

Summer 2023 : Issue 163

Yorkshire **DALES** review



Healthy Habitats



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DALES
YORKSHIRE DALES SOCIETY

Front Cover: Curlews and hayrows: linocut for July, from the 'Within These Walls - Haytime in the Yorkshire Dales' exhibition by artist Hester Cox. (See also Hay Meadows in Focus on p21.)

Views expressed in the *Yorkshire Dales Review* are not necessarily those of Friends of the Dales.

For comments on this issue, enquiries about contributing an article, photographs or illustrations, or to suggest future topics, please contact Prue Harrison, volunteer Editor: prue.harrison@friendsofthedales.org.uk

For further information about the charity's campaigns, policies and future plans, please contact Ann Shadrake, Executive Director: ann.shadrake@friendsofthedales.org.uk

Friends of the Dales
Canal Wharf
Eshton Road
Gargrave
North Yorkshire
BD23 3PN

Office: 01756 749400



www.friendsofthedales.org.uk



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Dales and Bowland Community Interest Company:
www.dalesandbowland.com

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Photographic Pioneers



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Exploring the Dales on Two Wheels

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Carly Stevens. Carly is Professor of Plant Ecology and Soil Biogeochemistry at Lancaster University. She has been surveying limestone pavements across

the UK and in particular in the Yorkshire Dales to see how they have changed over the last 50 years.

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Its Original Course?



Prof. Jonathan Grey. Jonny retains one foot in academia as Professor in Practice at Lancaster University but mostly works for the Wild Trout Trust,

getting people to reassess how they think about their local thin blue line, and restoring rivers and becks in the Dales environs.

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Triss Kenny. The Yorkshire Dales National Park has been Triss's local playground since his early teens.

Now retired, and actively enjoying adventures in the outdoors, he is currently obsessing about off-road cycling. 18-19

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A Hidden World

Every Action Matters

We all have a part to play in protecting fragile habitats and ecosystems, says chair Bruce McLeod.

There are 73 million fewer birds in our skies than there were in 1970.* Mind-boggling? Mind-numbing? Mind-blowing? All of the above. This is not recent news but worth repeating ad nauseam since government data shows 48% of species declined between 2015 and 2020 with woodland birds faring worst. The bird population might be in freefall - but nothing serious, let alone a response commensurate to an emergency, is being done to halt the decline.

As with everything from hedgehogs to insects, bird populations have been decimated by a loss of habitat: that which is nourishing, protective, ecologically complex and free from toxic chemicals.

The consensus is that a huge disruptor of the survival and reproduction of a diverse, connected and interactive ecosystem is intensive farming – a system of farming fuelled by the chemical, feed, seed and fertiliser companies, as well as the ‘free market’, which is tightly controlled by the big grocery store chains.

Thinking Before We Act

Having identified the big actors in this tragedy, how do we, as individuals, fit into the myriad factors facilitating species collapse? The onus on us is to be aware of the range of forces that threaten or promote a habitat and therefore a particular species.

Let us consider imidacloprid. It’s not a word you’re likely to bandy around on a daily basis but it is closer to hand than one might suspect. Even though it was finally banned in 2018 for agricultural use (exemptions have been made) and in the garden,** this member of the group of chemicals known as neonicotinoids wreaks its terrible damage on bees, bats, fish, birds (especially through the thinning of eggshell) and invertebrates via its now most common use: flea, lice and tick treatment for pets. Treated dogs distribute a devastating payload when they enter water.

Imperial College London warned in April: ‘One monthly flea treatment for a large dog contains enough imidacloprid to kill 25 million bees. In aquatic ecosystems, insect larvae are particularly at risk, such as those of mayfly and dragonfly. These species, among others, are important food for fish, birds, and bats, potentially causing knock-on effects on the wider ecosystem.’ Promoting healthy habitats, in this case rivers, depends on understanding the ‘knock-on effects’ of everyday practices.

The government passed the Environment Act into law in 2021, which requires a halt in species decline by 2030. Campaigners have said that radical changes to government policy are needed if it is to meet its own targets. Richard Benwell, the Chief Executive Officer of Wildlife and Countryside Link, said: ‘Meeting the legally binding target to

stop wildlife losses...can’t be achieved with a legal tweak here, some spare change there. Serious, sustained investment, proper penalties for pollution, and action in every sphere of government must be the hallmarks of any nature-positive manifesto.’

Some months ago I wrote a blog for Campaign for National Parks in which I urged that the #attackonnature be a permanent rallying cry in the face of proposals to deregulate safeguards for our protected landscapes. The threat has not gone away and government, although retreating from its original promise to cast thousands of EU laws into the bonfire, is still looking to ditch 600. A wide range of laws to be repealed relate to biocidal products and the regulation of levels of pesticides. Countryside stewardship schemes, flood risk management and other habitat protections in sensitive landscapes are also for the chop. Imidacloprid for gardening and agriculture could well be making a comeback.***

Our Response

What is Friends of the Dales doing in light of reckless deregulation and the unabated decline of nature? Part of our response has been to reset our sights and widen our scope. At a recent strategy refresh we decided to rebrand our campaigns in order to highlight sustainability and diversity, system and scale; and to make connections between our inhabitation of the Dales and its numberless habitats.

Under the rubric of Living Dales, our campaign against single-use plastics, for instance, becomes Living Woods and the campaign to protect peat bogs becomes Living Waters - Peatland. We aim, therefore, to go large and to get louder. And we invite you to do the same whether that be volunteering (which might mean helping to run a campaign), donating or turning your garden into a mosaic of habitats.**** We can, I believe, make the Dales a vital dwelling place where nature recovery and sustainable communities go hand in hand.

Bruce McLeod, Chair

509
the number of fossil fuel sites in UK protected areas – the highest globally

138
Number of pet products containing imidacloprid

* www.bto.org/about-us/press-releases/73-million-birds-gone-1970-which-have-vanished-near-you

** www.rhs.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/policies/pesticide-statement

*** *Glyphosate, best known as Roundup, was to be banned but, with the help of Brexit, it has been approved until December 2025.*

**** *The Biodiversity Gardener: Establishing a Legacy for the Natural World* Paul Sterry (2023).

Background image: Yellison Wood, courtesy of Bridget Tempest



Capturing the Past: an Online Archive of Life in the Yorkshire Dales

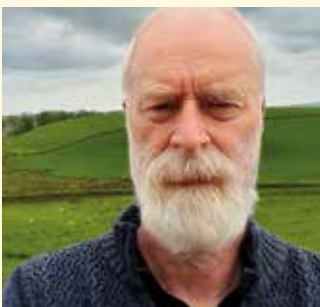
Capturing the Past is a long-term project managed by Friends of the Dales. It is an online display of collections and individual items that reflect the lives of those who have lived and worked in the Yorkshire Dales. There are photos, wills, parish records, deeds and indentures, spoken memories, stories, inventories, newspaper cuttings, transcripts, translations and the occasional family tree. These items have been sought out by Friends of the Dales to ensure they are not lost.

The project is led by John Cuthbert, who coordinates the search for new material and helps those willing to volunteer by training them to organise, digitise and upload their collections. He is assisted by Leigh Weston, who has recently joined the team. She digitises and uploads material we have found when no volunteer is available.

Capturing the Past can be found at www.dalescommunityarchives.org.uk

You can contact John on dalescommunityarchives@gmail.com and Leigh on dalescommunityassist@gmail.com

The project was developed by the Ingleborough Dales Landscape Partnership, led by Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.



CTP project leader John Cuthbert



CTP project assistant Leigh Weston

AGM 2023 – Save the Date

We are delighted to provide advance notice to members of this year's AGM, which will be held on Saturday, 23 September 2023 at Long Preston Village Hall. We will be offering a short business meeting with a chance for questions afterwards, a complimentary light lunch (donations welcome on the day) and an afternoon walk with trustees, staff and volunteers in the local area. Details are currently being confirmed and we are endeavouring to make the day accessible by public transport (train and/or bus).

We hope this will be a good opportunity to meet kindred spirits in a lovely village setting and find out more about the work of the charity you support as a member. You might decide to stay on afterwards to enjoy one of the two excellent pubs in the village.

Members will receive information by post during August with full details of the AGM and how to register their attendance, or give apologies and thus cast their votes by proxy.

Community Supporters Hits Ground Running



Our new Community Supporters membership scheme for organisations has got off to a healthy start, with 11 joining in the first month and others indicating an intention to do so soon. You can see which businesses and not-for-profits have joined by looking at the Community Supporter Map on the 'Support Us' page of our website.

In addition to championing our work through becoming part of a group of like-minded environmentally conscious organisations, Community Supporters receive:

- an informative bimonthly e-newsletter – full of environmental news relevant to organisations
- two business-focused digital talks per year
- a Friends of the Dales Community Supporter logo to promote their support
- a Google map pin presence on our website
- and copies of this magazine.

Please promote this scheme to like-minded businesses and not-for-profit organisations you may know and encourage them to become a Friends of the Dales Community Supporter – and remember, they don't have to be in the Dales to support the Dales.

Visit www.friendsofthedales.org.uk/support-us/support



Living Verges: a colourful example in Hebden.
Photo courtesy of Victoria Benn



Bus Services at Risk

Friends of the Dales Vice President Colin Speakman has made an impassioned plea for increased funding for public transport in protected landscapes.

In a blog for Campaign for National Parks he writes that travel opportunities are becoming increasingly restricted for people who do not have a car through age, ability or choice.



DalesBus services, which are provided by a not-for-profit organisation set up by Friends of the Dales, are among those threatened by lack of funding. However, in

its last financial year the company recorded 41,731 passenger journeys, the highest number since 2015. This represents a welcome recovery in public transport use since the pandemic, boosted by a £2 single fare cap offer.

In March a BBC News online report highlighted concerns about the need for a significant increase in buses and better integration with rail services to cut car usage. Friends of the Dales Vice President and national park authority Member Champion for the Natural Environment Mark Corner said: 'it was increasingly clear that for reasons of climate mitigation and accessibility' there must be 'a change in how people travel to the national park and move around in it. We need those bodies who are responsible to bring about a situation where people use cars less and public transport more.'

Read Colin's blog in full at www.cnp.org.uk/blog/national-park-bus-services



Photo courtesy of DalesBus

25%
of national park's carbon footprint caused by car use
Source: BBC News

5,000,000 visitors to Yorkshire Dales National Park per year
82% travel by private car or van, with only **4%** by public bus or coach and **2%** by train

Source: Yorkshire Dales National Park Visitor Survey 2022

More Eyes on the Bog

You may remember from previous updates that Eyes on the Bog is funded as part of the Great North Bog and is a scheme that enables scientifically robust, repeatable, low-tech, low-cost, long-term monitoring on peatland sites.

Working with Yorkshire Peat Partnership, we now have several small volunteer groups already set up across the Yorkshire Dales and monitoring their own 'patches' of peatland with a few others awaiting landowner permissions to be agreed.

Following our third volunteer training day at Kingsdale Head in May, we are also looking forward to having established even more groups with their own areas of peatland to monitor. We'll keep you posted as things develop.



Training prospective new Eyes on the Bog volunteers with Yorkshire Peat Partnership. Photos courtesy of Victoria Benn



Strength in Numbers

Could collaboration between farmers and the wider community be the key to success for large-scale conservation projects? A ground-breaking venture near Reeth is showing the way.



Heggs Farm



Volunteers constructing a leaky dam below Heggs House



Heggs-Castle cluster locations

Arkengarthdale landowner Liz Sutcliffe has joined forces with her neighbours, Dr Andrew Stringer and Swaledale Estate, to restore natural processes across 80 hectares of upland.

The Heggs-Castle Renaturing Project will increase biodiversity by creating a mosaic of habitats and more resilient ecosystems on what was previously marginal farmland.

‘This is not the place to farm herds of cattle or flocks of sheep in any great numbers to sustain you as a farming business,’ says Liz, who bought off-grid Heggs House and its 55 hectares of land four years ago. ‘But it is the perfect place to be a nature conservation site, for want of a better description.’

‘When Heggs was for sale, the common thought among people who are farming – and farming profitably – was “Who would want that?”. It’s not at all productive farmland but Heggs is a little pocket of biodiversity. This is marginal land and for whatever reason has been allowed to wild of its own accord.’

The very fact that Heggs Farm could not be intensively farmed might turn out to be its strongest asset. When Liz moved in, it already had pockets of woodland, scrub and wood pasture. Networks of islands were strung out along the beck and the run-down stone walls provided much-needed shelter spots. The ubiquitous sound of birdsong proved that this was a place where, given a helping hand, nature could thrive.

In March work was completed on the first stage of a flagship native broad-leaved woodland creation scheme when more than 33,000 trees and shrubs were planted over 32 hectares below Fremington Edge. The

species selected included rowan, downy birch, small-leaved and large-leaved lime, sessile and pedunculate oak, elm, sycamore, hawthorn, blackthorn, goat willow, bird cherry, hazel, holly and yew.

The trees and shrubs were planted in random groups of between three and nine to mimic natural colonisation and at a greater density in those areas with more substantial soil cover than at higher altitudes. Avoiding archaeological remains and natural rock expanses enhanced the natural, non-uniform effect. Several hundred compostable tree guards are being trialled to see whether they can work as well as plastic alternatives.

‘Hopefully in the next 20 or 30 years we will have a very natural, open woodland develop with scrub around the edges and the very top,’ says Liz. ‘This will join existing corridors that exist on either side of our planting site. As a cluster we envisage restoring the remainder of the site to wood pasture.’

Many Hands Make Light Work

The woodland at Heggs and Castle farms will be publicly accessible and it is hoped that it will help to alleviate flooding by consolidating the soil and reducing the speed of rainfall run-off. Arkengarthdale hit the headlines when it suffered badly from flash floods in July 2019 but this was far from a one-off occurrence. Arkle Beck breaks its banks regularly and its course is constantly shifting. Other flood alleviation measures aimed at reducing peak flow include scrapes, sediment traps and riparian planting and coppicing. The Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust has also helped to build leaky dams.

The nature restoration work at Heggs-Castle has received funding from the government’s Grow Back Greener programme and the Tees-Swale: naturally connected initiative, which is supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.



But pulling in independent expertise from organisations such as the national park authority, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust and Sustainable Swaledale and encouraging community involvement are also central to its success. Volunteers have helped with tree planting, replacing and removing damaged guards and stakes, and building dams, sediment traps and germination boxes. These sociable activities are often accompanied by a warm lunch and the cluster also holds youth engagement days.

‘One of the key things for me and the partners I’m working with is community involvement and inviting local people into what we are doing,’ says Liz. ‘Otherwise it’s not really going to create that butterfly effect that we are hoping it will have eventually.’

To join the volunteer mailing list email heggs.castle.cluster@gmail.com or visit www.heggscastlecluster.org

Heggs Farm is offering a limited number of off-grid camping nights until October 2023. For more information visit www.heggsfarm.com

Images courtesy of Heggs-Castle Renaturing Project



Poster Power and a Campaign Tree

Skipton children's author Katie Daynes finds Craven youngsters are just as environmentally aware as their fictional counterparts.

As part of its Beyond Carbon events, North Yorkshire Libraries invited me to read my book *Can we Really Help the Trees?* to some of its younger members. In the book, an eclectic group of forest animals makes a surprise visit to a suburban treehouse and inspires a group of sparky kids to have a go at saving the trees.

Over the past few months, I've had the pleasure of meeting some real-life sparky kids from Gargrave, Giggleswick, Bentham and Ingleton primary schools, and I challenged them to come up with their own

environmental campaign messages. Just as the storybook kids managed to get their protect the trees banner featured on the local news, so have our North Yorkshire kids reached the heady heights of the *Yorkshire Dales Review* with their excellent messages of hope and action.

Bentham year three students wrote their messages on leaves and hung them on a campaign tree (on display in Bentham Library for all to see).



Ingleton years two and three put pen to paper to create their own campaign posters.

Young people matter. Their voices matter. The future is theirs, so let's listen to them and **take action**. Can we really save the trees? Yes, we can!

Katie Daynes

Can We Really Save the Trees? (2022)
Katie Daynes.



Ticking all the Boxes



Photo courtesy of Victoria Benn

Carefully managed moorland provides a host of benefits including wildlife-rich habitats, carbon storage, flood alleviation and improved water quality writes trustee Nancy Stedman.

So what is it that we want from our moorlands? I love the experience of walking out over the hills – the wide-open spaces, the big skies, the great views. And, if I'm lucky, the calls of curlew and lapwing, spiralling skylarks singing with verve, ring ouzels and golden plover calling, red grouse telling me to 'go back, go back!', buzzards wheeling and mewing overhead, and even the glimpse of a hen harrier slipping out of sight over a stone wall, or a peregrine setting off hunting for food for its chicks. Sadly, in the impoverished moorlands of northern England, that would be a very good day.

Then what about all those other things that we can't see that moorlands provide us with?

Most of our moorlands are underlain by carbon-rich soil: that is, by peat. The UK holds 10 - 15% of the global resource of blanket peat, and this peat stores billions of tonnes of carbon, making it the largest terrestrial carbon reserve in the UK. As well as this, our moorlands support a wide range of upland wildlife, often of high international conservation value. We need to look after them.

A healthy peat moorland or blanket bog will have retained its structural integrity, enabling it to absorb and retain a huge amount of rainfall – thus holding the water back and reducing the impact of its flow downstream. The peat will be accreting, by which I mean that the vegetation, and in particular sphagnum moss, will be forming new peat in the cool, wet and almost anaerobic conditions. In this way, it will be capturing carbon from the atmosphere, not losing it through drying out and oxidising. It will support a wide range of vegetation, from mosses and lichens to species like cranberry and bilberry, then the more woody heather and bell heather, bog myrtle in wet places, even scrubby willow, alder and birch. This provides structural diversity, offering shelter and food to a wider range of insects, birds and mammals.

What we don't want to see is moorland managed in the extreme for one particular interest, to the extent that it no longer provides all these benefits for society – carbon capture, flood mitigation, water quality improvement, a rich wildlife habitat. Any management practice that dries the peat out, breaks down active peat formation, reduces structural diversity and encourages a monoculture should be avoided. We think this is simply the responsible thing to do to ensure the long-term health of our valuable moorlands.

We'd welcome contributions from Dales moorland managers who are actively promoting significant areas of peat formation and avoiding management practices that dry out or damage peat. You can read more detail on our policy on peatlands on our website.

Nancy Stedman, trustee

A Hidden World

the Vegetation of Limestone Pavements



Professor Carly Stevens has been researching the plants and soils of the UK uplands for over 20 years. She explains why there is more to limestone pavements than meets the eye and how furthering our understanding of this internationally important habitat is critical to helping it survive.

I have been working on limestone pavements for the last six years, spending my summers hiking over them and recording the vegetation found there. This has necessitated a lot of time spent among the limestone pavements of the Yorkshire Dales and I must confess that I fell in love with the dramatic landscapes and the magical world that is hidden in the fissures of the pavements. Next time you are out walking around our limestone pavements, take a few minutes to look down a grike carefully: you might be surprised just how much plant life there is to see hidden away.

Limestone pavements are ancient landscapes. The limestone was formed millions of years ago when sediments were laid down under the sea, but the ice ages were key to forming the pavements. As glaciers spread across the

landscape, they scraped away everything covering the pavements: once they retreated, they left behind a bare, flat surface. Over time water worked its way into cracks and joints, slowly dissolving the limestone and leaving the pavement we see today. The slabs of stone, called clints, can vary greatly in size, from something just big enough to sit on to the size of a room in your house. Between them are grikes (or grykes), fissures in the rock that house a unique range of plants.

The grikes of limestone pavements provide an environment protected from the elements. They are dark and sheltered, and it is challenging for grazing animals to reach them. Within the grikes ferns dominate the vegetation but they are complemented by a range of herbs and grasses.

Many of the plants found in limestone pavements are those that we would typically expect to see in ancient woodlands rather than open habitats as the grikes provide a sheltered habitat similar to that under a tree canopy. It isn't unusual to see carpets of bluebells and wild garlic spreading through the grikes. Alongside these woodland species there are species more typical of open habitats and found in calcareous grassland



or heathland. This includes blue moor grass, a grass that is very common locally but scarce in Great Britain as a whole, because it is found only in the north of England and a few other places.

A Changing Environment

The research I have been doing has identified some of the challenges facing limestone pavements. I have been investigating how the vegetation in grikes has changed over the last 50 years by repeating a survey originally conducted by two plant ecologists in the 1970s, Stephen Ward and David Evans. My research has shown a mixed picture, with the vegetation of some areas improving or staying the same whereas others have seen dramatic declines in the number of species. Because many of these changes have occurred over a long time, they have not been recognised until now.

In the Dales many areas have seen a slight increase in the number of species found within grikes, most likely because grazing intensities have been reduced in many areas since the 1970s. However, this has also been accompanied by an increase in the number of plant species we don't necessarily want

to see in limestone pavements – things like creeping thistle and nettles. There are also some rare plants that can still be found within the grikes of the Yorkshire Dales pavements such as holly fern, bird's-eye primrose and baneberry, all of which are rare or scarce in the UK.

Compared to other habitats, there has been very little research on limestone pavements and this leaves us with no evidence to base management guidance on. I am trying to fill this gap and improve our understanding of how we should strike a balance between overgrazing and undergrazing. I am also keen to improve the level of monitoring that happens when management changes are made so that we can use areas as natural experiments. This research is especially important as we face threats from climate change and air pollution and we need more information to help us protect the limestone pavements of the Dales. Their distinct geology, number of rare species and the unique combination of species mean they are internationally important.

Carly Stevens, Professor of Plant Ecology and Soil Biogeochemistry, University of Lancaster

Main image: Limestone pavement on Ingleborough

Far left: *Cystopteris fragilis*

Below: Grike with competition

Photos courtesy of Carly Stevens



Its Original

Managing Riverside Ha

Conservationist Jonathan Grey argues that we should go with the flow when it comes to managing our riverside habitats.

'We need to get the river back to its original course....' I'll be blunt: I loathe statements like this. I said as much in my presentation *Wharfe Woes and Trout Tales* at the sell-out Friends of the Dales conference *From Peat to Paddling* in 2022.

For hundreds of years, we have been wrestling with the power of water to harness that power for industry or try to get rid of what we deemed excess water from the land to 'improve' it for agriculture. The result: straightened channels, effectively pipes, frequently perched in an unnaturally high position within the valley. Millions of tonnes of boulders and rocks have been shifted to pin these channels in position, frequently dug from the riverbed itself, thus artificially deepening and severing the connection laterally between those channels and their floodplains. Set in aspic. To add insult to injury, we've then built walls across these channels to hold back water to provide the

'head' for waterwheels or turbines, thereby severing the connection longitudinally and impeding the movement of fish and sediment. (See *Eller Beck* photo below.)

Part of our built heritage - but what about our *natural* heritage, which is disappearing at an alarming rate due to this lingering legacy of the Industrial Revolution? Most historical works are redundant or rapidly approaching the end of their lifespans, unable to cope with the plethora of change we have unleashed on the landscape. Weirs and bank revetments are collapsing (think Gargrave weir in 2021) or teetering under the onslaught of increasingly intense winter spate flows resulting from misguided works upstream, which simply convey water and its associated power more quickly downstream. On the flip side, with warmer and drier springs and summers, is getting rid of the water from the landscape as quickly as possible such a good idea?

Breaking the Chains

Hence, the more holistic approach to both reducing flood risk and improving riverine habitat is to 'slow the flow', remove the barriers and allow the river to access its floodplain wherever possible in our crowded landscape, and return the channel to a more natural course. Note, not its *original* course. We need to free these channels and reintroduce the key ingredient – dynamism.

It seems a difficult concept for folk to grasp because a river 'has always been there' during their lifetimes but that is the mere blink of an eye in the 'lifetime' of a river. The water in a wandering river, which can move dynamically, takes longer to get from A to B. It is better connected to its floodplain (aka better storage during the wet and the dry), more physically and hence biologically diverse, and it will once more be able to access important sediments that it might have laid down centuries or millennia previously. Yes, there will be erosion, but there will also be deposition, and we should embrace these natural processes, not fight them.

I'm not averse to a good 'rewiggling', the phrase the media have jumped upon to represent returning a river channel to a more meandering form. Many rewiggling projects use a paleochannel, the ghostly depression of a former channel position, as the basis of a restoration. Perhaps here lies some of the misconception of the 'original course': rather, we should acknowledge that the ghost of the river past was also just a momentary snapshot. Wherever we can, we need to take the shackles off and allow river channels to return to wander freely in both space *and* time across their floodplains.



Eller Beck in Skipton Castle Woods. Irony - far from running through a wilderness, the watercourse has been constructed to meet the needs of industry over many centuries.

Course?

bitats

Airton



Channelling Ghost Rivers at Airton

Modern constraints in the landscape – roads, bridges, dwellings – all limit the extent to which we can allow larger channels to renaturalise in such a way, but it can be done. On the River Aire just south of Airton, I have been working with a landowner to improve lateral connectivity. Paleochannels were evident in the fields on either side of the existing, artificially straightened channel, and where the old and new channels crossed paths, the old had been blocked off with stone robbed from the riverbed.

We have not rewiggled here *per se*. Instead, we have dug out all the stone plugs and returned them to the channel as well as lowering the bank in places. Elevated flow following rainfall can now spill out onto the floodplain more easily, dissipating flow energy and fine, life-giving silts across the floodplain and allowing retention of gravel within the main channel, making better habitat for invertebrates, for fish, and for those species that feed on one or the other. The resultant wet(ter) meadow habitat is relatively rare in the Dales, and will now be managed via

conservation grazing (low-density cattle) to promote the wildflower flora and wader nesting habitat: win-win.

In isolation, the Airton project might have only relatively localised impact, but it links laterally and longitudinally to many other seemingly small projects. Within a 1.25-mile radius, under the aegis of the Upper Aire Project, I removed the redundant and collapsing Newfield Bridge weir downstream, thereby allowing free access for migrating fish, while project partners have planted 2.5 miles of hedging and one hectare of woodland, created three leaky ponds to slow the flow, and improved soil health over 53 hectares by mechanical aeration.



Malham Beck

Upstream, I will be working with other landowners to renaturalise sections of Malham and Gordale becks. At key locations where those becks have been straightened, forced to turn unnaturally or pinned (perched) to one side of the valley, I will simply remove the retaining walls and return the stone to the channel whence it came. With the becks unshackled for the first time in decades, if not centuries, I do not expect the change to be immediate. And again, rather than putting the channel back physically to some notional timepoint, I hope

to reinvigorate dynamism and let each beck forge its own course, slowly but surely and most importantly, naturally.... essentially doing the work for me.

All the above works were progressed only after consultation with the relevant authorities and with appropriate permissions.

Professor Jonathan Grey, Research and Conservation Officer, Wild Trout Trust

What Lies Beneath

A citizen science project has shown that the regular release of treated effluent has an even greater impact on the ecology of the River Wharfe than storm discharges of untreated sewage.

The **i-Wharfe EcoAshlands** study took samples from ten sites between Addingham Suspension Bridge and Otley Sailing Club. These were analysed for water chemistry, diatoms, filamentous algae and aquatic invertebrates at accredited laboratories.

Although the adverse effects of storm discharges have attracted much media attention, the study indicates that this is not the main cause of the deterioration in the health of the river downstream from Ilkley. By taking samples between the overflow and final treated effluent outfalls in the town, the researchers showed that the continuous release of nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorus) pollution had the greatest impact on water quality.

Although most treated sewage discharges in the UK may meet statutory standards for the removal of organic matter, suspended solids and ammonia, they are also often high in faecal bacteria.

Photographic Pioneers



Cherry and his brother Richard photographing birds in high hedges

The cutting-edge wildlife film-making we now enjoy on programmes such as the BBC's *Wild Isles* owes much to the groundbreaking techniques developed by two brothers from the Yorkshire Dales, writes Keld Resource Centre Project Manager Helen Guy.

Richard (1862) and Cherry (1871) Kearton were both born in the small village of Thwaite in upper Swaledale. When not at Muker School, they spent their days exploring the surrounding countryside, fishing, tickling trout and building their knowledge of the natural world first hand, not from books.

In 1882 Richard met Sidney Galpin, who had travelled up to Swaledale for the grouse shooting season. Sidney was impressed by Richard and so offered him a job at his father's publishing house, Cassell, Petter & Galpin, in London. Richard accepted and he began to work his way up in the firm. When their father died in 1887, Richard persuaded his mother to allow his brother, Cherry, who was then only 14 years old, to move to London and join the company.

The Kearton partnership really started in April 1892. Richard spotted a song thrush nest and asked Cherry to take a picture of it. The result inspired Richard to write a book on British birds' nests and include photographs taken in the wild by Cherry throughout. In 1895 *British Birds' Nests* was published.

The book was very well received, with Dr Sharpe from the Natural History Museum stating that it marked a new era in bird study. Indeed, it was so popular that by 1907 it had been reprinted six times.

Ingenuity and Innovation

Their aim was to capture birds in their natural habitats so they began to create and design a range of hides that could be used in different locations. These had to blend in with the landscape and included an artificial 'rubbish heap', which was effectively a tent that Richard placed over Cherry and then covered with sticks and materials.



Cherry carrying a taxidermy ox, 1900

With the help of a London taxidermist, they designed an artificial ox from a cured skin stretched over a light wood frame, inside which was built a little platform for the camera to rest on. On stony seashores they would build horseshoe-shaped hides; they even built an artificial rock from five individual pieces that hooked together.

Their hemp climbing ropes were 60 metres long. A crowbar was driven into the ground on top of a cliff to secure the rope, then Cherry would attach the rope to himself and simply walk backwards off the cliff with his camera and tripod on his back.



Cherry dangling precariously from a rock face

Cherry had vast amounts of patience, once taking half a day just to obtain the perfect shot of a dragonfly. On another occasion he spent three days up to his chest in water standing in a loch trying to capture the last pair of ospreys in Britain.

International Travel and Home Ties

The brothers' work took them to many wild and remote places such as the Farne Isles, Inner and Outer Hebrides, St Kilda and the Saltee Islands near Ireland.

1909 saw Cherry depart for Africa. He visited the Serengeti Plain, Mombasa, Nairobi and the Congo, where he discovered Toto, a chimp who featured in his film, and filmed a Masai lion hunt, which was seen by millions of people after its release.

In 1911 Cherry visited Borneo and India and was the first to film an orang-utan in its natural



Portrait of a chimpanzee, 1909-12

environment. In 1912 he was in Canada, filming moose feeding in the lakes, but by 1913 he had returned to Africa and spent a year travelling from coast to coast, photographing and filming the wildlife. His next book, *The Island of the Penguins*, was published in 1930 and was the result of a camping trip to Dassen Island, near Cape Town.



Nature's comedians, penguins on Dassen Island, 1921

1914 saw Richard and his family return to Swaledale, staying in Muker. They visited Neddy Dick in Keld to hear him play his stone piano and visited the lead mines in Swinnergill. It seems evident that Richard maintained a great affection for Swaledale, despite having left many years before.

In 1914 Cherry joined the Legion of Fusiliers in East Africa, enduring horrendous living conditions with inadequate supplies of food, water and medical supplies and no reliable



Rhino taken with flashlight, 1909-12



The lion, 1909-12

maps. After the Armistice he went to South Africa, the Sahara and on to Algeria.

Whilst Cherry travelled around the world, Richard wrote, or contributed to, over 20 books. He was a gifted public speaker, giving talks at the White House, Sandringham, Paris, Berlin, the USA and towns and villages throughout the British Isles, and even showed his slides in prisons and asylums.

Richard died aged 66 in 1928. Towards the end of his life, he often returned to his Yorkshire roots as would Cherry, who would roar up Swaledale in chauffeur-driven cars with his wife by his side.

Cherry died in 1940 in London at the age of 68. He had just completed a recording for *BBC Children's Hour* and collapsed on the steps of Broadcasting House. In 1943 a memorial plaque for Cherry was installed on the side of Muker School alongside an earlier one in memory of his brother, Richard.

It is remarkable that two young boys from the top of a remote Pennine dale went on to achieve all they did and became esteemed and respected pioneers, who truly deserved the accolade of 'trailblazers'. Their passion, creativity, tenacity and resourcefulness made the natural world accessible to all.

Helen Guy, Project Manager, Keld Resource Centre



Streaks of spotted yellow, 1909-12

Saving Our Wild Isles

The success of the nature-friendly farming practices adopted by Malham farmer Neil Heseltine is highlighted in David Attenborough's latest *Wild Isles* BBC natural history series.

The sixth and final episode focuses on the threats to UK wildlife and the people and organisations working to protect threatened habitats. However, *Saving Our Wild Isles* was not broadcast by the BBC amid allegations of censorship, instead only being made available as an extra online.

Neil, who is also Chair of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and Chair of National Parks England, explains how taking part in the Limestone Country Project 15 years ago marked a change of direction for Hill Top Farm. Since then, the number of sheep has fallen from 800 to 100 and Belted Galloway cattle are now grazing the hillsides in all weathers. This hardy, native species pulls up clumps of grass and disturbs the ground as it feeds, creating an environment where hares and ground-nesting birds flourish and the meadows are full of wildflowers. The business is now carbon-negative – yet the changes have also made it more profitable.

The film was commissioned by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, World Wide Fund for Nature and the National Trust, and produced by Silverback Films. You can see it on iPlayer (*Wild Isles*, Extras) or the dedicated website at www.saveourwildisles.org.uk



Belted Galloways

A Growing Issue

Vice President Mark Corner looks at the best ways of minimising the use of plastic when planting woodlands.

I acquired a 36-hectare deer-fenced woodland 10 years ago and, with the help of many kind volunteers including those from Friends of the Dales, have been working to remove the 45,000 plastic tree shelters that were installed when the saplings were planted in 2002. I'm doing this because it was an obligation of the grant funding that the original owners of the land received for creating the woodland, but mainly because the shelters look ugly and as they deteriorate, they will pollute the soil and get into the beck that flows into the River Ribble. The removed shelters have been recycled.

A more positive activity is the planting of some 2,500 additional saplings with the help of Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust. It's healthy for a woodland to have trees in different stages of growth and there are gaps where some of the original planting failed. We're using the opportunity to trial the use of a variety of alternative shelters and to plant some saplings without any protection and some within small stock-fenced enclosures as a deterrent to deer.

Changing the Default Setting

These activities have given me cause to reflect on how woodlands should best be established. This is clearly an important question, given aspirations to increase tree cover in the UK, including in the Yorkshire Dales, where we hope to see 6,000 hectares planted by 2030, taking the area of the national park covered by woodland from 4.3% to 7%.

Unfortunately, there is an industry tendency to automatically opt for the use of plastic tree shelters, which is encouraged by conditions stipulated in the grants offered for woodland creation. These state that the shelters must be removed and recycled when no longer required, which can be up to 10 years after planting, and provide money to do this within the up-front payment. However, there is no effective enforcement of this requirement. Although shelter removal is very satisfying, it is slow, hard, dirty work. I reckon that to remove all 45,000 shelters would require around 250 working days of effort for one person. For paid labour a landowner will face a hefty bill years after receiving the grant. It is estimated that tree shelter removal accounts for some 30% of the total woodland establishment cost.



The challenge of cardboard tubes in the upland Dales



Non-hydrocarbon plastic guards

The Elusive Silver Bullet

The attractiveness, therefore, of a tree shelter that does not require removal and recycling is clear and the ideal of a fully compostable material that breaks down completely into non-toxic components is worth striving for. We are trialling a number of products in my woodland including card-based materials with waterproof coatings (spoiler alert – they didn't work), bioplastics and sheeps' wool. However, the risks and impacts of some of these materials on the environment is unclear. Some bioplastics may still need to be collected and recycled, at greater cost than the traditional polypropylene of high-density polyethylene. And they are currently more expensive to produce.

Minimal Intervention

The issues with tree shelters prompts the question of whether they are needed at all. If you leave a piece of land alone, ideally excluding deer by fencing, which has been used for around 1,000 years, then scrub will develop and if there is a seed source nearby, trees will follow. The scrub, acting as a natural tree shelter, protects the trees. Biodiversity benefits



Enclosure planted without guards



A group of Friends of the Dales volunteers

from the diverse structure of natural tree growth, and locally adapted seed can increase woodland resilience. The process is slow, and we tend not to be patient. There is a lack of research in the UK to determine if natural processes can deliver the magnitude or speed of carbon sequestration required to meet net zero targets.

My experience with unprotected trees wasn't good but things may have been better with more effective deer management. It's also worth bearing in mind that a significant proportion of the cost of a planted sapling, which is around £3.80, is the tree shelter and stake (over £1 and around 80p respectively), with the sapling costing typically 60p. You can afford to overplant unprotected trees severalfold compared to a tree with a shelter in the anticipation of browsing loss.

It is encouraging to see that the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, in partnership with The Woodland Trust and its Grow Back Greener initiative, is supporting a project near Hawes, in which a four-hectare site with a neighbouring tree seed source will have grazing removed and be fenced off and left to nature, with a funded management regime of monitoring and maintenance.

We shouldn't default to the use of tree shelters and we should encourage natural regeneration, and not shy away from the need for appropriate deer management. Where shelters are unavoidable, grant money should be held back to ensure that they are removed and recycled.

Mark Corner, Vice President

Find out more about Mark's experiences by downloading the Plastic-Free Woodlands talk from our YouTube channel.

Exploring the Dales on

Want to leave the road behind but not sure where you can take your bike? Triss Kenny has devised the Yorkshire Dales 500 to link together some of the best bridleways for cyclists in the national park. Here are his suggestions for days out or longer rides and tips to help you stay safe and avoid harming the environment or other people.

Accessible but wild, beautiful but challenging; the Yorkshire Dales offer some of the best off-road cycling in England. To illustrate, it is possible to ride on a reasonably direct high-level route from Langcliffe (near Settle) to Bolton Abbey, a distance of 24 miles, with 87% of that being off-road.

However, the Yorkshire Dales have a complicated topography that makes it difficult to work out where to ride. The roads tend to follow the valleys and cross some of the high passes. Off-road tracks that permit bicycle use can be found almost anywhere. This article attempts to point the reader towards the best off-road riding the area has to offer.

The map illustrates the possibilities.

Day Rides

There are some classic off-road cycle routes in the Dales that involve less than a day of riding. A good introduction is the Swale Trail, a signposted route along the banks of the Swale that is 70% off-road. In and around Swaledale there are many other options for further adventures by gravel or mountain bike. Notable rides include one involving Arkengarthdale, Schoolmaster Pasture (near Hurst) and Fremington Edge, and another involves the descent of Apedale.

Another area where several good tracks can be found is in the southern part of the national park. The high ground between Settle and Wharfedale is criss-crossed by a number of amazing trails. More information on these and other day ride possibilities and route suggestions can be found at:

Cycle the Yorkshire Dales www.cyclethedales.org.uk/route_type/mtb/

Dales Bike Centre www.dalesbikecentre.co.uk/pages/mtb-swaledale

Heritage House Maps Swaledale by Bike Cycle Map www.heritage-house.co.uk/product-page/swaledale-by-bike-cycle-map-1-25-000-1-40-000

Multi-day Rides

The map presents a 310-mile (500km) route that can be bikepacked in its entirety over several days or be used as a resource to provide inspiration for shorter multi-day rides. Another shorter multi-day option is the Yorkshire Dales 300. More long-established routes that include the Yorkshire Dales include the Pennine Bridleway, the Great North Trail, the GBDuro/GBDivide and the Dales Divide. Information on these routes can be found at:

Yorkshire Dales 500 www.komoot.com/collection/1933167/-yorkshire-dales-500 and www.ridewithgps.com/routes/41053705

Yorkshire Dales 300 www.komoot.com/collection/903458/roman-roads-sublime-singletrack-the-yorkshire-dales-300

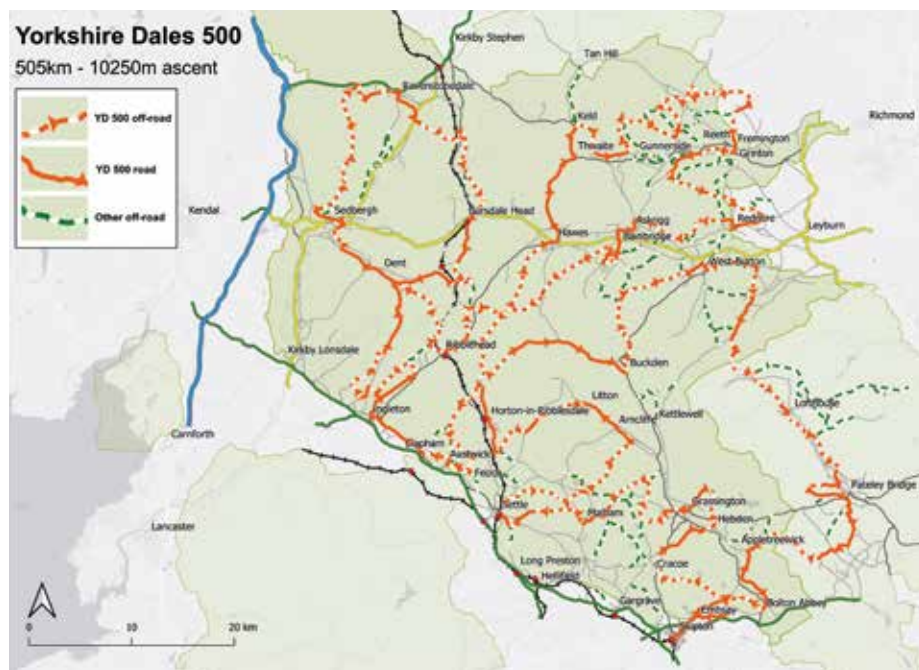
Pennine Bridleway www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/pennine-bridleway/

Great North Trail www.cyclinguk.org/route/great-north-trail-full-route-cape-wrath

GB Divide www.gbdivide.net/

Dales Divide www.facebook.com/dalesdivide/

All images courtesy of Triss Kenny



Above, Bolton Abbey to Barden Road cattle grid.
Below, Stake Allotments to Thoralbly



Two Wheels

What to Expect

Many of the trails are relatively smooth double-track but sections of bog or loose/chunky gravel or steep sections may be encountered. Most of the trails can be ridden on a gravel bike but a mountain bike may be preferable. Depending on the route, wide tyres and suspension could be beneficial. Expect to encounter short sections of hike-a-bike and to reach exposed and relatively

remote places. Be self-sufficient: carry enough food and water to get you to the next resupply; be prepared for any trailside repairs that may be required; and consider the consequences of bad weather coming in or dealing with an accident.

And finally, ride in such a way that you cause as little damage as possible to yourself, the environment or other people.

Triss Kenny



Above, Hebden stepping stones. Below, Hebden Gill



Inset below, upper Swale from Catrake Force



The Howgills from the Dales Way

Code of Conduct of the International Mountain Biking Association UK

- 1. Ride on open trails only** - Stick to bridleways, byways and other recognised routes. Avoid possible trespass on private land.
- 2. Leave no trace** - Wet and muddy trails are more vulnerable to damage. When the trail bed is soft, consider other riding options.
- 3. Control your bicycle** - Inattention for even a second can cause disaster. Excessive speed can maim and threaten people: there is no excuse for it.
- 4. Always give way to other users** - Make your approach known well in advance. A friendly greeting (or a bell) is considerate and works well.
- 5. Never scare animals** - When approaching horse riders from behind, you must warn them you are coming by calling out a greeting. A silent approach can easily spook a horse. Remember – 'Call out hello and pass wide and slow'.
- 6. Plan ahead** - Know your equipment, your ability and the area in which you are riding and prepare accordingly. A well-executed trip is a satisfaction to you and not a burden or offence to others.

Source: www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/things-to-do/get-outdoors/adventure-activities/mountain-biking/ride-right/

Tune in on YouTube

YouTube, that ubiquitous streaming service you can watch on your phone, tablet or Smart TV, is now home to our very own channel. Simply named @FriendsoftheDales, it's a channel you can tune in to and view some 23 videos at your leisure.

These cover a wide range of topics, enabling you to explore pressing environmental and social issues and make the most of your visits to the Dales. Popular downloads include:

How Polluted is the Wharfe? by Professor Rick Battarbee (videoed at Friends of the Dales 2022 *From Peat to Paddling* conference). It's an issue that is more pressing than ever – discover the scientific facts here.

Living and Roaming in the Orton Fells by Kyle Blue. Trustee Kyle showcases the Westmorland village and the rural surroundings of Orton, which became part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park in 2016.

The Impact of the 2019 Floods on the Historic Environment of the Northern Dales by Miles Johnson. Depicts the devastating impact of the floods on the remnants of the area's former lead mining industry and the remedial work undertaken.

Plastic-Free Woodlands by Mike Appleton and Mark Corner. Insight into how the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust is taking steps to break our reliance on the use of plastic when tree planting.

Exploring Crummack Dale by Ken Humphris. Trustee Ken shares footage and personal insight into one of his favourite areas of the Yorkshire Dales.

Managing the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's Nature Reserves in the Yorkshire Dales by Graham Standing. Learn about the trust's 13 reserves in the Yorkshire Dales and how it is helping them to recover their natural fauna, flora and biodiversity.

Birds of the Yorkshire Dales by Ian Court. The Wildlife Conservation Officer for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority showcases the bird species – both native and migratory – that make the Yorkshire Dales their home.

Raptor Persecution by Howard Jones. Howard, an Investigations Officer for the RSPB, brings to life the cases and day-to-day work of fighting wildlife crime, with a focus on North Yorkshire – the worst place in the UK for bird of prey persecution.

Give Peat a Chance by Jenny Sharman. An insight into the extensive degradation of our peatlands and the consequences of this for wildlife, carbon storage, flood risk and water quality plus the ways in which they are being restored by Yorkshire Peat Partnership.

Wharfe Woes and Trout Tales by Professor Jonathan Grey (videoed at Friends of the Dales 2022 *From Peat to Paddling* conference). An exploration into the totemic species of trout which, when thriving, reflect a healthy, functioning ecosystem. Trout, however, are not thriving within the River Wharfe and Professor Grey explains why.

Other topics you can upload from the channel include talks about the Wild Ingleborough Partnership, sustainable farming and our long-term project and social history archive, Capturing the Past.

To be notified of new uploads, make sure you subscribe. You can find us at www.youtube.com/@friendsofthedales

Victoria Benn, Membership & Events Officer

Professor Jonathan Grey is also working to restore wildlife habitats by helping rivers take their natural courses – find out more on page 12

Professor Rick Battarbee is one of the authors of a report into the health of the Wharfe featured on page 13

Mark Corner reports on his own experiments with alternatives to plastic tree guards on page 16.



Crummack Dale. Photo courtesy of Ken Humphris



Curlew. Photo courtesy of Whitfield Benson YDNPA



Recording a pole trap. Photo courtesy of G Shorrock RSPB



Planting sphagnum. Photo courtesy of Jenny Sharman



Jonathan Grey. Photo courtesy of Friends of the Dales

Hay Meadows in Focus

A special exhibition at the Dales Countryside Museum gives a new perspective on one of the national park's best-loved and most iconic - but rarest and most vulnerable - habitats.

'Within These Walls' is a detailed exploration of the fauna and flora of traditional upland hay meadows and is the culmination of eight years' work by printmaker and artist Hester Cox. Images include swallows skimming over fields ablaze with spring flowers and a group of iconic but endangered curlews foraging after the midsummer harvest.

Both pictures are inspired by the work of Dales Countryside Museum founder Marie Hartley, who co-authored many books with fellow social historians Ella Pontefract and Joan Ingilby and illustrated them with distinctive wood engravings. By using a linocut technique, Hester has been able to recreate the effect for her 'A Year in the Meadows' series.

'It's become an obsession,' she says. 'We moved to Horton-in-Ribblesdale in 2014, and nearly every day I walk a footpath through two meadows and along a lane past a third. Because they are on my doorstep, it means I can go and draw the plants and see the changes.'

'Last year a pair of curlews came back to the larger of the three meadows and nested. We saw them raise and successfully fledge four chicks. I couldn't believe it: I was really worrying about them, but they survived because the field margins didn't get cut, and there were lots of plants such as meadowsweet to hide away in. I was able to see them after the hay had been raked into rows and baled and I watched them fly off towards the end of July.'

The centrepiece of the exhibition is the 'Within These Walls' installation consisting of five four-metre-long panels, which was created for Grassington Festival in 2017 and took six months to complete. It depicts a cross-section of the most important species that you would see if you looked through the grass and flowers of a traditionally managed hay meadow from ground level.

These have now largely disappeared from England due to changes in agricultural practices including a switch to silage making with earlier cutting regimes. Half of those surviving - more than 1,000 hectares in total - are in the Yorkshire Dales.

Member Champion for Promoting Understanding at the national park authority Derek Twine says that the exhibition is a tribute to the nature-friendly

farmers of Ribblesdale and surrounding areas. Our own Living Verges campaign encourages people to preserve the remains of traditional hay meadows including roadsides, village greens and churchyards. Find out how you can help at www.friendsofthedales.org.uk/campaigns/verges.

The 'Within These Walls - Haytime in the Yorkshire Dales' exhibition is open seven days a week until 17 September and is included in the Dales Countryside Museum entry fee of £4.90 (children free). Also on display are artefacts from the collections, archive photographs and oral histories relating to the Irish itinerant workers who worked in the fields, and woodcuts by Marie Hartley.

www.hestercox.com



Hester at exhibition set up, with the *Within These Walls* panels behind her

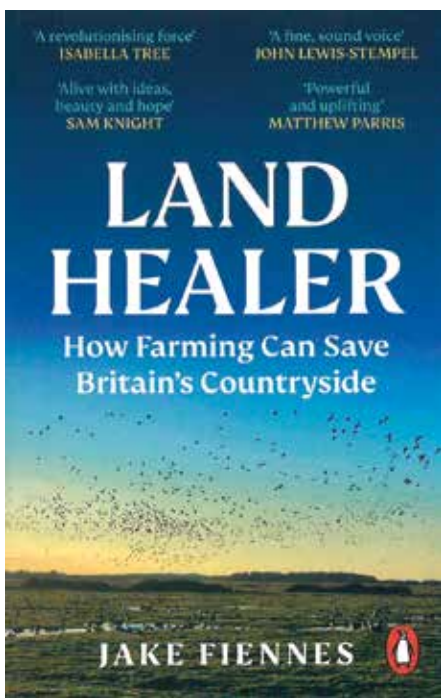


Linocut for May - Swallows feeding over meadow in flower



'Hidden'

Land Healer How Farming Can Save Britain's Countryside



Author: Jake Fiennes
Publisher: Penguin Books
Price: £10.99
ISBN: 9781785947315

Jake Fiennes is Director of Conservation at the Earl of Leicester's Holkham Estate, having also worked at the Knepp Estate in Sussex. He sat on the panel of Julian Glover's 2019 *Landscapes Review: National Parks and AONBs*. He makes play of a somewhat chaotic childhood with little money but

somehow sufficient to attend various public schools. These networks have kept him in work despite his own admission of a lack of formal education beyond his teens. He is now considered to be an 'expert'.

This expertise unfortunately falls at the second hurdle. He opens with praise of hedges, with which I have absolutely no quibble. In my view he is right to say that we need more and bigger and more diverse hedges for many reasons. But he then blots his copy book by misunderstanding the carbon cycle.

He talks about greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture without apparently understanding or allowing for the source of those emissions. Living things do not add new carbon to the atmosphere. They simply co-opt atmospheric carbon to turn light energy into chemical energy. The carbon from living things then simply re-enters the natural atmospheric system to be used and reused ad infinitum. So the misunderstanding leads, despite the facts, to calls to eat less red meat from grazing animals.

A Game of Two Halves

Jake is on firmer ground when he speaks of 'small changes' that still allow for food production but will also 'allow' nature. The growing move to the so-called regenerative agriculture actually co-opts nature, the clear understanding being that we cannot have

one without the other. He also agrees with Jack Spees, Chief Executive of Ribble Rivers Trust and a recent guest speaker to our policy and planning committee: 'to improve the environment, talk to farmers.' Indeed, he says that 'without farmers any attempt at redressing some of the environmental damage we have done to the countryside will be futile.' Plus, in a phrase to gladden my heart, 'farmers are not the enemy.'

Jake reflects on the *Landscapes Review* and how parks should be leaders in nature recovery and that farmers should be partners in these relationships. He quotes John Dower that 'established farming use should be effectively maintained' and 'there can be few national purposes which, at so modest a cost, offer so large a prospect of health-giving happiness for the people'.* This was written when the UK population was 42 million whereas we are now at nearly 70 million. That needs managing. Jake adds: 'We must be careful about imagining how we can return it to some pristine, or even truly wild, state.'

But he then talks of 'virgin country' in North American and African national parks. These places already had people in them who were 'managing' the landscape, albeit with a very light footprint. The 'white colonial' mindset rather jars, to say the least. These landscapes were also cultural landscapes to Native Americans, nomadic African herders, Aboriginals and so on. Charles Massy covers

Walks Without Stiles A Guide to the Best 32 Stile Free Walks in the Yorkshire

Authors: Debbie North & Jonathan Smith
Publisher: Where2Walk
Price: £9.95
ISBN: 9780995673564

When I am planning a Yorkshire hike, I pick one of the dozens of hiking books I have dotted around my house and there is a good chance that I can drag my aged body around most of the walks in the book. Some I baulk at for various reasons - too long; too steep; too soggy; no pub at the end - but there is a whole raft of people who love hiking but have to baulk at most of the wonderful walks in Yorkshire: wheelchair users.

One wheelchair user is Debbie North, who, with her colleague Jonathan Smith, has written a wonderful little book, *Walks Without Stiles*, specifically for those who love to get out and about in our beautiful countryside but are jiggered by the very things that make a Dales walk into an obstacle course - the ubiquitous stile.

Between the covers are 32 of the best Dales walks, from Malham to Kirkby Stephen, from Sedbergh to Reeth, all accessible and enjoyable if you are on foot or in a wheelchair, and none of which has a single stile.

The walks range from a one-mile romp to Aysgarth Falls to an 11-mile trek through the Howgills, and all of them have been tried and

tested by Debbie and Jonathan. Each walk is fully described with comments about the terrain and available facilities along with little hints from the writers. There is a map of each walk and all of them are illustrated with photos, which make the book a super read even if you don't even own a pair of hiking boots.

There are sections on safety and accommodation and articles by Dales people extraordinaire such as Amanda Owen, Rachel Briggs and Andrew Jarman and, of course, by Debbie and Jonathan themselves. It is a fascinating read and surely a welcome addition to any hiking library. Plus, it marks all the pubs you might just encounter on your hike.

Martin Carr, member and volunteer



this rather better in *Call of the Reed Warbler*** and indeed speaks of the need to 'listen' to the eponymous warblers and the people who have lived with them since before God was a lad.

There is now a genre of books with an interest in the intersection between agriculture, biodiversity, climate, recreation and the relationship between these competing demands. Some of these books are, to use a sporting analogy, playing in the Champions League. *Land Healer*, despite the often joyous tone, is two-nil down and struggling to avoid relegation.

* For more information about the life and legacy of John Dower, whose 1945 *White Paper* was instrumental in establishing the first national parks in England and Wales, visit www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/about/about-the-national-park/history/john-dower/

** For details of *Call of the Reed Warbler* see www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/34951739

Anthony Bradley, policy & planning committee member and Dales farmer

We are organising a return visit to Anthony's farm at Mearbeck near Long Preston on 23 August. See details, right.

Farm Walk: Cattle, Carbon, Conservation, Climate and Conversation

Wednesday, 23 August
10:30am – 3:30pm

Former Friends of the Dales trustee and Yorkshire Dales farmer Anthony Bradley will lead a four-mile guided walk around key parts of his 36-hectare farm near Long Preston and talk about some of the science behind grazing cattle in a traditional, rotational way – a methodology that makes economic sense as well as being carbon-neutral. There will also be a chance to observe habitat creation and look at soil and its role in the carbon cycle. Sorry, no dogs are allowed on this walk, due to the presence of livestock.

For an engaging and warm insight into Anthony's approach to farming, see *Cultivating Carbon and Cows*, a short documentary by Ruth Garrett, CNP New Perspectives Bursary Holder 2022, available on her website, www.ruthkittiwake.com



Save the Date! AGM 2023

Saturday, 23 September
Long Preston Hall

Full details will be sent to all members by post in August.

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.



Guided Walk: Clapham Heritage Trail

Saturday, 7 October
10:30am – 2:00pm

Our trustee Ken Humphris will lead a two-mile walk around picturesque Clapham, planned in the early 19th century and now a conservation area. This guided walk offers an opportunity to learn about the village's long history, from its 10th-century medieval farmsteads to the present day. Clapham comprises a fascinating collection of vernacular buildings, a beck and a waterfall, along with connections to the famous scientist Michael Faraday, well-known Victorian plant hunter Reginald Farrer, Prince Albert and writer Alan Bennett.



Photo courtesy of Paul Harris

Digital Talk: In Your Words – Words from the Dales

Wednesday, 11 October, 4:30pm

Dr Fiona Douglas, Project Lead for The Dialect and Heritage Project based at the University of Leeds, will bring to life some of the key insights and discoveries uncovered through its recent work with the Dales Countryside Museum and Ryedale Folk Museum. Fiona will share snippets of rare audio interviews gathered by researchers in the 1950s alongside newer oral histories, to explore whether the Yorkshire language and dialect have changed and developed over the last 75 years.

Catch up via E-News

Sign up to our free monthly e-news and be one of the first to hear 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](#) and [Twitter](#).



* 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/events

and Cumbrian Dales

Debbie North is founder of *Access the Dales*, a charity dedicated to raising funds to purchase all-terrain wheelchairs for the public to borrow. It now has nine wheelchair hubs across the Yorkshire Dales at Ravenseat Farm; The Lister Arms, Malham; Rakehead Farm, Nateby; Settle Railway Station; Eden Ewe-Nique Lonnin, Tebay; Cottage in the Dales, West Burton; Clapham Nature Trail; Malham Tarn Estate and Bolton Abbey Estate.

For further information visit www.access-the-dales.com

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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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