



In this issue:

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No apologies for repeating a brief article from last February. If these tips can prevent a single winter injury then they will have served their purpose.
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Why use Trekking poles?

- As bipeds we human beings spend a tremendous amount of energy maintaining our balance using just two points of contact with the ground, our feet. This balancing act can be aided by the use of a trekking pole. Not only is balance and posture improved by using a trekking pole but the knees and lower back experience less strain.
- Poles function as extra legs on uneven terrain preventing injuries.
 - Trekking pole users are less likely to lose their balance, reducing stress fractures and sprains.
 - Knee strain is reduced significantly, especially when walking downhill.
 - By using a trekking pole you improve your overall posture while walking.
 - The more upright posture also allows more air into your lungs so breathing is maximized.

Keep safe on your walk

How often have you seen sights like these in the last few weeks?

OK, sticky and slippery mud on flat ground is a natural hazard at this time of year and for some it adds 'charm' to our walks in the great outdoors whilst making us work a lot harder.

Slippery slopes however can be a real hazard and cause of injury if we are not prepared for them.

Most of us, as experienced walkers, have developed a knowledge of how best to be prepared and we know:

1. You need wellies or walking boots which, with a deep strong, rubber tread, are good for all types of snow, ice, slush and mud. Wellington boots will give you depth of tread and grip but will not stop you twisting your ankle. Wearing waterproof gaiters over a pair of walking boots is usually a good idea although I prefer to wear waterproof trousers which will keep me comfortable if I should slip and sit in the mud.
2. Walking sticks (or 'Poles') are invaluable multi-purpose devices which serve primarily as portable handrails but can also be used to test the depth of water/mud and can reveal uneven ground or potholes hidden by water. Some people prefer not to use poles but I believe it is better to have a stick and not need it than to need it and not have it.



As we are now in February we could also still be faced with ice and snow and so here are some helpful hints from winter-safety experts that will reduce the risk of falling.

Along paths, look for darkened or shiny patches and avoid them. These are ice patches and the most likely spot for walkers to slip.

Walk with short and relatively quick steps along thin, hard snow or ice. Slips happen when you firmly plant your foot on slippery surfaces. Shorter, quicker steps reduces the leverage that enables slips.

In fresh snow, try to walk in someone else's footsteps. Not only will you use up less energy, but their shoes will have left a tread mark which will be easier for your feet to grip. On deeper snow, always walk heel to toe. Applying your heel first will create a hole, which helps prevent your foot slipping forward.

Keep your weight leaning slightly forward. You would much rather fall forward than backward. (This is obviously not an easy thing to do on a downhill slope - a stick will be a great help.)

Be prepared to use your hands to protect your face and head from an unpleasant landing if you are unlucky enough to fall. (No such thing as a bad fall - only bad landings!)

And finally - A major part of staying safe is staying alert. Feeling cold can numb the senses and so we should all be aware that up to 40% of body heat is lost through the head and so a warm hat can be regarded as a safety as well as a comfort aid. Gloves are also important in cold weather, especially for those who have circulation problems. To walk comfortably and with a good posture you should be able to swing your arms freely, so putting your hands in your pockets is not an option.





Out and About

KNOW YOUR GAME BIRDS



With the deciduous trees having lost their leaves, the undergrowth died back and arable farmland with no tall crops, January offers the opportunity to view our game birds. Game birds belong to the order of birds called the Galliformes and in most cases, can be shot within their shooting season. All game birds can fly, but most prefer to run from a threat; hence their legs and feet are powerful.

COMMON PHEASANT



Native to Asia and recorded in Britain, before the Norman Conquest.

Resident all year.

Habitat: Farmland; Woodland; Hedgerows.

Sexes have different plumage.

Many captive Pheasants are released into the wild for shooting; shooting season October 1st - February 1st.

Collective noun: Bouquet.

Status: IUCN [International Union for the Conservation of Nature] Red List - Least Concern.

There are many species of ornamental Pheasant. Some appear in the wild, having escaped from captivity or from being deliberately released.

Look out for Reeve's Pheasant in the Martley area. The male has the longest tail feathers of any bird species; the tail can measure up to 2.4m[7.9 feet].

OTHERS: Lady Amherst's Pheasant; Golden Pheasant; Temminck's Tragopan.

Golden Pheasant



GREY PARTRIDGE



Native to Britain.

Resident all year.

Habitat: Farmland; Open Grasslands.

Sexes have similar but not identical plumage.

Shooting season—September 1st - February 1st.

Collective noun: Covey.

Status: IUCN - Red List - Least Concern/Trend - Population decreasing.



**stride
and
stroll**

Affiliated to HF Holidays



Out and About (continued)

Red Legged Partridge



Native to South-West Europe; introduced from France into East Anglia around the 1770s. They have expanded their range, in some areas being more common than the native Grey Partridge.

Resident all year.

Habitat: Farmland; Dry Heaths; Open Grasslands.

Sexes have similar plumage.

Shooting season—September 1st-February 1st.

Collective noun: Covey.

Status: IUCN - Red List - Least concern/Trend - Population decreasing.

The closely related Chukar Partridge can breed with the Red-Legged Partridge and in some areas, these hybrids have escaped into the wild.

Widespread in Europe and Africa. Migrates to Britain to breed. Summer visitor to Britain from late April to late September. Only present in the wild during the breeding season. Males utter a diagnostic '**wet-my-lips**' call, sometimes for many hours.

Habitat: Farmland particularly barley fields; Grassland.

Sexes have similar plumage but not identical plumage.

Protected in Britain from shooting.

Collective noun: Bevy or Covey.

Status: IUCN-Red List - Least Concern/Trend - Population decreasing.

Quail



RED GROUSE



Native to Britain. It is a sub-species of the Willow Grouse, which is found in northern Europe and Canada.

Resident all year.

Habitat: Heather moorland; Lower mountain slopes.

Sexes have different plumage; males have red wattles.

Shooting season-August 12th December 10th.

Collective noun: Covey or Lek.

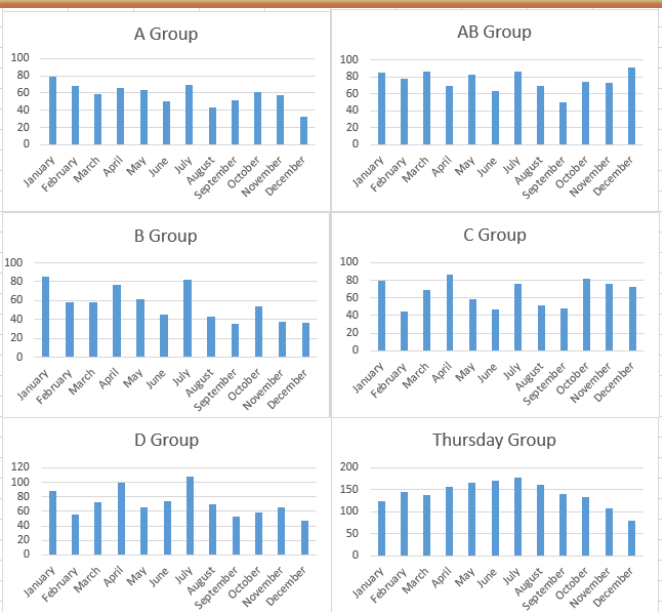
Status: IUCN-Red List - Least Concern/Trend - Population decreasing.



Notice Board

December Attendances

Saturday walk date	Thursday numbers	December 2016					Saturday Totals	Weekly Totals	
		A	AB	B	C	D			
03/12/16	28	Saturday	13	28	9	21	19	90	118
10/12/16	21	Saturday	12	19	8	16	17	72	93
17/12/16	32	Saturday	12	22	9	19	0	62	94
24/12/16	0	Saturday	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
31/12/16		Saturday	15	22	11	16	11	75	75
Totals	81		52	91	37	72	47	299	380
Average miles per person	1.5		6.5	5.0	4.5	4.0	3.0	Saturday Mileage	1388.5
Mileage per Group	121.5		338.0	455.0	166.5	288.0	141.0	Month's total Mileage	1510.0



2016 Attendance Summary.

We continued to grow our numbers at a pleasing rate during 2016 and the table below shows the total attendances for each group during the year and the attendance changes, compared with 2015, for each group.

	A	AB	B	C	D	Thursday
Total For 2016	699	909	674	792	856	1706
Change since 2015	+7%	+36%	-7%	No change	+8%	+9%

The AB group has shown an exceptional increase in numbers over the year but it appears that some of the growth may have been due to a decline in the numbers joining the B group.

The total number of walker attendances during 2016 was 5636. The 2015 figure was 5193 and so we have seen a growth in attendance of 8.5%. The reason for the growth will be a mixture of last years walkers attending more regularly and new walkers joining.

For anyone interested in comparing group information the graphs above indicate that:

1. The Thursday short walks attract large numbers who prefer the summer months.
2. The AB group has a consistently high attendance. (Averaging 76 walkers per month).
3. A, AB and B groups had remarkably high attendance in January, considering the weather.
4. The month of July attracted the most walkers (600) across all of our groups.
5. The most popular months were July, April and January - Totalling 1696 walkers



Public Health England

EAT WELL

DRINK LESS

MOVE MORE

BE SMOKE FREE

BECAUSE THERE'S ONLY **ONE YOU**

worcestershire county council

A healthier you at your fingertips. Search **One You** apps.

TAKE THE HOW ARE YOU HEALTH QUIZ TODAY

BECAUSE THERE'S ONLY **ONE YOU**



A little space on a page and a picture too good to leave out
AB Group walkers showing off their pre Christmas headgear!

The following is an extract from an e-mail we have received from Worcestershire County Council HWB (Health and Wellbeing) administration.

Ready for a new you?

It's that time of year when, after overindulging a bit, we're all thinking about getting some healthier habits. With the right support and motivation, you can make small changes to improve your health right away and double your chances of staying healthy as you get older.

A good way to decide which lifestyle changes to make is to take the free online How Are You? health quiz. It provides personalised recommendations based on your results and directs you to tools that help you take action.

Over one million people have already started their journey to a happier, healthier life. It's never too late to join them, take the free online How Are You? health quiz to see how you score.

Take the quiz online by visiting:

http://po.st/OneYou_Worcestershire

Editors Note.

Personally I tend to be rather sceptical about this sort of thing but I have to say that I have taken the quiz and I was impressed with the results.

As a reasonably fit, but overweight, 68 year old I would say I am more active than most. My Garmin watch, which I only wear when I "go for a walk", recorded 92.2 miles walking in December.

After taking the quiz I was advised to:

1. Take more strengthening exercise.
2. Cut down on my drinking to lose weight.

I can only agree with the conclusion but I have a feeling that this advice (and maybe more) would be offered to most 68 year old men, regardless of their level of activity.

In my opinion the quiz is well worthwhile spending a few minutes on and, who knows, you may discover a New You!

