

Yorkshire **DALES** review

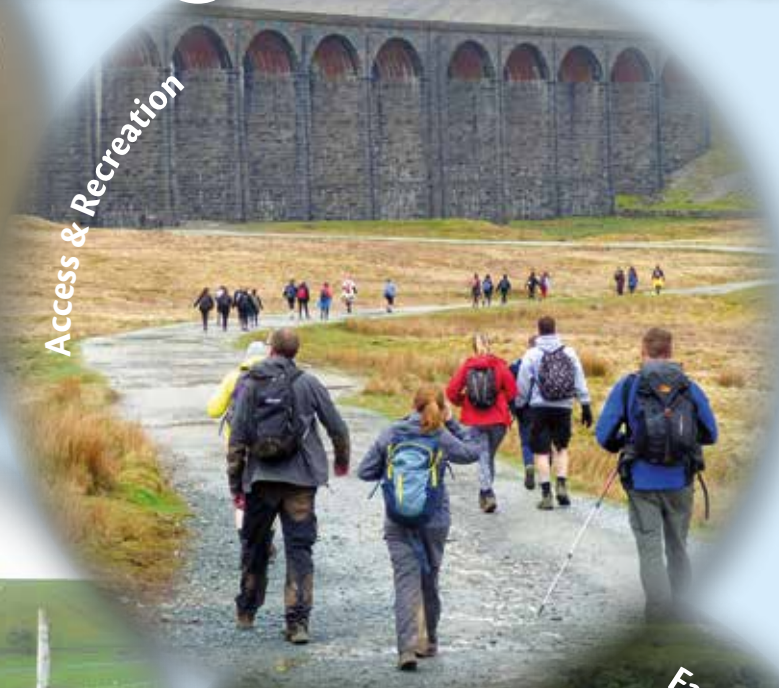
Spring 2024 : Issue 166

Balancing Priorities

Biodiversity & Wildlife



Access & Recreation



Young People & Careers



Farming



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Friends of the
DALES
YORKSHIRE DALES SOCIETY

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Ribblehead walkers, courtesy of Gary Butterfield (Unsplash)
Dry stone walling (Wikimedia)
Swaledale ewe with lamb, courtesy of Ambersky235 (Flickr Creative Commons)

A Welcome in the Hillsides

Are national parks' legal purposes incompatible? Some people say it's impossible to conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage whilst also providing opportunities for the public to enjoy their special qualities. President Amy-Jane Beer lists her priorities for helping people to access these special landscapes without destroying their unique qualities.

Both the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and Friends of the Dales have much to offer the debate about access to nature – not least, I feel, an ability to provide assurance that having more people on that land won't necessarily mean the sky will fall in. We can all also probably agree on the need for greater public education to help ensure that when we do go out into green or blue space, we do so responsibly.

The priorities for access, as I see them, are (in no particular order): connectivity, legitimacy, clarity and equity.

The current system – a network of Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) that vary hugely in quality and open access land designated under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act – amounts to just over 8% of England, and less than 4% of our rivers.

It's important to state that no one is asking for carte blanche to trample at will. The Right to Roam campaign is asking that the default be flipped from one of exclusion with pockets of access to one of access with exclusions for reasons that carry social legitimacy, such as privacy, public safety, cultivation and the protection of sensitive habitats and species. These are things the vast majority of people can recognise and respect – and this will aid compliance.

The current network of PRoWs is extensive, and those in the Dales are generally well maintained and marked. Sadly, that is not the case everywhere. Local councils currently report over 30,000 blockages on PRoWs – one every four and a half miles. What's more, many paths are blighted with hostile signage, others meet dead ends or spit the walker out onto major roads, and many fail to provide the connectivity needed to travel through the landscape in a logical, safe, pleasurable way.

The designation of access land under the CRoW Act by habitat type (mountain, moor, heath and certain types of unimproved downland) led to the absurd phenomenon of 'access islands' – areas on which the public has a right to roam, but no legal means of getting there. Flipping the default would solve this at a stroke and allow the development of desire lines showing where paths are needed – once established these would provide clarity for landowners and farmers.

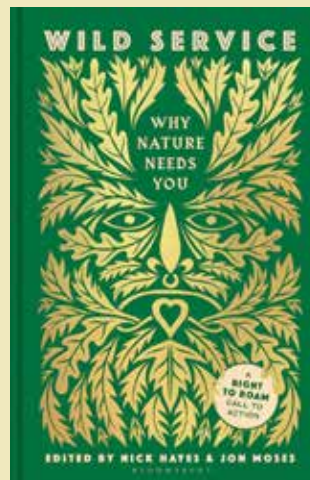
Understanding and Inclusion

Clarity is not only needed in the context of where we are permitted to go, but how. In Scotland, where a right of access has existed for 20 years, an Outdoor Access Code lays all this out in admirable detail – for members of the public and landowners and managers alike. Responsibility, respect and care are the watchwords, encompassing consideration for other people, their legitimate activity and peace of mind, care for the environment and responsibility for your own safety. Landowners often cite liability concerns as a reason not to permit

access. The Scottish system invokes a legal principle that basically means that people going out in nature have to expect certain risks and can't sue if a tree falls on them.

Equity is a big one. Current access is heavily skewed to remote upland areas, which tend to be far from where most people live. In the Dales around 55% of land is designated open access. In Leicestershire the figure is 0.2%. It is part of the role of national parks to cater for the public need for green space – and to welcome visitors from elsewhere. But how much better would it be if everyone was also able to explore his or her own patch, and develop a sense of belonging and shared responsibility for the natural world that can come only with lived experience of it?

With public transport being wildly patchy, the opportunities for people without personal transportation are often scant. Factor in cost, lack of confidence, pressure of time, and risk (real or perceived), and the barriers become significant. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority has been more bold than some in addressing the issues. We have a lot to offer in terms of experience of managing access for the benefit of the public, land managers and nature.



In a book called *Wild Service: Why Nature Needs You* to be published this April, to which I have contributed, members of the Right to Roam team lay out a philosophy of reconnection and reciprocity that challenges the narrative that people are somehow bad for or incompatible with nature. We are nature. Every exploration comes with responsibilities and opportunities to leave a positive trace.

If we could all connect with nature daily and close to home, we'd be a little more willing

to accept the odd occasion when nature says no. No, don't light a barbecue in a drought-afflicted field. No to letting your dog run free in curlew breeding territory. No to holding a mass participation event in saturated ground conditions. It's hard to make these choices or to even understand what they are if you don't feel part of the ecology of place.

If we feel that we belong, it's natural to take on guardianship. There are some wonderful examples of this happening, especially in relation to rivers. Take the Save Windermere campaign spearheaded by the irrepressible Matt Staniek, the Friends of the Wye Coalition, the Ilkley Clean River Group and dozens of others. None of these astonishing campaigners personally owns the rivers but they are moved to act – even to rally the entire country. Such is the power of recognising our place, as Mary Oliver put it, 'in the family of things.'

Amy-Jane Beer, President

Wild Service: Why Nature Needs You Nick Hayes & Jon Moses, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2024



Opportunity to Create Village Wildlife Refuges

Friends of the Dales has been campaigning for many years on the overlooked value of flower-rich roadside verges, with the aim of encouraging councils and parishes to shift to a more biodiversity-positive approach.

We are delighted that this year North Yorkshire Council has launched a scheme for parish councils or village environmental groups to sign up to manage verges in their villages with biodiversity in mind. As of 2024, local parishes or groups can enter into new local working agreements with NYC so that roadside verges are cut at more appropriate times. Over time this could improve biodiversity without compromising safety. All the potential sites are marked on an interactive map hosted by NYC, reached by a link in its new document *Local Road Verge Restoration Guidance*.

This new approach could help parish councils and environmental groups really make a difference to wildlife on the village doorstep. For the verges alongside roads with a speed limit over 40mph the council



Photos courtesy of Kyle Blue

is also trialling a change of approach. It has identified 14 trial verges across the county, with two sites in the Dales on verges between Horton-in-Ribblesdale and Ribbleshead. For these trials, it will issue contracts that have an early cut and only one or two cuts per year, but with all arisings (cuttings) collected and taken away in boxes on the back of the tractor mowers. Baseline surveys and regular monitoring will be done to see any impact on plant species. Safety considerations are still paramount but hopefully these trials will demonstrate that changing the mowing regime in the right way can maximise biodiversity too.

If you live in North Yorkshire and would like more information about how you can influence the mowing of verges in your village, contact Iain Summerson, Asset Management Engineer, at iain.summerson@northyorks.gov.uk. The new NYC guidance is on our website under Campaigns/Living Verges.



Plantlife Partnership Local Campaign

Local Road verge restoration guidance

As many Councils throughout the UK are declaring a climate emergency, there is a growing pressure on local authorities to reassess their green space management to create species-rich grassland habitats. This approach has the potential to improve the biodiversity of our roadside verges to support more wildlife by creating a more balanced landscape while also increasing the number of native wildflowers that have been in decline since the 1970s.

This guidance document has been created in line with the current Plantlife campaign. To help and support parish and town councils, or local groups who want to help manage and maintain roadside verges separately to our existing safety management.

Plantlife have successfully campaigned to highlight the benefits that can be gained by managing our roadside grassland verges for safety and wildlife. For more information you can visit the following documents: [Management plan](#) [Local Verge](#) [The Local Verge Guide](#)

NOTE: not all verges will be suited for individual management plans, each site must be assessed by North Yorkshire Council prior to any works commencing.

This document has been designed to assist with urban highway green management, however it can be used for rural verges following a safety assessment. Please use this [link](#) to identify the green verges within your local area, the areas outlined in blue are currently maintained under the existing policy.

North Yorkshire Council's existing grass cutting policies are focused on safety to provide full visibility for all highway users and have been developed on the following categories:

- Urban, under 40mph speed limit - max 5 cuts per season and include all junction verges, unswitched warning signs and overhead lighting.
- Rural, over 40mph speed limit - max 2 cuts per season and include all junction verges, unswitched warning signs, longitudinal roadlines up to 2.4m, overhead light trees and service hedges which fall outside of the existing safety zone.
- Both policies are currently being reviewed by our partners, but will not necessarily separate the safety assessment of the highway verges.

CAUTION! You must ensure there is a safe distance between the carriageway edge and your chosen site. Roadworks in a road will block off lower verges to a maximum width of 1.5m from the carriageway edge. Roadworks in a road will block off a lower verge to a maximum width of 1.5m from the carriageway edge.

All works should be carried out in a safe manner and in compliance with government documents if required.

[For more information please contact iain.summerson@northyorks.gov.uk](#)

Spreading the Word

Attracting and retaining new members is both a priority and a challenge and so, ever up for trying out fresh ways of reaching new hearts and minds, Membership and Events Officer Victoria, with the help of Administration Assistant Penny, ran our first 'Friends 4 Friends' event. The premise was simple; members brought a non-member friend along to a social event comprising a fun quiz all about our charity, a complimentary lunch (covered by donations on the day) and a three-mile walk.

All who came enjoyed it and several of the invited friends also joined as members. So, all in all, a success, and one we plan to repeat later in the year as an evening event – further details to follow in the summer issue.



Here's what some who came had to say:

'Very informative session, well facilitated. I now have a much better understanding of Friends of the Dales and can be inspired to become an active member.'

'A very informative day that explained in detail and with humour all the aspects of the society. Its passion and enthusiasm in looking after the Dales is impressive.'

'Great session. Very informative and I am now much more aware of the work of Friends of the Dales. I shall be joining as a member and hope to be involved in some of the upcoming events and volunteering opportunities.'

'Very informative with a lovely canal path walk to follow – will indeed be joining Friends of the Dales.'



Climate Change Number One Priority

'None of us will have a business life, none of us will have an economy, if we don't put the planet at the heart of how we think about the next decades. It's a bit existential.'

Baroness Martha Lane Fox, President of British Chambers of Commerce



Earth photo by NASA (Unsplash)

70

the number of years the fossil fuel industry has known about the climate risks of CO₂ emissions and their planetary implications.

(Climate Investigations Centre)

New Benefits for Community Supporters

It's a year since we launched Community Supporters – our membership scheme for businesses and community groups. Following feedback, we have made some key changes to make it even more attractive. If you would like to become part of a group of like-minded businesses and organisations helping to build a sustainable future for the Yorkshire Dales, for a minimum donation of £40 you will receive:

- your logo on our website
- a bimonthly Community Supporters e-newsletter full of business-related environmental news
- copies of this quarterly membership magazine, *Yorkshire Dales Review*
- use of our Community Supporters digital logo

The new scheme runs on a rolling basis for 12 months from the date you join.

To find out more or to join, please email victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk



Photo: Victoria Benn



Letter to the Editor

Birds of Prey not Fair Game



I read with shock, but not surprise, in the winter 2024 issue of the *Review*, of the abhorrent raptor persecution still going on in the Dales. Whether one views grouse moors from the perspective of conservation, climate change or biodiversity, it is well overdue to ban such shoots. Licensing is no answer, either. In this election year we should press all candidates on the issue and hold them to account afterwards.

Tim Hancock, member

Importance of Buying Local

The environmental audit committee has found that the UK's deforestation footprint per tonne of product consumed is 'unsustainable' and higher than that of China. A study by the RSPB and World Wide Fund for Nature found imports of just seven forest-risk commodities – soya, cocoa, palm oil, beef and leather, paper, rubber and timber – required a land footprint overseas of 88% of the size of the UK.



East Meets West

Images of the natural world by Skipton-based Bridget Tempest will be shown alongside paintings on the same theme by Korean artist JongHa Park and his wife Sungsil at Cliffe Castle Museum, Keighley, from 1 June.

The exhibition is the culmination of a 34-year friendship and will explore the similarities and differences between cultures whilst encouraging reflection on the climate crisis.

Within Nature – East and West can be seen from 10am-4pm Tuesday to Friday and 11am-4pm Saturday to Sunday until 1 December.

The Yorkshire Dales National Park: Priorities for its next Seventy Years



Grazing sheep at Ribbleshead. Photo by Sam Robbins (Unsplash)

Postwar governments recognised the need to create visionary legislation prioritising countryside access for all in times of austerity. Vice President Colin Speakman was among the many urban dwellers who benefited. While celebrating the remarkable achievements of the national park movement over the last 75 years, he asks where we should focus our efforts going forward.

Immediately after the Second World War I lived with my family in a terraced house in Salford. Times were tough, memories of the war still vivid. I remember playing out in the nearby bomb sites we took for granted as play areas. The first time I heard, or more accurately read, the words 'Yorkshire Dales' was around 1955, when I saw a poster in the geography room at school, produced by the National Parks Commission. It had an image of Malham Cove.

By my mid-teens I had joined the local cycling club and soon managed to cycle

as far as Bolton Abbey, and eventually even Malham, from Salford, and those words gained meaning. I soon spent every weekend with my girlfriend, later fiancée, Fleur, walking those Dales. The special landscape was, and still is, a constant inspiration to me, a powerful influence on my imagination, on my campaigning work and, above all, on my writing.

As a member of the local Ramblers, I met two inspirational figures, who were deeply involved with the national parks and access movement – Tom Stephenson, creator of the Pennine Way, and Dr Arthur Raistrick, President of the West Riding Ramblers, who in 1981 became a founder member of The Yorkshire Dales Society (now known as Friends of the Dales). Raistrick, a Quaker, had been a close friend of architect John Dower, who lived at Kirkby Malham. Invalided out of the War, Dower was commissioned by Government to write a report on national parks.

Raistrick walked the nine miles or so from his home in Linton to meet Dower and discuss

the document, finally published in 1945 as the Dower Report. This became the driving force behind the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, undoubtedly the greatest piece of environmental and countryside legislation in our history. It established not only our network of national parks, AONBs (now national landscapes) and national nature reserves, but also initiated the massive task of registering and recording all our public rights of way.

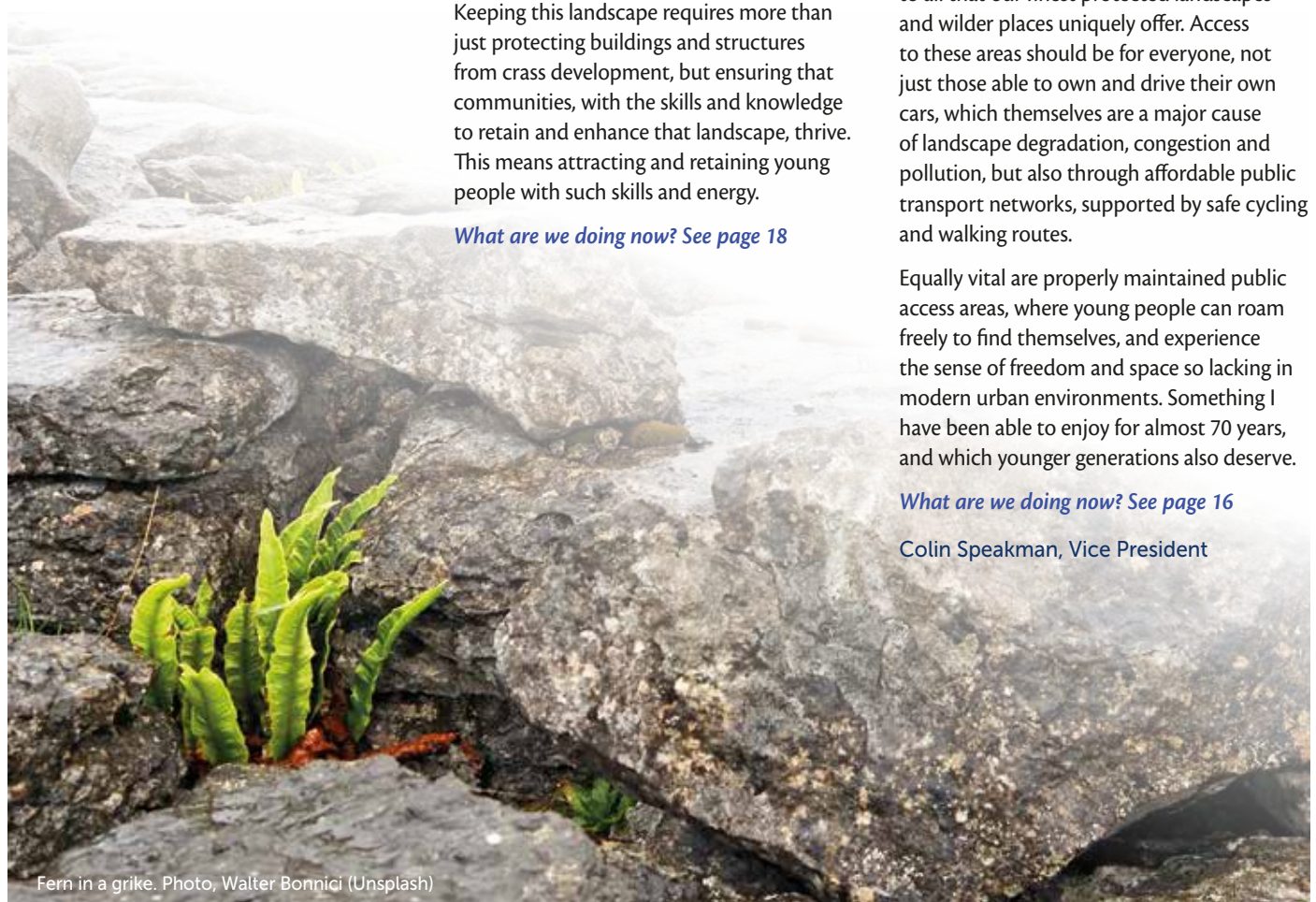
The formation of the Yorkshire Dales National Park in 1954 was only the start of a long and difficult process. It was divided between committees of the North and West Ridings, the boundary being Kidstone Pass. The two committees rarely met and had only two or three members of staff and a minuscule budget. Even when they were combined in 1974, it took another 23 years before an independent park authority was established in 1997, and even longer until access to open country in the Dales became a reality, thanks to the CROW (Countryside and Rights of Way) Act 2000.

Needed More than Ever

Now in my ninth decade I can reflect on how much, despite everything, including constant financial cutbacks, our national park has achieved over those 70 years. But what of the future? Does the 1949 legislation inspired by Raistrick and Dower, now 75 years old, still have relevance?

Indeed it does. Yet in many respects, the future seems far more bleak than in 1949 and 1974. Climate collapse, with many parts of the world becoming uninhabitable because of searing heat, floods and water shortages, is now with us. Just as alarming are the major military conflicts spreading as far-right demagogues seize power with simplistic slogans. Current disputes in the Middle East and Ukraine could so easily escalate to world war.

I would argue that in these deeply worrying times our national parks and protected landscapes have never been more relevant, nor more urgently needed. We are only a small voice in crowded public arenas, and we cannot expect national governments to solve all problems. But here are my own four personal priorities to share for the decades ahead.



Fern in a grike. Photo, Walter Bonnici (Unsplash)

Priority One: Biodiversity and Habitat Retention

The rivers, streams, lakes, caves, peatland moors, meadows, limestone pavements and woodlands of the Yorkshire Dales are sanctuaries for wildlife, birds, small mammals, insects and plants, many species of which are under severe threat from climate change and human environmental degradation and pollution. As well as carbon capture and flood prevention, protected and enhanced upland habitats will offer precious reservoirs and gene pools from which other species than humans, which have an equal right to survive, can re-emerge and reclaim our damaged planet in millennia to come.

What are we doing now?
See pages 4, 9, 10, 12, 14

Priority Two: Conserving a Cultural Landscape

The Yorkshire Dales are a living document of past lives and ways of life, which people of the 21st century desperately need in order to understand their own culture and identity. Keeping this landscape requires more than just protecting buildings and structures from crass development, but ensuring that communities, with the skills and knowledge to retain and enhance that landscape, thrive. This means attracting and retaining young people with such skills and energy.

What are we doing now? See page 18

Priority Three: Human Resilience

Dales people – especially hill farmers – have, over the last two millennia, survived in harsh environments on meagre incomes. They represent a collective wisdom and knowledge, for example in growing food in the uplands, that need to be used at a time of possible food shortages and unavailability of cheap imports because of climate breakdown, political ineptitude and human conflict. Our survival may depend on our ability to rediscover lost skills of the past, but also on new ways of using the land which, far from destroying the cultural landscape, could enhance it. Much of the national park is actually species-poor degraded upland pasture, which could benefit from woodland restoration to host forest grazing or even fruit production, creating new kinds of natural beauty.

What are we doing now? See pages 10, 12, 14

Priority Four: Accessibility

The 5.4 million people living in the Yorkshire region require access to green spaces for their physical health and mental wellbeing, not only within or near our towns and cities, but to all that our finest protected landscapes and wilder places uniquely offer. Access to these areas should be for everyone, not just those able to own and drive their own cars, which themselves are a major cause of landscape degradation, congestion and pollution, but also through affordable public transport networks, supported by safe cycling and walking routes.

Equally vital are properly maintained public access areas, where young people can roam freely to find themselves, and experience the sense of freedom and space so lacking in modern urban environments. Something I have been able to enjoy for almost 70 years, and which younger generations also deserve.

What are we doing now? See page 16

Colin Speakman, Vice President



Listening to Everyone



Charlotte filming content at Janets Foss

Every five years, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority updates the national park management plan. This covers the national park area – rather than being a plan for the authority as an organisation or a development control plan, for example.

Charlotte Mudd, one of our Creative Campaigner volunteers, is employed by the authority as a creative content assistant apprentice and was involved with a video and social media campaign to launch the first part of this consultation. Read Charlotte's perspective below.

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan sets out six long-term ambitions backed up by a five-year programme of specific objectives, which will be delivered by many different local organisations.

The aim of the video was to engage a cross-section of society with the creation of an updated management plan and to collect opinions via an online survey (which closed on 26 February 2024). Everyone has a different perspective and we wanted to gather the views and 'priorities' of people who care about the Yorkshire Dales National Park, including visitors and people who live and/or work here.

In the video, we showcase the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park to highlight why this place is so special and why people should have their say about the priorities for the future.

I made a film location list featuring the best examples of each of the special qualities, such as Malham for limestone scenery and the famous Gaping Gill – one of the largest caverns and home to the highest unbroken underground waterfall in Britain.

We worked with independent film company Film on the Brain to capture the footage. Digital Communications Officer Wendy McDonnell and I accompanied the filmographer around the Dales helping to direct shots.

In the narration of the video we touch on the challenges the area is facing. I voiced the narration – I tried my best to pronounce my 't's, which isn't natural in my Dales accent.

When creating and planning the promotion of the content we focused on trying to reach the widest possible audience, but we particularly wanted to hear from traditionally under-represented groups like young people, people from surrounding urban communities and people from minority ethnic backgrounds. Social media is a good way to do this.

For this reason, in recent years the national park authority has expanded its social media presence and it now has a strong following, particularly on Instagram.

We decided to create a video to support the survey as this has also become an increasingly popular medium for people to consume their news and other content online and is often shared, which improves reach. We broadcast the video on all our social media channels including Instagram and TikTok.

As a younger person living in the Dales, an opportunity to have my say on the decisions that are made by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority is very important to me, as they affect me, my life and my future directly in many ways. This consultation allows everyone to have their say.

For me, affordable housing and supporting local businesses including farmers is very important to sustain local communities and the culture of the people who look after the Yorkshire Dales National Park every day and have done for generations. We are also in a climate emergency so big decisions need to be made regarding nature and the environment, and we need to support farmers and landowners with the funding and support to make these changes.

Charlotte Mudd, Creative Campaigner



Charlotte and Wendy down Gaping Gill

For more information, and to view the video, visit the national park authority's website and social media platforms

@YorkshireDalesnp

www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/about/national-park-management-plan/

Friends of the Dales is responding to the management plan consultation as it progresses through 2024, and we will provide updates on our website and in our monthly e-news.

Celebrating a Dales Icon



Leigh Weston watching real curlew amongst sculptures at Malham. Photo courtesy Ann Shadrake

With curlew now one of the UK's most critically endangered species, Friends of the Dales Creative Campaigners – our group of creative environmentalists aged 20-30 – have taken action to make this year's World Curlew Day on 21 April really count.

Joined by friends and colleagues, including some from Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust and the national park authority, in the region of 20 foraged and recycled wire life-sized curlew were made at a recent workshop – thanks to the expert guidance of Dales-based artist Lesley Knevitt.

Our curfew* of crafted curlew will be making its way to Malham for a one-day outdoor installation and awareness-raising event on Sunday 14 April and we invite all members to come and see it if they are walking nearby that day. The curlew will be placed in the field alongside the pathway that links Malham village to Janet's Foss (by kind agreement of farmers Neil Heseltine and Leigh Weston) and will be supported by a range of information and activities for people to engage with and take home.

The aim of the event is to raise awareness of the bird's endangered status, whilst explaining the things we can all do to help improve its survival rate. The team will also be handing out instructions on how to make your own wire curlew, so you can create your own sculpture for your garden or community space – the perfect way to keep sharing the message about this incredibly beautiful, yet incredibly vulnerable, bird.



Creative Campaigner Ruth Garrett with some of the curlew



Lesley Knevitt demonstrating technique to Fiona Busfield from YDMT



Creative Campaigner Jonathan Cunningham with the curlew he made



Trustee Ken Humphris making a curlew

*the name for a group of curlew

Delivering at Scale



Ribblesdale Farmers Group joined Clapham Curlew Cluster and the RSPB for a farm tour and presentation on management of wading birds at Lawkland Hall Farm last June. Photo courtesy of Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust

We ask a lot of our farmers. They are in the front line in the battle against climate breakdown and biodiversity loss but we still depend on them to feed the nation. Yet, by collaborating on a landscape level, they are proving it's possible to meet all these priorities and still have a viable business.

No one had heard of farmer clusters ten years ago. Now there are over 110 of them, with five covering parts of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. There are also 12 northern flood management groups, four of which cover the catchments of the Swale, Ure, upper Wharfe and Lune.

It all began in 2012 when the government allocated £7.5m for the creation of a dozen nature improvement areas in England. One of the schemes, in the Marlborough Downs, was led by farmers. There are now many similar groups across the South. These farmer clusters bring together land custodians with the help of advisors or facilitators, so that they can deliver greater benefits for soil, water and wildlife – whilst also increasing the resilience of their businesses.

So far there have been relatively few in Yorkshire and the North East but that could soon change with the announcement that the National Trust has secured Defra funding for its Heart of the Dales project, which covers a large area around Malham Tarn and upper Wharfedale.

The initial grant will pay for it to plan how landscape recovery can be delivered on challenging terrain with a bespoke approach to each farm. Eventually it could result in more tree planting, improvements

to water quality and steps to mitigate the effects of climate change and improve biodiversity such as peatland restoration and species reintroductions. But the initiative is just as much about increasing the economic resilience of the farming community as it is about environmental sustainability.

The report *A Climate for Change: Adaptation and the National Trust* highlighted how the organisation has already worked with Darnbrook Farm tenant James Hall to restore peatland and plant 75,000 trees and shrubs in steep-sided gills.

Strength in Numbers

Elsewhere in the Dales farmers like Tim in Tebay are taking matters into their own hands. When Tebay flooded during Storm Desmond in 2015, he installed 116 large, leaky dams as part of a natural flood management initiative monitored by Lancaster University and the Lune Rivers Trust.

His farm is carbon neutral, with almost half of its energy coming from solar panels and turbines. He has planted 15,000 trees and reinstated hedgerows, using timber for stakes and posts from nearby Grizedale in south Cumbria and sawing it on the farm. This enables him to use more durable larch, most of which is not treated. Two hundred acres have been converted to woodland pasture and he has carried out extensive peatland restoration.

Tim is one of seven members of the **Orton Fells Farm Cluster** featured in the winter 2024 issue of the *Review*, which received a Farming in

Protected Landscapes (FiPL) grant of £42,120 in 2021 to set up the group and pay for a part-time facilitator, speakers and visits around the county. It is now carrying out a two-year study investigating how different management practices affect soil structure and health, with support from Cumbria Wildlife Trust and Lancaster University.

The **Swaledale and Wensleydale Environmental Farmers** co-operative promotes sustainability by restoring, protecting and enhancing peatland, increasing biodiversity, contributing to cleaner water and storage and working towards net zero carbon by 2040. But equally importantly, being part of a collective gives its members more clout when bargaining for payment for goods and services supporting these aims.

The **Three Dales project** is a consortium of farmers, landowners and conservation organisations led by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and aiming to restore a large upland area in the west of the national park, creating habitats for species like black grouse, curlew and ring ouzels. Meanwhile the **Heggs-Castle Cluster** in Arkengarthdale, featured in the summer 2023 *Review*, has a particular focus on planting woodland and minimising the impact of heavy rainfall.

The four flood management groups with members in the Dales focus on initiatives that not only slow run-off in wet weather but also help to protect threatened habitats and species such as the red squirrel, waders and black grouse.

But working together also provides opportunities to pool collective wisdom and learn from each other. For example, the **Ribblesdale**

Farmers Group meets about once a month, usually listening to guest speakers in winter with on-site visits in summer. But crucially it acts as a catalyst for change by helping to build trust and mutual respect between members and bodies like the Ribble Rivers Trust, Natural England and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

Environmental and economic sustainability are often presented as being mutually exclusive priorities. Nothing could be further from the case. By working together, farmers can help fight climate change, create sizeable networks of nature refuges and run profitable businesses that are the bedrock of thriving, resilient communities.

Lynn Leadbeatter, volunteer

www.farmerclusters.com

www.ortonfellsfarmcluster.co.uk

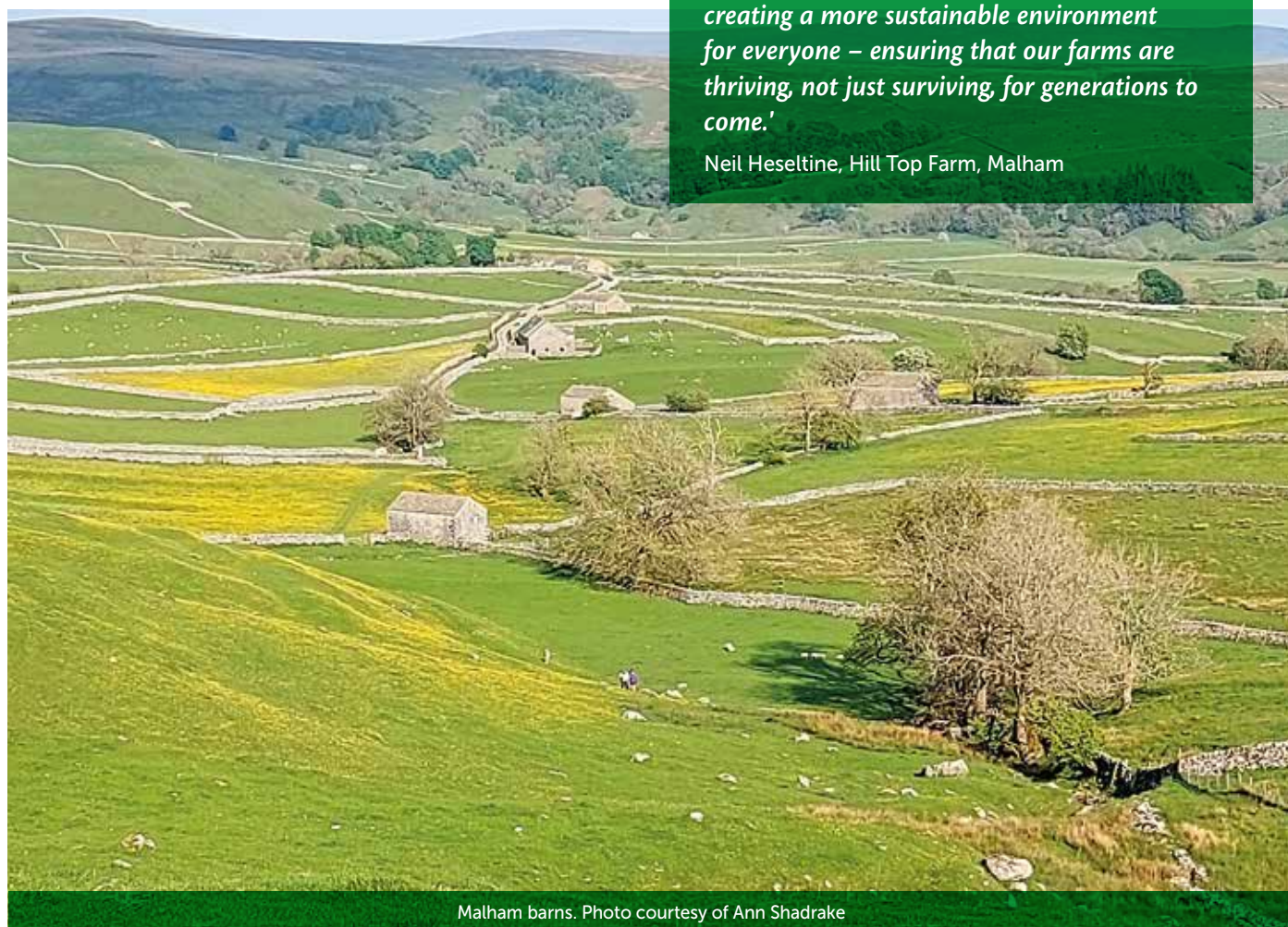
www.swef.org.uk

www.heggscastlecluster.org

'No two farms are the same in the Dales, so it's essential that we're able to work collaboratively with landowners like the National Trust to find nature-based solutions for the challenges brought about by climate change.'

'Landscape recovery is essentially about creating a more sustainable environment for everyone – ensuring that our farms are thriving, not just surviving, for generations to come.'

Neil Heseltine, Hill Top Farm, Malham



Malham barns. Photo courtesy of Ann Shadrake

Having our Cake and Eating It



Researchers Robyn Wrigley and Cesca Dávill from the University of Leeds monitoring soil properties at Woodland Trust's Snaizeholme project

Professor Dominic Spracklen argues that we don't have to choose between initiatives that promote nature recovery and tackle climate change, and economic imperatives like food security and supporting farming businesses: the same solutions can meet all these priorities.

We are facing a climate emergency and a biodiversity crisis. In England, one in ten species faces extinction. It is also a crucial time for farming. Many farmers, particularly those in the uplands, face uncertainties around their future incomes. Climate extremes are intensifying: droughts and floods create challenges for nature, farming and local communities. The scale of the issues can make us feel powerless. With so many challenges we feel forced to set priorities and identify what is most important. Sometimes this can create or exacerbate existing divisions. Do we support jobs or nature, farming or net zero?

Identifying priorities is an important step – the real test is finding ways to work together to address multiple challenges simultaneously. What are the win-win solutions that will bolster sustainable farm businesses while tackling the climate emergency and halting further declines in nature?

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Vision for Nature Recovery provides us with a new and ambitious vision that can help us address many of the challenges we are facing simultaneously.

Restoring a nature-rich environment across our national parks yields many benefits: arresting the decline in nature, curbing river pollution and reducing downstream flooding, sequestering carbon and combating climate change. Compensating farmers and landowners for delivering these benefits alongside producing food can help create resilient and profitable farm businesses. The work to restore nature creates new job opportunities, particularly for young people. A nature-rich environment enriches the lives of both locals and visitors.

Although a lot is known about the benefits provided by nature, there is still much to learn. I am working with a team of researchers from the universities of Leeds and York to investigate how restoring nature can provide benefits within the national park. We are monitoring the impacts of two different landscape recovery projects in the Dales, Wild Ingleborough and the Woodland Trust's Snaizeholme project, as well as projects in the Lake District National Park.

We have installed temperature sensors to monitor how planting trees and creating woodland can alter the local microclimate.

We have shown that during heatwaves it can be five to 10°C cooler under trees and woodlands compared to nearby areas. This provides a vital escape for nature, livestock and people during heatwaves that are likely to be more frequent and more extreme in the coming years. Hot off the press, a paper we have just published shows that creating new woodlands reduces the flood peak during large storms by as much as 15% (see Monger et al, 2024). This could make the crucial difference between a community or business being flooded or not.

Taking it to the Next Level

There are already some really good examples of farmers in the Dales working to deliver farming alongside nature recovery. But a big question remains: how will recovery of nature be scaled up more widely across the park?

New agricultural support schemes will hopefully provide increased support for farmers to restore nature, although there is still too much uncertainty around timings, availability and complexity. Defra's Landscape Recovery scheme will support the most ambitious nature recovery, backed by the largest payments and secure for at least 20 years. This could be an important way to support farm businesses to work hand in hand with restoring nature. Crucial to these schemes will be ongoing monitoring, embedded from the start of the projects to demonstrate they deliver.

There are now three Landscape Recovery projects in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The Three Dales project is a consortium of farmers, landowners and conservation organisations led by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. It aims to restore a large area of the western Yorkshire Dales uplands, creating habitats for a range of species including black grouse, curlew and ring ouzels. In the latest round of Landscape Recovery, two more projects were selected in the park: Heart of the Dales and the Ure Dales. Denton Park Estate, just outside the park, has also started. These projects provide an exciting opportunity to work together at scale to find solutions that benefit people, nature and climate.

The Upper Duddon Landscape Recovery project in the Lake District National Park. Photo courtesy of Jess Wilson



How do we make sure that farmers are at the core of efforts to support nature? I help lead the Upper Duddon Landscape Recovery project, bringing together farmers, landowners and environmental organisations for landscape-scale nature recovery in Cumbria. Paddy, one of the farmers in our project and our Project Manager, is maybe one of the least likely project managers you can imagine. He used to make a living through combining farming with working on building jobs around Cumbria. Now he fits project management around his farming. This

has multiple benefits. It makes sure that the project is literally 'farmer-led' – discussions with other farmers on the project happen during farm activities such as gathering rather than via email. It also helps build trust between the different partners and helps reduce potential tension between farming and nature.

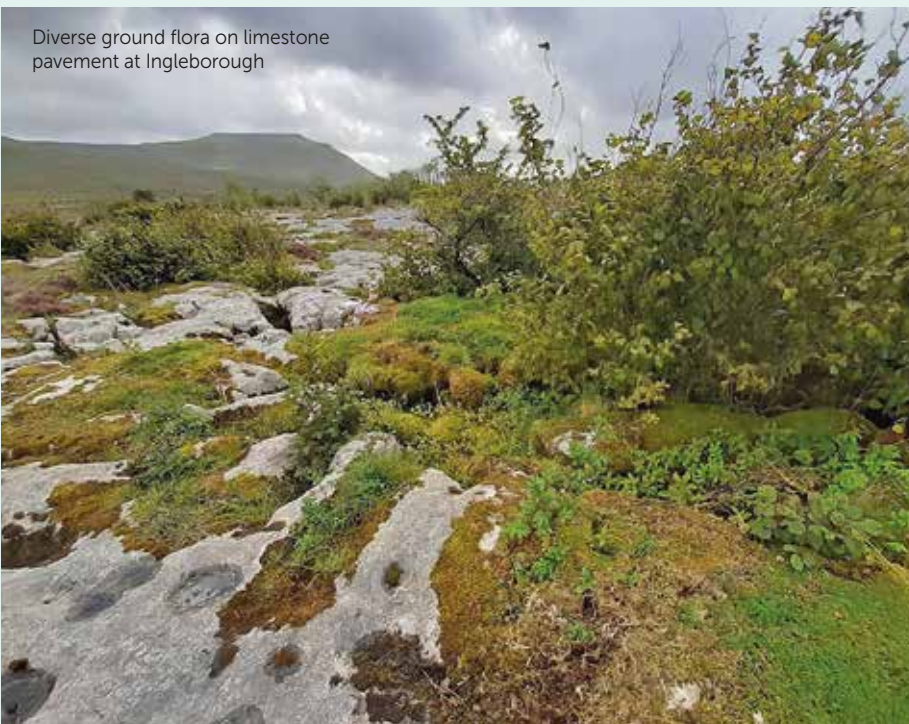
The media likes to pit farmers against conservationists, food security against nature. This isn't helpful and doesn't match what is happening in our national parks. When we work together, we often find a lot of common

ground and common priorities. Working together to find solutions that support nature, people and our climate is vital to the future of our national parks.

[Professor Dominick Spracklen, University of Leeds](#)

Find out more about how farmers are working with conservation organisations in the Dales on page 10. Long-standing Friends of the Dales volunteer Anthony Bradley gives his take on the way forward for farms in the national park on page 14.

Diverse ground flora on limestone pavement at Ingleborough



Creating new wood pasture, like here at Wild Ingleborough, is supported through Countryside Stewardship schemes



Meeting Many Demands



Anthony, at Mearbeck Farm. Photos courtesy of Ann Shadrake

Farmers are being asked to produce food while at the same time acting as environmental custodians and providing recreational opportunities and access to the outdoors. Anthony Bradley explains how restoring the original ecological processes of the Dales can help them balance all these priorities.

One wag in the farming press once defined success in farming as 'still being in business next year'. That clearly qualifies as a 'priority'. However, we have a centralised and metropolitan government, which seems to echo President Eisenhower when he said: 'Farming looks mighty easy when your plough is a pencil and you're a thousand miles from a cornfield.' In short, we are being asked to not only produce food and fibre but also to mitigate the effects of fossil fuel use and the consequent damage to the climate. Add in the moves likewise for biodiversity, recreation, right to roam etc and the old-school definition of a farmer being the producer of food and fibre seems a little dated, to say the least. All the while government support for agriculture is being reduced/abolished. 'Multitasking' hardly covers it.

So I suggest our actual priority is to produce food profitably without government support and replace lost biodiversity to offset others' ongoing environmental damage increasingly with private finance. Both priorities to be achieved with as near zero fossil fuel

use as possible as well as fixing the issues caused by the legacy of chemistry-driven agriculture.

This feels like a big, if not overwhelming, prospect but there is 'good' news. I can scarcely pick up a copy of the farming press without there being another story about how a particular agricultural sector is reducing its use of machinery and chemistry and increasingly incorporating livestock. There is a quiet return to 'mixed' farming, which is gradually replacing the mechanical movement of soil and using cover crops grazed by ruminants.

The effects of this on depleted soils and their crops is all positive. Less chemistry, more biology, less mechanical operations and the sequestering of carbon into soils. There are positive improvements to the bottom line as well. In effect, livestock is reducing the use of fossil fuels, chemicals and damage to the environment. Better still for Dales farmers is the improved demand for ruminants to be sold into arable areas.

Closer to home the way farmers are managing their livestock and forage is changing too. Diversity is being reintroduced to the make-up of the forage being grown. There is the planting of 'multi-species' leys. These will include many different species of grass, legumes and herbs. Increasingly these will be grown without fertiliser – indeed, not using nitrogen fertiliser assists legumes to thrive and extract nitrogen from the atmosphere for free. On the downside some of the stewardship schemes, whilst supporting these changes, want further changes based on dates. An example is preset livestock exclusion or mowing dates. The problem is that the weather hasn't read the calendar. There is talk of these schemes moving to 'outcomes' rather than process or calendar dates. That should be a priority.

There is, though, perhaps another change to a farmer's priorities. In addition to the producing of food, land is being sought for biodiversity net gain and tree planting. This seems to me to be a conundrum. If developers cannot build without trashing the environment, I am not sure I as a farmer should be asked to clear up their mess and/or host their offsets. I already have my own job, after all. I suspect ultimately money will overcome the misgivings.

But the following quote I think came from Defra: 'Too often production methods have been at the expense of nature rather than being symbiotic. We need farmers and other land managers to improve the natural environment alongside food production with environmental goods and services playing a key role in all farm businesses.'

Harnessing Natural Processes

In my neck of the woods we are ably assisted by the Ribble Rivers Trust and the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust in the Ribblesdale Farmers Group to achieve those aims. That group grew out of the Long Preston Wet Grassland project. We are looking at biodiversity net gain as well as the traditional stewardship schemes to expand that work. It is hoped it will extend the work already done whilst helping us farm as well — ie 'win-win' scenarios.

What we also have is the growth of managed grazing regimes. So 'rotational, mob, paddock and holistic grazing' are a part of the agricultural lexicon unimaginable even a few years ago. There is some guff expressed around this but the Defra use of the word 'symbiotic' is

key here. Both grass and other grazed plants co-evolved with grazing ruminants. They also co-evolved with predators, which included humans. This means ruminants are predisposed to form herds or flocks for their own protection or safety in numbers. They had to continually move as they left behind their muck, trampled vegetation, moved to fresh grazing and tried to stay ahead of the predators.

So as farmers with domesticated livestock we can mimic that co-evolved behaviour. That is, I can put lots of stock on a small area for a short time before moving them swiftly to a fresh grazing area. Here in the Dales we have replaced the wild predators with stone walls, hedges and sometimes electric fences. Effectively the human place in the system is also symbiotic.

What then are the priorities for ruminant agriculture in the Dales? I think we will still grow grass but it will be a more diverse ley. We will include non-grass species such as clover and herbs. That might mean in some places more old-school hay meadows with the associated increase in wildlife both above and below ground. There will be buffer zones next to watercourses to exclude livestock. These will become wildlife habitats in their own right. In their turn they will link to other areas with livestock exclusion for various reasons.

It doesn't take Einstein to work out that wildlife habitat will attract more wildlife, which will attract more and more diversity. The livestock we keep will be a symbiotic part of that increasingly diverse farmed landscape we manage. We will use fewer inputs and ideally none based on fossil fuel. Our carbon use will be what we can capture via photosynthesis. Our nitrogen use will be from legumes. The additional elements will be cycled and recycled by an increasing diversity of fungi in the soil, which will also be adding more carbon to that very same soil.

Looking at the payments for 'wood pasture' in some 'schemes' there could very well be a priority at Chez Bradley for some more tree planting. I will also keep opening and closing gates and moving stock to pastures new as a surrogate but symbiotic pack of predators.

Anthony Bradley, farmer and volunteer

Find out more about Ribblesdale Farmers Group and similar Dales networks on page 10.



Mid-summer cutting on a 'traditionally managed' meadow can help promote a mix of wildflowers and grasses. July, upper Wharfedale.



Living Access: Making the Case for

For too long now, people in the Dales have been left high and dry by the lack of bus and train services. Trustee Jonathan Riley explains why we are redoubling our efforts to change this in 2024.

Our Living Access campaign is pressing for a comprehensive and effective public transport network in the Yorkshire Dales to be available seven days per week for residents and visitors. The national park authority recognised this last year with the publication of a bold new statement, which highlights the need for urgent substantial improvements to the network for social, economic and environmental reasons – with the latter of particular importance in the context of climate breakdown.

We are supporting the national park authority by working with our subsidiary organisation, Dales & Bowland CIC (DalesBus), to campaign for the funding needed to continue its services and see our vision for sustainable transport in the Dales come to fruition. We have raised the profile of the issue through several pieces in the Yorkshire media and direct engagement with North Yorkshire Council and West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

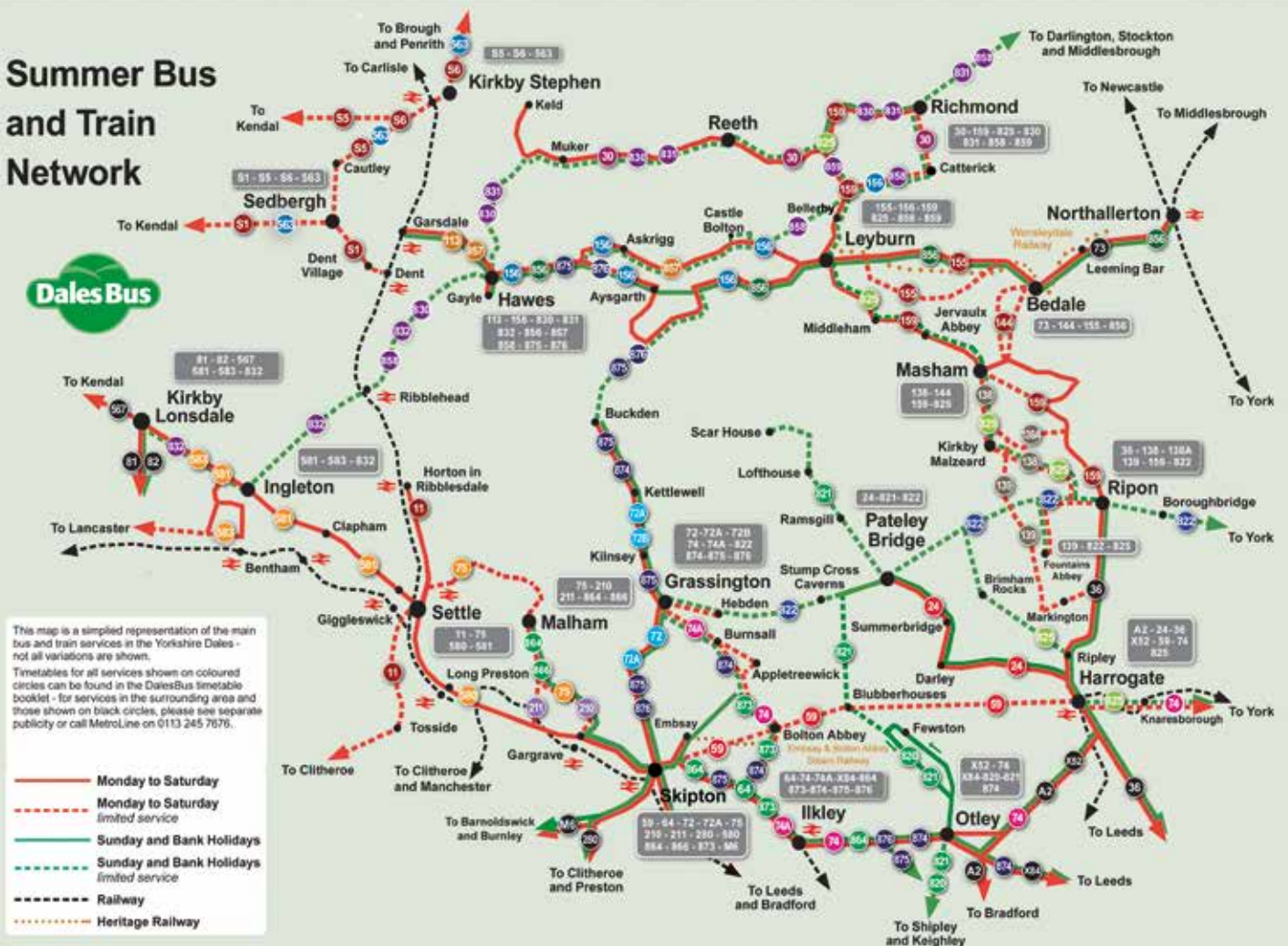
With this article we launch a new Transport Policy, in which we set out our support for achieving net zero by 2034 and carbon negative by 2040, by reducing private car usage, decarbonising road vehicles, increasing active travel for short journeys and increasing the percentage of passengers using buses and trains.

The situation across the Dales is severe. Public transport provides only basic coverage while car travel is dominant and the single largest contributor to the carbon emissions footprint of the national park. Whilst the proportion of visitors coming by car is falling, it is still above 80% – but with up to 25% of the population in North and West Yorkshire having no access to a car, lack of public transport is perpetuating issues of social exclusion, so that visiting or working in the Dales is not an option for many people.

Car ownership levels in the national park are higher than average, often because the lack of public transport means there is no alternative. Young people tell us that it is near impossible to conceive of living in the Dales and being able to travel for education or work, never mind the additional barrier of lack of affordable housing.

The impact of this is felt by many across the Dales and in neighbouring

Summer Bus and Train Network



Sustainable Public Transport

locations, particularly at Malham, which has been described as an abysmal policy failure, with very high visitor demand continuing to cause many problems. The lack of a decent weekday bus service makes it difficult for those living in the area to travel outside to work without a car and impossible for visitors to have a day trip using public transport. DalesBus has done a great job of providing a better weekend service despite the former North Yorkshire Council refusing to provide funding. We hope to get this changed, with the new combined authority putting in place proper public transport to Malham and many other locations across the Dales.

The rail network also plays a key role in supporting more public transport journeys but we believe changes are needed in order to make train services like Settle-Carlisle more useful for travel to and from work in neighbouring towns and cities rather than just for scenic journeys. More can be made of this line along with the Bentham Line and adjacent main lines, offering nodal points that could feed the national park with connected bus services. We are already engaging with Northern Trains to seek improvements to the timetables to enable better connections, thereby offering the decent public transport options that people tell us they want for travelling in the Dales.

A Critical Time

We have an opportunity to secure these much-needed improvements to access in the Yorkshire Dales in 2024. The new North Yorkshire Council, which is responsible for public transport across the national park and beyond, is required to produce a Local Transport Plan this year. People in the county will also be given the opportunity to elect a mayor, who will have wider delegated powers for transport than the old county council. In the short term there is also the prospect of bus services in the Yorkshire Dales benefitting from a further tranche of Bus Service Improvement Grant from the Department for Transport.



Photo: settle-carlisle.co.uk

The national park authority cannot solve this alone as it is not the body responsible for public transport but under the recent Levelling Up and Regeneration Act local authorities, including North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and Westmorland & Furness councils and West Yorkshire Combined Authority, now have a duty to further the purposes of the national park. Dialogue with the Dales, be it the national park authority itself or us, is positive and we are also hearing positive noises about the Local Transport Plan and from mayoral candidates as to the higher priority going to be given to improving public transport.

We would really like to hear your stories and views about the state of transport in the Dales and examples of where improvements would make a real difference to people's lives and choices.

Jonathan Riley, trustee

See our new transport policy at www.friendsofthedales.org.uk/policies

Even now, it's possible to make long-distance journeys to and from the Yorkshire Dales if you are prepared to make the effort. Find out how Creative Campaigner Bess Holt travelled all the way to Stockholm by train on page 19, and read her tips for anyone else who wants to take a foreign holiday without incurring an excessive carbon footprint.



DalesBus at Ribbleshead. Photo courtesy of DalesBus.org

North Yorkshire's Missing Generation

Friends of the Dales is supporting young people to develop their creative campaigning skills but Vice President Colin Speakman asks whether the needs of this age group are being overlooked by decision-makers.

Ripon's magnificent cathedral is a spiritual and cultural focal point for the whole of the Yorkshire Dales. Its modern episcopal area, part of the Diocese of Leeds, covers a huge area of North Yorkshire, even extending into parts of Lancashire, Cumbria and Durham, from Harrogate and Skipton on the boundaries of West Yorkshire into the Forest of Bowland, Wensleydale and Swaledale.

But the cathedral's involvement with the life and communities within the diocese extends well beyond that of its many Church of England parishes and parishioners. Established in 2017 under the leadership of the Dean of Ripon, the Very Reverend John Dobson, the Ripon Cathedral Rural Forum has welcomed representatives of local authorities, government agencies and the voluntary sector – including Friends of the Dales. The forum 'seeks to bring together and facilitate conversation amongst those with an interest in rural affairs' with a series of seminars and discussions in which a wide range of interest groups are invited to take part.

Topics recently discussed include the future of hill farming, rural housing, transport and rural isolation. The forum has no power as such to change events or to take decisions about the future, but exists to facilitate an exchange of ideas, recognising that rural issues too often get drowned out in national and even local government debates, which focus on urban issues. As the forum recognises, shared experience can create ideas and suggest solutions, which participants can then take back to their parent organisations to be applied by those who have the resources to do so. Ideas have a power and life of their own.

The topic for the highly successful forum held at the cathedral in November lay especially close to core concerns expressed by Friends of the Dales' own Creative Campaigners: The Missing Generation – How to Attract and Retain Young People in North Yorkshire. This, of course, includes most of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and all of the Nidderdale National Landscape.

Generation Gap

Dean John presented the seminar with a bleak statistic from the North Yorkshire Rural Commission. Forty-five thousand young people are 'missing' from North Yorkshire's rural population, compared with the number national statistical averages would indicate should be present.

A series of excellent presentations, with representatives from Craven College, Yorkshire Agricultural Society and both the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors national park authorities, explored why this is happening. But speakers also indicated some remarkable projects in terms of training and apprenticeships in rural and green technology skills, which were reversing these trends. Significantly, however, several of the keynote talks were given and discussions led by young people, all offering first-hand and peer group experience of the barriers now forcing younger people to migrate out of rural North Yorkshire, or not return to their home areas after gaining professional qualifications.

The barriers are familiar – key amongst them being lack of affordable housing with so much of the housing stock in areas like the Dales being second homes or holiday lets. There are also insufficient suitable secure employment opportunities, especially for those with higher qualifications. Crucial too is lack of essential services, especially public transport to access jobs, even in nearby market towns.

Without this 'missing generation' the Yorkshire Dales will increasingly become a large retirement home for the wealthy, old and grey, who, as they themselves become infirm and perhaps unable to drive, will no longer be able to access the local services they need to survive.

But the young people engaged with the forum in Ripon indicated that, providing the present generation of politicians, service providers, industry leaders and senior managers listen to what they are saying, there is a brighter, greener future ahead. It is in all our interests to take heed of their findings and for Friends of the Dales to support the work of our young Creative Campaigners to deal with the many challenges that lie ahead.

Colin Speakman, Vice President



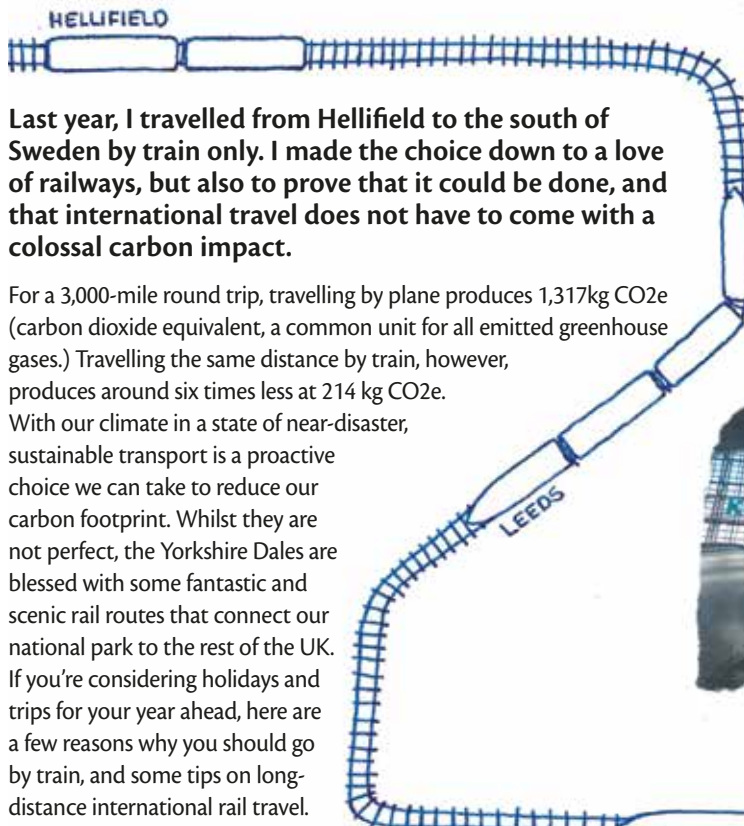
Trainee mechanics working on a tractor.
Photo courtesy of Craven College (Creative Commons)



An exhibitor at the Cheese Festival at the Wensleydale Creamery.
Photo courtesy of Stephen Garnett photography



Way to Go



Last year, I travelled from Hellifield to the south of Sweden by train only. I made the choice down to a love of railways, but also to prove that it could be done, and that international travel does not have to come with a colossal carbon impact.

For a 3,000-mile round trip, travelling by plane produces 1,317kg CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent, a common unit for all emitted greenhouse gases.) Travelling the same distance by train, however, produces around six times less at 214 kg CO₂e. With our climate in a state of near-disaster, sustainable transport is a proactive choice we can take to reduce our carbon footprint. Whilst they are not perfect, the Yorkshire Dales are blessed with some fantastic and scenic rail routes that connect our national park to the rest of the UK. If you're considering holidays and trips for your year ahead, here are a few reasons why you should go by train, and some tips on long-distance international rail travel.

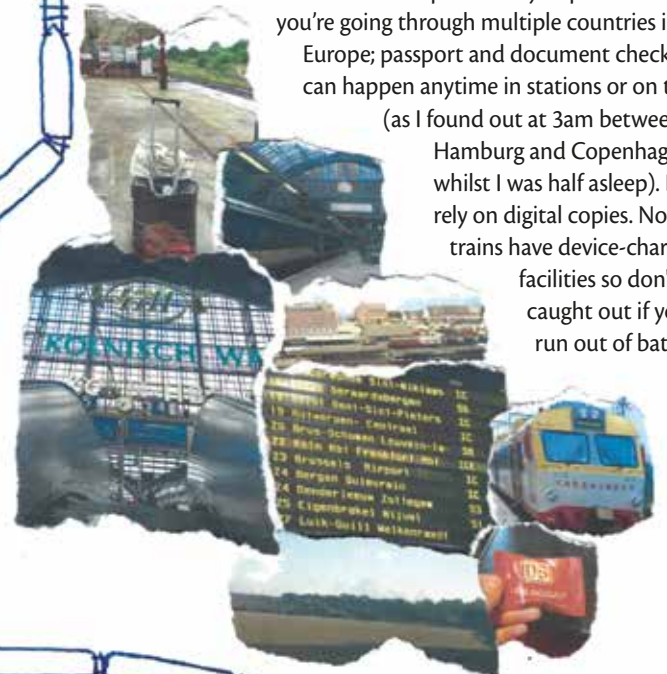
- No extra hidden costs for luggage. Eurostar has a pretty generous baggage allowance that doesn't come at any extra cost to your ticket. Make sure to label all your luggage with your name; on lots of European trains this is mandatory. An address might be a good idea too in case you misplace anything.



- Much more comfort and leg room than on a budget/mid-range airline. An upgrade to first class between Brussels and Copenhagen, which is a great option for long-distance journeys, cost me just €5 extra. Take an eye mask and earplugs for when you need a nap – your future self will thank you.

- Make a plan before you set off in case of delayed trains and missed connections. Rail travel is not all perfect, but putting together a little notebook of alternative trains and hotels near the station will give you options and more peace of mind should the worst happen.

- Print off all your tickets, travel documents, hotel bookings and a trip itinerary and keep them safe but accessible. This is particularly important if you're going through multiple countries in Europe; passport and document checks can happen anytime in stations or on trains (as I found out at 3am between Hamburg and Copenhagen whilst I was half asleep). Don't rely on digital copies. Not all trains have device-charging facilities so don't get caught out if you run out of battery.



Words and illustration by Bess Holt



Travelling by rail gives you a much better appreciation of the journey and distance you go. There's a near instant gratification with short-haul flights: two hours between cities thousands of miles away. But with rolling views out of big train windows you can appreciate it, switch off and read, write, draw, listen to music or chat. It's not often nowadays that we allow ourselves to sit and just be, and a train journey can let you do just that.

Bess Holt, Creative Campaigner

Find out more about how we are working to improve rail and bus services in the Dales on page 16.

Springtime in the Dales

Springtime in the Dales brings us joy as grasses, flowers and trees burst into new life whilst retaining beautiful seedheads from late winter. Jonny Cunningham, one of our cohort of young Creative Campaigners, regularly explores the landscapes of Ingleborough National Nature Reserve (NNR) and other important habitats in the limestone dales. Using his smartphone to capture the tiny flowers and seedheads that others might pass by, Jonny shares some of his favourite images and botanical knowledge. Working from home using simple techniques that anyone could try, Jonny also creates stunning linocuts and prints.

All the species on these pages were photographed at Ingleborough National Nature Reserve and Jonny's notes explain their habitats and why they are special in the Dales.



Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)

Found on limestone areas, hedgerows, chalky downland and woodland.

A late-budding tree in spring and an early faller in autumn because of being situated at higher altitudes, the ash tree's features are most noticeable in summer and winter. This species has been in decline due to ash dieback, a foreign fungal disease first discovered in 1992, and this can be seen dramatically in Ribblesdale. It is now even more important to celebrate this species.



Barren Strawberry (*Potentilla sterilis*)

Found on limestone pavement and grassland, hedge bottoms and open woodland.

The barren strawberry can be found abundantly in the fissures and grikes of limestone clints amongst mosses and blue moor grass but can go unnoticed because of its size. It is a lesser-known, non-edible fruiting relative of the wild strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*), which flowers earlier and is also common.



Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*)

Found on scree slopes and dry wasteland.

A common plant seen in nature reserves like disused railway quarries, where history has been reclaimed by nature because the soil is covered in scree. At first glance, the flower looks like a daisy and the seedhead depicted looks like one from the dandelion (*Taraxacum*) genus, which can confuse botanists.

Blue Moor Grass

(*Sesleria caerulea*)

See main image, left.

Found on limestone grassland.

A unique species in the Dales due to its preferred habitat being limestone pavements, blue moor grass is a welcome sign of spring because its blue-purple colour appears nestled on the limestone clints whilst the winter weather is still adjusting to spring.



Early Purple Orchid

(*Orchis mascula*)

Found on limestone grassland and ancient woodland.

An indicator of ancient woodland such as Oxenber Woods near Austwick, the early purple orchid is one of the first orchids to bloom in the year alongside English bluebells and primroses, covering areas with its purple beauty.



Hare's-tail Cottongrass

(*Eriophorum vaginatum*)

Found on blanket bogs, areas of concentrated peatland that experience high rainfall and cool temperatures. They can at first appear bleak and lifeless but are actually species-rich.

Hare's-tail cottongrass is an obvious sight amongst very rare blanket bogs and an indicator of the transition to acid grassland. Ribblesdale has some of the best examples of blanket bogs. Hare's-tail cottongrass and its associated habitat have suffered from burning, drainage and pollution. Global warming causes the top layers of peat and vegetation to dry out, making the perfect conditions for wildfires, which decimate the local flora and fauna. The rate of erosion is also increased dramatically once the top layer of vegetation is burned off. Therefore, it is important not to light your own fire and then leave it in this habitat.

Jonny Cunningham, Creative Campaigner

Further reading:

The Nature of Britain, Alan Titchmarsh. BBC Books 2007, ISBN: 978-0-56-349398-3

Wild Flowers and Where to Find Them in Northern England: Northern Limestone, Laurie Fallows. Frances Lincoln 2003, ISBN: 0-7112-2030-1

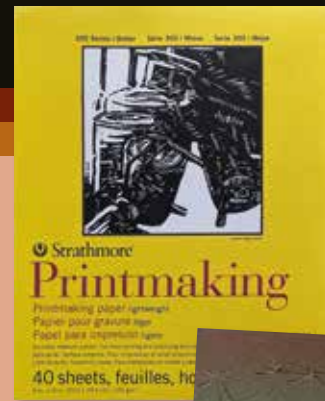
Alpines of the Yorkshire Dales. Peter and Ruth Kerr, 2021

Websites:

www.ywt.org.uk

www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/about/wildlife/habitats/moorland/blanket-bogs/

www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk/our-purpose/reducing-the-risk-of-wildfire

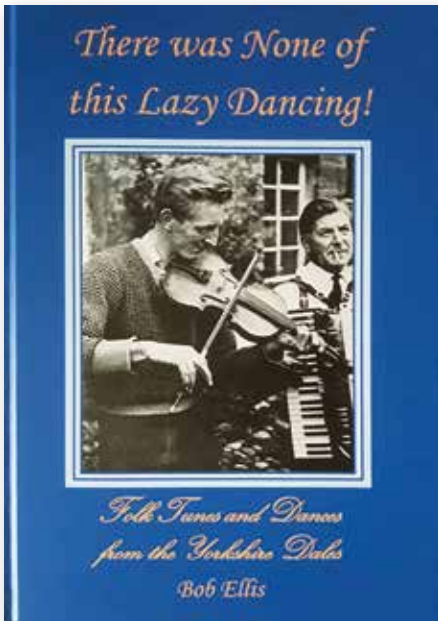


Lino printing is a modern alternative to wood printing. It enables more fluidity with the marks you make because lino is softer than wood. The seedhead of a dill depicted here demonstrates how you can simplify what you observe whilst still appreciating the beauty of it.

First, I photographed the dill in my garden at home, flipped the photograph, sketched it straight onto the lino block, cut the lino using a range of cutting shapes and sizes, and then printed the block onto Strathmore lightweight paper for relief printing with a lever press from Woodzilla. Having sheets of carbon paper is very handy for a quick transfer from an image to lino. If an image isn't flipped, use tracing paper instead to flip the drawing. Have a look at the range of linocut starter kits at www.essdee.co.uk



Linocut of bird's-eye primrose, the emblem of Friends of the Dales



Author: Bob Ellis

Publisher: Robert Ellis

Price: £20 plus £4 post and packaging from www.dalestunes.org.uk

ISBN: 9781527256040

There was None of this Lazy Dancing! Folk Tunes and Dances from the Yorkshire Dales

Colossal, comprehensive and fascinating, this is a social and musical history of popular entertainment in the Yorkshire Dales from the 18th century until about the 1970s. It covers the nature of the often rumbustious and all-night dances, or 'stirs' as they were called, the lives of the musicians who played for them, detailed notes on how to dance them as described at the time, and how the tunes were collected or later recorded and published by folklorist collectors.

Few of the musicians could actually read music: they learned by ear from other musicians or by family tradition. Music in the Beresford family of Langstrothdale in upper Wharfedale was handed down over five generations. Some of those who could read music, like William Calvert (1780-1847), who was born in the Street Head Inn in Bishopdale, compiled notebooks of their tunes. Over 200 tunes are printed here with their origins and links to other printed versions of each tune, all laid out in a way that makes it easy to

photocopy them. An absolute treasure trove for folk dance musicians and callers, it has sold well and prompted a revival of monthly pub sessions at The Buck Inn in Buckden and a series of Dales Dance events for the public in the southern Dales.

There was None of this Lazy Dancing! was written, transcribed and published in 2020 by Bob Ellis on behalf of the Yorkshire Dales Folk Dance and Tunes Project at the Dales Countryside Museum in Hawes. Sadly, Bob became ill with serious heart problems in 2023 and died in early January 2024. At the funeral in Hawes the No Lazy Dancing Band played tunes from the book as the mourners filed out of the church and past morris dancers and band outside, with whom Bob had played for many years. Let this majestic book be a memorial and inspiration for years to come.

Richard Hargreaves

More information at www.dalestunes.org.uk. Also available from Waterstones.

The End We Start From (2023)



Director: Mahalia Belo

In Jodie Comer's latest on-screen performance, we follow her as the unnamed mother of a newborn baby, all the while grappling the chaos and destruction of a UK climate disaster. The themes explored in the film are potent for a contemporary audience as the climatic events played out seem unnervingly plausible. By presenting this environmental narrative alongside the touching and – for many audience members – relatable story of motherhood, another dimension is envisioned, demonstrating the real human cost of climate change.

A bleak and conceivable portrayal of an eco-disaster is presented, with imagery of flooded streets and intense rainfall that, worryingly, doesn't feel too dissimilar to what has been experienced in the UK throughout winter 2023/4. Where other fictional environmental disaster films fall short, *The End We Start From* doesn't depict a world full of barren and unrecognisable landscapes: instead, it puts the viewer in the familiar setting of London and the English countryside. Unfathomable technology, flying cars and other ambitious

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visions of the future are completely absent, grounding the film in an important reality – a reality we already partially recognise.

The emotional gut-punch of the film is achieved through the raw, emotional intensity of Comer's lead performance, which creates an engaging dimension to an otherwise forgettable character. Her friendship with Katherine Waterston's character is perhaps the most touching aspect of the film, a connection arguably more sincere than the unnamed mother's romantic relationship with her partner and father of her newborn baby. The remarkable score and soundscape also heighten the emotional intensity of certain scenes, working beautifully alongside Comer's consistently impressive performance.

Although not a perfect film, *The End We Start From* is an impressive directorial debut, contributing to the much-needed canon of environmental films, and doing so in a uniquely grounded way.

Bea Benn, Year 12 pupil at Skipton Girls' High School



Walk: ride2stride

Wednesday, 1 May

10:15am – 4:00pm

Once again we are taking part in the popular ride2stride Settle-Carlisle walking and music festival programme, with a seven-mile, easy-moderate walk from Long Preston railway station to Settle station. Partly following the Ribble Way, walkers can enjoy viewing Wigglesworth Hall and Long Preston Deep along with lots of spring flowers and hopefully wading birds. Please note this walk starts and ends at different railway stations.

This walk is free and no booking is required.

Please arrive promptly at the start point with suitable clothing, footwear, a drink and packed lunch. No dogs. The start time marks the arrival of a train and so may be subject to delay. The finish time is approximate.

Walk: Fauna, Flora and Water in Wensleydale

Thursday, 23 May

10:30am – 3:30pm

Catherine Mason, Education and Engagement Officer for the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, will lead a seven-mile, circular walk and talk exploring a short stretch of the River Ure and one of its tributaries. Starting and finishing at Aysgarth Falls (charges apply), this walk will be an excellent opportunity to learn more about the trust's work including river and riparian restoration to improve habitats, address pollution, prevent erosion and reduce the impacts of flooding.

The terrain is mainly easy but with stiles and one steep, rocky climb and descent. No dogs please, as there are ground-nesting birds and livestock.

To book your place email victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk

Walk: Discover Smardale Nature Reserve

Wednesday, 19 June

10:30am – 3:00pm

This is a unique opportunity to join Andrew Walter, Reserves Officer for Cumbria Wildlife Trust, for a five-mile, moderately difficult, circular guided walk around this exceptional reserve. Smardale Nature Reserve occupies a five-mile section of the disused railway line that once ran from Tebay to Darlington, now home to species-rich grassland attracting a variety of pollinating insects, with the industrial archaeology of the railway line adding further interest. Please note the walk includes a section of steep terrain.

To book your place email victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk

Walk: Exploring Grassington Moor Upland Common

Wednesday, 3 July

10:30am – 1:00pm

Claire Braeburn, Project Officer for the Foundation for Common Land, will lead a half-day walk over part of the Grassington Moor upland common. Providing insight into the ancient history of our upland commons, Claire will also guide participants through the archaeological trail of Yarnbury's lead mining industry and discuss the peat, bird and archaeological surveys that have taken place on the moor. This walk doesn't include any steep inclines or descents, just one stone step stile. Car share will be offered for those that wish it from the Yorkshire Dales National Park bus station/car park in Grassington to the walk start.

To book your place email victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk

Walk: Access the Dales by Foot or Terrain Hopper

Wednesday, 31 July

11:00am – 3:00pm

We are very pleased to offer our first walk run in collaboration with Yorkshire Dales charity Access the Dales and walking company Where2Walk. Starting from a farm near Tebay (a hub for all-terrain wheelchairs available to book for free – visit www.access-the-dales.com/2024-events to secure), participants will enjoy a leisurely paced, stile-free, four-mile route over rough, moderately challenging terrain to Powson Knott, whilst taking in views of the eastern and northern fells of the Lake District.

For those requiring assistance, the hub provides a Trampler – an all-terrain wheelchair – and a TerrainHopper, both battery-operated. Additionally, two Paratrekers, rugged manual wheelchairs, are available, necessitating strong pushers. Alternatively, bring your all-terrain mobility scooter/wheelchair for an inclusive walk event.

This walk is not accessible for regular wheelchairs.

To secure your place with an all-terrain wheelchair, please book via www.access-the-dales.com/2024-events. To book your place without, email victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk

Catch up via E-News

Sign up to our free monthly e-news and be one of the first to receive our news, new event listings and information about hands-on volunteering opportunities arranged by Friends of the Dales and other environmental charities.

Sign up at: www.friendsofthedales.org.uk

You can also follow us on Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn.



Catch up on YouTube

If you missed one of our talks first time round, you can watch them on our own YouTube channel: [@friendsofthedales](https://www.youtube.com/@friendsofthedales)

There are more than 20 films – with more being added all the time – on a wide range of environmental subjects covered in our successful digital talks programme. Find out more about everything from raptor persecution in the Yorkshire Dales to the facts about our decimated peatlands to the future of rural bus services.

If you subscribe to the channel you will immediately be notified of all new content additions.



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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.

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- 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.

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- 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



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