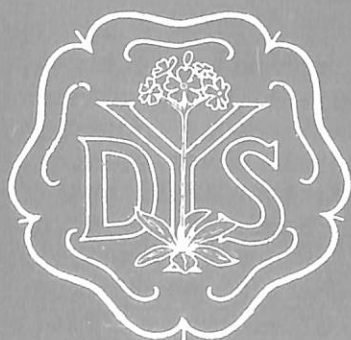


Y The Yorkshire Dales Review

No. 21
Winter 1987/88



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Recreation 2000

30p.

THE YORKSHIRE DALES REVIEW is the quarterly journal of the Yorkshire Dales Society and is published by the Society with the help and support of the Countryside Commission who contribute to the development and work of the Society. Views expressed in The Review are those of individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Society.

Recreation 2000 — The Rational Way Forward

Publication of the Countryside Commission's major new policy document for Recreation in the Countryside - POLICIES FOR ENJOYING THE COUNTRYSIDE (CCP 234 available from the Commission's Publication Despatch Department 19/23 Albert Road, Manchester M19 2EQ free of charge) and the related PRIORITIES FOR ACTION (CCP 235) mark an important step forward in the development of the Commission's thinking on recreation and access matters in the countryside.

Its importance lies in the fact that it recognises, clearly and firmly, the important, positive role that recreation has to play in the countryside. Of course the needs of landowners and farmers are fully recognised, but it is people, not resources, that matter, and the overwhelming importance of the countryside as a place to be enjoyed, appreciated, cared for is emphasised.

Many Yorkshire Dales Society members will be delighted to learn of the importance given to public rights of way in the countryside - to maintain them, have them well and clearly signed, and to increase public awareness, understanding and confidence in using them. Far from causing more problems to farmers, the Commission suggest that well marked, well maintained paths reduce trespass and nuisance.

Whilst the Commission's views have been warmly received by a wide range of opinion, it was sad to note shrill self-interest emerging in the Country Landowners' objections to what they describe as an "impossible dream" of opening up the footpaths for public use - that is doing what they law of the land requires highway authorities to do. The CLA would, it seems, prefer to confine the public to neat little routes of their choosing, to and from car parks.

Clearly, if outdoor or walking organisations were to recommend the ignoring of the law of the land they would quite rightly be described as "extremists" or a "selfish minority". Public paths are public highways, and not only do the public have rights across them, but the highway authority has a duty to maintain them. Where these duties are taken seriously, as in the Yorkshire Dales National Park by Wardens and Fieldstaff, almost invariably with the full co-operation and support of local farmers, both walkers and landowners benefit. And the Dales Park has proved on many occasions how it is possible to reach agreement with all interested parties to divert paths to more convenient and commodious routes to reduce inconvenience to farmers. There is now a very noticeable difference between standards of maintenance in areas of the Yorkshire Dales within and outside the National Park boundaries.

The Chairman of the Countryside Commission, Sir Derek Barber, himself a farmer, has suggested that well maintained rights of way reveal responsible "custodianship" of land, reducing conflict between users of the countryside. But he argues, too, that there is a role for voluntary groups in helping to maintain path networks.

Sir Derek is right. Now that the Commission has such clearly defined objectives, the next stage is for co-operation and partnership to achieve them, not empty posturing. Responsible use of the countryside - whether we are country dwellers or country goers is part of an attitude of mind. At very least, the Commission has given us a clear target to aim at, and in the confused world of the 1980s, that is no small achievement.

Colin Speakman

Cover: Aysgarth Falls John Potter (First Prizewinner Yorkshire Dales Society Photography Competition (see page 6/7))

Birstwith Meadow Saved



Birstwith showfield

(photo: Richard Muir)

Villagers of Birstwith, Nidderdale, have fought a brilliantly effective campaign to prevent the destruction of a superb area of meadowland and parkland, which is used for the village's annual flowershow.

The meadow is owned by a local firm of flour and rusk millers, which has itself expanded in recent years, causing increased traffic and noise nuisance in this unspoiled rural environment. But what really incensed local opinion was a planning application to put an estate of 48 houses on the site. Not only would this precious open space be destroyed, but the character of Birstwith, a village situated on the very edge of the proposed Nidderdale Moors Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and of exceptional interest in its own right as a fine example of a 19th century Dales estate village, would be totally changed.

A local action committee - the Birstwith Rural Action Group - was formed to challenge the proposal, and soon had the support of many organisations including the CPRE, the Nidderdale Society and the Yorkshire Dales Society. Letters in the press and to the local authority ensured that the matter was thoroughly investigated and debated and a series of public meetings helped to galvanise local opinion. When it came to the crucial Planning Committee Meeting of Harrogate District Council the proposal was emphatically rejected, with Councillor Richard Whitfield, the local representative for the area stating, going as far as to suggest that the best thing the developers could do was to "donate the field to the village."

Doubtless there will be an appeal, with clever consultants available to try and convince a Whitehall inspector that there is an overwhelming need for this kind of speculative development in Nidderdale. Hopefully, BART will once again be able to present forceful arguments to support their case.

But the Birstwith showfield saga does raise many interesting questions. Not every village community has a group of people as well organised as BART to defend their amenities. Pressure on the countryside is increasing all the time as population moves out of the cities helped by good roads, fast cars and better communications. Even National Park areas as Grassington and Threshfield demonstrate all too vividly, are not exempt from the increasing pressures of large-scale suburban development that quickly transform historic settlements to something quite different. Planning laws which were designed to protect our finest landscapes from creeping suburbia now seem relatively helpless against these pressures. The Birstwith example is an encouragement to those who believe that our finest unspoiled villages and their settings can and should be protected.

What Kind of Yorkshire Dales Society?

The Yorkshire Dales Society was six years old in October. During that time membership has grown from the original dozen people who met in Upper Wharfedale to a thriving Society of over 1,700 members. We have an office, largely staffed by volunteers, a quarterly newsletter, a well supported programme of events, and an increasingly effective influence on opinion about key environmental matters in the Yorkshire Dales. Naturally, there is a long way to go, but the emergence of DALESWATCH as a method of sharing information is proving very effective.

What we have yet to achieve is financial stability. Thanks to continuing support in the form of grant aid, from the Countryside Commission, the Society is able to continue a level of activity higher than that justified by membership subscription.

But this situation cannot last. The Countryside Commission grant aid is at a declining percentage of our expenditure, and is due to end at the end of the next financial year. But even in the next financial year, beginning in April 1988, it now looks as if there will be a shortfall of income over expenditure of something like £1,000.

One answer to this problem is to increase membership. Despite efforts, however, it now looks as if the target figure of 2,000 members at the end of 1987 will not be reached. There are several reasons for the slowing down of the rate of increase in membership, one of which is the fact that the membership system is now more efficient, striking off non-renewing members after a second reminder which saves the cost of mailing to non-renewing members, but has effectively cut the number of members on the Society's books to the prompt renewers.

It has to be remembered of course that each new member generates costs - postage, stationery, a proportion of office time.

There are three courses of action open to the Society:

1. Cut down on expenditure. This might involve having only three YDS Reviews a year, less activities, and cutting down on the amount of part time paid professional help the Society receives.
2. Increasing income from membership fees. Already inflation has eroded about 20% from the value of the membership fee which was fixed five years ago. This has made margins ever tighter. Any increase, to be meaningful, would not only have to absorb this, but take into account inflation to come, currently running at around 4.5%.
3. Attract income from other sources - this would include other grants, sponsorship, donations, gifts or earnings from activities, such as sales of literature.

Over the next few months, the Society's Council of Management will be looking at each of these possibilities closely. The next AGM, which will be late May or early June, may be asked to ratify a whole series of recommendations.

But in the meantime, it is up to members to consider carefully the direction in which the Society should go. In some ways, the easiest option is to seek a "balanced budget" by cutting back expenditure. In the long term, however, this will inflict permanent damage on the Society, enabling it to achieve less; without professional staff to deal with the key administrative tasks the Society will cease to function, or at best survive as a low key lecture or walking club.

The answer has to be to increase income. Among the Society's 1,700 members it is inconceivable that there isn't the financial and entrepreneurial know-how to help place the Society's affairs on an even keel so we can get on with the job. Your Council of Management has no monopoly of ideas or skills; if you can help, or have some positive suggestions to make, they would be warmly welcomed.

One way everyone can help is by renewing membership promptly, by agreeing to a Deed of Covenant so that the Society can claim back tax and by regarding the current £4 or £5 subscription as a minimum and adding a little more to help the Society along. The Yorkshire Dales are surely worth it.

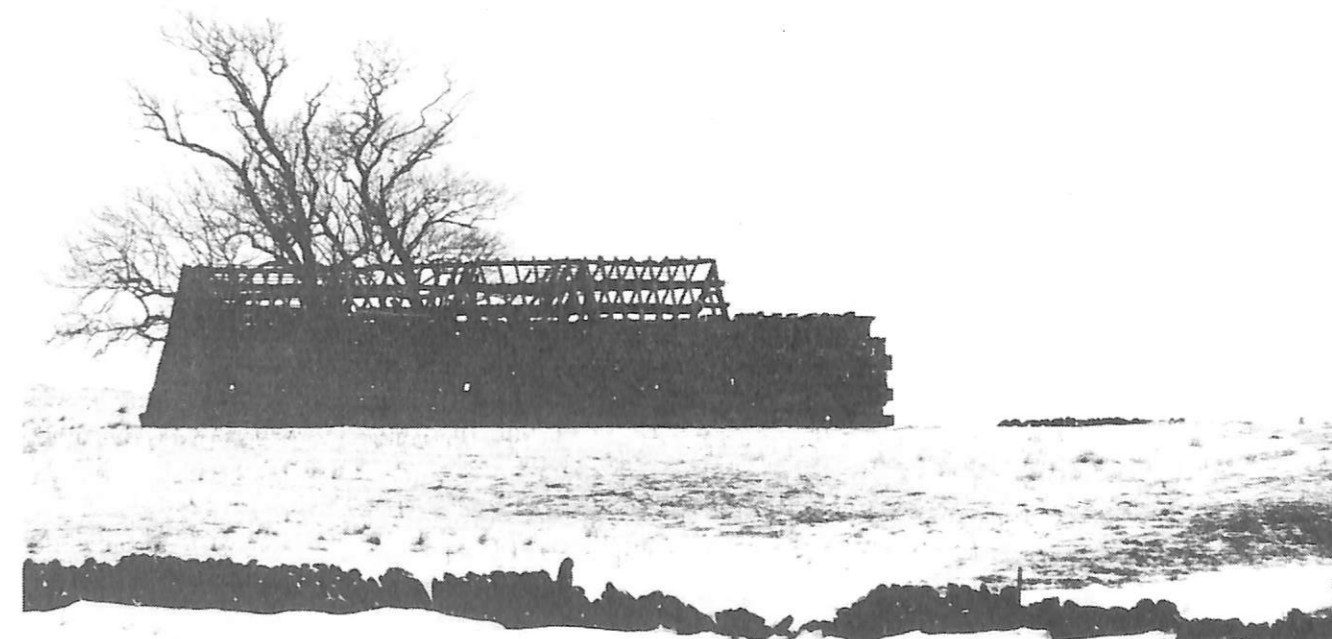
Chernobyl Fall-Out Hits the Dales

Revelations that the Yorkshire Dales have been contaminated by radio-active fall-out from the Chernobyl disaster came as a great shock to farmers and local people in the Yorkshire Dales. Through some Met. Office oversight, a heavy storm the day after the Chernobyl explosion which fell on Upper Wharfedale and Airedale was ignored, but recent scientific checks indicated quite alarming levels of radio-active fallout. Hotspots included Threshfield Moor, near Grassington and the watersheds and moorland areas around Silsden.

Extensive tests on humans and animals have confirmed that contamination levels have been low, with only a handful of livestock having to be destroyed, and no major restrictions imposed.

Most people will heave a sigh of relief, and carry on with their own lives. But evidence is now building up to suggest that even very low levels of radiation can weaken immunity systems, and that it may take many years for the real effects of the poisonous rain to be known. When it comes to radiation, history has shown both the scientific community and the medical profession to have been woefully complacent about its deadly effects. We can only hope and pray that official reassurances are not, in years to come, contradicted by events as the effects of atomic fall-out which began at the far side of our Continent work their way through the food chain.

What the incident does demonstrate, so very vividly, is the fragility of our world. The "permanent" beauty of the Yorkshire Dales is illusiory, vulnerable to accident, warfare, economic change. The Dales are part of a small planet facing many threats to its existence, from pollution to the reduction - for trivial purposes - of the protective ozone layers. Whilst the Government has, in recent years, been making encouraging noises on the future of the National Parks and the countryside generally, will this more caring philosophy also extend to such issues as maintaining a clean atmosphere and seeking renewable, non-polluting energy resources?



Ruined barn, Rombalds Moor - close to a fall-out "hot-spot" (Photo: Philip Helliwell)

ONE WAY to help the Yorkshire Dales Society is to "sign up a member"; experience has shown that personal recommendation is easily the best way of us increasing our membership - vital if we are to continue our work. A membership form has been included in this issues of The Review - please use it to sign up a relative or friend. If every single member of the YDS recruited just one other person into the Society in 1988 our financial problems would be at an end !

Images and Imagination

Results of the Yorkshire Dales Society Photography Competition



Approaching storm - Long Lane, Thwaite, Clapdale, near Clapham
Second Prizewinning entry - Tom Richardson.

The results of the first YDS Photography competition, have more than exceeded our hopes and expectations. The number of entries was small - approximately two dozen - but the quality, imagination and range of subjects chosen were of a high standard. We knew when we decided to restrict the competition to black and white photography, that we would disappoint many would-be entrants - and we received some sharp criticism.

We wanted selectivity rather than quantity. There is no doubt that black and white photography is a most demanding medium. But so many photographers in books and periodicals, as well as the majority of our holiday photos, are now in colour. Often one longs for the simple black and white image that manages to convey the photographer's power of imagination. Colour can at times be a distraction from the subject-matter.

So we wanted the competition to be a real challenge to enthusiastic photographers to capture 'all aspects of the Yorkshire Dales today.' Our three outright winners and three runner-up have definitely achieved this objective and we feature the six resulting photographs in our pages.

Winner of the First Prize was John Potter who lives at Acomb, York. His print of Aysgarth Falls - the cover of this issue of The Review - gives a delightfully different and atmospheric view of a well-known and much photographed location.

There is plenty of atmosphere, too, in the photograph 'Approaching Storm' (taken at Long Lane, Thwaite, in Clapdale) by Tom Richardson from Anchorsholme, Blackpool.

The third prize goes to Peter Akers from West Malling in Kent who has managed to capture a very human essence of Kilnsey Show as a result of his visit there last September.



Kilnsey Show - September 1987

Third Prizewinning entry - Peter Akers

The three runners-up, whose work we shall feature in the Spring Review, were Mrs Margaret Smith from Shipley whose 'Barn in Langstrothdale' was another strong image, as was the photograph of 'Limestone Clints - Ingleborough' by R.W.Chaney from Cheadle in Cheshire. Ivan Heath, also from Shipley, managed to capture 'Rain Clouds over Raydale' in an appealing way.

The six successful contestants' work will be exhibited early in 1988 at the offices of our sponsors, the Leeds photographic processing company, Warren Jepson & co., on the occasion when the prizes will be presented.

The judges were Ian Riddell, Warren's Sales Director, Tim Haley, Information Officer of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and David Morgan Rees, Vice Chairman of the Yorkshire Dales Society.

David Morgan Rees

One welcome aspect of the YDS photographic competition was to discover the work of so many talented Dales photographers. The Society is always looking for good quality black and white photographs, and, for forthcoming renewal of our publicity screens, fine quality colour prints.

Whilst we shall be featuring the work of the prizewinners and runners-up in future issues of The Review, we'd very much like to feature the work of other contestants, too, in future issues of The Review. Though we felt it only fair to return work at this stage, we'd welcome good photographs from any source, though sadly we are not able to pay reproduction fees. The same is true of written contributions for The Review. Short articles of specific Dales interest, preferably illustrated always welcome - though not poetry please, as we are not really a literary magazine.

Gayle Mill — a National Asset

Many people travelling over the Fleet Moss road from Wharfedale to Wensleydale will, as they approach the village of Gayle, near Hawes, have looked across at the old saw mill by Gayle Bridge with interest, perhaps noting its long mill-race.



Gayle Beck and the millrace
(photo: Trevor Sharpe)

Research has now shown that Gayle Mill is a truly remarkable building - probably the oldest unaltered textile mill in Britain, dating from the 18th century. It also contains what is "almost certainly" the oldest water turbine in the country, if not the world.

When it was built, it was a spinning mill using American cotton brought by packpony across Dales tracks from west coast ports. In later years it was converted to wool, and in more recent times it became a sawmill. And its powerful water turbine remains in working order.

The owner Mr Brian Alderson has decided to sell the mill, but is anxious to ensure that the building is conserved and its unique machinery preserved for future generations.

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Committee, recalling the tragic loss to a speculator of another such mill of national importance, the medieval watermill at Linton, on the River Wharfe, have opened negotiations to buy the mill and to carry out essential renovation work, with a view to turning it into a working heritage centre. Should this not prove possible, the National Park hope that a joint venture with another conservation or heritage body might prove possible to ensure the safeguarding of this national asset.



Gayle, Mill, near Hawes built in 1784.

(photo: Yorkshire Dales National Park)

We hope it will prove possible to visit GAYLE MILL on Saturday March 12th depending on circumstances at that time, during the Society's planned visit to Hawes and Gayle - see back page for information.

National Park Backs Community Initiatives — and Archaeological Conservation

The Yorkshire Dales Society has long affirmed that economic and social factors are a fundamental part of the conservation of a landscape. Dales communities need support ever bit as much as the woodlands or the flowers, and without recognition of the special needs and problems of upland communities, the rich culture and heritage of the Dales will be lost for ever.

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Committee has now recognised this fact, and in partnership with the Yorkshire Rural Community Council, is involved in a major project which will see the appointment of a Development Officer to help revive and expand local services and opportunities. Commenting on the proposals, Dr. Nigel Roome, a member of the National Park Committee, has said: "It has long been recognised that you can't talk about managing the environment without setting that in the context of a balanced and vital community." We couldn't agree more!

Welcome too, is the National Park's decision to appoint an Archaeological Conservation Officer. This is a long overdue appointment considering the rich archaeological inheritance of the Yorkshire Dales and evidence that a vast amount of prehistorical materials still remains to be discovered, making the Yorkshire Dales of outstanding importance nationally and internationally. Many sites are at considerable risk from agriculture, forestry and erosion, and early action is essential to safeguard them for future generations.

Leon Brittan at Garsdale Station



Mrs Diane Britton signs the Visitors' Book whilst Mr Britton, Kath Hetherington (Sedbergh Chamber of Trade) and Mrs Sheila Jeffryes look on
(Photo: Peter Shaw)

A welcome visitor to Garsdale Station at the end of October was the Rt. Hon. Leon Brittan, MP for Richmondshire with Mrs Brittan to see the station improvements at Garsdale.

After they had met people off the northbound train and signed the station visitors' book, Mr. Brittan commented: "We were able to see the tremendous strength of commitment of people over a very wide area, and we were enormously impressed by what we saw."

One hopes that Mr Brittan will be able to take back to the Minister of Transport this strength of commitment to offset the fact that Department of Transport officials - whose anti-rail bias is a national scandal - are rumoured to be strongly urging closure of the entire Settle-Carlisle railway, despite the Government's own wishes to find a way to safeguard the line.

DALESWATCH - DALES DIGEST YDS Council member John Ward has produced, as part of the DALESWATCH campaign, a fascinating and detailed breakdown of articles and news items from the local and national press concerning the Yorkshire Dales. This has been compiled from cuttings sent to John by YDS members, and gives great insight into what's happening in the Dales. Though primarily produced for Daleswatch and YDS Council members, a limited number of copies are available for interested individuals and organisations at a price of £2 for the next four issues. Chèques and orders to the Society's office. Press cuttings from any sources are also welcome. The DALES DIRECTORY of contacts and organisations is also ready and will be going to press shortly.

Walking Settle — Carlisle

Bill Mitchell, who recently retired as Editor of the Dalesman magazine, probably did more, with his colleague David Joy (the new Editor of The Dalesman) to develop what Bill himself has termed "Settle-Carlislitis". For it was Bill and David's paperback The Settle-Carlisle Railway published by Dalesman, still in print after much revision over the 20-odd years of its success, that really introduced the beauty and majesty of the Settle-Carlisle line to a wider, non-railway specialist market with their highly readable account of the building of the line and the scenery through which it passes. That was in steam engine days.

So it is highly appropriate now that the new daily service to the reopened local stations offers such superb walking opportunities that Bill should again co-author a book about the S&C, this time with R.W.Swallow Walks from the Settle-Carlisle Railway (Dalesman £2.25)

The book has 14 excellent walks which include everything from an urban stroll round Carlisle, to the top of Wild Boar Fell. Some are circular walks which can be done by motorists keen to enjoy the magnificent architecture of the line as a backcloth, others can be used catching the train between stations. The text is enriched by fascinating bits of historical information on the line which make it compulsory reading for any walkers' or rail lovers' library.

On a more modest scale, and designed to fit in with the new Dalesman stopping service (an appropriate name !) are Stan Abbott and Colin Speakman's four popular Great Walks from the Settle-Carlisle which are available as a set in a waterproof cover to cope with typical S&C weather, price £1.50 post free from Leading Edge Press, 1D Rural Workshops, Burnt Acres, Hawes, North Yorkshire.

If you're planning to have a walk on the S&C this winter, why not join one of the excellent guided walks arranged by the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the Friends of Dales Rail. Walks are every Saturday right through the winter, usually from the 0842 train from Leeds. Pick up a leaflet or send a SAE to the National Park Office, Hebden Road, Grassington, Skipton North Yorkshire, tel 0756 752748. Don't let our photograph put you off, the weather and walking conditions are often superb during the winter months.

* * * * *

A Reet Good Dales Neet

This year, recalling nights of swirling snow, we postponed our winter social to (slightly) lighter nights, and arranged an evening in a typical small Dales pub, at the village of Linton, upper Wharfedale. There'll be a traditional three course meal with homemade soup, roastbeef and Yorkshire pudding or roast turkey and cranberry and sherry trifle as a prelude to an evening of traditional Dales songs, fiddle music, folklore and recitation presented by Trevor Sharpe and Tim Boothman.

The all-in price for the evening will be £7 per head, and only 30 places (because of pressure of space in a small country inn) will be available. Early advance bookig is essential - first come first served. Booking will close March 1st. Please send your booking with cheque payable to Yorkshire Dales Society for £7 per head (plus SAE to acknowledge receipt and tickets) to the Yorkshire Dales Society, 152 Main Street, Addingham, West Yorkshire LS29 OLY. Please signify choice of main course - numbers of turkey or beef.



Ribbleshead Station after snow (photo: Joe Shevelan)

Membership Matters

Over the last year, the Society has completed a minor revolution in the way its membership records and membership renewals have been handled. The old system of doing everything manually, with membership cards and a much amended address master list has given way to a much more efficient computerised system.

Suffice it to say that the old system was close to breaking down completely. A system originally set up to deal with a few hundred members could no longer cope with a thousand plus, and errors - and complaints from members - were endemic.

Thanks to Anne Halloran who has been able to secure access to a mainframe computer system, and to Fleur Speakman and her team of volunteers at the Addingham office, the system has been transferred to computer extremely efficiently, and almost entirely by volunteer labour.

This means a mass of information about numbers and types of membership are now immediately available to the Society, and renewal notices etc can be sent out without the nightmarish problem of sorting through records each time.

Of course errors can and still do occur. A computer is only as good as the people who programme it, and it still very easy to miss out essential items of information, misspell addresses etc. Please let us know immediately if anything is wrong with your address label or other membership matter.

The renewal system has, from time to time, caused members some problems, so we explain how it works. The simple system of having members renew once a year has two major drawbacks - most members would lose several months' membership if, for example, they join in July and their first year's membership runs out in December, and its also means the Society's income is "lumped" at the end of the year.

So we have devised a system of Quarterly renewal, which means whenever you join your membership is allocated to that Quarter. Quarter 1 begins January 1st, Quarter 2 April 1st, Quarter 3 July 1st, Quarter 4 October 1st.

This can just mean that if, for example, you joined in March you would be allocated Q1, renewal due December 31st, meaning you only get an initial 9½ months for your money (we recently had a member from the South of England who spent an estimated £4 in phone calls to argue that he was being denied in effect about 80p worth of membership !), but after the first year, the situation evens itself out.

The system is saving the Society money and volunteers a great deal of time and heartache. But you only get two reminders for renewal before it is due and at time of renewal. If you subscription doesn't then turn up during the next three months, the computer erases your name from the membership record. And it's extremely sad to lose you so please renew your membership promptly !

A special plea to our overseas members We are very enthusiastic indeed to have our members in Europe, America, the Far East, Australia - the Society is international. But it does cost a little more (outside EEC countries) to mail to you, and if you renew your sub in local currency, eg dollars, the bank takes from us almost half the value in commission. So please, if you can, send us your renewal in sterling - this means we get full value of your subscription. Most of our overseas members do so already, but in some cases the bank has made more than the Society !

Finally members will have seen on page 4 that the Society's Council of Management is looking seriously indeed at the Society's financial situation. Membership subscription will have to rise just to keep levelwith inflation. If when you renew, you are able to give the Society just a little extra - say £1 or £2s, this will be of such value to us. A donation will help us enormously.

We have also learned that we shall no longer have access to the computer after February 1988 and may have to seek a way of raising funds for our own machine. If members have access to suitable machines, we would be grateful to hear from them.

Winter Events

Take opportunity to enjoy what the Dales have to offer in the winter months. Snow permitting, we hope to have a number of events during the winter and early Spring, and look forward to meeting you on them.

SUNDAY January 17th

Hackfall woods A walk to discover this unusual 18th century landscaped woodland, complete with hermit's grotto and druid's circle. Meet Grewelthope village, 11am (north of Ripon) bring warmclothes, packed lunch.

SATURDAY February 13th

Around Clapham A winter stroll from this lovely Dales village along Clapdale. Meet National Park Centre Car Park 1.30pm. Train connection leaves Leeds 1130, Skipton 1210, at Clapham Station 1246.

SATURDAY March 12th

Hawes and Gayle Discovering one of the most fascinating towns of the Yorkshire Dales, with a stroll to the nearby village of Gayle including, if circumstances permit, a visit to the historic cotton mill.

SATURDAY March 19th

Yorkshire Dales Society - Dinner and folk night.
An evening of good food and good company at the Fountaine Inn, Linton. £7 per head - bookings by March 1st - see page 7 for details.

BACK NUMBERS of the Yorkshire Dales Review are still available for most issues - though one or two are now out of print or in short supply. If you'd like any to complete your collection, these can be supplied at 20p per copy adding 20p for postage up to six issues, 40p over six.

Sorry, we have no badges left. We shall be looking for new supplies in the Spring - look out for an announcement in the Spring Review.

YDS lecture service Our panel of speakers is available to give the National Park and Yorkshire Dales lecture. A £10 expenses fee is normally charged. If you have an organisation who would like to have the lecture, please write with SAE to Meg Knight, "Waymarks", Pletts Barn, Grassington, near Skipton. Three months' notice is normally required to fit a speaker with the event.

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- PENDRAGON CASTLE -

Pendragon Castle Jill M. Aldersley
(from Great Walks from the Settle-Carlisle - see p. 10)