

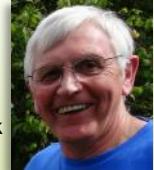


## In this issue:

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## INTREPID WALK LEADER RESCUES RUNAWAY HORSE

On a recent pre-walk in Rock, Group C walk leader Graham Little wasted no time in taking the reins when a runaway horse came galloping down the hill towards him and his fellow walkers. Sporting a saddle and bridle – it looked like the horse had unseated his rider, so Graham (using his latent horse whispering skills) took the reins and lead the horse plus co-walkers back up the hill in the hope that a dishevelled equestrian would appear – which very soon she did.



After modestly accepting her thanks Graham helped her back into the saddle. She settled herself, told us the horse was named Taz and trotted off. Graham smiled at the horse's name and admitted he was a big fan of another Taz – the Tasmanian Devil character from Looney Tunes and was wearing Taz socks and had a Taz toy hanging from his rear view mirror. As they say, you never really know someone until you see their socks!

Just another day in the life of a Stride & Stroll walk leader.

*With thanks to intrepid reporter Jillian McMillan*



## Rhythmicity Drumming Event

Thirty five of us from across all of the Stride and Stroll walking groups duly assembled and took our seats in Wribbenhall Parish Rooms on a lovely Saturday evening in early July.

Our leaders, Tim and Pam Scarborough who run the Rhythmicity drumming workshops swiftly introduced us to our instruments and put us through our paces.



Drumming is integral to traditional African culture: there is a rhythm, a dance and a song for just about every possibility, from building a house to welcoming a new baby.



The people who carry and pass this on are known as Master Drummers. As well as being expert drummers, they know all the dance steps, words and music!

The music is often used to initially gather people together, and frequently becomes a celebration all on its own.



Although primarily drumming, three types of percussion instruments were available; shakers (maracas), those which were hit with sticks e.g. cowbells, and of course bongos which we placed at our feet and which we patted with palms.



During the course of the evening Tim encouraged us to move the various instruments around so we all had the opportunity to try out each one.

We soon got into a 'groove' to the beat of 'Kidderminster Stride and Stroll' and, once established, was alternated between opposite sides of the room and then between the various instruments and then men versus women. Concentration imperative!!!!



After a refreshment interval, Tim shared some very interesting facts regarding the origins of African drumming. Also known as "The Talking Drum" in Western Africa, it remains the oldest instrument in the world and is Sacred and revered in African culture. For centuries throughout the African continent, it was the primary source of communication both from one village to another and also within individual communities to share ceremonial, religious or relevant information and news.

More interesting beats followed relating to birthplaces, previous addresses or whatever we were free to choose and all came together in a cacophony of interesting sounds! Not deafening, but certainly varied.

All too soon it was time to wind down and we headed out into the still light evening. Early enough for one or two to pay a quick visit to the very handy Great Western en-route home!!





## Out and About



### COLLECTING FROM THE WILD IN SEPTEMBER

September into October, is the time to take advantage of edible wild food. Many plants at this time, are bearing their fruits; either soft fruits or hard, nut like fruits. As well as the Blackberries and Elderberries, there are other wild fruits worth collecting.

**Always be sure of what you are collecting and only take what you need. In some cases, you may need the landowner's permission to collect from the wild.**

#### BLACKTHORN [*Prunus spinosa*]

A shrub or small tree, common in hedgerows and thickets. The fruits of the Blackthorn are Sloes; blue-black, berry like fruits, which botanically are not berries but drupes. A drupe has a thin skin, which surrounds soft flesh, with a hard centre, containing a single seed. Other *Prunus* species which have fruits as drupes are: Plums, Cherries, Peaches, Nectarines and Apricots. Sloe fruits are astringent and should be picked with care, as the twigs have sharp thorns, hence the name 'Blackthorn' and 'spinosa'. Sloes are best picked after frosty weather, as when the juice inside the fruits freezes, it expands and makes the fruit skin softer. You could put your sloes in the freezer for 24 hours, to achieve the same effect.

##### Suggested uses:

- Sloe Gin
- Sloe and Apple Cheese
- Sloe Jam
- Caramelised Apple and Sloe Pudding



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#### ROWAN [*Sorbus aucuparia*]

The Rowan or Mountain Ash, is a small, stand-alone tree, growing in woodland and in hilly areas. It does not belong to the Ash family [*Oleaceae*], but to the Rose family [*Rosaceae*]. The scarlet fruits hang in clusters and are a good source of the Vitamins A and C. The Rowan fruits are Pomes; when not all of the fruit, has been formed from the floral ovary, but from another part of the flower. Other examples of Pome fruits are, Apples, Pears and Quinces. The Rowan tree in Britain, has a long history with magic and witchcraft. A cross made of Rowan wood and tied with red thread, was considered to give protection against witches. If cream was stirred with Rowan wood, this was thought to stop witches from curdling it.

##### Suggested uses:

- Rowan Fruit Jelly
- Rowan Fruit Jam
- Rowan Fruit Wine



#### BILBERRY [*Vaccinium myrtillus*]

Also called Whortleberry, Blaeberry and Wimberry; the Bilberry belongs to the Heather family and is usually found growing in association with Heather. A low-growing plant, preferring acidic soils of dry heaths and moorland. The small, blue-black berries are edible and also produce a purple dye.

##### Suggested uses:

- Summer Pudding with blackberries and raspberries
- Bilberry Muffins
- Tarte aux Myrtilles [French pastry] In France Bilberries are called 'Myrtillus'.





## Out and About (continued)



### COLLECTING FROM THE WILD IN SEPTEMBER

#### SWEET CHESTNUT [*Castanea sativa*]

A tree with a characteristic net-shaped pattern to its bark, with deep furrows running spirally in both directions. Native to Greece and South-West Asia, it is thought the Romans introduced the Sweet Chestnut to Britain; as Roman soldiers would have Sweet Chestnut porridge, before going into battle. The fruit is a nut, which contains twice as much starch as an equivalent amount of potato and is low in fat. The high starch content, means the chestnuts can be ground into a fine flour and used to make bread. Traditionally used at Christmas, to make a chestnut stuffing or just roasted in their shells. It is not advisable to eat too many raw sweet chestnuts as the tannic acid contained in the skin of the nut, can upset the stomach.

**DO NOT CONFUSE THE SWEET CHESTNUT WITH THE HORSE CHESTNUT AS THE LATTER MUST NOT BE EATEN.**

#### Suggested uses:

- Sweet Chestnut Brownies
- Marrons Glacés [Candied Sweet Chestnuts]
- Sweet Chestnut and Ricotta Cheesecake
- Sweet Chestnut soup



Sweet Chestnut      Horse Chestnut



cc-by-sa2.0 - Chestnut - photo by Stephen Davison - geograph.org.uk/1074562

#### HAZEL [*Corylus avellana*]

A native, small tree or shrub, growing in hedgerows and woodland. Appearing in January/February, the male flowers, hang as yellow catkins, dusted with pollen, to be carried by the wind. The Celts associated the tree with fire and fertility and it was thought to protect against evil. The fruit is a nut, much sought after by squirrels and the Common Dormouse [Hazel Dormouse]; the latter feeding on Hazelnuts, to put on fat, before hibernating through the winter.

#### Suggested uses:

- Hazelnut Nougat
- Pear, Hazelnut and Chocolate Cake
- Hazelnut Meringue
- Italian Hazelnut Biscuits



cc-by-sa2.0 - Hazel catkins - photo by Andrew Codd - geograph.org.uk/2821562



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## Notice Board

### August attendances

Saturday walk date	Thursday numbers		August 2016					Saturday Totals	Weekly Totals
			A	AB	B	C	D		
06/08/16	44	Saturday	15	23	15	15	18	86	130
13/08/16	51	Saturday	11	16	13	17	21	78	129
20/08/16	26	Saturday	10	15	4	10	12	51	77
27/08/16	40	Saturday	7	15	11	10	19	62	102
								0	0
Totals	161		43	69	43	52	70	277	438
Average miles per person	0.5		6.0	5.0	4.5	4.0	3.0	Saturday Mileage	1214.5
Mileage per Group	80.5		258.0	345.0	193.5	208.0	210.0	Month's total Mileage	1295.0