

The Good That Walking Can Do for You

Tom interviews Margaret and Florence from Sudbury Ramblers

Tom Crowley: When you have a moment to catch your breath, do you think could tell me again about your mum talking about walking the roads, because I was managing not to record that. And that was nice.

Margaret: I'm just trying to think when it would have been I mean, she was born in 1907. So, let's say she was 15, or whatever. 1922, the 20s to the 30s, I guess. And her and her friends they'd all, you know, on a Sunday, because they, they were tied to various church services, as people were in those days, and they, they would walk into other villages around Glemsford and Cavendish and Clare. And they'd be on what's now the main road. You know, the main road. Which you can't even hardly cross now. And they'd link arms, three or four of them, girls, all girls, they'd all walk together in the middle of the road. You know? Imagine doing that now? That's what she used to tell me.

Tom Crowley: That's a lovely image, isn't it?

Margaret: Yeah.

Tom Crowley: Do you ever get lost on any walks? Or do you always follow the map very carefully?

Margaret: Oh, no, we have been lost. Not with ramblers, but you know, by ourselves, we've gone wrong. In Dorset, I remember once, oh dear. Even if you've got the map or whatever, or if you've got a book, if you have a book, which has got a particular walk in, and it will give you a, kind of, perhaps ... not an accurate map. More of a sketch if you know what I mean. And you're looking at the sketch and you're looking at the instructions in the book, and it says, you know, at certain point find the gate and turn right or something. And you don't go further enough. That's the danger. You find a gate, and you turn right. And then you find out you're not getting anything else. Right? So you end up having to go back, which is a bit frustrating. Have you ever got lost?

Frances: Yeah. Similar things. You follow the directions and... not so much in books, but sometimes in newspapers and the direction sorts of say, turn left at the tree in the middle of the field, well the tree could have been cut down.

Margaret: Well, of course it could, yeah.

Frances: By the time you get there. Yeah. So, we always take a map with us.

Margaret: It's best to have the Ordnance Survey or, you know, have an app on the phone or something like that.

Tom Crowley: I've got terribly lost.

Margaret: Have you?

Tom Crowley: ... Oops, we've got another car.

Margaret: When we have got lost with books, and not having an Ordnance Survey, he's got very cross because he said the instructions are wrong. Why didn't they put down this and why didn't they put down that? And so on. They are a bit vague sometimes aren't they?

Frances: They are. My husband always likes to carry a compass with him.

Margaret: Oh, yes that would be a good idea.

Tom Crowley: Do you think men or women are better map readers or is that not even a legitimate question?

Frances: I don't think it's a legitimate question. [laughs]

Margaret: Yeah.

Tom Crowley: So, what drew you to it. What drew you to this area?

Frances: We moved because of my husband's job and then we moved to the village we did because we liked the area. We wanted to be out of the town. And it's a beautiful area.

Tom Crowley: Yeah, it really is.

Frances: And north Essex isn't very well known really. But when you go a bit further over, it's not very well known. Don't get too many visitors. But yeah, you know, the footpaths are good and the walking is good. Yeah, we've got a lot of wildlife, a fair bit of history...

Tom Crowley: Are they the two big... Yeah, like the two big important things about walking: wildlife and getting in touch with the history?

Frances: I think for me, it's getting in touch with nature, just being out and about getting in touch with nature, but to be able to, you know, come across wildlife -because there is so much when you're out walking- and to learn the history of the different areas. That's part of it as well. But it's really sort of just being out and about and close to nature, I think. It's difficult to explain. But I think apart from the exercise, I think just being out and about does you good and I think you appreciate the world around you.