

Winter 2022 : Issue 157

Yorkshire **DALES** review

Natural Beauty



.....
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.....


**Friends of the
DALES**
YORKSHIRE DALES SOCIETY

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Zigzag, Wensleydale.

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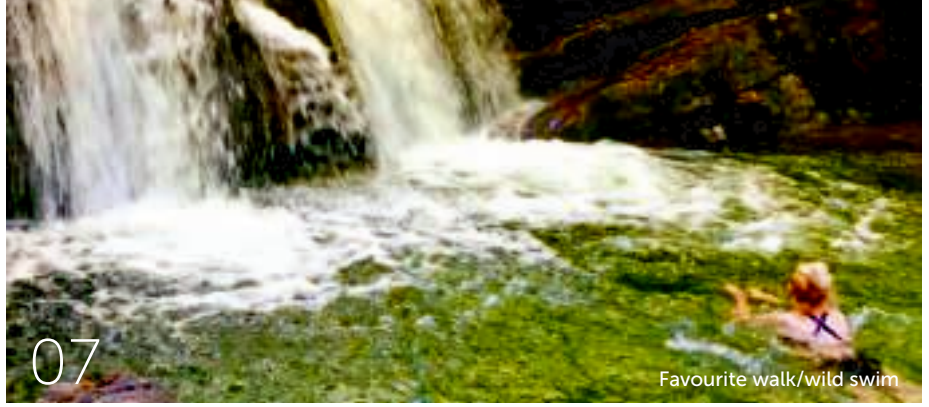
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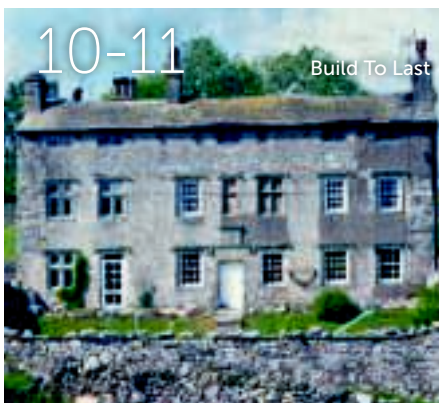


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Favourite walk/wild swim

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Floodwaters, oil on canvas, Frank Gordon



On Beauty

Is our fixation with the aesthetic qualities of the Yorkshire Dales blinding us to the need for change? Chair Bruce McLeod asks whether the national park has become the victim of outdated fashions and practices.

Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder is a cliché that is wholly inaccurate when it comes to the Dales. One would be hard pushed to find any who wouldn't agree that the Dales landscape is beautiful. I was certainly conscious of this on the 40th anniversary walk led by Colin Speakman recently, which took us from Grassington to Burnsall and back via Linton. When it comes to the beauty of the Dales we all share the same view.

However, there's not always been a consensus. In his *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1726) Daniel Defoe describes the Westmorland Dales and the area north of Leeds as he travelled along the Wharfe towards Ripley as 'dismal', 'frightful' and 'barren'. The 'continued waste of black, ill looking, desolate moors' compares unfavourably with manufacturing towns. So much for nature and natural beauty, which in the early eighteenth century was a paradise compared to now, despite centuries of sheep farming, the numerous lead mining operations and toxic spoil heaps.

The conception of natural beauty has clearly 'moved on' since the 1720s with the same moorland now ranking among the nation's favourite landscapes. However, it can congeal into an abstraction, which hides how landscapes are designed by the economy, and produced through labour and ownership of private land. Our gaze, primed to read landscape as idyllic, can glide over what is artificial, whether that be the way industry has

shaped the landscape or the highly engineered grouse moors (a Victorian fashion dating from the 1850s).

Today's version and vision of natural beauty can also drum up a feeling of nostalgia for simpler times and the belief that the countryside is a place of virtue, restoration and escape. Recent grumbling about the influx of uncouth visitors during the summer is part of a long tradition that views the countryside as a refuge from urban ills (and dwellers). Such relatively unexamined ideas, I believe, get in the way of a realistic appraisal of the natural world and its historical evolution.

The Romantic poets and the painters of the 'picturesque', not to mention the tourist industry that followed in their wake, have a lot to answer for. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries established a way of seeing landscape – distorted to fit certain definitions of beauty – which persists to this day. However, even Wordsworth, who did so much to define a rose-tinted picture of the Lake District, acknowledged rural poverty, the ravages of industry, and the human derelicts returning from empire-building and war. Loss and fragility haunt his environment.

Looking to the Future

Understandably when we contemplate the Dales we don't want to focus on the lack of biodiversity, the polluted rivers, the congested roads, the litter of single-use plastic. Nonetheless, dwelling on the aesthetic, which tends to be superficial and ahistorical, runs the risk of disregarding what is absent. The price we pay for the iconic beauty of the Dales is a national park dominated by

monocultures: tourism, grouse moors, sheep farming, ownership of private land and an aging, well-off demographic. Diversity and resilience are minimal. The idealised scenery works to 'conserve' these monocultures rather than promote recovery, regeneration and repurposing of nature and community.

The emphasis on the beauty of the status quo is, therefore, not going to serve us well for the future, obscuring realities and what steps are needed to mitigate crises. At present we have something similar to the state described in the poem *The Deserted Village* (1770) by Oliver Goldsmith: 'The country blooms - a garden, and a grave'.

The challenge is to arrive at a sensibility that recognises what WG Hoskins in *The Making of the English Landscape* calls 'the logic that lies behind the beautiful whole'. In other words, we try looking at the landscape with a double consciousness: admire the characteristics we've learned to love whilst also being acutely aware of its history and possible futures. The Dales will change dramatically according to the climate crisis. And it has to dramatically change in order to recover some of the biodiversity destroyed over the last 50 years.

Only a collective and radical effort will save 'our commons' so that all may thrive. A transformative plan would include insulating all houses, land increasingly brought under public ownership, all of us hooked up digitally and to public transport, the local production of renewable energy, rewetting the uplands and the recovery of nature through regenerative farming, rewilding and eco-tourism. A green new Dales is a future and a thing of 'beauty' we must imagine and fight for.

Bruce McLeod, Chair

Behind the Beauty: Biodiversity in the UK?

50% wildlife and plant species lost since 1750

10% UK ranked in bottom 10% in the world (for biodiversity)

WORST UK worst among G7 nations (for biodiversity)

189/218 UK's ranking for 'biodiversity intactness'

Plastic-Free Dales

Regular readers of the *Yorkshire Dales Review* will know that, although we fully support the well-managed planting of trees across the Yorkshire Dales, we do not support the use of plastic tree guards. Plastic tree guards not only support the fossil fuel industry but – if unmanaged – pollute the land, rivers and oceans. Our recent volunteer tree guard collection event retrieved more than 2,500 redundant tubes from the landscape. It also helped to increase awareness of this important and often overlooked 'plastic problem' and was featured in both the *Craven Herald* and the *Yorkshire Post*.

Our campaigning has also succeeded in encouraging 11 out of the other 12 national park societies to take up the cause in their areas. Other good news is that the Royal Horticultural Society recently announced that it will be following in the footsteps of the Woodland Trust, National Trust and Highways England by trialling biodegradable alternatives to plastic guards.



Volunteers and members collecting plastic tree guards.
Photo courtesy of Mark Corner

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The eagle-eyed amongst you may have noticed that our website has a slick new look. This is thanks to a new volunteer, Peter Edwards, who has invested a great deal of time moving the old site onto a new platform. As well as already looking better, the new site will make it much easier for us to make other improvements to the navigation and visual content moving forward. So keep watching this space!



'Our addiction to fossil fuels is pushing humanity to the brink. We face a stark choice. Either we stop it, or it stops us. And it is time to say, 'Enough'. Enough of brutalising biodiversity. Enough of killing ourselves with carbon. Enough of treating nature like a toilet. Enough of burning and drilling and mining our way deeper. We are digging our own graves.'

UN Secretary-General António Guterres

40th Anniversary Walk



Photo courtesy of Tony Smith

Forty years of campaigning for the protection of the Yorkshire Dales is definitely worthy of a celebration – so we did. A group of intrepid supporters, led by Colin Speakman, one of the founders of Friends of the Dales, enjoyed an eight-mile circular route from Grassington to Hebden and Burnsall, returning via Thorpe and Linton.

Colin highlighted geological and historical landmarks along the route, before drawing the walk to a fitting conclusion by the sculpted stone bench dedicated to Arthur Raistrick, one of the founding fathers of the national park movement, by Friends of the Dales in 2000. One of our newest members, Martin Carr (the 'chap in the cap', below!), said: 'Thank you for a super, if exhausting, day last Wednesday. It was brilliant. In bed by 8pm and woke up at 9am. Wonderful!'

For information about future events turn to page 23.



Photo courtesy of Tony Smith



Golden Eagle Sighting...

Campaigner and founding member of Friends of the Dales Colin Speakman has been awarded the Golden Eagle for Outstanding Services to the Outdoors by the Outdoor Writers and Photographers Guild. Colin, co-creator of the Dales Way, one of the most popular long-distance paths in the country, has written nearly 60 books about walking and history, transport guides, biographies, poems and fiction. His latest book, *Yorkshire: Ancient Nation, Future Province*, which is 'part polemic, part manifesto' was launched in November.



Artist David Bellamy presenting Colin with a watercolour of Pen-y-Ghent featuring a golden eagle hovering around its summit. Photo courtesy of Outdoor Writers and Photographers Guild

Jobs Are Foundation For Housing

Wilf Fenten's excellent article in the autumn *Review* took me back to my PhD days researching rural development for emerging economies. Back in the late 1970s the case was being argued for integrated socio-economic policies, which brought together investments in education, welfare, housing and general infrastructure as a means of slowing down the migration of rural populations to urban centres. But it was quite evident then that without effective investment in employment opportunities being placed at the heart of the strategy, no amount of capital expenditure in social and welfare infrastructure was going to stem the tide of rural migration.

It seems to me that the national park authority could learn from such experiences and focus its limited resources on stimulating small-scale enterprises to provide employment, which can then be backed up by supporting investment in local, affordable housing. As Wilf Fenten highlights, investing in housing without the employment simply risks perpetuating the problems faced today by our local Dales communities.

Ian Harrison, Treasurer



Photo courtesy of Lyndon Smith

Distinguished Naturalist Adds Voice to Friends of the Dales

We are delighted to welcome the biologist, nature writer and campaigner Dr Amy-Jane Beer as our new honorary President.

North Yorkshire-based Amy has not only authored more than 30 books about science and natural history including *Cool Nature* and *The A-Z of Wildlife Watching*, but is a Country Diarist for *The Guardian*, a columnist for *British Wildlife* and a regular contributor to *BBC Wildlife* and *Countryfile Magazine*. She said, 'In Friends of the Dales I see an organisation that can make a genuine difference – they are vocal, energetic and creative, and willing to reach out and make connections in a common cause. This is the best of grass-roots activism, and I'm delighted to be adding my voice to theirs.'

Friends of the Dales Chair Bruce McLeod said, 'Having the distinguished environmental writer Dr Beer join our charity as President is an important step in helping us further spread the word about our work to help protect and improve the Dales for the generations to come. Some of our current campaigns go right to the heart of the issues facing the whole planet, such as plastic pollution, loss of biodiversity and habitats and the destruction of our natural carbon sinks, such as our peatlands. Amy's passion for the natural world is well known and we believe that her voice will enable us to engage a new demographic of environmentalist to our causes.'

Turn to page 7 to hear from Amy herself...

Difficult Decisions

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Chief Executive David Butterworth asks how carbon emissions can be reduced while continuing to allow access for all.

Watching recent events unfold in Glasgow at the COP26 summit, and the glacial pace of progress towards tackling the planet's climate agenda, again brought to mind one of the major issues that is likely to face the Yorkshire Dales National Park in the coming years. It is the potential conflict arising from our desire to contribute towards tackling the impact of climate change and nature recovery and one of our two statutory purposes: to promote the enjoyment and understanding by the public of the park's 'special qualities' -- often interpreted as our remit for recreation, access and tourism.

You don't need to be some kind of genius to see the potential tension between these two objectives – though only the latter has the force of law behind it: unless you count the UK's commitment to become net zero by 2050 which, although laudable, feels like passing the buck to future generations.

What it boils down to is this: how can we take seriously our obligations, particularly in relation to the climate, whilst 'promoting' the area to millions of visitors – the vast majority of whom arrive and travel around the park by private vehicle, contributing to the growth in carbon emissions? In the future, will it be sufficient to attempt to 'manage' these two potentially conflicting objectives, or will more radical approaches and measures be required?


Of course there have been, and continue to be, a number of efforts to address the issues around visitors and the impact they have on the park. Some have centred on the role of public transport, and whilst this clearly has a place as part of any solution, it is my view that it is unlikely to deliver the necessary scale of change in travel behaviour that is required. Not least because public policy favours more elderly travellers over other potential users and, more importantly, the ingrained car culture that exists within the UK. This emphasis on the private vehicle has been demonstrated in national policy for decades and as a consequence it is difficult to believe that reducing carbon emissions can be tackled through the sole use of public transport incentives rather than by restraints on car usage.

Taking Responsibility Now

I imagine many reading this piece might be saying to themselves: 'Fine, what's the problem? Of course addressing the problems of the climate and carbon emissions must take precedence over everything else.' But it's not that simple for the national park authority. I've already highlighted the legislative barrier and, on a personal level, I feel that there is also a more fundamental issue that needs to be considered. It is this. Public access to national parks has not been something that has come easily. It was an 'entitlement' that was achieved only after many years of hard lobbying and campaigning and, in some cases, through broken skulls and prison sentences. We should therefore never take access 'rights' lightly.

As a consequence, we should also be extremely cautious about how we might choose to limit public access to these wonderful landscapes. Hard-fought concessions should never be given up easily. In addition, the recent and ongoing pandemic has demonstrated yet again the value of these magical places to the nation for the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the public. On the back of those experiences I'm sure your readers can see why any restrictions should not be introduced lightly. I don't pretend to know the solutions to this difficult area of public policy and, to be frank, I see no 'silver bullet' that will resolve these issues at a stroke. What I do believe is that something is going to have to give and it is this generation that needs to address these matters now, and at a national level, rather than more 'generational fudge', where we leave these problems to our children and grandchildren to resolve. They will not thank us for that.

**David Butterworth, Chief Executive,
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority**



A beauty of their own? Wind turbines are one response to the climate crisis. A step too far for the Dales - or a necessary adjunct to the armoury of measures that will be needed?

Photo supplied by YDNPA, photographer Andrew Leinster

The Perfect Dales Day

I've been invited to launch my presidency of Friends of the Dales by writing about a favourite walk or wild swim and, I have to say, it's a near impossible task. I'm often asked to name an animal/bird/tree/place and the question never fails to plunge me into a state of confusion and pre-emptive regret over all those I don't pick. I could name a dozen and still wake up tomorrow thinking: 'Dammit, how could I have forgotten such-and-such?' My stock answer to the latter (which has the virtue of being true most of the time) has become 'the one I'm looking at', and so it may be for walks and swims: my favourite is usually the one I'm doing. It is in the nature of nature to captivate and it would have to be a bad day indeed for a walk or a dip not to deliver moments of beauty, insight or mood enhancement, which for those seconds or hours can matter more than almost anything. A walk with fine company is a joy but people distract me terribly, so I'll happily be alone.



What I look for in any excursion is variety, and in this the Dales are truly outstanding, with potential to pack woodland and meadow, hill and river, crag and cascade, moor and cave into an odyssey of just a few hours. I suppose, if I'm allowed to dream up perfection, I'd also like four seasons of weather in a day, and the chance to walk through either sunrise or sunset. But where? If you twisted my arm, I'd have to mention Gordale Scar and Malham Cove. I'd need a bit of upper Swaledale in June, the summit of Pen-y-Ghent iced like a wedding cake on a blue-dome winter day, and a plunge-pool dip in water so clear that I can count pebbles on the bottom. I'd have to insist on a chance to hopscotch over the natural land art of limestone pavement, and to peer into the hidden miniature jungles of the grykes.

I'd want a picnic near some stepping stones. I'd insist on curlew and skylark song, the aerial acrobatics of lapwing, the amphibious antics of a dipper. If you can arrange for me to see the ripples where a rising trout kisses the shimmering interface between river and air, that'd be great. Red squirrel or otter, oh yes! Wildflowers, but of course – don't forget some orchids. And trees, please: muscular beech, riverside oaks and rowans heavy with fruit, wind-bitten hawthorn, dwarf yew. I especially want to embrace the ash trees that line boundaries and droves before dieback claims them. It breaks my heart to see them ailing, but I will want to remember when I am old how their leaves play with sunlight and their branch tips shift in the breeze – how they whisper with a voice all their own.

And what will I give in return for this perfect day? That's easy - I will go with a positive trace mentality – not only mindful of doing no harm, but with an explicit intention of improving things by my presence, be it by picking up other people's litter, recording wildlife, reporting pollution (and, as long as it remains necessary, the wildlife crime we all know is still perpetrated here in the name of management), or simply greeting others I meet on the way – a small price indeed for the astonishing privilege of simply being alive and sentient in this blessed place.

Amy-Jane Beer, President



A Different Kind of Beauty for Crisis Times?

Concepts of what constitutes a beautiful landscape evolve. The great change in European landscape aesthetics – seeing it as beautiful, restorative, sublime and romantic – began about 250 years ago and is still very much with us. Even the great poet Sylvia Plath, often plagued by severe depression, could exclaim: ‘I felt my lungs inflate with the onrush of scenery – air, mountains, trees, people. I thought, “This is what it is to be happy”’.



Photo courtesy of Hilary Fenten

Wordsworth and his contemporaries extolled much of this beauty of nature in verse, in contrast to earlier generations like Daniel Defoe, who often saw nature as ‘a waste and howling (sic) wilderness’, an object to be controlled and exploited by humans.

Both attitudes are still with us, in the way that many value national parks as perfect, pristine places, yet care less about the degradation of nature elsewhere. Some of the most visited places in our country impress by their prettiness: romantic, pleasing to the senses. Does this show how much nature means to us or is it a sign of our disconnectedness from nature in its fullness?

Some years ago I was researching a project for the then Countryside Council for Wales when our team wrote in its final report, ‘All landscapes, not just designated or very rural ones, are an expression of the cultural value of the people who shape them. To that extent, if those people are becoming disconnected from their place, that will be reflected in the landscape.’ This will impact on the character and biodiversity of places like the Dales. Seeing the crises of biodiversity and climate, we need to pause and gain a greater connectedness with nature, learning a different kind of beauty, more in tune with our times.

Lessons from Europe

In the 1990s the largest area of contiguous forest in Europe was suffering from a plague of bark beetle, which was killing vast areas of trees. Authorities in the Czech part of that forest, Šumava National Park (formerly Bohemian Forest), decided on chemical warfare

whereas the German part, the Bavarian Forest National Park, just left nature to get on with it.

The results were stunning. Neither method saved the old trees. However, the natural decay on the Bavarian side quickly promoted new growth, creating a new forest, more diverse and more beautiful. Bark beetle mainly infects old trees and, as there are now fewer of those, the bark beetle pest is contained.

As much of the forest died, local people organised militant demonstrations against the park authority, so much so that on my visit there our group had to be bussed into the headquarters. But the authority stuck to its policy of leaving nature to get on with it.

The old forest was certainly ‘beautiful’, as the photo of a walk in the Bohemian Forest shows. Yet I found the decaying trees and verdant new growth equally exciting. The revitalised woodlands showed more biodiversity, attracted new fauna and flora and reconnected people to the cycle of birth, growth and decay.

The biggest issues facing the Dales are the climate emergency and nature recovery. We may well need to move towards a position of seeing our current notions of landscape ‘sacrificed’ in order to meet these challenges. Yet with a different concept of beauty we could have all three: climate change mitigation, a thriving ecosystem and a landscape shining in a new kind of beauty.

Wilf Fenten, Vice Chair



Bark beetle damage, Bavarian forest.



Bavarian forest regrowing after bark beetle damage.

Back to the Future

Widdale wasn't always wild and windswept – in fact, its name comes from the Norse for wooded valley. The Woodland Trust has raised £3.5 million to restore its ancient habitats and the new, greener landscape could alleviate the effects of climate change and provide a haven for endangered species.

Bare, bleak, barren – these are adjectives often applied to the polar ice caps and the most inhospitable deserts. Yet for some people, when used to describe the uplands of the Yorkshire Dales, they conjure up positive images of rare opportunities to escape the hustle and bustle of modern life – in places such as Widdale in upper Wensleydale, one of the last remaining strongholds of the red squirrel in the national park.

But a new Woodland Trust initiative is set to turn the clock back still further. Five hundred and fifty acres of open, sheep-grazed land in the dale's remote tributary valley of Snaizeholme will be replaced by a mosaic of habitats, ranging from new native woodland to riverside meadows, with scattered montane trees on the exposed upper slopes.

The flagship project aims to increase biodiversity, encourage nature recovery, develop resilience to climate change and help with flood management. Although Snaizeholme is best known for its red squirrel reserve, tree planting could also help to support populations of two more iconic species – otters and white-clawed crayfish – by improving the water quality of the streams and becks. Much-loved birds such as herons, kingfishers, dippers and grey wagtails could also benefit.

But, importantly, the charity does not plan to cover the landscape in an alien blanket of tree cover. Instead, the aim is to make the valley more attractive to people as well as animals.

'After the last Ice Age, 90% of the Yorkshire Dales would have been wooded, before settlers began to clear the forest for dwellings and farming,' says project lead Al Nash. 'We've already discovered remnant ancient woodland indicators, hidden away in crevices of the rocky outcrops high on the hillside.'

'But we'll also be keeping plenty of open habitat and allowing existing wooded gullies to regenerate naturally. Apart from planting trees, we'll be restoring and caring for over 150 acres of meadow and peatland.'

To see what could be achieved you need look no further than Carrifran Wildwood in the Scottish Borders, where volunteers have spent 20 years working to recreate the countryside of six millennia ago on previously denuded hillsides.

A Varied Landscape

In Snaizeholme's open valley bottoms habitats will be managed for existing wading birds such as curlew, lapwing, oystercatcher and snipe. Barns will be retained as landscape features; the meadows will be maintained by grazing with cattle; and the river channel will be allowed to flood and move naturally. Scattered trees will provide pockets of scrub and dappled shade along the banks while leaky stone dams will help to reduce flooding and erosion and trap sediment without obstructing the movement of fish and crayfish.

Irregular woodland will cover the mid-level slopes but planting will be avoided near streams, gullies and wet flushes. Scots pine will help to landscape the edge of the existing spruce plantations and provide habitat and

foraging for species like the red squirrel and black grouse in the early stages of restoration.

Eight hectares of blanket bog to the north-west will be left unplanted so that it can develop naturally to offer cover and food for ground-nesting birds. And some boundary dry-stone walls will be repaired and maintained to preserve landscape character while sheltering wildlife.

Eventually natural regeneration will shape the countryside around Snaizeholme but until then another £400,000 is still needed to carry out restoration work. To donate visit www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/support-us/give/appeals/snaizeholme/

Lynn Leadbeatter, Life member



Carrifran landscape.
Photo courtesy of Al Nash, WTML

Woodland cover in Yorkshire Dales: **4.3%** compared to national average of **9%**

Only just over **2%** of this is broad-leaved and **0.84%** ancient – a critically low figure

Number of young native trees to be planted at Snaizeholme: **250,000** including birch, oak, rowan, aspen, alder, willow and Scots pine

Estimated number of red squirrels in England: **15,000** – the new site will extend and protect the existing reserve

The Woodland Trust has pledged to use **plastic-free alternatives to tree guards** at all its reserves, including Snaizeholme, by the end of 2021



Build To Last



This early view of Austwick shows that most of the houses were lime-rendered and limewashed...



...This contrasts with the modern view of the exposed limestone rubble, which was originally regarded as an inferior material to be covered up for aesthetic reasons and to protect it from the weather.

Is it time to forget our love affair with exposed stonework?

Chartered surveyor Jonathan Ratter says the old ways are often the best.

Photos: Yorkshire Dales Community Archives

When I was the Building Conservation Officer for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority in the 1990s, the most common problem that house owners asked me about was damp coming through their solid stone walls because of driving rain. Many of the Dales churches also had problems.

These were the early days of the 'lime revival', following recognition of the issues caused by using modern cement mortars and gypsum plasters on traditional, solid stone walls. I started to become interested in how the walls of local houses and churches were originally finished and to closely examine their stonework. It became obvious that many of the problems had been caused by the removal of the original lime protective coatings, usually a long time ago.

The fashion for exposed stone, even if it is inferior rubble, began in the Victorian period. Many people still think that exposed stone is always attractive, their belief reinforced by the dead, grey appearance of modern cement renders and pebbledashes.

Lime was an essential building material. Numerous lime kilns remain in the Dales, where limestone was mixed with fuel and burnt to produce quicklime. When used for building, this was combined with sand and slaked with wetted sand or water to produce mortar for building walls, for rendering their external faces and for plastering their internal ones. If the slaked lime was diluted, it could be used like a paint to cover the insides or outsides of walls.

Turning The Clock Back

In recent years there has been a return to the original method of using lime as 'hot lime', with quicklime being mixed directly with wet sand or water. It is referred to as 'hot' because of the heat and steam that is produced. It has several properties that make it superior to processed lime products.

The walls of many local houses built before the mid-19th century were originally finished with lime, either with many coats of limewash applied directly onto the stone or over a type of render



When photographed in 1974, Knight Stainforth Hall had the remains of a lime render, patched with cement. Its removal led to years of damp problems. Photo courtesy of Jonathan Ratter



that is simply a thin coating of sand and lime applied by throwing it from a trowel. The practice seems to have been almost universal in the limestone areas of the national park and on the blue ragstone around Sedbergh, and limewashing persisted for longer in Dentdale and Garsdale than in other dales. If not maintained by periodic recoating, lime finishes will erode away almost completely but traces can often be found in sheltered parts of walls. Evidence can often be found on rubble buildings in the sandstone areas as well. Unfortunately some buildings that still have their stone covered have been coated with synthetic masonry paints, which can bring their own problems.

It is now generally accepted that stone should be repointed with lime mortar. It is less commonly recognised that walls can greatly benefit from a protective coating of lime that allows any water that penetrates the surface of the wall to safely evaporate when weather conditions are favourable. Old lime surfaces are precious and should be conserved, and where there are persistent damp problems reinstatement should be considered.

Jonathan Ratter , JWRC Conservation
enquiries@jwrc.co.uk



Limewashing the new lime render at The Oaks, Sedbergh, in 2005. A lime finish was reinstated because removal of the original had caused serious damp problems.

Photo courtesy of Jonathan Ratter

Andrea Hunter

Natural beauty of the Dales – the image that immediately springs to mind is that of the cotton grass, sometimes referred to as bog cotton due to its abundance in boggy areas on high ground. This very modest little flower, which appears in June, just makes me smile and every year inspires me to try to capture its beauty in my work. The stoic nature of this little plant reflects how I think of the Dales and their people, but it has also in recent times made me reflect on how delicate the balance is between nature and our modern lives. The flowers nod in the breeze like little flags of surrender telling me that we must change our ways and respect our planet.

www.focusonfelt.co.uk

Andrea Hunter is a professional artist living in Hardraw, who specialises in using felt as an art medium.

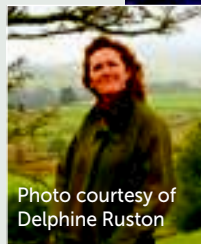


Photo courtesy of Delphine Ruston



Battalions of Peacemakers (medium felt), Andrea Hunter.

Vision of the Future

Across the Dales artists are out in all weathers, inspired by their unique beauty but also witnessing how we are shaping the landscapes of tomorrow. We asked them to share their thoughts about the delicate interaction between people and nature.

*On Lunds Fell
The Cotton-grass blows:
A battalion of peacemakers,
Dressed in their small
flags of hope.*

Poem by Mavis Fawcett

Bev Parker

I am fascinated by how centuries of upland farming have shaped a natural beauty and mosaic that supports a diversity of habitats for nature. My art aims to celebrate the part sheep have played in the evolution of the Dales landscape. I fear that some 're-wilding' conceptions may not actually deliver the intended outcomes, preferring our world-beating animal welfare standards along with nature-friendly grazing patterns as key to sustaining the natural beauty of our Yorkshire Dales.

cumbye.arts@gmail.com

Bev Parker is a landscape and agrarian artist who worked for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority for many years and has lived on a moorland sheep farm.



Hesleden to Potts Moor, watercolour, Bev Parker

Mark Corner

The interaction of people with nature in the Dales has produced a landscape of remarkable beauty and distinctive character, which I think is framed and enhanced by its iconic dry-stone walls and barns: a wonderful combination of our natural and cultural heritage. It has a spirit which lifts me, and is 'picturesque', and that's what inspires me to photograph and, more recently, to draw and paint it.

This natural and built environment will be impacted by climate change, where warmer and wetter winters and hotter and drier summers will affect the land, wildlife and trees and buildings will be adapted to the changing conditions. Whilst nature is remarkably resilient I do fear what the future holds if we ask too much of it through our own actions or inaction. Follow Mark on Instagram @dalesexplorer

Mark Corner is vice-president of Friends of the Dales and a Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority member, who started painting during lockdown in spring 2020.



Moss, watercolour, Mark Corner

Giggleswick quarry, watercolour, Frank Gordon



Read about former quarry workings in the Dales on page 17



Frank Gordon

We often speak of the 'natural beauty' of the Dales but so much of it is made by those who work the land. The underlying structure may be unchanging but the familiar pattern of dry-stone walls is, of course, artificial, superimposed. The apparent naturalness arises from the harmonious relationship of line and form, the ephemeral and the eternal. These rhythms and echoes are a constant source of inspiration for me – a well that never runs dry.

How does climate change fit into my particular vision of the Dales? I'm not sure I know – but a recurring subject is the Ribble's floodwaters at Long Preston Deeps and they seem to hang on a little longer each year.

www.frankgordon.co.uk

Frank Gordon is a landscape painter and long-distance walker whose work focuses mainly on scenes close to his Giggleswick home.

Brian Burton

What we often consider 'natural beauty' is actually the result of considered management by our farmers. Much unnoticed is the hedgerow: an historic living landmark, that stitched line around the borders of our patchwork fields, the perfect carbon-capturing boundary, home and open larder to a myriad of creatures.

I am fascinated by its structure, the horizontal layers that echo the history of their pruning and regrowth. I look forward each spring to the 'resurrection' moment when the first hawthorn leaves unfurl on the bare, tortured winter branches.

bburton.studio@gmail.com

Brian Burton is a fine artist specialising in contemporary landscapes based in Hetton.



Flailed Hedge, acrylic and oil pastel, Brian Burton

Hester Cox

The Yorkshire Dales landscape has been shaped by thousands of years of human intervention to become the iconic and beautiful place that it is and the wildlife that lives here reflects its diversity. I gain inspiration for my prints whilst walking and fell running, seeking out seasonal indicators such as the arrival of the first curlews, swallows and swifts and the flowering of certain plants, for example purple saxifrage and bird's-eye primroses, and I have noticed some strange anomalies during the last few years such as plants flowering out of season and migrating birds arriving later than usual. Recently I found blackthorn blossoms on the bushes at the same time as sloes were ripening.



These, combined with the more regular instances of flooding, cause me to reflect on what the Dales may be like in years to come and what we may stand to lose if we don't address climate change.

www.hestercox.com

Hester Cox is a printmaker based in Horton-in-Ribblesdale, whose current exhibitions include a solo show at Masham Gallery.



Above: Waymarks, The Swale. Hester Cox

Left: The Watering Hole. Hester Cox

Use Them or Lose Them?

Barns in Swaledale. Photo courtesy of Ian Harrison

How can planners strike a balance between preserving the iconic architecture of the national park and allowing development that might damage the wider landscape?

Business member, developer and co-author of *Barns of the Yorkshire Dales* Andy Singleton, and past Secretary of State Member of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Nancy Stedman, weigh up the pros and cons.

Moving with the times

I am a long-standing supporter of Friends of the Dales but sadly find myself at odds with what appears to me to be the popular but far too cautious opinion regarding reuse of redundant buildings, particularly barns, in the national park.

I am exasperated when people assume that the rural landscape has to be preserved exactly as it is today instead of encouraging it to evolve creatively and sensitively. In the past some appalling buildings have been constructed but now it is rare for unrestricted development to get through without further scrutiny.

If barn conversions are opposed due to their location, how can we maintain these structures? Occasional grant funding can't be relied upon and what is the justification for protecting buildings that can't be used when we are so short of houses? 'The Silent Traveller' Chiang Yee noted, when gazing at Barden Tower, that only the English enjoyed

looking at the rubble of formerly grand structures. But if you allow them to be used, they can be maintained.

Strict planning control is necessary to protect this special landscape but why dictate that the Dales must always look as they are now?

Do we want to say to our grandchildren: 'I was one of the lucky ones. When I was young, there was a barn in every field. Look over there, where that grassy mound is -- that used to be a beautiful stone building.'

It is perverse to maintain an empty built structure just to look at from a distance.

A landscape created by humans can be remodelled, restored and reused and still be beautiful and functional. Why should anyone seeking to do so be treated as a potential vandal?

Minimising visual impact

Through careful design, planning and the use of craft skills in the local vernacular, married to 21st-century technology, many

redundant buildings can be converted without harm to the landscape.

Innovative ventilation apertures with splayed reveals internally instead of traditional windows; car parking in open-fronted sheds served by gravel tracks with grass allowed to grow over; electric bicycles; underground cables and storage tanks and state-of-the-art technical innovation – these can all contribute to preventing domestication of the landscape.

Is it so tragic to see a human living in harmony with nature in a remote location? Communication technology, changing work patterns, electric cars and bicycles, sustainable lifestyles and the internet make the argument that this should be discouraged because it will stretch emergency services and contribute to climate change outdated.

Following that logic means that we all have to live in urban environments when the closer to nature we are, the healthier we become.

Andy Singleton, Consultant, Ecovril

Preventing Inappropriate Developments

The issues around the conservation and conversion of barns in iconic Dales landscapes are many and complex. Andy Singleton's contribution to the debate is welcome, but I do feel I need to address some misconceptions.

Friends of the Dales are well aware that landscapes constantly change; nowhere do we say that we are trying to preserve them exactly as they are today, or at any other point in time. In our policy on built heritage we clearly state that we support the sensitive, creative and appropriate reuse and adaptation of listed and vernacular buildings where this is necessary to their survival.

But change in such a special landscape, valued by so many, needs to be managed to be effective, and the planning system is, of course, one of the main tools to achieve this. According to a report presented to the national park authority's audit and review committee in November, under the new barn conversion policies 198 new residential units have been granted permission over the six-year period (94% approval rate). Of those granted permission, 53 are in what we would consider to be sensitive locations – that is, outside villages, hamlets or farmsteads.

Over the same period we lodged objections to 23 applications (10.5%), and expressed reservations about a further 21. Our concerns included remoteness of location, visual impacts and sustainability. We also think that the need to reduce emissions should be taken into account – yet more car use should not be encouraged. It is unrealistic to expect families living at the far end of a dale to use bicycles. Then there were concerns about loss of historical integrity of the building and poor design, often an excess of glazing. Andy makes very good points about how careful design can mitigate impacts.

So I believe we are in agreement with Andy about accepting change, but I don't see our position on barn conversions as trying to prevent change: rather it's trying to prevent inappropriate developments.

Supporting Dales Communities

We agree that it is hard to justify funding for buildings that are not used. But it is worth noting that £3.5m went into restoring and weatherproofing farm barns under the Pennine Dales Environmentally Sensitive Scheme, and subsequently some 95% of those barns were back in use. We also accept that in some instances 'managed decline' is an option – where the building is demolished, and the materials reused, but only after comprehensive records are taken and archived.

It is difficult to see the full effects of the new barns policies as yet, as only 42 have been completed. We would disagree that 'we are so short of houses'. Firstly, there are over 600 outstanding planning permissions for new dwellings in the national park, but there is no mechanism to ensure that they reach completion. Secondly, there is a very high proportion of second homes and holiday lets in the Dales, up to 40% in some settlements. This leads to an increase in house prices, a 'hollowing out' of villages, and a loss of amenities like shops and pubs. We believe that both these issues need to be addressed first, rather than simply continuing to provide more, relatively expensive, units.

The issues are many, and often the subject of judgement; the debate will continue, and further contributions are very welcome.

Nancy Stedman,
volunteer member of policy & planning committee

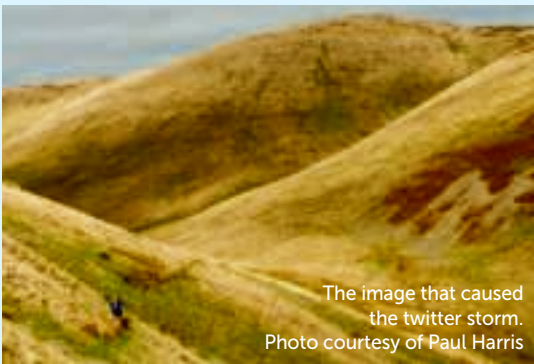


In the Eye of the Beholder

What makes a beautiful landscape? Is it trees, shrubs and flowers?
Long-vanished iconic species like golden eagles and wild boar?
Or can solitude and stunning geomorphology make up for lack of biodiversity?

The publication on social media in August 2020 of a photograph of a lone walker traversing the great, and apparently empty, spaces of the Howgill Fells brought the debate into sharp focus. Outraged users compared the view to a lunar landscape and a war zone and called for the area to be rewilded. A selection of their comments is reproduced below, together with the responses posted by the national park authority.

But is it possible – or desirable – to change landscape management practices in our uplands in order to promote biodiversity? We would welcome the opinions of our members to feed into our policy development – contact Ann Shadrake at ann.shadrake@friendsofthedailes.org.uk



The image that caused the twitter storm.
Photo courtesy of Paul Harris



Love the Howgills - so unspoiled. They look so rounded and cosy and velvety as you drive by on the motorway. We always called them the 'elephants' bottoms'!

Nice geology underlying an ecological disaster zone.

Beautiful! You're 'avin' a larff. Sheep-wrecked ecological desert, more like. Where are the trees? Where are the raptors?

Are you joking? This has been stripped bare of life. For goodness sake, re-wild it. Stop showing off a destroyed landscape as if it's desirable.

Barren, denuded of life, destroyed. Like some post-apocalyptic landscape. We desperately need rewilding.

Time for a radical rethink.

Imagine what they could really look like if nature had its way?! A mosaic of habitats, rich with a multitude of wildlife species. This is a dead and barren landscape.

Yes, bleak, barren, denuded. An over-grazed wasteland devoid of biodiversity. Is there anything above knee height for miles around? It could be so much more.

'I can't believe I'm reading all those dreadful things about some of my favourite walking places. But as with many things there is a strong element of truth. The Howgills are a pretty sterile environment from the point of view of wildlife.'

Response from trustee Kyle Blue

That's a barren artificial desert... it's not remotely natural or beautiful.

My most diverse meadows look the same from a distance. It's only when you down the long lens and get close that you see the diversity.

There's a reason why the UK is one of the least biodiverse countries globally. Those pictures demonstrate why.

Thanks for encouraging me not to visit. If I wanted a desert and dunes, I would go to Dubai.

The Australian outback has more vegetation than that.

Is it the moon? Sorry, but my carpet at home has more wildlife.

Neil Armstrong thought the moonscape was beautiful. Dead zones can be beautiful too...

An overgrazed ecological calamity

Is this where The Clangers was filmed?

National Park responses

Most of the Howgills are commons or privately owned land, and we'd like to see land owners/managers moving forward with agri-environment schemes - though we can't insist that happens.

Historically this area hasn't had the same kind of agri-environment scheme funding as other parts of the Yorkshire Dales National Park as the geology and landform has limited the grassland habitats, as well as sheep grazing.

Some farmers still need this land for grazing as their farmsteads around the edges of the Howgills are too small to be profitable without the large area of common for sheep. This may change as the new ELMS [Environmental Land Management Schemes] come in.

If you're looking for wooded areas, these are on the north-west flank of the Howgills – below Tebay – and there are acres of land planted with open woodland and scrub along Mallerstang on the eastern flank.

Beauty and the Bleak?

Threshfield Quarry, near Grassington

Some find natural beauty where others see only a landscape scarred by previous industrial use. Here our Executive Director Ann Shadrake and artist Ann Rutherford explain why they find inspiration amid reminders of former quarrying in the Dales.

This is one of my favourite places in the Dales ... probably because it is so 'un-Dales-y'. I find the simple blocks of colour – grey, slate, cream, charcoal, steel blue, aqua – inspiring and uplifting. Despite its past as a working quarry, this post-industrial landscape feels to me wild and unmanaged. Unlike the familiar Dales scenery of dry-stone walls, meadows and barns, the quarry site doesn't feel 'man-made' although it patently is!

With climate breakdown, we'll most likely need to accept landscapes that look very different. These landscapes might not align well to your preferred view of the Dales. And they may not have much in common with those 'special qualities' for which the Dales was designated a national park (over 70 years ago). Can we learn to love landscapes of regularly flooded valleys, eroded tracks, soggy and scrubby uplands, and even more derelict walls and barns? Will we have a choice?

Ann Shadrake, Executive Director

Life Returns to Disused Quarry

Threshfield Quarry is a spectacular, disused limestone quarry near the villages of Threshfield, Skirethorns and Long Ashes with a stunning waterfall, pools and soaring, terraced walls.

Quarrying has been carried on for hundreds of years but it is only in the last century that this became heavily industrialised. It is now 2022 and the quarry has been disused for the last 12 years. Limestone-loving plants are creeping back onto the quarry floor, mosses and lichens are taking up habitation. Let's hope climate change doesn't affect this progress.

Rock is one of the central themes of my artistic practice. Threshfield Quarry is hard to illustrate and so finding details is a way to bring focus. The ancient limestone is revealed in its horizontal bands and the quarried face features strong verticals created by the blasting. I like to use charcoal to illustrate rock. The charcoal lends itself to a soft rendering of the weathering and quarrying processes that create the deeply textured faces of the quarry.

Ann Rutherford, artist and Threshfield Quarry Development Trust trustee



Charcoal drawing of quarry face, Ann Rutherford

Further information about Threshfield Quarry

Back in 2010 Tarmac gained planning permission to extend extraction at Swinden Quarry to 2030, in return for closing down its operation at the nearby smaller Threshfield Quarry. There was to be no net increase in extracted stone. A legal agreement (Section 106) was signed to ensure that the long-term restoration and management of Threshfield Quarry was properly delivered. Under the auspices of the Threshfield Quarry Development Trust, footpaths, viewing platforms and signage were installed to help visitors enjoy the former quarry site.

After concerns about visitors to the quarry in 2020, locked gates and 'Private Land: No public access' signs were installed at the main entrance on Skirethorns Lane. We hope that access for walkers will be restored to this spectacular site in the near future.

www.threshfieldquarry.org.uk

www.annrutherford.co.uk

App: Search for Threshfield Quarry Heritage on your smart phone

Can Gardeners Make a Difference to the Climate Emergency?



A Yorkshire Allotment. Photo courtesy of Allotmenteer.

We can all do our bit to help tackle climate change and biodiversity loss. Friends of the Dales are campaigning for the adoption of nature-friendly cutting regimes that could transform our roadside verges into wildlife corridors and some of our trustees described their efforts to create wildflower habitats in the summer 2021 issue of the *Review*. Long-standing volunteer Tony Smith shows how we can change our gardening practices to create havens for nature that can also withstand extreme weather events.

In September 2021 I attended the Royal Horticultural Society Chelsea Flower Show as a volunteer on the RHS COP26 Garden, which was inspired by the recent COP26 UN conference on climate change in Glasgow in November 2021.

The garden was designed by Marie-Louise Agius for the RHS and demonstrates how our gardens and public green spaces can play an important part in dealing with climate change. The design of the show garden was divided into four areas and gave practical ideas about how to modify a garden to adapt to climate change, with the predicted warmer, drier summers but more stormy rainfall.

The design was based on a cycle, the first area representing a garden in **decline**, showing impermeable paving and lawn monoculture leading to flash flooding, degradation of habitats and a loss of wildlife and biodiversity.

The next area was an **adaptation** zone, which illustrated some of the plants that could be used for a garden of the future – plants adapted to warmer and drier conditions and using better drainage to deal with heavier rainfall.

In the **mitigation** area landscaping and planting choices demonstrated how we can improve the habitat and help combat climate change – it contrasted markedly with the area in decline. A wildflower-rich meadow and wildlife pond created biodiversity and better drainage management using swales (shallow, broad channels with vegetation to collect rainwater) provided diverse habitats for wildlife. The presence

of a compost bin indicated how we can improve our soil by making our own compost and avoiding the use of peat as a soil conditioner, thereby protecting our peatlands.

The final zone, **balance**, envisioned a garden designed for a warmer climate with a mixture of plants to provide a more biodiverse habitat for the benefit of wildlife and pollinating insects. It still had a lawn but managed to provide an area left wilder and more uncut for longer periods and vegetables and fruit were grown alongside flowers and ornamental plants. And planting a tree, however small it is – even in a pot, will be beneficial. This vision is, in reality, a modern version of the cottage garden using a diverse range of plants as well as recycled materials where appropriate.

My task, as a volunteer, was to explain the design to the general public and to encourage them to implement some of the practical ideas into their own gardens, to help reduce our impact on the environment and improve biodiversity. There are around 30 million gardens in the UK and if some of these ideas were implemented, it could have a major impact on the climate emergency. **Together gardeners can make a difference.**

The RHS has developed a Planet-Friendly Gardening Campaign, which provides support to gardeners to reduce their negative environmental impacts and improve the positive ones. It has shown that there are three areas where gardeners can have the biggest impact on sustainability: home composting, buying peat-free and switching from mains to rainwater to water plants.

Tony Smith, Friends of the Dales volunteer

Belonging: Fashion & a Sense of Place

As a 'dedicated follower of fashion' I didn't require any encouragement to take time out to visit Halifax's Bankfield Museum, which is hosting – until March 2022 – a fashion exhibition to rival any that I've seen at the V&A. Alexander McQueen, Burberry, Red or Dead, Cunnington & Sanderson (and more), along with breathtaking artefacts from the museum's extensive fashion archive, reawaken the history, ingenuity and creativity that have long sat at the heart of Yorkshire's enduring textile industry.

Belonging: Fashion & A Sense of Place, a curatorial collaboration with Leeds Arts University, brings to the fore the visceral connections that still exist between landscape, community spirit, wit and fashion, with one of the standout stars of the exhibition being Edward Crutchley from Clapham in the Yorkshire Dales. Crutchley, one of the industry's most experienced and knowledgeable experts in materials (he is Director of Fabric for Dior Men), is also a fierce advocate for the development of sustainable and traceable 'farm to yarn' practices in manufacturing.

Featuring several pieces from Crutchley's stunning ready-to-wear collection, which he describes as a 'love letter to home', the exhibition celebrates the Yorkshire Dales through fabrics such as wool and cashmere, textures and imagery in a unique, modern way. With a gratifying absence of tweeds and the usual hunting and shooting iconography, Crutchley showcases a different side of the Dales, weaving together aspects of his personal history with cultural folklore – whilst using traditional techniques such as embroidery to create vibrant and thought-provoking clothes for a fashion-forward audience.

Standout pieces include an embroidered blouson and latex laser-cut top, which

Crutchley says offers 'that feeling of being in the countryside, being on a fell or in a wood and how that space makes you feel'. His Legends of the Dales embroidered boiler suit offers an innovative and fascinating insight into some of myths and legends of the Dales, beautifully reinterpreted through his skilful embroidery, with the majestic Pen-y-Ghent sphinx being my personal favourite. Crutchley's sense of humour also shines through in his homage to the 'gritty glamour you only find up North', as the archetypal 'rollers and headscarves' look, once pervasive in the 1950s and 1960s, is reimagined as the Floating Headscarf, a design he created in collaboration with celebrated milliner Stephen Jones.

Edward Crutchley grew up in Clapham near Settle, studying fashion at Central Saint Martins in London, where he learned about the importance of authentic research in the design process. He has previously worked for Pringle, Kanye West and Louis Vuitton. Now working at Christian Dior, Edward Crutchley also designs for his own label.

The exhibition and museum are free to visit; the exhibition runs to 5 March, 2022.

More information at www.calderdale.gov.uk/museums and www.edwardcrutchley.com

Victoria Benn,
Membership and events officer



Hopes for New Beginnings in the Dales

Dr Alexander C Lees, Senior lecturer in conservation biology, Manchester Metropolitan University

“One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds. Much of the damage inflicted on land is quite invisible to laymen.”

Aldo Leopold



Derelict barn in Widdale. Photo courtesy of Alex Lees

Aldo Leopold's quote from his *A Sand County Almanac* is rarely far from the back of my mind when ruminating on the land uses and land covers of Britain's beleaguered national park system.

My relationship with the Yorkshire Dales has been considerably more fleeting than that with other national parks (I now live in the Peak District) but started over three decades ago when I tried and failed to see a wandering golden eagle frequenting Nidderdale. Such a sighting would now probably attract national news coverage, but at the time wandering juvenile eagles were recorded annually in the Dales. One such ringed bird came to grief upon pylons at Grassington in November 1986 and proved to be one of the offspring of the famous Haweswater pair: the last English eagles, which stopped darkening skies in the Lake District five years ago and had failed to breed since 2004. As a result, eagles in the Dales are now a vanishing memory; but they have a deeper history too – remembered in place names like Yarncliffe or Arncliffe, derived from Old English for eagle.*

My subsequent Dales visits have been infrequent – most recently (prior to the invitation to write this piece) – to a wedding in the north of the park, followed by a morning in Arkengarthdale spent watching black grouse. (I first saw this species in the Peak District in the early

1990s – but it is now locally extinct there.) The fate of these two birds exemplifies a trend across the uplands, with some of our most charismatic species slowly fading from the landscape and eventually from memory. Twite are now poised to follow corncrake to local extinction and nature's orchestra will lose another unique note.



Black Grouse. Photo courtesy of Alex Lees

Magnificent Desolation

Vegetation was conspicuous by its absence when Professor Brian Cox visited the Yorkshire Dales during production of the recent BBC Two series *Universe*.

After comparing a wintry High Force waterfall in Teesdale to the event horizon of a black hole, the presenter moved into the national park, where sequences shot at Malham Cove and Gordale Scar evoked the bleak beauty of a moonscape.

Scenes filmed at Brimham Rocks in Nidderdale, Fountains Abbey and the North Yorkshire coast also focused on stark and rugged terrain to illustrate the grandeur of the cosmos.



Malham Tarn. Photo courtesy of Michael Spencer

Bleak Outlook

On being asked to contribute to this magazine I decided I needed to reacquaint myself with the Dales, so on a foggy November day I travelled a transect across the park to try to give myself an ecological overview of the state of nature there. First off, the countryside around Malham Tarn, which bore more than a passing resemblance to the White Peak: no accident given the underlying geology.

Although the region may retain some traditional hay meadows and precious species-rich calcareous grassland, improved pastures seemed the norm. The absence of any vegetative complexity beyond the odd shelter belt was stark: hard edges, no scrub, no visible signs of regeneration. Trees were not a feature of the wider landscape – they largely appeared at roadsides, on cliff faces, in gardens or railway cuttings. The potential guerrilla-rewilding culprits – itinerant flocks of berry-guzzling and seed-dispersing redwings and fieldfares – were, however, very much in evidence.

* *Germanic Old English Erne (arn, earn, yarn, yearn)*
Ekwall 1960, Kitson 1997, 1998)

** See www.friendsofthedales.org.uk/policies

A Fresh Start

Hope for a more variegated landscape appeared further north: a differentiated hillside visible from afar proved to be Brae Pasture, part of Ingleborough SSSI, which itself now forms part of the Rewilding Britain network and a graphic demonstration of what a rethink of grazing pressure can deliver for biodiversity.

My journey ended in Widdale – supposedly 'wooded valley' in Old Norse but largely dominated by the recurring ecological nightmare of purple moor grass barrens, which abruptly met dark plantations (albeit a last redoubt of our native squirrel), a theme of so much of upland Britain. Derelict barns and eroding hillsides in the same region seemed to speak of socioecological failure too, a landscape no longer delivering for people or wildlife. Despair turned to hope on my return as I discovered that the Woodland Trust has acquired land there at Snaizeholme and after reading the forestry and woodland and farming policies of Friends of the Dales, which aim to reverse biodiversity loss through socially just ecosystem restoration**. There is ample room for hope, but we can't dawdle.

Read more about the Woodland Trust's plans to increase biodiversity at Snaizeholme on page 9

Growing Up in Desperate Times

Freya Baggaley, 23, is a volunteer on the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's Up Skill, Down Dales programme, which helps young people to develop the skills needed for careers in environment or outdoor learning.

When I was growing up, places of natural beauty were always seen as tainted by the destruction we have caused -- where humans are enemy number one to nature. My most vivid memory of this was my school's performance of Debbie Campbell's *The Emerald Crown*. One particular song still haunts me -- *Twentieth-Century Highwaymen*. There I stood, 10 years old, dressed like a tree, singing *He'll rob from the forest and steal from the trees; he gets what he wants and he wants what he sees*. By the end, I was overwhelmed by the bleak reality of how people treat our world, and given no solution to the problems that have been dumped on us.

I escaped this doom and gloom outside. Places of natural beauty have always been a refuge to me, even when hiding in a tent during a biblical downpour. Moving up to the Dales from Milton Keynes was a dream come true -- trading the concrete cows for actual cows. The time when I thought I was a city person is now laughable. I cycle along the Wharfe in the hope of spotting an otter. I no longer run around in a frenzy shutting windows when farmers are muck spreading. I truly miss the Dales when I leave: from the rolling hills outlined by dry-stone walls to the purple hue of the heather on the moors -- even the temperamental weather. You can't find a place like this anywhere else: that is what makes it beautiful. Its very nature is unique and deserves to be protected.

This is when I panic. Our history with nature is not good. I wonder if the Dales can truly depart from the trend of seeking profit to the point of extinction. How long can the Dales I love survive in that kind of world?

Every generation has faced a struggle: mine is knowing only a dying planet. Pessimistic? Yes. Dramatic? Perhaps. I, like others, blame my school for this overwhelming cynicism. We weren't asked to draw the planet bursting with life but a dying one. My drawing of this was a grey-scale earth, choking on smoke, which stayed on my teacher's display board for six years. It was right under her sign that said 'Fail to prepare, prepare to fail'. I know the sign had more to do with homework, but it always seemed oddly fitting to me.

When I watch the news, and read about the non-binding climate agreements that give countries decades to solve time-critical issues, the image of that sign surrounded by drawings of a dying earth pops into my head.

Yet when I feel that weight bearing down, I open the front door. I am welcomed by what I can simply call bliss: the *Highwaymen* finally drowned out. That is not to say I feel the weight disappear, but it lifts in the face of what we are trying so desperately to protect. I am surrounded by a beautiful countryside and have come to know a community of people fighting to preserve it. For me, that is enough to keep trying.

Freya Baggaley



Inspiring Change

Long-standing business member Chrysalis Arts has produced a guide for creative practitioners wanting to adopt more environmentally-friendly working practices or address related issues through their work.

The Gargrave-based development agency reaches out to audiences in York, North Yorkshire and other rural areas. The *Greening Arts Practice* guide is among a wide range of resources supporting skills development with a focus on addressing the climate crisis and sustainability.

It features 11 case studies including Fabric Of Place, which saw four artists in residence working with Swaledale communities. The programme attracted 324 participants including 138 young people and culminated in a touring exhibition at the Dales Countryside Museum, Keld Resource Centre and Catterick Library. The themes explored included lichens, dark skies, folklore and historical pottery.

It is ironic that parts of Swaledale and Arkengarthdale were overwhelmed by devastating floods in 2019 -- a decade after an extreme weather event caused two rivers to burst their banks in the Cumbrian town of Cockermouth. In another case study artist David Haley describes an initiative to help its communities become more resilient based on the realisation that this would not be an isolated incident. Just 30 years ago, when I was living in Cockermouth, the possibility of flooding would not have featured highly on a list of many residents' social and environmental concerns.

You can download a copy of *Greening Arts Practice* at www.chrysalisarts.com/resources

Lynn Leadbeater, Life member

Find out more about how the work of Dales artists reflects environmental concerns on pages 12-13.



Talks and Walks in Spring 2022

Online Talk – Climate Breakdown – What Does it Mean for the Yorkshire Dales?

Wednesday, 19 January 2022

4:30pm

In the face of inevitable change due to the breakdown of our climatic system, what do we want the Dales to be like by 2050? In this talk, Richard Boothman, an environmental associate lecturer with The Open University and founder of Ideostone Limited, an online environmental learning provider, will explore climate breakdown and its associated environmental changes. He will also be asking what those of us who care about the physical and social landscape of the Dales want them to look like and what we can do to achieve this objective – with the underlying proviso that staying the same is not an option.

To book your place on this Zoom talk, email victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk



River Wharfe in Flood.
Photo courtesy of Victoria Benn

Booking for our events is easy. Either email our Membership & Events Officer, Victoria Benn, at victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk or add your booking request to our **contact form** on the home page of our website, www.friendsofthedales.org.uk.

The best way of keeping abreast of our latest events information is via our **e-news**, which you can sign up for at www.friendsofthedales.org.uk. This is a monthly newsletter delivered direct to your inbox, which brings you all our most up-to-date news and stories.

Finally, our **social media** pages on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are another great way of joining in the chat and finding out what's going on.

Online Talk – Working with Crayfish in the Yorkshire Dales

Wednesday, 16 February 2022

4:30pm

This talk, presented by Paul Bradley, Director of PBA Applied Ecology, and Dr Dan Chadwick, will be an insight into the challenges of conserving our native crayfish in the Yorkshire Dales. Based in Settle, PBA is uniquely involved in delivering management of crayfish across the Dales, drawing on experiences from academia and industry.

To book your place on this Zoom talk, email victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk



White-clawed crayfish.
Photo courtesy of PBA Applied Ecology

Online Talk – Biodiverse Verges

Wednesday, 16 March 2022

4.30pm

The Yorkshire Dales has hundreds of miles of roadside verges. In spring and summer they form an integral part of the verdant Dales landscape. These verges have a rich diversity of different plants growing in them, supporting lots of different insects, which in turn support all manners of other wildlife. Dr Anne Readshaw, leader of the Friends of the Dales campaign to protect and enhance roadside verges for biodiversity, will give an update on its progress and explain how local authorities and communities can help to make road verges an important, safe and healthy sanctuary for plant and insect species.

To book your place on this Zoom talk, email victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk



Wildflower verge near Stackhouse, Ribblesdale.
Photo courtesy of Mark Corner

Walk – Exploring Crummack Dale

Saturday, 19 March 2022

10:15am – 4:00pm

As a follow-up to Ken Humphris's popular talk entitled Exploring Crummack Dale, you now have the opportunity to do just that with Ken as your guide. Commencing in Austwick, you will be taken on a clockwise walk around Crummack Dale, taking in its geology, natural beauty and some of its social and cultural history. This 4 – 4.5 hour walk is mainly easy underfoot. Packed lunch essential. The walk loosely fits with buses from Skipton – see dalesbus.org.uk for up-to-date timetables.

To book your place on this Zoom talk, email victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk



Crummack Dale. Photo courtesy of Ken Humphris

A talk hosted by our friends at the North York Moors Association (www.nyma.org.uk/walks-events)

Online Talk – The Responsible Retrofit of Traditional Buildings: Risks and Opportunities

Tuesday, 25 January 2022

7:00pm

This talk will be led by Nigel Griffiths, who has 25 years' experience of working in the sustainability and energy efficiency sector. Currently an adviser for private clients on retrofit strategies, Nigel is also the author of several books including the *Haynes Eco House Manual*.

To book, email: secretary@nyma.org.uk



Grade II listed Prospect Gallery, Arncliffe.
Photo courtesy of Native Chartered Architects

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Support us, support the Dales

Friends of the Dales is the leading voice campaigning for a sustainable future for the Dales.

Our charity needs your support to help us protect this amazing, inspiring but fragile place - for years to come.

➔ JOIN US

- More members means more clout when we campaign. Members receive this quarterly magazine and first news of our events programme.

➔ DONATE

- Our charity's running costs are funded entirely by your voluntary subscriptions, donations and legacy gifts.

➔ VOLUNTEER

- Help with our walks and other events
- Shape our charity's future: become a trustee
- Put out our leaflets on your home patch

➔ LEGACY

- Please consider making a gift in your will to Friends of the Dales.

➔ BE 'DALES-FRIENDLY'

- Try out our sociable walks and events (most are free)
- Support Dales businesses and communities
- Look for sustainable ways to visit, like [DalesBus](#)

www.friendsofthedales.org.uk



Please visit our website and follow us on social media. Full contact details and membership rates are on page 2

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