

Cave spotting.

It's been such a mild Winter. There has been no sign of snow for weeks and weeks, which is very odd. Christmas didn't feel very Christmasy because of it. But there is an up side* to this strange weather. Everyone has been able to go for walks. Normally, when there is so much snow and ice around, you don't see people walking on the street at all. They stay in their cars, nice and warm, if they want to go anywhere. But this year, people are still walking and jogging on the streets. The parks are almost as busy with people as they are in the Spring or Autumn. Walking in the countryside is something that I love to do. It gets the heart pumping, the circulation going*, and clears the mind. So, a couple of days ago, my brother and I went up into the hills that are nearby. We followed a road called Horselake, up to a rough, primitive road, that took us winding up, away from the town. It was a cold day, with mist sitting on the tops of the hills. The grasses and bushes up there were all different hues* of brown, blonde, and pale greens, - very gentle on the eyes. We were hoping to see some wildlife: perhaps a coyote, or a deer. My brother noticed all kinds of foot prints in the mud. Some were definitely those of dogs, but a few looked as though they could have been cougar prints. We do have them in the area; we've even had a couple in town in recent years. Yikes!* I don't like the sound of that! Well, we walked upwards, following a ridge. On one side of it we could see a valley with the Wenatchee river cutting through it, and on the other side, a steep slope down into a ravine*. It was hard work, but worth it. The view was great. We ended up walking down onto the road because from there, we could access some sandstone caves. I had been up this way before, but had never seen the caves. They blend into the side of the hill, so they are very hard to see. We scrambled* down to reach them, and then spent some time exploring. It was fun. It reminded me of rock climbing in England when I was young, though I'm not as brave now as I was then. We crawled up to the biggest ones, and took photos, and looked for signs of animals. The wind and water had carved out fascinating shapes, mini bridges and arches, and little places that would be perfect for small animals. There was evidence of birds staying there: droppings*. After taking photos and having a good look around, we headed back to the car. There was still no sign of coyotes, but, then again, they are very smart animals, and had probably been observing us the whole time.

Related vocabulary: an up side to something, get the circulation going, a hue, yikes.

1. This weather is terribly wet. Mind you, the up side is that the garden is getting plenty of water.
2. That aerobics class is hard. It really gets the circulation in the body going.
3. She painted her whole house in different hues of yellow.
4. Yikes! I wouldn't want to hold that rattlesnake!