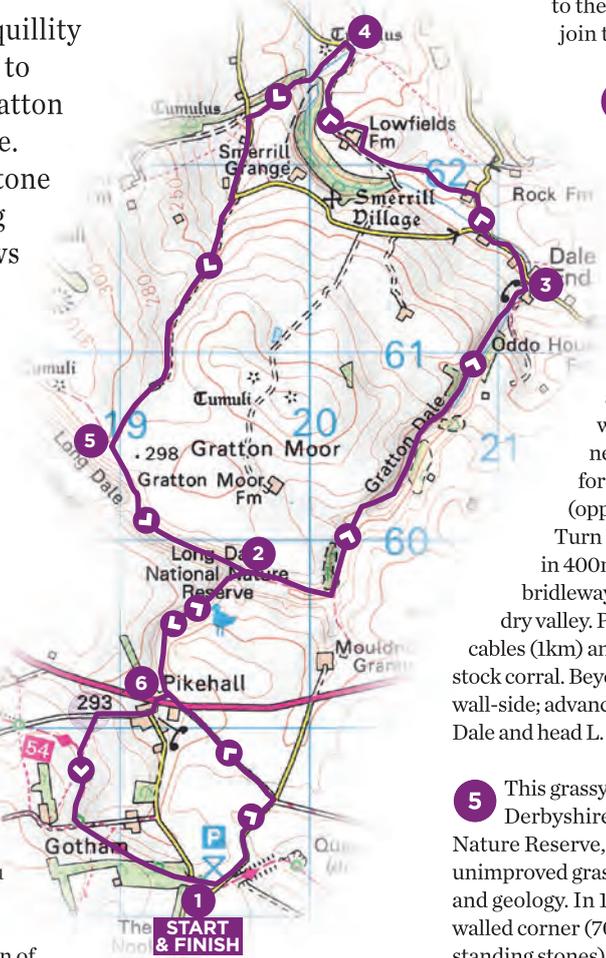
GUIDEBOOK *Longer Walks in the Peak District* by Neil Coates (£7.99, Bradwell Books, ISBN 978 1910551677).

LOCAL RAMBLERS GROUP Derbyshire Dales (ramblers.org.uk/derbyshire-dales).

For some peace and tranquillity in the Peak District, head to tree-shaded, secluded Graton Dale and grassy Long Dale. Both penetrate the limestone plateau, while connecting paths unveil sublime views across this secret part of the lower White Peak and Minninglow Embankment. The walk takes in an extinct railway line – engineered as a canal but built as a railway – it’s as quirky as they come

ROUTE BY NEIL COATES

- 1 START** From the car park rear, turn L along the lane. The vast Minninglow embankment recalls the astounding Cromford and High Peak Railway. Built to connect limestone quarries on the plateau with canals at both Cromford (south-east) and Whaley Bridge (north-west), it was a combination of railway and inclines and operated between 1831 and 1967. At the rough cross-ways in 600m turn L along the walled track. Cross the main road to use two Access Land handgates; then descend the length of Pikehall Dale.
- 2** Turn R (handgate) as Long Dale joins from the west, putting wall R. In another 475m, turn L (gate then handgate) into Graton Dale, a deep, part-wooded furrow in the limestone plateau. In season, the cowslips and ox-eye daisies are magnificent. In wet weather, this stretch is very muddy.



The bridlepath eventually emerges onto a lane at Dale End Farm.

- 3** Head L, then at the junction in 300m, bear R. The building here was a cheese factory until the 1930s. Upon reaching Graton Grange Farm, turn L into the yard. Pass R of the farmhouse, then look L for a gate into pasture. Contour-walk the waymarked path (be vigilant) via three meadows to approach Lowfields Farm. A concessionary path here avoids the farmyard. The well-marked route passes via gates

to the R of the buildings to join the access road.

- 4** Just after the cattle grid and bridge, go L through a waymarked handgate and walk near Rowlow Brook. At the woodland snout (250m), slip through the upright stile (L) and rise beside the woods (R). Beyond the next stile, look ahead R for the stile into a lane (opposite farm road). Turn L to the sharp-L bend in 400m. Take the walled bridleway ahead up a shallow dry valley. Pass below electricity cables (1km) and enter the walled stock corral. Beyond it, crest the rise wall-side; advance down into Long Dale and head L.
- 5** This grassy trod is part of the Derbyshire Dales National Nature Reserve, protecting unimproved grasslands, wildflowers and geology. In 1km at the offset walled corner (700m past the modern standing stones) be alert for the path R (handgate and stubby trees) back up Pikehall Dale to Pikehall.
- 6** Turn R on the main road then L on the lane for Parwich. Bend R, then diverge R along the rough track. In 250m, go L (waymarked) into a pasture. Bisect this and cut the R-corner of the top field to reach the old railway (gateside stile). Turn L back to base.

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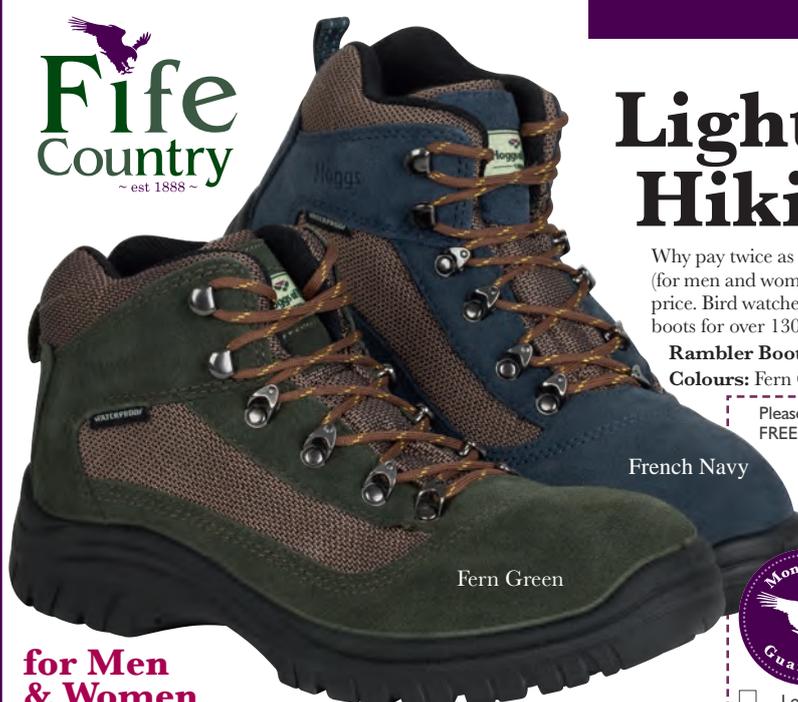


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Wicken & Upware, Cambridgeshire

DISTANCE 11KM/7 MILES **ASCENT** 2M/6½FT
TIME 3½ HOURS **TYPE** FEN

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NAVIGATION LEVEL **EASY** | FITNESS LEVEL **LEISURELY** | PERFECT FOR **WILDLIFE** | NUMBER OF STILES **3**



Plan your walk

WHERE Circular lowland walk from Wicken Fen.

START/END National Trust car park (members free) at Wicken Fen (TL564705).

TERRAIN Easy walking on paths and tracks.

MAPS OS Explorer 226; Landranger 154.

GETTING THERE Nearest rail station Ely. No bus connections to Wicken - taxi required.

EATING & DRINKING Docky Hut café, Wicken Fen Nature Reserve (01353 720274). The Maid's Head, Wicken (01353 720727, maidsheadwicken.com). Five Miles from Anywhere, Upware (01353 721654, fivemilesinn.com).

SLEEPING Red Lion, Stretham (01353 648132, redlionstretham.com). YHA Cambridge (0345 371 9728, yha.org.uk).

VISITOR INFORMATION Ely Tourist Information Centre, 29 St Mary's Street (01353 662062). Wicken Fen Nature Reserve (01353 720274, nationaltrust.org.uk/wicken-fen-nature-reserve).

GUIDEBOOK *Cambridgeshire and the Fens* (£12.99, Pathfinder Guides, ISBN 978 0319090794).

LOCAL RAMBLERS GROUP Cambridge (01223 362881, ramblers.org.uk/Cambridge).

The National Nature Reserve at Wicken Fen, with a mixture of watery fens, marshland, woods and farmland, is a wetland site of international importance. The National Trust established its first reserve here in 1899 and this route explores the surrounding fenland landscape. The area is rich in wildlife, with an exceptional range of invertebrates and plants

ROUTE BY ROGER BUTLER



1 START Cross the lane next to the car park and take the grass track known as Breed Fen Drove. Turn L after 450m onto another track named Sedge Fen Drove - this was one of the original access routes into the wild fen and the bridleway was officially designated to be four carts wide. The track passes through damp woodland, with the reedbeds of the National Nature Reserve on L. The right of way terminates by Drainer's Dyke after 1km - retrace your steps back to Breed Fen Drove and turn L.

2 Cross a stile on L after 350m and take the path known as Spinney Drove. The broad grass track follows the edge of Wicken Fen and bends sharp R after 400m. Continue ahead for 1.2km, past a small pumping station, to cross a stile just before a road. Go straight over onto another broad path and soon walk ahead with a hedge on L.

3 Continue to a gap and turn L on a track between trees (this is now the route of the Fen Rivers Way). When the track emerges from the trees, continue south on the path, pass a marina on R and cross a small footbridge to meet the lane in Upware. Turn L and after 200m go R at the junction. Walk ahead towards the imposing lock, with guillotine gates, at the junction of the River Cam and Reach Lode - lode is the local term for a drainage channel.

4 Turn L on the track along the north side of Reach Lode, with boats moored to the bank, and continue for 550m to cross a footbridge and fork L on the path alongside Wicken Lode. Reedbeds on the far bank mark the boundary of the national nature reserve and there are sweeping views to the L across the pools and marshes at Adventurers' Fen. This was named after those who originally ventured out here to drain the land for agriculture, though today there are large-scale plans to

re-establish the fenland environment. Continue for almost 2km to the junction with Monk's Lode.

5 Ignore the footbridge on L and follow the path along the south side of Monk's Lode with the woods of Wicken Poores' Fen and St Edmund's Fen on the north side of the water. Continue to the end of the woods and cross a footbridge to a path leading north across a field.

6 Turn L at the houses and pass the impressive windmill on the south side of Wicken High Street, which still produces flour. Continue ahead to join a lane and turn L at the next lane to return to the start. The National Trust visitor centre is close by and trails and bird hides can be explored (admission charge, members free).

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Eggesford Forest, Devon

DISTANCE 18KM/11 MILES **ASCENT** 481M/1,578FT
TIME 5½ HOURS **TYPE** WOOD AND FOREST

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NAVIGATION LEVEL **EASY** | FITNESS LEVEL **MODERATE** | PERFECT FOR **VIEWS** | NUMBER OF STILES **4**



Plan your walk

WHERE Woodland walk from Eggesford, visiting a historic Forestry Commission plantation.

START/END Eggesford rail station (SS682114).

TERRAIN Paths and forestry tracks. Can be muddy in wet weather. Moderate ascents and descents.

MAPS OS Explorer 127; Landranger 191.

GETTING THERE Regular trains to Eggesford from Exeter and Barnstaple on the scenic Tarka Line. Great Western Railways runs an approximately hourly service (0345 7000 125, gwr.com). Limited car parking at the station.

EATING & DRINKING The Fox and Hounds Country Hotel, Eggesford (01769 580345, foxandhoundshotel.co.uk).

SLEEPING Rooms and a luxury treehouse at the Fox and Hounds (as above).

VISITOR INFORMATION The Amory Centre, 125 East Street, South Molton (01769 572501, visitsouthmolton.co.uk).

GUIDEBOOK *Tarka Line Walks* by Peter Craske (£9.99, Pathfinder Guides, ISBN 978 1780591827).

LOCAL RAMBLERS GROUP Tiverton (ramblers.org.uk/tiverton).

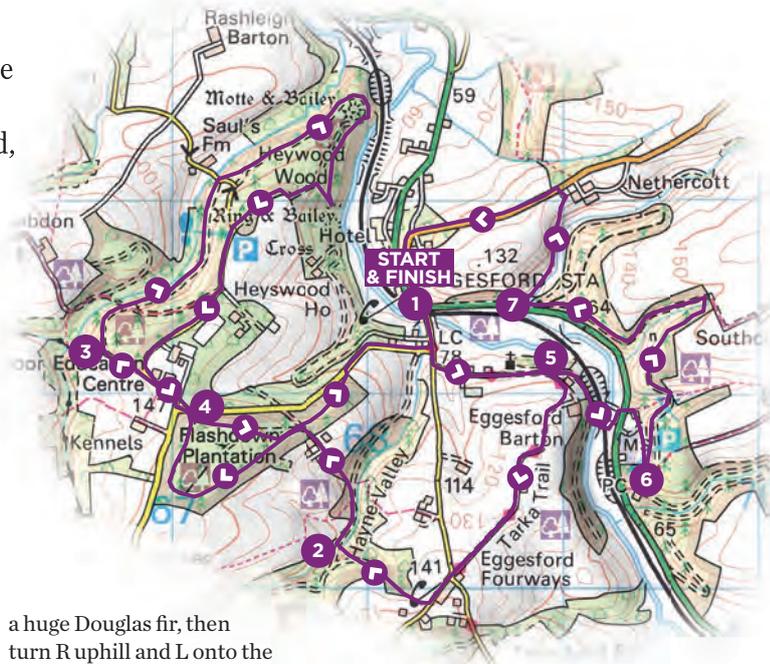
This looping woodland walk celebrates the centenary of the Forestry Commission with a visit to the parish of Eggesford, where the commission's first trees were planted. The route takes in native woodland and an evergreen plantation

ROUTE BY MATTHEW JONES

1 START From Eggesford station, cross the bridge over the river. Take the first L. Pass All Saints Church and follow the track uphill. Take the footpath R signed 'Tarka Trail', just before a cattle grid. Look R for views of the impressive Eggesford House. Go through a gate and follow the field edge. Exit onto a road, where there is a First World War memorial cross. Head along the road signed 'Brushford'. Take the footpath R. Pass through a gate to enter woodland.

2 Turn R downhill at the path junction and go over a small stile beside a gate. Follow the path along the bottom of the field and go through a second gate. After a short distance, turn L to follow a bridleway uphill. Emerge onto a gravel track. At the path junction, take the first path L. This is Flashdown Plantation, where the first Forestry Commission trees were planted in 1919. Follow the path around the plantation, ignoring paths L and R, to emerge onto a road. Turn L then R at the first junction towards Bridge Reeve. Ignore the bridleway L and take the footpath ahead.

3 Bear R at a path junction, heading downhill. Ignore the bridleway that crosses the path. Continue ahead when you reach a road. Walk around the earthwork remains of a motte and bailey castle and take the first L to pass



a huge Douglas fir, then turn R uphill and L onto the main track. Walk through the car park and turn L down the lane. At the junction, retrace your steps back into Flashdown Plantation.

4 Take the track L. At the end, turn L. Continue ahead through an avenue of copper beech trees, planted for the Forestry Commission's 50th anniversary. Turn R onto the road. At the end of the road, turn R, then first L along the lane you took earlier, past the church and onto the gravel track.

5 As the track bends R, take the footpath L. Go through a gate and take the L-hand path downhill. Pass through another gate and follow the path up steps to cross the railway bridge. Go down some steps and cross two stiles. Pass under a bridge and cross another stile into a meadow. Follow the path up to the A377 and cross it. Take the path ahead into the woods and turn first R. Follow this track to a picnic area and the Queen's Stone, unveiled in 1956 by the Queen

to commemorate the millionth acre of Forestry Commission planting. To the right is an oak planted by Her Majesty at the same time.

6 From the car park, look for a grassy track that runs parallel to the one you have just walked down, through a wooden barrier. After the track bears L, take a smaller path R, heading steeply uphill. At a path junction, pick up the bridleway L and follow it down to the A377.

7 Take the signed footpath R and go through a gate to enter a field. Follow the path gradually uphill and go through a gate near a barn. Take the path through the field to emerge onto the B3042. Turn L and follow the road back to the start.

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PHOTO: MATTHEW JONES. MAP: © CROWN COPYRIGHT 2019. ORDNANCE SURVEY. MEDIA LICENCE 032/19. CREATED WITH MEMORY-MAP



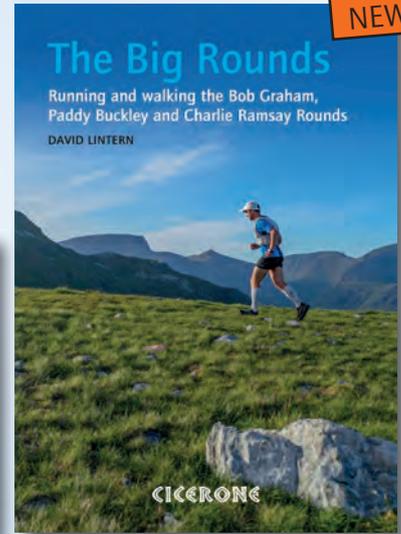
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Shatterford & Denny Wood, New Forest

DISTANCE 9KM/5½ MILES **ASCENT** 30M/98FT
TIME 3 HOURS **TYPE** FOREST AND HEATH

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 NAVIGATION LEVEL **EASY** |
  FITNESS LEVEL **LEISURELY** |
  PERFECT FOR **WILDLIFE** |
  NUMBER OF STILES **NONE**



Plan your walk

WHERE Circular walk in the New Forest National Park.

START/END Shatterford Forestry Commission car park (SU348063).

TERRAIN Forest tracks and heathland paths.

MAPS OS Explorer OL22; Landranger 196.

GETTING THERE Beaulieu Road rail station (on the London Waterloo to Poole route) is near the start of the walk. Plenty of free parking in Shatterford car park.

EATING & DRINKING The Drift Inn (023 8029 2342, driftinn.co.uk).

SLEEPING The Beaulieu Hotel (0800 444441, newforesthotels.co.uk/beaulieu-hotel).

VISITOR INFORMATION New Forest Heritage Centre, High Street, Lyndhurst (023 8028 3444, newforestheritage.org.uk); The New Forest (thenewforest.co.uk/visitor-info).

GUIDEBOOK *Walking in the New Forest: 30 Walks in the National Park* by Steve Davison (£12.95, Cicerone, ISBN 978 1852846374).

LOCAL RAMBLERS GROUP New Forest (023 8089 7654, ramblers.org.uk/new-forest).

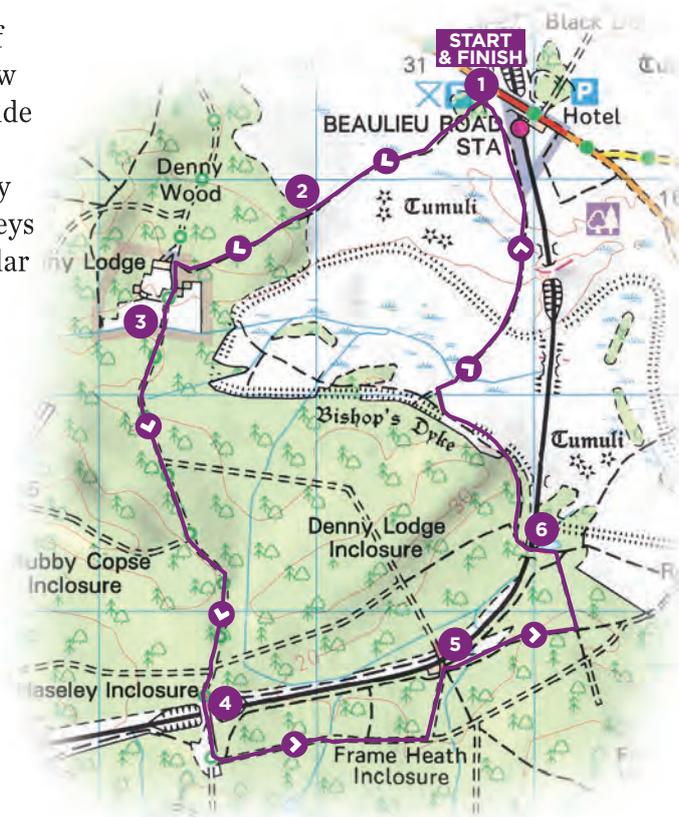
A walk encapsulating many of the unique features of the New Forest National Park, from wide open heathland to tranquil, secluded woodland and plenty of free-roaming ponies, donkeys and cattle. Much of this circular route follows well-surfaced paths making it accessible throughout the year

ROUTE BY NATALIE LEAL

1 **START** from the Shatterford car park and, facing away from the railway line and the road, take the main R-hand path through the pine trees. A broad stony path takes you over an extensive area of bog and heath towards some woodland known as Denny Wood. As with much of the New Forest, wild ponies and donkeys are often roaming free across this area of heathland. As you near the woods, the path forks. Go L and continue along the main path into the woodland.

2 Walk through tranquil Denny Wood and when you reach the forest road, turn L, taking the track marked as a cycle path downhill. Once past the houses, continue straight ahead on the main track through the gate and back into the forest.

3 Continue along the well-surfaced track for about a mile, ignoring any turnings off the main path. This takes you through a large, peaceful forestry enclosure to a crossroads. When you arrive at the crossroads (this is by Forestry Commission marker point 324) continue straight ahead towards a gate and then over the railway bridge.



4 Once over the railway, continue straight ahead until you reach a barrier, then turn L and continue through the woods for just over half a mile. When you arrive at a turning signed for Woodfidley, go L and follow this path towards the railway cottages. Go through the gate and turn R at the cottages, taking the lower path through the trees.

5 Go through the gate and walk along the grassy path (which can be boggy after wet weather). At the T-junction, go L. At the end of this path, go through the gate. This takes you back to the edge of the woodland, with views across the heath, often full of free-roaming cattle and more wild ponies. Turn L and climb the path up across the railway bridge.

6 Once over the bridge, the trail forks. Take the R fork and continue with the wire fence to your L. The surroundings soon open up onto heathland at the woodlands edge. At the next fork, bear R and follow the path over the heathland towards a footbridge at an area of wet ground. Having crossed the footbridge, follow the main path across the heath and back to the start point.

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Via the Pathwatch app or at ramblers.org.uk/pathwatch

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'One of the best moments walking the trail was setting up my final camp with a view over the Ogwen Valley and the Glyders on one side and the sunset behind the slate tips of Penrhyn Quarry on the other. Snowdonia at its best and an overwhelming feeling of "I made it!"

Paula Renzel, Ramblers Cymru. Read her blog about completing the trail solo at ramblers.org.uk/news



📍 Remains of quarrymen's accommodation near Cwmorthin

A kestrel was brooding over the moor. Before us, pink heather, blushing in the last of the light, sloped down to meet patchwork fields, the grey, pebbledashed village of Y Fron and the sea glittering red beyond. Just west of us, a mini-peak called Moel Tryfan looked eerily primeval, luring us towards its summit, over mossy mounds popping with tiny white heath bedstraw flowers. Welcome to mile 20 of the Snowdonia Slate Trail.

The mountaintop has been quarried into a giant egg cup. Peering over the edge revealed two lakes, shimmering cool turquoise. Amphitheatre-like walkways of purple slate, which once echoed with quarrymen's hobnailed boots, tower above the water. In places, the industry has left monumental slate pillars. Exploring Snowdonia's slate-mining heritage feels like stumbling upon lost civilisations.

The celebrated 20th-century Welsh-language author, Kate Roberts, grew up at the foot of Moel Tryfan during the slate heydays of the early 1900s. Her novels reveal a harsh but idyllic lifestyle scraped from the land and the quarries. A time when heather was gathered for kindling and worn clothes were carefully patched. Kate's childhood home is now a heritage centre.

I have lived in North Wales for three years and explored it, I'd thought, extensively on foot. However, the new Snowdonia Slate Trail (opened in 2017) was leading me along wild corridors I never knew existed. Paths that slope over the shoulders of forgotten peaks and rise up through lost valleys. Trails that pop out in the region's most celebrated villages – Llanberis, Beddgelert, Betws-y-Coed – but sneak around the region's famous peaks; eyeing them up from paths largely overlooked since the quarrymen packed up. Here are some of my favourite sections.

Slate beginnings

The Slate Trail starts at Port Penrhyn, just outside the city of Bangor, where horse-drawn wagons used to disgorge slate into sailing ships for export around the world. Nearby Penrhyn Castle reveals the huge gap in living standards between quarry owners and quarry workers. Perhaps Britain's finest example of the neo-Norman style, the castle is fairy-tale decadent and, my husband Rob points out, offers tea and cake. Don't miss the slate bed made for Queen Victoria's visit, which literally weighs a ton.

Seven miles further south, from a hillside just outside Bethesda, we get our first good view of some Snowdonian giants: the Carneddau and Glyderau mountain ranges. The scene, though, is dominated by the exposed blue ribs of a mountain in the foreground. Penrhyn, once the world's largest slate quarry, has eaten into it in square-cut steps. It's amazing to think that Welsh slate lay hidden under the earth for 400 million years, then, during a few frantic decades of industry, all this was wrested to the surface.

No other stone industry has ever dominated world markets like North Welsh slate did. The mountain quarries here roofed the 19th-century world. Gargantuan amounts of slate were shipped, then the industry collapsed in the >



1960s due to the rise of cheaper European slate and mass-produced tiles. Snowdonia has been left scattered with prescient, apocalyptic lost worlds, which are slowly being reclaimed by nature. These otherworldly slate landscapes are the UK's 2019 nomination for UNESCO World Heritage status: a fitting reminder of the resilience of nature and the short-termism of mankind.

With its dinky stone cottages and strip-fields, the nearby village of Mynydd Llandegai seems little changed since the slate days. The fields are fenced with tombstone-sized slabs of slate, edges worn smooth by rain and speckled with lichen.

Zigzag paths and beckoning water

At mile 12, the route slinks around the green shoulder of a peak called Elidir Fawr and we get a view of its neighbour, the hulking Snowdon massif, with Llanberis village huddled at its feet. The inviting blue water of Llyn Padarn beckons from the valley floor, and a zigzag path leads the way down to the Gallt y Glyn pub.

We detour to walk down Elidir Fawr's face, which has been quarried into purple galleries that reach almost to its summit. This route was once the morning walk of thousands of hardy, flat-capped men, off to work at Dinorwic Quarry. Nowadays, rust creeps over abandoned machinery, and plants grow from cracks in slate workshops; as if trying to return them to the earth.

In between two villages that time forgot, Croesor

📍 Beddgelert village green



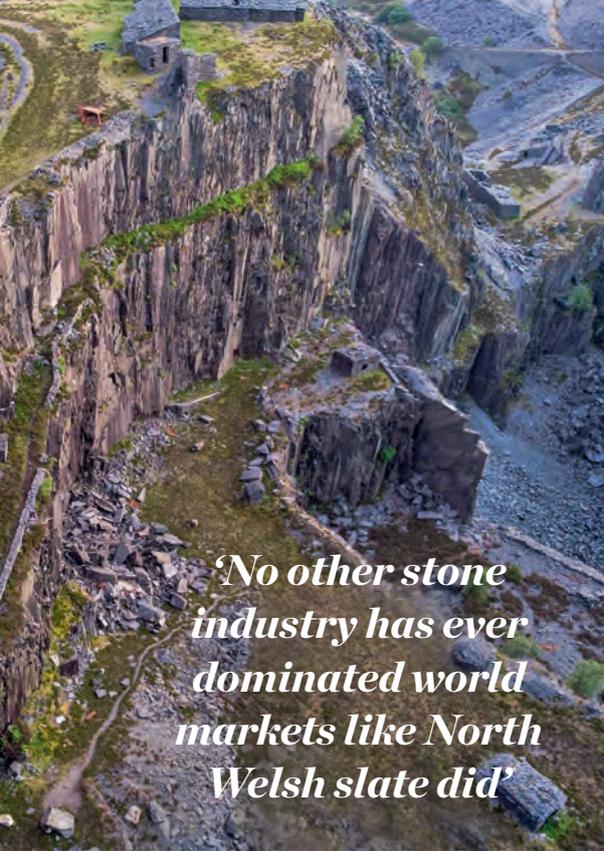
📍 Clockwise from top left: Former slate workshops; Cwm Cynfal; Dinorwic Quarry, as seen from a drone; approaching the Fairy Glen; waterfall in Cwm Cynfal; sheep dominate much of the landscape; piles of abandoned slate are being reclaimed by nature; the old quarries resemble lost civilisations

and Tanygrisiau, we cross the wildest section yet: a green desert scattered with the ruins of slate communities and echoing with their stories. 'It's like discovering Machu Picchu!' I exclaim. A forlorn chapel stands roofless. At Cwmorthin Quarry, rows of cramped quarrymen's cottages whistle with draughts. Sometimes whole families lived in these tiny, terraced dwellings. Schoolteacher Mrs Hughes was renowned for travelling up to one quarry near here in a slate wagon and whizzing down in a 'wild car' – essentially a skateboard on rollers with a brake – at the day's end.

At mile 45, Blaenau Ffestiniog is a reminder of the huge waste generated from Victorian slate tile manufacture. For every ton of finished slate, around nine tons of waste were tipped. The slate piles here are human-made mountains that dwarf the cottages. Rogue rhododendrons add splashes of pink to the slopes in spring and summer. These garden and estate escapees shouldn't be here, either.

The slate layer in Blaenau Ffestiniog isn't horizontal, as it was further west at Penrhyn and Dinorwic: it plunges on a 30-degree angle. In order to follow the course of these blue veins, the slate here had to be extracted from underground. Over a few decades, Oakeley Quarry grew from a three-man enterprise into the largest underground quarry in the world. It was around 30 floors deep with about 43 miles of connecting tunnels. The Oakeley family, who owned the quarry, bought and buried a village, Rhiwbryfdir, and a monastery, Mynachlog. Mills were built on top of slate spoils. A story of the time: health and safety standards were low, and eventually huge rockfalls and the family's fortune both came crashing down.

We pass the village railway station. A few of the old slate railway lines have been restored and reopened, and perhaps the best of these is the Ffestiniog – the world's oldest narrow-gauge railway –



'No other stone industry has ever dominated world markets like North Welsh slate did'



SNOWDONIA



which takes you 13½ miles out to the coast at Portmadog, powered by original, 150-year-old locomotives. We have other plans for today, though. A few miles south of Blaenau, we wander down a meadow and emerge in another kind of lost world. Everything is softened with moss. Huge waterfalls plunge into water-carved rock pools. We pause at a strange rock pillar known as Huw Llwyd's Pulpit after a 17th-century local character who used to converse with spirits here. A red squirrel skitters across the path. This is Cwm Cynfal.

Next comes the most remote section of the walk: striding across the blanket-boggy back of beyond, a huge expanse of moorland covering central Snowdonia known as the Migneint. I gaze around at huge outcrops of cliffs, mountains and ridges that I've never seen before, and the hut circles of a partially reconstructed hillfort, Bryn y Castell.

Waterfalls and gorges

We emerge on a forgotten road, which leads us up a valley I've never heard of: Cwm Teigl. There is not a car or person in sight. At the top of this road is Cwt-y-Bugail, one of a handful of slate quarries still in operation across North Wales. The contents of the National Gallery were hidden deep in the underground quarries up here during the Second World War. From just outside the quarry I have a Messerschmitt view over the landscape. I can see nothing man-made apart from the slate works.

The Penmachno to Capel Curig section of the walk bursts with high accolades: Swallow Falls is Wales's highest continuous waterfall, and the Fairy Glen is the region's prettiest gorge. Approaching Betws-y-Coed at mile 63, we peek at the Roman Bridge, hidden in a green

glen and festooned with drooping ivy. It's not actually Roman, but it is an ancient packhorse bridge. Further on, we reach the 50-foot drop of Conwy Falls. A fish ladder has been built here to help leaping salmon return to their ancestral breeding grounds. Next, we reach the Fairy Glen, a fragment of Celtic rainforest where cascades and rapids are channelled into a narrow ravine cloaked in greenery. It's a dreamy landscape with light pouring through the trees, and

we decide to pause here for a swim. These remnants of ancient woodlands are a reminder of how most of Wales would look if it wasn't constantly grazed by sheep.

In Betws-y-Coed, a chocolate-box village full of historic bridges, restaurants and outdoors shops, we plump for Welsh tapas in the big windows at Olif, then continue past Miners Bridge – yet another gorge beauty spot, which was crossed by the quarrymen on their way to work in the Gwydyr Forest – to Swallow Falls. Here, a chasm projects a spectacular waterfall among beech, conifer and birch trees. A narrow but safe path clings to the cliffs above the swirling torrent.

At mile 72, as we descend towards Capel Curig, views of Snowdon, Moel Siabod, the Carneddau and the Glyderau range open up, heralding a change in scenery. The final section is a beautiful stretch through the Ogwen and Nant Ffrancon Valleys; Tolkienesque, with huge green mountainsides, heather sprouting from crags and the mile-long Ogwen lake. The valleys are little developed, making them a haven for all kinds of birds and even otters. I can't wait to walk this final stretch, but first there's an inn, Bryn Tyrch, which offers great food and board – and views of Moel Siabod. *Nos da*, as they say round here... goodnight. ■



Walk it!

TIME/DISTANCE The circular 134km/83-mile Snowdonia Slate Trail starts at Port Penrhyn in Bangor and ends at Bethesda. It typically takes seven days to complete comfortably.

MAPS/GUIDEBOOK OS Explorer OL17 and OL18; *The Snowdonia Slate Trail* (£12.99, Rucksack Readers).

ACCOMMODATION Plenty of choice, especially in Bangor, Bethesda, Llanberis, Beddgelert, Llan Ffestiniog, Penmachno and Capel Curig.

FURTHER INFO snowdoniaslatetrail.org, visitsnowdonia.info



📍 A cottonwood tree
in the Lamar Valley



DESTINATION

Yellowstone

Established in 1872, the world's first national park is an iconic landscape of exploding geysers, deep canyons and magnificent wildlife. And with more than 1,450km of trails, walking is by far the best way to experience its wonders – and escape the millions of visitors it receives annually

WORDS BRADLEY MAYHEW

From the summit of Mount Washburn (3,122 metres/10,243 feet) a fire lookout tower provides sweeping views over almost half of Yellowstone National Park. To the north rise the volcanic crests of the Absaroka Range, while to the south the Yellowstone River in its deep canyon snakes its way to the shimmering blue of Yellowstone Lake, one of North America's largest alpine bodies of water. It's the stunning climax of what is deservedly the park's most popular hike.

But it's only after you read the nearby interpretive signs that a bigger, more ancient landscape reveals itself. You begin to make out the outline of a huge caldera, a collapsed

volcanic crater, 50km/30 miles wide and eroded almost beyond distinction. Slowly, it dawns on you that you are looking down over one of the world's largest supervolcanoes. And that you are standing right on its rim.

Much of the feted landscape that visitors marvel at on a trip through Yellowstone National Park owes its existence to this supervolcano and its last great eruption, some 640,000 years ago. Most of the campers in the park's Canyon or Madison campgrounds are unaware that they are toasting their marshmallows atop a 190km/120-mile deep magma chamber, which roils away as close as 5km/3 miles beneath their feet.

It's this underground hot spot that fuels >



📍 Clockwise from top left: Mount Washburn; bison grazing; limestone terrace at Mammoth; the Lamar Valley in autumn; a black wolf

Yellowstone's 10,000 or so thermal features – gurgling mud pots, hissing fumaroles, exploding geysers, steaming hot springs and sulphur-bleached thermal basins. More than half of the world's geysers cram into this one park, including the world's tallest, Steamboat Geyser, and the world's most famous, Old Faithful.

In Yellowstone you can see the earth raging, churning and shifting in near-constant primeval flux. At times it feels as if you are witnessing creation.

I'd hiked up to Mount Washburn because it's one of the few places where I can start to comprehend the scale of Yellowstone's geology (it turns out that supervolcanoes aren't as easy to spot as you'd think). Coming from densely packed south-east England, I found it takes time to adjust to the scale of Montana and Wyoming. From landscapes to restaurant portion size, things just seem bigger and bolder here in the American heartland.

Hiking is easily the best way to experience Yellowstone, up close to the land and far from the crowds. Statistics claim that only 10% of the park's visitors ever hike a trail and only half of those get further than a mile from the parking lot. Invest in a bit of

research and it's not difficult to find your own private backcountry geysers, canyon views, lakeshore picnic spots, petrified forests, secret hot springs and stunning mountain panoramas. With more than 1,450km/900 miles of marked trails, you are spoilt for choice.

The first national park

After a morning hike up Mount Washburn (six miles return), I go back to my rental car and drive north, down past the basalt cliffs

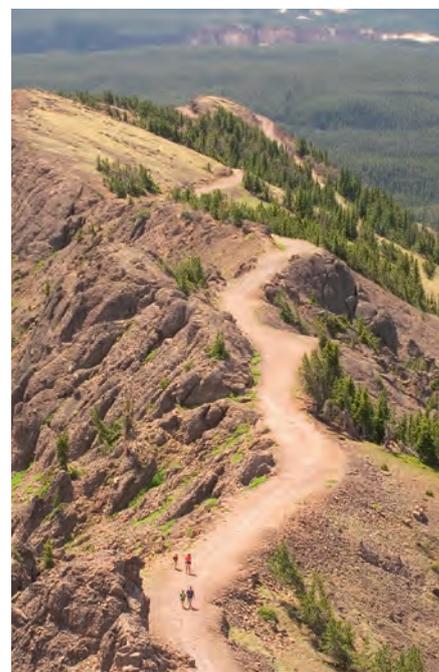


and salmon-pink canyon walls of Tower district and then north-east to Mammoth Junction, the historic centre of the park.

Congress established Yellowstone in 1872 as America's (and essentially the world's) first national park. Yosemite and Sequoia national parks followed in 1890, with Mount Rainier next in 1899, solidifying a concept that would quickly spread to provide global inspiration. Within 30 years of Yellowstone's founding, parks had been established in Australia, Canada and New Zealand. 'National parks are the best idea we ever had' wrote American author Wallace Stegner. 'Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst.'

I'd come to Mammoth's Albright Visitor Center partly to get some suggestions on local trails, but also to trace the park's history back to its earliest formation. Yellowstone may have been signed into existence in 1872, but it would be over 40 years before the National Park Service was created to run it, and for most of the intervening years the park was administered by the US Army from the sandstone buildings of Fort Yellowstone.

Today elk graze the manicured lawns of Mammoth, as rangers give guided tours around the former barracks, stables, guardhouses and granaries that helped preserve the fledgling park. The visitor



📍 Left: The Lamar Valley, known as ‘the Serengeti of North America’; hiking the Mount Washburn Trail

centre itself is a former bachelor officers’ quarters dating from 1909.

On a ranger’s advice, I set off on the nearby Howard Eaton Trail. It’s an easy stroll through one of the park’s most popular corners, yet because there’s no signed trailhead, there is rarely anyone on the trail. For me, this is one of Yellowstone’s great joys; that it is big enough still to hold quite a few secrets.

Contradictory demands

As the path skirted the backs of giant travertine mounds and layered limestone terraces, I would catch the occasional glimpse of boardwalk crowds taking selfies on the other side of the basin, before veering away to pass cascading hot springs, coloured mandarin orange, canary yellow or salmon pink, depending on the temperature of the water. The terraces around the springs form as intricate layers of coral-like limestone, deposited by the acidic hot spring water – a process described by one guidebook as ‘a mountain turning itself inside out’. It’s yet more evidence of the dynamic underground forces that shape Yellowstone.

As I got closer to Mammoth Junction, the dirt trail underfoot turned into boardwalk, then a concrete path, and then a giant parking lot, full of tour buses and RVs. The ugly truth is that Yellowstone in August is a busy place. Popular parking areas fill

by 9am and every campsite in the park is claimed by noon. Lines of RVs clog the highways at even the rumour of a roadside bear sighting, and park rangers spend more time corralling tourists than they do wildlife.

And this is the conundrum of Yellowstone. It may be one of America’s largest and wildest national parks, but it’s also one of the most popular, with over four million visitors crushing through its gates each year. It’s a wilderness managed by a bureaucracy; a park established to serve the contradictory demands of both environmental protection and a founding principle that the park exists ‘for the benefit and enjoyment of the people’.

How to balance the demands of conservation versus recreation – of tourists, locals, hunters, environmentalists, businessmen and backpackers – is a challenge that faces many protected areas across the globe and one that continues to raise debate across Yellowstone, almost 150 years after the park came into being.

The American Serengeti

On my last day in the park, I headed north-east into the wild sagebrush country of the Lamar Valley. For many, wildlife is Yellowstone’s greatest draw, and this green rolling corner of the park, known as ‘the Serengeti of North America’, holds the

nation’s greatest concentration of mega fauna. The park is home to between 10,000 and 20,000 elk (depending on the season) and several hundred grizzly and black bears, as well as bighorn sheep, mountain goats, moose, bald eagles and trumpeter swans. Its pronghorn antelope are the fastest land animals in the North American continent. Its 4,500 bison make up some of the last free-roaming herds on the continent. There’s simply nowhere better to spot wild animals in North America.

As I drove into the roadside pullouts that dot the Lamar Valley, I noticed the groups of hardened wildlife-watchers, surrounded by collapsible chairs, spotting scopes and coolers of soft drinks, settling in for the long haul. These are Yellowstone’s wolf watchers and they are a dedicated bunch, returning year after year.

By the 1920s, Yellowstone’s wolves had been largely pushed to oblivion; hunted by ranchers outside the park and poisoned as ‘pests’ by early park employees. Then, in the winter of 1995, the first of 41 grey wolves from Canada and north-west Montana were released into the Lamar Valley. The population grew steadily to 170 by 2007, dropping back today to 80 individuals in nine packs (a decline put down to distemper and legal hunting outside the park). The reintroduction of wolves sent ripples of change across the interconnected >



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📍 Clockwise from top left: An exhibit at Albright Visitor Center; Grand Prismatic Hot Spring, Yellowstone's most photographed thermal feature; a bighorn sheep at Mount Washburn; Lower Yellowstone Falls

Yellowstone Ecosystem. As wolf numbers rose, so elk numbers fell, allowing willow and aspen to expand. Coyote numbers dropped but other scavengers, including bears, benefitted from the wolves' winter kills. A natural balance was restored.

While many see the reintroduction of the wolf as the park's greatest modern achievement, others are less pleased. Wild animals care little for park boundaries, and ranchers just outside the park in neighbouring Wyoming and Montana still

view wolves as a centuries-old foe, which, and at the time of writing can be hunted legally. In 2012, the alpha female of the Lamar wolf pack, the park's most famous wolf, was shot dead just outside the park, as was her daughter last year.

As the wolf watchers scanned the lush valley for movement, a ripple of excitement spread through the group. At the far edge of the valley, a single black wolf was skirting the treeline, loping along the edge of the meadow, probing for a weakness in the herd

of elk, searching for an opportunity. Tension spread through the herd; the wolf and the elk eyed each other, both summing up the odds, until the wolf eventually disappeared back into the forest shadows. The tension was palpable. All that was missing was the David Attenborough commentary.

Into the wild

For all of its gift shops and ice-cream stands, Yellowstone remains at its heart an astonishingly wild place. Taken together with the park's surrounding national forests, the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem forms one of the largest nearly intact temperate-zone ecosystems on Earth. It is one of the few places left in America where you just might spot a grizzly sow lumbering across the horizon in front of you, cubs in tow, or hear the midnight howling of a wolf pack from your campsite.

If this happens, your pulse will quicken and the hair will stand up on the back of your neck. You will momentarily experience what it feels like to be part of the food chain. It's a thrilling, primeval rush, and for me it encapsulates the true essence of Yellowstone – a protected pocket of the wild, whose very existence reminds us of what the world once was, and whose legacy continues to inspire beyond borders and generations. ■



Walk it!

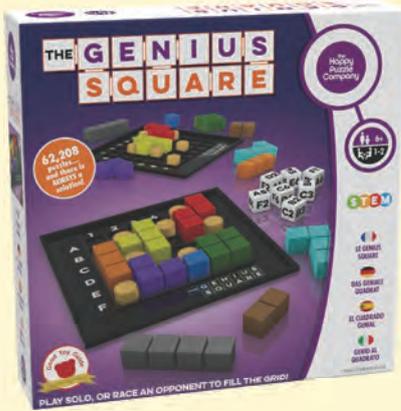
TIME/DISTANCE Yellowstone has more than 1,450km/900 miles of hiking trails. The Mount Washburn summit hike is a moderate 10km/6-mile out-and-back walk from the car park at Dunraven Pass. The 6.5km/4-mile Howard Eaton Trail is an easy stroll through one of the park's most popular corners and starts at the Glen Creek Trailhead south of Mammoth Junction.

GUIDEBOOKS *Top Trails: Yellowstone & Grand Teton National Parks* (£12.99, Wilderness Press) outlines 46 'must-do' walks and *Lonely Planet Yellowstone & Grand Teton National Parks* (£14.99) is a good general guide to the parks.

FURTHER INFO nps.gov/yell

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I live in Hillingdon in north-west London and I'm a nature enthusiast. I love to go birdwatching in Ruislip Woods. It's a National Nature Reserve (NNR) on the edge of London. There's a lido that attracts hundreds of ducks from Scandinavia every winter, and during spring and autumn you can spot whitethroats and other warblers, which breed in the woods.

My favourite subjects at school are all three sciences and geography, which has been great for my map. I've always loved animals but my first encounter with nature was in my back garden when I was about eight, watching foxes, blackbirds and house sparrows. I wanted to explore more, so I got a field guide and just set off – with my parents and brother in tow – and that's how I discovered the green spaces near my house.

Once familiar with the local area, I wanted to explore further afield, so looked at various organisations' websites and noticed that they only mapped their own designated protected areas. There appeared to be no single source showing all of London's wildlife and green spaces. I imagined that a lot of people, like me, weren't finding it easy to discover all the different wild places in our city.

I created the first version of my online map when I was 10, using an iPad and Google My Maps software. I abandoned that after six months, thinking it was finished, but then I realised that my work had only just begun – I discovered so many other types of protected designations! There are more than 1,500 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in Greater London. By far the most common designation on my map, they cover nearly 20% of London.

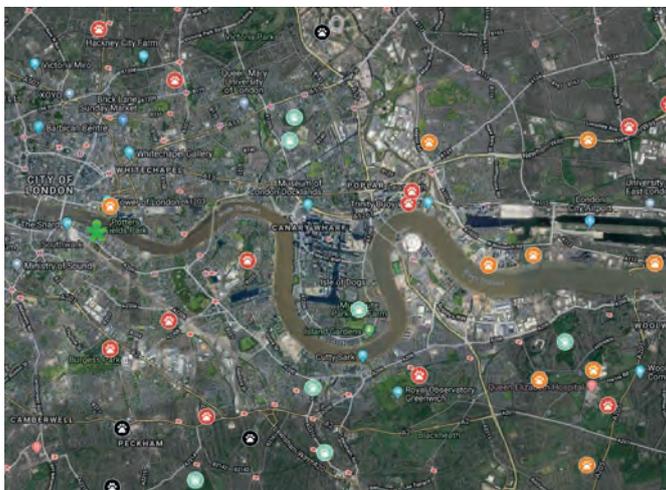


MY WALK OF LIFE

KABIR KAUL

The 14-year-old nature enthusiast has plotted the first complete map of London's wildlife and green spaces

INTERVIEW NATALIE HOARE



📍 Clockwise from top left: Kabir has been interested in nature since he was a small boy; by the Thames; his map of London's wildlife and green spaces

Next, Greenspace Information for Greater London gave me a list that included SINCs, NNRs, Ramsar wetlands sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and more, and bit by

bit I plotted them on the new map, showing all the London boroughs (Nature Reserves of London – 2nd Edition).

I was surprised this hadn't been collated already. I must have spent hours – days – over the past 18 months plotting the

sites onto one single map – and adding opening hours and other helpful information to try to encourage more people to experience all these fantastic wild spaces.

The next step in my project is to gradually visit all the places listed on my map, review them on my blog and then create some nice walking routes around them – I have already created some. I want to raise awareness of these fantastic green spaces among people of all ages, especially young people. The common perception is that you have to visit the countryside to see wildlife. Not many people realise that there are woodland, wetlands, parkland and meadows dotted throughout London. People just walk past them and still have the idea that London is a concrete jungle. They don't see these oases of green around the capital. We need this knowledge to be passed down through generations to ensure that these places are protected for everyone to enjoy – and visiting these spaces is great for our wellbeing, physically and mentally. I hope my map will help to address that.

The reaction to my map has been amazing. So many people have said they're discovering new places in London. I've been invited to be an ambassador for the Cameron Bespolka Trust charity, which aims to get young people involved with nature, and I'm also involved with the London National Park City movement.

My family say that they are surprised by all of this because none of my relatives is particularly interested in nature – I'm definitely the first. I've got my family into nature now, which is very good. When I grow up, I'd like to be a zoologist or a conservationist... And a broadcaster as well. kaulofthewild.com



GEAR ON TEST

Kit with a conscience

Our experts Jen and Sim Benson seek out the best outdoor gear with outstanding ethical credentials

1 Jack Wolfskin Kiewa fleece jacket

£190 jack-wolfskin.co.uk

The Kiewa fleece is part of a new 100% recycled clothing range from sustainable German brand Jack Wolfskin, which also achieved 100% PFC-free clothing and packs this year. The Kiewa is made from bluesign-certified recycled polyester and is great to wear as a mid-layer in colder weather or as a breathable outer.

2 Smith Lowdown XL2 sunglasses

£139 smithoptics.com

US-based Smith Optics has the largest eco-friendly sunglasses collection in the world, with 100% of its injection-moulded frames made with Rilsan Clear – a bioplastic made from renewable, non-GM (genetically modified) castor plants. The Lowdown XL2 offers great coverage with polarised, ChromaPop colour-enhancing lenses.

3 Sherpa Suraj tee-shirt

£25 sherpaadventuregear.co.uk

Tashi Sherpa founded the company in 2003 to provide local people with economic and social stability. More than half the products are made in Nepal, where workers are guaranteed steady employment and fair pay and conditions. The Suraj Tee is made from organic cotton, grown without reliance on pesticides and synthetic fertilisers. The fabric is tough, comfortable and breathable, and ideal for warmer days.

4 Columbia OutDry Ex Eco Tech Shell waterproof jacket

£180 columbiasportswear.co.uk

Established in 1938, US brand Columbia has a range of market-leading eco-friendly products. This mid-weight waterproof features Columbia's own OutDry external membrane to keep out the worst of the weather. It's PFC-free and 100% recycled. The white and grey colours are undyed to reduce water usage and pollution.

5 Vaude Kabru Light down jacket

£215 vaude.com

Vaude thoroughly lives up to its mission to 'full-heartedly accept [its] social and environmental responsibility', winning numerous green business awards, as Fair Wear Foundation members and in pioneering the use of sustainable materials. The Kabru jacket is made with 100% recycled materials, including a durable nylon outer, 800-fill power RDS-certified recycled down and polyester stretch panels for a warm, lightweight and packable layer.

6 Darn Tough Hiker Micro Crew Cushion socks

£20 darntough.com

Family company Darn Tough has been making socks in Vermont, US, for 40 years. Its Merino wool is sustainably sourced, and the brand is working towards 100% recycled materials. Designed for high-mileage hiking and tested on the Vermont Long Trail, these socks combine cushioning around the heel and forefoot with support, and the naturally antimicrobial properties of Merino wool for comfort.

7 Fjällräven Keb 52

£265 fjallraven.co.uk

In 1950, Fjällräven's founder, Åke Nordin, created a wooden-framed backpack in his basement in Sweden using his mother's sewing machine and his father's tools. The Keb 52 draws from that early heritage, its beautiful wooden frame reducing CO₂ emissions by 90% compared with similar packs' production. Designed using tough recycled polyester/organic cotton fabric with recycled nylon base and sides, it's a joy to carry.

8 Klean Kanteen Reflect bottle 800ml

£29.95 kleankanteen.co.uk

California-based Klean Kanteen has revolutionised drinking on the go by raising awareness of plastic pollution and creating bottles that people are proud to use. Reflect is designed using sustainably

harvested bamboo, food-grade silicone and stainless steel. Klean Kanteen is a certified B-Corporation, ensuring high social and environmental standards, and donates 1% of sales to environmental organisations.

9 Alt-berg Nordkapp boots

£219.99 altberg.co.uk

Alt-berg is a British company making outstanding boots in its own factories in Yorkshire and Italy. Known for quality and fit, Alt-berg also has good ethical credentials, using European manufacture and sustainably sourced European leather. The Nordkapp three-season walking boot is made from Italian Nubuk, with a Vibram sole and a PFC/PTFE-free waterproof Sympatex membrane.

10 AKU Bellamont II Plus shoes

£164.95 aku.it/en

With 30 years' experience as premium footwear makers, Italian brand AKU manufactures 85% of its products in company-owned European factories with 100% traceability. The Bellamont combines outstanding craftsmanship with top-quality materials in a shoe that's perfect for less technical walking. The nubuck leather upper is responsibly sourced from Dani, a sustainable Italian chrome-free tannery, while both the midsole and Vibram outsole are made with recycled content.

11 Páramo Cascada II waterproof trousers

£155 paramo-clothing.com

Páramo and sister company Nikwax were set up by Nick Brown as a sustainable alternative to PFC-based waterproofing. All Páramo products are PFC-free and Fair Trade certified, and over 80% (including these trousers) are made in the Miquelina Foundation in Colombia, providing safe employment for vulnerable women. The Cascada trousers are durable and well-ventilated, waterproof and comfortable. Páramo offers a full recycling service for its products.

12 Tilley TMH55 Mash-Up Airflo hat

£75 tilley.com

This Tilley hat is made from hemp, organic cotton and recycled polyester, all of which are reclaimed waste yarns from the manufacture of other products. Each one is handmade in Canada – a process requiring 23 pairs of hands. They're individually sized, comfortable, UV-protective, washable and buoyant – and they come with a lifetime guarantee.

13 Light My Fire Eat 'N Drink Kit Bio

£40 lightmyfire.com

Founded on fair-trade principles and with all products designed and made in Sweden, Light My Fire's ingenious Sporks are a favourite with outdoorsy folk. You'll find four Sporks in this meal kit, as well as four plates and four Pack-Up-Cups. A reusable alternative to single-use kitchenware, it's made from 100% BPA-free bio-based plastic.

14 Smartwool Merino 250 base layer pattern crew

£84.99 smartwool.com

Smartwool has been making socks in the US since 1994. Working with its suppliers in New Zealand, Smartwool ensures the best possible animal welfare and is making its range more sustainable through the use of recycled wool and eliminating PFCs. This 100% Merino wool crew is a cosy, breathable and naturally antimicrobial layer.

15 Salewa Ortles Hybrid TirolWool Celliant jacket

£200 salewa.com

Established in Germany in 1935, Salewa's eco-friendly headquarters are now based in the Dolomites. Ethical

Buying tips

Increased awareness is driving corporations to seek better ways of production, reducing harmful processes. To ensure best possible practices, look out for these terms: Fair Wear Foundation/Fair Trade; Recycled; Organic/GOTS; bluesign; PFC-free; Biodegradable; Responsible Down Standard; Non-mulesed Merino wool; Made in Green by OEKO-TEX. Find out more at ramblers.org.uk/walkmag

credentials include bluesign system certification and Fair Wear Foundation brand leader status. The Celliant insulated jacket combines TirolWool with synthetic insulation for a warm, lightweight layer that works to regulate body temperature. It's quick-drying and comfortable, with stretch side panels for freedom of movement.

16 Fjällräven Keb Eco-Shell waterproof jacket

£445 fjallraven.co.uk

Founded by Swedish adventurer Åke Nordin in 1960, Fjällräven has a mission to enable people to spend time in nature. Its products combine practicality, comfort and durability with a strong focus on sustainability. The Keb Eco-Shell is made from comfortable yet highly protective three-layer recycled polyester with a PFC-free water-repellent finish.

17 Picture Siense fleece

£119.99 picture-organic-clothing.com

Since 2008, French brand Picture has been creating organic, recycled and bio-sourced outdoor clothing. All garments are 100% PFC-free and offcuts are reused. The soft and cosy fleece is made from a mixture of durable, quick-drying, biodegradable nylon and responsibly sourced, naturally antimicrobial Merino wool. It features snug hand-warmer pockets and wooden buttons.

18 Mountain Hardwear Lamina Eco AF -1C sleeping bag

£220 mountainhardwear.com

The Lamina Eco range combines Mountain Hardwear's outstanding quality and performance with a vastly reduced manufacturing footprint. Undyed to reduce water usage and pollution, the main fabric is a 20D recycled nylon ripstop, the insulation is 70% recycled polyester and the stuff sack, compression sack and trims are also recycled. Mountain Hardwear has a team of corporate responsibility specialists that carries out regular unannounced audits to monitor factory working conditions.

19 Montane Cygnus Pants

£65 montane.co.uk

Known for making hardwearing kit for demanding outdoor environments, Montane also takes its corporate responsibility seriously. The first brand to implement the Responsible Down Standard across its entire collection,

Montane is involved in research to find more sustainable yet equally effective alternatives to PFC-based water-repellents. Made with durable, PFC-free recycled nylon, the women's Cygnus trousers are lightweight, super-stretchy and comfortable.

20 Millican Fraser The Rucksack 25L

£130 homeofmillican.com

Following in the footsteps of maverick Millican Dalton, who, in the 1900s, swapped his life in London for adventures in the mountains of the Lake District, Millican's founders moved to Keswick aiming to make kit in a better way. Fraser The Rucksack combines functional design – including a generous main compartment, internal laptop sleeve and easy-access side pockets – with a hard-wearing cotton/recycled polyester canvas. Made in Vietnam, we'd like to see more commitment to humanitarian issues.

21 BAM walking socks

£15 bambooclothing.co.uk

Founded in 2006 by British pole vaulter and environmentalist David Gordon, BAM now leads the way in bamboo clothing. Bamboo requires far less water and land area, while being faster-growing and harder than cotton. It's also biodegradable and doesn't release microplastics during washing. BAM's walking socks are made using 77% bamboo with nylon for durability and elastane for stretch.

22 Vaude Green Core Mid boots

£215 vaude.com

German brand Vaude is run by Antje von Dewitz, whose father founded it in 1974. Europe's most sustainable outdoor clothing company, Vaude is bluesign and Fair Wear accredited, and partners with the WWF and Greenpeace. Part of the brand's Green Shape Core Collection, pushing forward the development of eco-friendly materials, these mid-length boots feature sustainable leather, recycled rubber outsole, PrimaLoft Eco (30% plant-based/70% recycled PET) insulation and felt made from cows' milk.



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OUR EXPERTS



James Austin is a Ramblers delivery officer who oversees group walks and the Ramblers' digital tools.



Jen Benson is a writer and walk gear reviewer. She has a BSc (Hons) in podiatry and an MSc in sports and exercise medicine.



Robyn Stephens is the policy and local advocacy officer at the Ramblers.



Nick Summerton is a Yorkshire GP, author and Ryedale Ramblers committee member.



Helen Todd is campaigns and policy manager for Ramblers Scotland.



HEALTH

Lyme disease advice

A friend has been diagnosed with Lyme disease. She is a regular walker but has no recollection of having picked up a tick. What is the advice for walkers on avoiding ticks, symptoms, worst affected areas and so on? Samantha Jones, Exeter

Nick Summerton Lyme disease is caused by bacteria – Borrelia – carried by ticks. Around 3,000 people get it each year in England and Wales. Many people won't notice a tick or a bite. Some ticks can be tiny – under 2mm – and often hide in the groin, armpits, behind the knees and in the scalp. Showering after a walk will wash off some ticks (Lyme disease is rare if the tick has been stuck to you for less than a day). Lyme disease is often hard to spot, but symptoms can include a red circular 'bull's eye' rash, although around a quarter of Lyme disease sufferers will just have a fever, tiredness, headaches, muscle pains, joint aches or swollen glands. Encounters are more likely in southern England, the Lake District, the North York Moors and the Scottish Highlands. If you feel unwell, make sure your doctor knows if you have been walking through woods or tall grass, or across heathland. This online video shows how to become more tick aware: bit.ly/RamblersTickAdvice

SAFETY

First-aid kit for first-timers

I am a fit, healthy solo walker in my 60s. I don't carry a first-aid kit, but after reading *Masterclass (Go it Alone, Spring 2019)*, I think I should. Are there many first-aid kits on the market that would be suitable or, if I make my own, what essential items should be included? Alison Goodwin, Lincolnshire

James Austin We recommend carrying a first-aid kit on walks. The items to include depend on the type of walk and level of difficulty, but a basic first-aid kit should contain wound dressings, bandages, plasters and painkillers. We also recommend carrying a foil survival blanket. Find a full kit list, which has been reviewed by St John Ambulance, at ramblers.org.uk/firstaid. Most kits on the market contain the basics – you can add to these, or create your own.



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COUNTRYSIDE

Identifying traps

I was out walking recently and spotted what looked like some kind of animal trap. Can you please advise how I can tell the difference between bona fide, humane traps used for wildlife surveying purposes and those that might have more sinister (and possibly) illegal uses?

Malcolm Bruce, Edinburgh

Helen Todd Traps and snares are commonly used for pest and predator control, often by farmers or land managers,

and sometimes for conservation purposes. Used correctly, they can be a legitimate land management tool. For example, 16,000 traps are helping eradicate non-native stoats, which are threatening vulnerable ground-nesting birds on Orkney. However, sadly there continue to be instances of illegal traps being used in Britain's countryside, including to kill raptors. If you have concerns about a trap, never touch it but take a photo, note the location and contact your local police wildlife crime officer. Learn more about traps at bit.ly/TrapTypes

HEALTH

Stubborn foot pain

Having been a walker for over 40 years and now in my 70th year, I had to stop walking last year because of plantar fasciitis. I saw a podiatrist in January 2018, and since then I've been using orthotics and doing daily stretching exercises. I've had two courses of anti-inflammatories, nine sessions of ultrasound therapy and a steroid injection and I still can't shake it off. Is there a cure? *Chris Tarrant, Stockport*



Jen Benson The plantar fascia is a strong, ligament-like band that crosses the arch of the foot between the calcaneus (heel bone) and the metatarsal heads. Plantar fasciitis is a non-inflammatory overuse injury resulting from repetitive stressing of the fascia, such as occurs during long-distance walking or running. It's usually felt as a persistent heel pain and is generally worse first thing in the morning or after rest. There's no definitive cure, and most cases resolve themselves within six to 18 months. There is good evidence that stretching, mobilising and massaging the area – try rolling a golf ball around under your foot – and improving leg strength all help to speed up recovery. Support the foot by wearing shoes with a stiff sole, never go barefoot, and use 'low-dye' taping, a technique your podiatrist can show you. Plantar fasciitis can sometimes occur secondary to other conditions, so if the pain continues, talk to your GP about a referral for imaging – usually by MRI or ultrasound – to confirm the diagnosis.

GEAR

Footwear for inserts

I have a neuropathy problem with my right foot and wear a custom-made NHS orthosis. I've been advised to choose boots or shoes with 'a low opening'. Any suggestions? *Colin Hills, Derbyshire*

Jen Benson Neuropathy occurs as a result of nerve damage, causing reduced or altered sensation in the affected area. Custom orthoses can provide support but can also substantially change the way footwear fits. You may need to size up or change to a model with greater depth. Low-opening footwear allows the orthosis to be correctly positioned. Many walking shoes fully unlace, but for boots look for a model with a lower ankle cuff that unlaces well into the forefoot, such as the Alt-Berg Fremington boot, which comes in five different width fittings. Always remove the existing footbed before inserting an orthosis. If you can, see a specialist boot-fitter. Whalley Warm & Dry in Lancashire (whalleyoutdoor.co.uk) offers a fitting service with a selection of brands, and Alt-Berg (altberg.co.uk) has a fitting service at its factory in Richmond, Yorkshire.

PATHS

Right of way in my garden

I have a footpath and bridleway running through my garden, from a shared gate. One of the pillars is rotten and needs replacing. Am I solely responsible for this or might my local authority be obliged to help? *Daniel Vulliamy, East Yorkshire*

Robyn Stephens According to section 146 of the Highways Act 1980 (bit.ly/HighwaysAct1980), a gate across a right of way should be maintained in a safe condition by the landowner. You can claim at least 25% of the cost of this work from the authority, which in this case would be East Riding of Yorkshire Council. Some authorities also provide materials; others may carry out the work themselves. It is worth asking directly.





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MASTERCLASS

BOTHY BAGGING

Offering five-star views, bothies are basic, off-grid stone shelters providing hardy hillwalkers with a welcome refuge in some of Great Britain's most wild and lonely places. Follow our experts' advice on using them

WORDS LUKE WATERSON

At a time when travel was more arduous and accommodation options scant, Highland hospitality was an honoured Scottish tradition for centuries, obligating households to provide free shelter to travellers. In a more commercial and less community-minded age, this tradition has largely fallen by the wayside, with one rather eclectic exception: bothies.

Bothies are remote wilderness shelters that are mainly used by hikers, cyclists and sometimes kayakers as vital overnight refuges during longer forays into the wilds.

Often fascinating historic buildings that have outlived their original purpose – such as old estate cottages and schoolhouses – in Great Britain, most are found in remote parts of Scotland, predominantly in the Highlands, Skye and Dumfries and Galloway, plus a few scattered examples across North Wales and northern England.

Bothies are basic shelters that are always left unlocked and are free to use. Inside, they have little more than four walls and a roof. Most have a hearth and a raised sleeping

area. Almost all lack a toilet, running water or mains electricity. Nevertheless, their popularity is on the increase.

The Mountain Bothies Association (MBA) is a charitable organisation that maintains about 100 shelters and aims to keep them open 'for the use and benefit of all who love wild and lonely places'. The MBA runs regular maintenance parties for its volunteer workforce and could be involved with fitting a new roof or making drinks for those doing the repairs. Recent work parties have had good turnouts,



📍 Above: The Lookout (Rubha Hunish), Skye, built in 1928 as a coastguard watch station

with volunteers from eight different countries participating in a renovation of Leacraithnaich on the Morvern Peninsula. The MBA posts details of forthcoming work parties on their website.

This network of buildings is reliant for their survival on good nature and respect: not just that of landowners and MBA volunteers, but also that of bothy users in adhering to a strict code (see opposite).

While some of Scotland's bothies have sea or loch access or are occasionally accessible via farm tracks, often the only way in is on foot.

'The locations of many bothies make them ideally placed for mountain climbers and hillwalkers,' says Neil Stewart, MBA's publicity coordinator. 'But they serve to make the outdoors that much more enjoyable, too. The Hutchison Memorial Hut in the Cairngorms, for example, is close to Munro ascents but also well positioned for users to appreciate the marvellous solitude.'

While many require some stamina to reach, such as Maol Bhuidhe, near Loch



📍 Above: Corrour bothy in the Cairngorms has an open fire and a composting toilet

Monar in the West Highlands, others are reachable by reasonably fit day walkers, being within a few hours' walk. They're a great spot for a lunch or tea break.

A superb introduction to a range of bothies could be on the Cape Wrath Trail, the only long-distance trail in the UK traversing remote enough terrain to have nothing else in the way of accommodation at the end of many days' stages. This 200-mile tramp from Fort William to Cape Wrath, along the rugged edge of the North-west Highlands, has plenty of bothies for bagging, such as serene Sourlies on a wild sandy beach on Knoydart, or Glendhu on a forgotten loch inlet near Kylesku.

'We welcome anyone responsible and curious to find out more about our bothies,' says Neil. 'They are not for big groups, but more suited for ones and twos. The point of them is not to be for long stays, but simply for overnight shelter.' Nor are they holiday homes.

'They are basic: think camping, without the tent,' advises Neil. 'Take everything else you would need on a camping trip when you go. And maybe take a tent anyway. Everyone says 'a bothy is never full' and that is generally true because bothies cannot be reserved and guests will always try to make room. But bothies get crowded and your tent might be more comfortable. Then again, you'll often be the only person staying. You never know.'

CODE OF CONDUCT

Bothy locations and etiquette probably help to deter the masses, minimise misuse and encourage only folk with a genuine passion for and interest in the great outdoors. The bothy code, a copy of which is found at each shelter, is straightforward: respect any agreement with the estate whose land the bothy is on, such as keeping to tracks where asked; leave the bothy tidy, and with dry kindling supplies topped up; leave the fire extinguished and outside doors and windows shut; leave only non-perishable food; do not cut live wood; take away all

rubbish (and do not bury it); and, finally, do bury human waste well away from the building. They are easy rules to observe in return for being able to overnight in Britain's most beautiful wild scenery.

A SENSE OF PLACE

Scotland's sad history of clearances during the 19th century resulted in many cottages, and in some instances entire communities, becoming abandoned. In the 20th century, the trend continued with the sheer isolation of the surrounding landscapes meaning many more buildings became impractical to maintain. The bothy network today almost totally comprises these neglected structures, mostly erstwhile estate cottages and long-lost crofts, often with poignant history you can almost feel.

On the lonely edge of long, steel-blue Loch Erich in the Grampian Mountains, Ben Alder Cottage bothy lies near a slew of crags containing the cave where Bonnie Prince Charlie hid out while on the run from English troops. On Ardnish Peninsula near Mallaig, the moody ruins of >

Been to a bothy lately?

'I use quite a lot of bothies on hikes, probably about three a year. In March, a few of us went to Coire Fionnaraich bothy (right), not too far from Strathcarron. Spectacular. My top tip would be to take better food than if you were camping. The combination of a lonely location and being able to make nice food away from the weather or midges is brilliant.'

Duncan Sproul,
Edinburgh Young Walkers



'We wanted to ascend a Graham- and Corbett-level hill from Corour Station (made famous by the film *Trainspotting*), and Loch Chiarain

bothy made a convenient midway base. You never quite know who to expect when you open the door. My top tip? Take plenty of sugary food, a good head torch and something to read about the local history.'

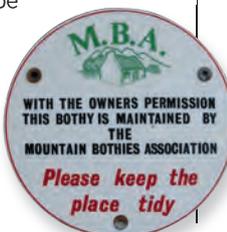
Owain Bristow,
Aberdeen Young Walkers



'About 18 months ago, we planned a there-and-back walk, with the bothy at Gorton, near Bridge of Orchy. They are ideal locations for a lunch or brew

stop. My top tip would be to join the MBA, which keeps most bothies fit for use and deserves your support.'

Trevor Jones,
Lochaber and Lorn Group



📍 Top and above: The Hutchison Memorial Hut in Coire Etchachan, built in 1954

Peanmeanach, a sizeable community before the Highland Clearances, has one stone cottage still with a bright lick of paint: the former post-office-turned-bothy.

More recently, abandoned buildings under the MBA's care include one at Duag Bridge, near Ullapool, occupying an old schoolhouse in use until the 1930s, and with original chairs and tables intact. Pupils, the MBA records, once used stilts to ford the swollen river below to attend classes. A former coastguard lookout on Skye's Trotternish peninsula, defunct after telecommunications advances in the 1970s, is now the spectacular Lookout bothy. Cape Wrath's off-grid Strathchailleach bothy was home to local character James McRory Smith for 30 years, on and off, until 1994. At one point, bothy users slept under the same roof as the spirited McRory

Smith (not always harmoniously!) and the man's vibrant paintings decorate Strathchailleach's walls still.

'The best bothies have a sense of place,' says Geoff Allan, author of the *Scottish Bothy Bible*. 'They are part of their landscape. Traditionally, every croft would have had a bothy for workers to sleep in. Thanks to MBA maintenance efforts, a bothy has become part of Scotland's cultural zeitgeist. But the way they are publicised is interesting. The MBA has existed since 1965, for example, but only published location information on bothies' whereabouts in 2009. Before that they were word-of-mouth, known only to a few. It's quite a Scottish trait to be private about these things and only reveal them to those they trust.'

GREAT CAMARADERIE

This would explain why Geoff's book was contentious when it was published in 2017, following five years of research and visits to more than 100 bothies.

'It definitely made "bothying" – going to a bothy for the experience rather than on an A-to-B hike – more popular,' reflects Geoff. 'But I see my book more as encouraging people to get out. Scotland has world-class scenery. Bothies help you enjoy it. And there has never been a better time to get into bothying. Volunteers are more proactive and renovations are of a higher standard.'



Five bothy facts

- **Corroun**, near Ben Macdui, is one of the few bothies with a composting toilet.
- **Maol Bhuidhe**, near Loch Monar, is the most remote MBA bothy.
- **Kearvaig** bothy, near Cape Wrath, boasts its own private sandy beach.
- **An Cladach** bothy, on the east coast of Islay, has board games, books and binoculars for watching wildlife.
- **Backhill of Bush** bothy, in Galloway Forest Park, was where modern bothying was born. A comment in the bothy book led to the MBA's formation.

📍 Clockwise from top left: Maol Bhuidhe bothy has an open fire; the remote Glendhu bothy on the Cape Wrath Trail; perfect for a brew and rest stop. Below: Kearvaig bothy on its private beach

As any bothy user will tell you, there is a very particular sense of satisfaction when, the day's walk done, you open the door of a bothy in readiness to bed down. If there are other guests, the feeling is often one of camaraderie, of being bound together by a secret you're in on: staying in a place that is often not found on OS maps.

According to Geoff, there are up to 80 additional bothies in Scotland besides those listed by the MBA.

'These will remain word-of-mouth,' he

says. 'In this way, it's less likely that the serendipitous element of the traveller stumbling upon a bothy in Scotland will ever truly be lost.'

But perhaps the most important part of the experience is the bothy book, which is found in most MBA shelters. Here, everything from anecdotes to observations about the state of repair or information about nearby wildlife has been recorded over the decades. And the MBA encourages all users to make an entry because their experiences help bothy management. In this way, every new visitor to a bothy can become a part of its narrative – and actively participate in its future. ■

Bag a bothy

- Read *The Scottish Bothy Bible* by Geoff Allan or *The Book of the Bothy* by Phoebe Smith.
- Join one of the regular MBA volunteer work parties (mountainbothies.org.uk/bothies/attend-a-work-party).
- Tackle the long-distance Cape Wrath Trail, where bothies (or your own tent) are the only options (capewrathtrail.org.uk).
- Reach Corryhully bothy by public transport – up the glen from Glenfinnan rail station.



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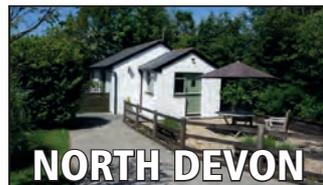
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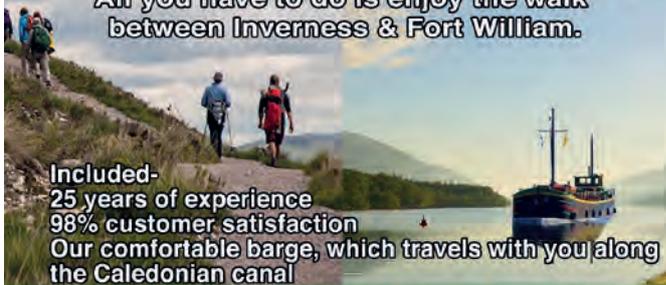


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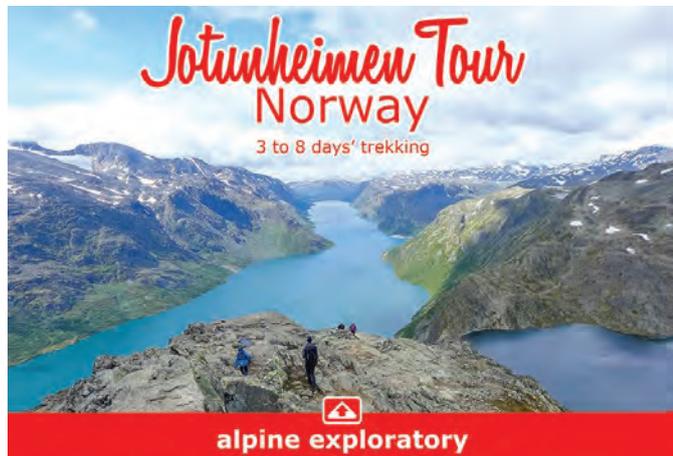
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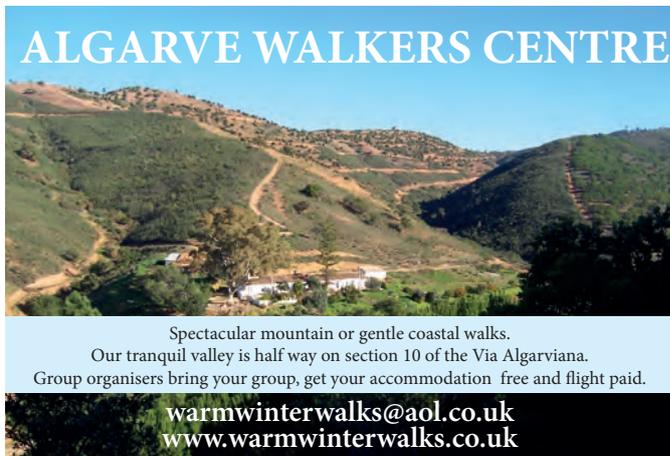
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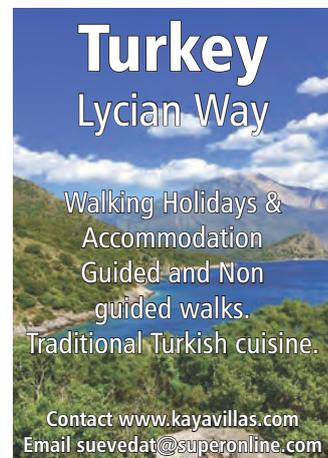
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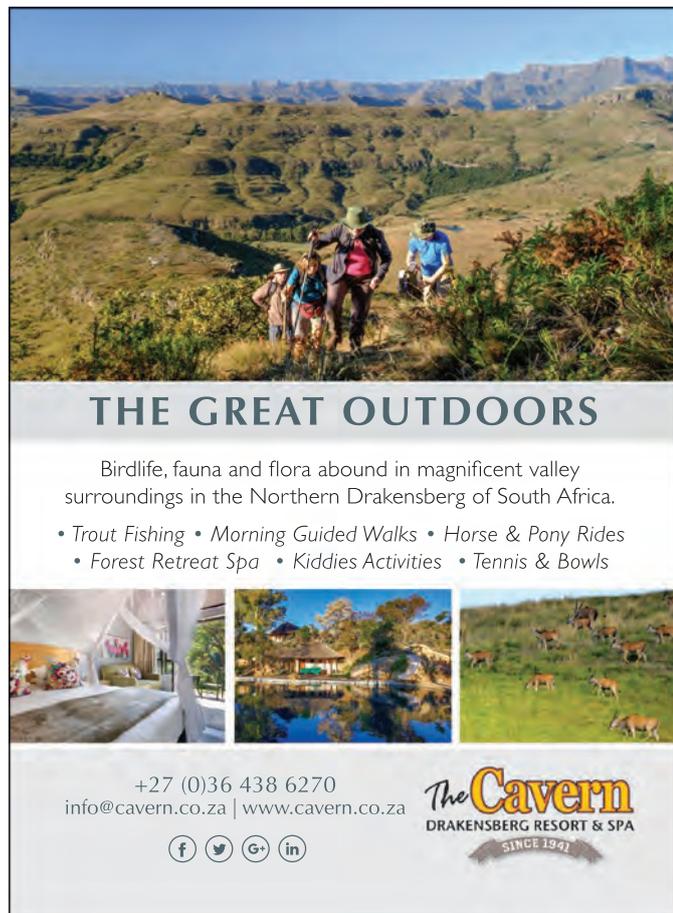
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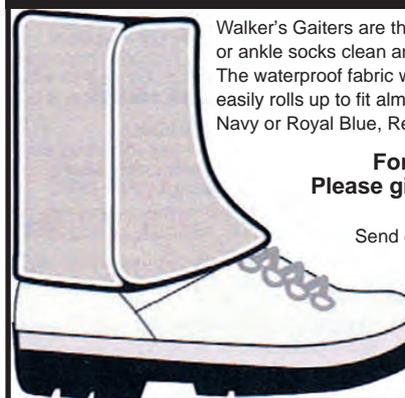
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Over to you...

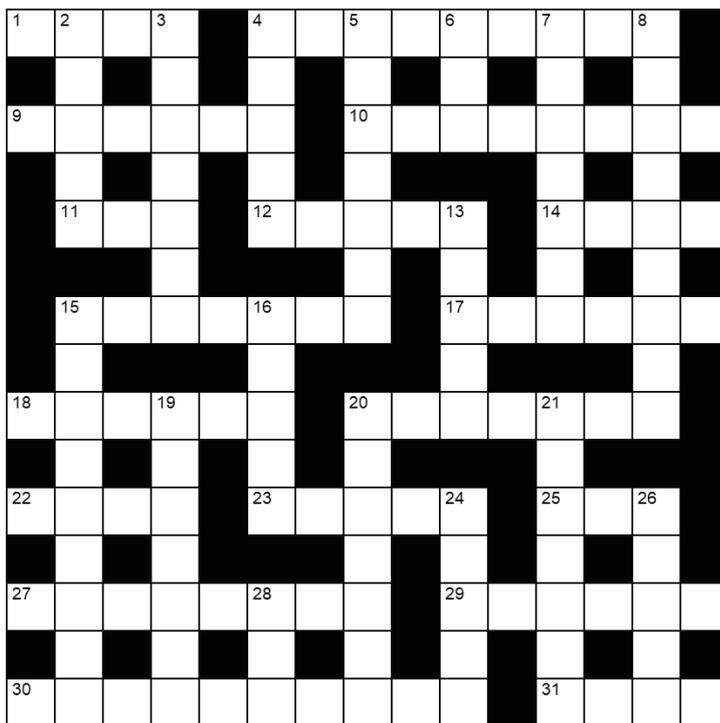
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Autumn 2019 crossword clues

ACROSS

- 1 Historic leylines reveal — Marshes in Norfolk (4)
- 4 Town on Herefordshire Trail moving SW – yes or no? (4-2-3)
- 9 Holds forth about undivided waterfalls! (6)
- 10 & 3 Down Our campaign to save historically protected paths – say you're now told otherwise! (4,4,4,3)
- 11 Early morning moisture expected, it's said (3)
- 12 Pembrokeshire Coast Path village – therefore lav needs to be refurbished! (5)
- 14 Advance slowly in church (4)
- 15 Snowdonian mountains, popular with climbers – dry legs off (7)
- 17 GPS device relies on this element of design a lot (6)
- 18 Warm clothing on the Channel Island Way? (6)
- 20 It provides a dramatic view on Cornwall's Minack headland, South West Coast Path (7)

- 22 Main rescue service in southern Lindisfarne (4)
- 23 Cry of owl abandoning church for mass of loose rocks (5)
- 25 See 8 Down
- 27 High-energy food from Kendal, sort of catkin eaten by yours truly (4,4)
- 29 Norton's first sub-Munro mountain? (6)
- 30 Cheshire's highest point – nothing is constructed by river (7,3)
- 31 Base destination – in Soho metropolis (4)

DOWN

- 2 Moved with long strides, breaking pole at end of road (5)
- 3 See 10 Across
- 4 Takes a break – there's no top to ridges (5)
- 5 Cols between peaks appreciated by riders? (7)
- 6 Have property in Bleaklow – nice! (3)
- 7 Doing a hike and, given a different start, chatting? (7)
- 8 & 25 Across Let's race

- away around a circular LDP in Ireland (4,5,3)
- 13 Bridal path? (5)
- 15 Mean time to be had in this borough on London's Capital Ring! (9)
- 16 Llanthony Priory is in this Brecon Beacons vale – say we turned up (5)
- 19 Town at one end of Yorkshire's Lady Anne's Way – brewing pints, OK (7)
- 20 Rocky hill split, revealing rushing stream (7)
- 21 Two, possibly, track a waterside walkway (7)
- 24 Raring to go in mileage record (5)
- 26 Having lost head, gamely diverted river in Dartmoor NP (5)
- 28 River on Reivers Way, in rural Northumberland (3)



How to enter

Post completed crosswords and your name, address and telephone number to: **walk** Crossword, Ramblers, 2nd Floor, Camelford House, 87-90 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TW



MY PERFECT DAY

DAN SNOW

The historian, broadcaster and TV presenter on walking through one of Britain's conflict-scarred landscapes

INTERVIEW REBECCA SWIRSKY

Where would you wake up on your perfect day?

On the Isle of Purbeck in Dorset, with the sun rising behind the Isle of Wight. Studland Bay would be in front, Hurst Castle would be in the distance, and I'd see The Needles rocks.

What's your favourite walk?

From Loch Shin in Sutherland across the mountains and down to Kylesku, which is a small, remote fishing hamlet on the coast. Even on our busy island, it's a place of real wilderness.

Who would be your ideal companion?

My wife – we put the world to rights while walking. There's always loads to talk about and plenty to look at to stimulate our ideas. It brings us together.

For your recent BBC series *Norman Walks*, which was your favourite?

The Welsh Borders, where the castles come thick and fast. The landscape is dynamic. It's hilly, with rivers, forests and hilltops, and communities dotted around the castles. It was a landscape scarred by conflict and endemic violence. You get the atmosphere of a place by walking around it, sniffing the air, finding the viewpoints. The only way to see anywhere is on foot.

Did your parents encourage you to connect with nature?

Well, I'm trying to raise my kids the way I was raised, which is going for a walk, going to a castle, going to a historical site, getting dirty and hitting things with sticks. Today, children tend to be kept on a tighter leash.

Can you recall any hair-raising experiences?

Being caught in storms, holding onto the sides of an eroding cliff, becoming lost, straying



📍 Clockwise from top: Dan at Conwy Castle, Wales; the New Forest, which he loves to explore; The Needles, Isle of Wight, a view he'd love to wake up to

into a minefield in Zimbabwe while hiking in the Eastern Highlands. What saved me was luck and trying not to let panic overwhelm me so that I could make the best decision.

What drew you to live in the New Forest?

I love water, nature and history,

and it's got the Grand Slam. You're so much more aware of the seasons, the birds and the flowering plants in the hedgerows. When I'm there, I thank my lucky stars and make sure to go out first thing. I see the migratory birds, and I have a poke around the trees. I can feel the history of the area – the

big presence of the Romans, and the medieval Cistercian monks of the 13th-century Beaulieu Abbey, skilled herbalists who tried to develop the area for agriculture. And, of course, the many troops who were based there before D-Day.

Do you think we can use history to learn from our mistakes ecologically?

Well, obviously we've made catastrophic mistakes ecologically. Killing vast numbers of our fellow animal species, using coal, chopping down all our forests, putting garbage and plastic into our oceans, to name just a few. Yet we should also be inspired by what our ancestors did, specifically animal husbandry and the way farmers were able to fertilise their fields rather than using excessive pesticides. Coppicing is making a return. It means we can secure firewood without having to destroy all the trees.

Britain has preserved much of its history. Do you see a link between that preservation and protecting our footpaths?

Yes, those are two sides of the same coin. We're proud of our landscape, our heritage, our buildings. That includes having rights of way, not having people block our landscape with buildings. We have continuity, we respect our laws. We have never torn up our constitution and started again. Whereas in France, with the revolution, all bets were off. Here, if people 300 years ago walked on a footpath, we see no reason why we shouldn't continue.

Dan appears on BBC's The One Show, runs documentary channel History Hit TV and is creator of podcast History Hit.

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