

Winter 2023 : Issue 161

# Yorkshire **DALES** review



## Water Matters

.....  
**CAMPAIGN • PROTECT • ENJOY**  
.....

  
**Friends of the  
DALES**  
YORKSHIRE DALES SOCIETY



Front Cover: Thwaite Beck, Thwaite, Swaledale. Photo courtesy of Ian Harrison


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

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# The Threat From Above

It is, I find, a challenge to keep one's spirits up these days, what with the cost of living crisis, the war in Europe, and the non-event of COP27 (with the recognition that the powers that be have been discussing the climate emergency for 27 years while carbon emissions and global heating have steadily increased). However, a beacon of light and enlightenment was our conference in September, *From Peat to Paddling: What Makes a Healthy River?* The afternoon was full of expertise, humour, science and solutions, all articulately delivered to an engaged audience of 170 people. The hugely successful event underlined for me that being part of a collective endeavour to discuss and take action to right some environmental wrongs is a key way to stay buoyant, if not sane.

The importance of this event was demonstrated by the almost simultaneous announcement by the government that it intended to ignite a bonfire of regulations under the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill. Most relevant for Friends of the Dales are the 570 laws governing the environment, agriculture and food safety. This is a potential disaster on a vast scale, radically exacerbating the climate and nature emergencies. It may not happen but the fact that serious consideration is being given to withdrawing safeguards and giving a green light to any sort of 'growth', even within the so-called protected landscapes of England and Wales, shows us that any gains achieved for nature and the public can be taken away.

If deregulation of the planning process, encouraging councils to introduce 'investment zones', and the evisceration of laws governing the use of toxic chemicals is one way of handing the countryside over to developers and corporations, the other is the gradual fiscal strangulation of the national park authorities and their ability to maintain, let alone enhance, our national parks. As with all public services, funding for national parks has been eroded. Taking into account inflation and the expansion of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, the core grant from government should be in the region of £9.4 million, not the £5.2 million on the table.

Recently YDNPA CEO David Butterworth, in his role as lead chief executive for National Parks England, commented on further budgetary cuts: '[National Parks in England] are being asked to help

fight the climate and nature emergencies. We are being asked to accommodate 80-odd million visitors a year. But we cannot achieve all these objectives if our funding is falling.' National parks are increasingly reliant on private sector grants – which, of course, makes them vulnerable to private sector demands.

### Coming Together in a Common Cause

Friends of the Dales urges our members, supporters and readers to contact their MPs about these threats. The ire and mobilisation of environmental NGOs like the RSPB, the Wildlife Trusts and the Woodland Trust are unprecedented and show the magnitude of the present danger. Friends of the Dales has joined the other national park societies in signing the Campaign for National Parks (CNP) declaration (which can be found on our website), urging co-ordination and action under #attackonnature.

At the *From Peat to Paddling* conference senior catchment partnerships officer for the Dales to Vale Rivers Network Charlotte Simons stated that, 'A healthy river is all about connections.' I would add that a healthy environmental movement is also all about connections: making links between issues, thinking laterally, forging alliances, identifying common cause, and taking action in collaboration with other like-minded groups.

Only by concerted and collective pressure from 'below' will change come about. It won't come from above; there is too much money to be made, and at our expense. For instance, all the water companies were debt-free in 1989, when water was privatised. Between 1991 and 2019 they took on £52 billion in debt. Little of this went into investing in infrastructure: a great deal of it was paid as dividends to shareholders. All too likely, the taxpayers will be asked to bail out these companies.

It is therefore time to redouble our efforts to save and regenerate our precious landscapes including, of course, our becks and rivers:

*If Government could feel the crisis of it, or if the public could make Government feel the experience of it, the industrial poisoning of the water-systems in and around England, for instance, could be cut to something negligible very quickly.*

Thus wrote future poet laureate Ted Hughes in 1970 in an essay titled *The Environmental Revolution*.

Bruce McLeod, Chair





## Successful Dales Dance Afternoon

More than 70 people, including several who arrived on the DalesBus from Leeds, came to Kettlewell Village Hall on Sunday, 20 November to enjoy an afternoon of traditional Yorkshire Dales dances. Quickly learning the moves from callers Pete and Sue Coe, people danced to the music of the Buttered Peas band plus guest player Bob Ellis, the author of *There was None of this Lazy Dancing!: Folk Tunes and Dancing from the Yorkshire Dales*, on the melodeon. It was a fun afternoon for all age groups, who were kindly fortified by the Wharfedale Brewery bar and tea and cakes from a team of Kettlewell residents, which raised £220 for Skipton Food Bank.

The revival of Dales music continues with Sunday afternoon pub sessions for musicians and singers at the Buck Inn in Buckden from 1pm to 4pm on Sunday, 8 January. For further information contact bob@bpellis.idps.co.uk



Photo courtesy of Jane Hargreaves

## Out of the Equation

The US military accounts for more than a fifth of the total fuel consumption of America and exceeds the total commercial energy consumption of nearly two-thirds of the world's countries. Military-related greenhouse gas emissions have never figured in international climate negotiations.

## All Talk but No Action



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has criticised the COP27 climate conference for falling short in pushing for the 'drastic' carbon-cutting needed to tackle global warming. He said, 'Our planet is still in the emergency room. We need to drastically reduce emissions now, and this is an issue this COP did not address.'

## In the News...

It's been great to see the key messages from our *From Peat to Paddling* conference picked up by several regional publications including *The Dalesman*, *Yorkshire Post on Saturday*, *Country Week*, *Craven Herald*, *Ilkley Gazette* and the *Wharfedale Observer*. Look out for another mention of it by our President, Dr Amy-Jane Beer, in the January edition of *Yorkshire Life* magazine.

**81%**  
The proportion of adults who said they believed nature was under threat and needed urgent protection (YouGov poll)

## ...and in the Running


Congratulations to our President Dr Amy-Jane Beer, whose book *The Flow*, about rivers and river life, has been shortlisted as one of the three best nature books of 2022 by Stephen Moss, one of Britain's leading nature writers, broadcasters and wildlife television producers.

## Rooted in the Dales

Skipton-based cellist Sarah Smout has gone back to the headwaters of the River Wharfe to create *Rooted*, a haunting film about a seemingly indestructible natural world that is anchored in deep time but now threatened by climate change.

Performing in the historic church of St Michael and All Angels, Hubberholme, Sarah combines poetry with music and song to evoke the timeless beauty and magnificence of the Dales, Iceland and Shetland.

Watch it at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpesV16-kB8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpesV16-kB8)

**UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA**

### Education Matters

In response to demands from student activists, the University of Barcelona has announced that a climate crisis module will become mandatory for all undergraduates and postgraduates from 2024.

# The National Parks Speak with One Voice



We were delighted to join an alliance of national park societies and campaigning organisations, including Campaign for National Parks (CNP), at the National Park Societies Conference at Plas y Brenin National Outdoor Centre in September, hosted by Cymdeithas Eryri/Snowdonia Society.

National Park Societies Conference 2022. Photo courtesy of Campaign for National Parks.

The two-day programme included two excellent presentations in Welsh, with live translation for those who speak only English by Bethan Wyn Jones, who works for the Snowdonia Society, and Dan Goodwin, who works for the Care for Snowdonia Partnership, set up after the first lockdown ended in 2020 to generate a volunteer force to tackle visitor issues and raise awareness.

One of the chief outputs of the event was a joint declaration, calling on governments in England and Wales to give protected landscapes (national parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) their full backing in legislation. Recognising the scale of the nature and climate emergency, the national parks are united in their call for protected landscapes in England and Wales to be given new purposes and powers that will allow them to thrive in future.

### The declaration from the national parks states:

At a time of nature and climate emergency, we must retain and strengthen the laws and policies that protect national parks and AONBs in Wales and England. This means there must be:

- no weakening or removal of vital European legislation such as the Habitats Regulations
- effective schemes of support for farmers and land managers, which safeguard rural livelihoods, reinforce nature's recovery and promote public access
- a principle of safeguarding the additional planning protections that are crucial for protected landscapes.

We are committed to working together to ensure that our protected landscapes can deliver more for nature, climate and people in future.

### The statement was signed by the following organisations:

Campaign for National Parks, Friends of the Dales, The Broads Society, Snowdonia Society, Dartmoor Preservation Association, The Exmoor Society, Friends of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, Friends of the Brecon Beacons, Friends of the Lake District, Friends of the New Forest, Friends of the Peak District, Friends of the South Downs, North York Moors Association.

Sign up to our e news via [www.friendsofthedales.org.uk](http://www.friendsofthedales.org.uk) to keep up to date on this matter, as the nature of the proposals and threats is changing fast.

Llynnau Mymbyr. Photo courtesy of Victoria Benn





# Flattening the Curve

Alex McDonald looks at the trade-offs between flood management and agriculture.

I work close to the Yorkshire Dales for a company that is passionate about reducing the risk of flooding. Since moving here, I have been thinking about how we can better protect communities whilst also preserving the landscape.

Flooding has been a problem in the Yorkshire Dales for a long time but has been getting worse, in part due to climate change. Watercourses in the national park swell quickly during heavy rainfall, which has become more frequent. Small villages and towns at increased flood risk include Pateley Bridge, which has had a number of problems, both from surface water and from the River Nidd. Pateley Bridge has flood protection including embankments running along the play park. These defences may eventually need to be redesigned or other approaches taken to protect properties due to increased frequency of intense storms and the level of floodwater.

Floods in the Dales are often due to a spike in rainfall, which quickly reaches the main rivers such as the Wharfe, Nidd and Ribble. Much of this rainfall runs directly off the fields or from the hillsides down gullies and ditches, many of which were dug to allow the land to drain to make it suitable for hill sheep farming.

## Slowing the Flow

One way of reducing the sudden increase in flow is to partially block the ditches with logs or bags, known as leaky dams. Setting aside this land to hold back and retain the water also allows the regeneration of peat bogs or wetlands. Other measures undertaken in the Dales have included the use of earth bunds and woodland creation. This is one of many methods that fall under the definition natural flood management (NFM), which is typically cheaper and better for the environment to build and maintain than traditional defences such as embankments and concrete walls.

A big constraint on these projects is the land required to store the additional water. Land

used for these projects will often be flooded for months at a time and this will limit what it can be used for. The measures put in place will need to be monitored and fixed from time to time. It's also important to remember that these projects will not solve flooding on their own and will need to be implemented alongside existing flood protection schemes.

Fortunately, there are incentives for landowners considering NFM. The Sustainable Farming Incentive pays farmers to help with mitigating climate change and improving the ecosystem of their local areas among other things. Other schemes include Flood Mitigation on Permanent Grassland, which pays farmers to slow down the flow of floodwater on their land – utilising vegetation is one such way of achieving this. NFM in the Dales will help to protect communities from being cut off by flooding and can help to increase biodiversity.

Alex McDonald, [From Peat to Paddling conference delegate](#)



Flood embankments at Pateley Bridge Park, Photo courtesy of Alex McDonald

# Wandering Along the Wenning

River Wenning, Clapham. Photo courtesy of J Thomas

I am very fortunate to live near the River Wenning and most days I walk along its banks. The Wenning is formed from Austwick and Clapham becks and flows into the River Lune. My walk is a looped path so I go along both sides of the river. I have seen lots of wildlife here, and it has given me great pleasure to see some inhabitants repeatedly over the years.

We were excited to see an otter in late July this year, although we haven't seen it since so it may have just been passing through. At the time, we watched it eating and swimming on the opposite bank before it swam further downstream. Otters are notoriously elusive, although they are of International Union for Conservation of Nature least-concern status in Great Britain. An easy way to tell whether there is an otter in the area is by its spraint (poo), which is full of fish bones and shells and smells sweet like jasmine tea. I feel very fortunate to have seen one locally.

I commonly see a couple of goosanders on my walk, which are beautiful diving ducks. The males have a mostly white body, with some black on their wings and a green head. The females look completely different, with a dark grey body and a reddish-brown head. Seeing them most days was a comfort during the lockdowns over the past few years, and happily they can still be found on this stretch of river. Earlier in 2022, we saw the mother goosander with eight adorable chicks, with a few riding on their mother's back.

Some other birds we see frequently along this stretch of river are kingfishers, which are too fast for me to photograph, but their iridescent blue flash is always exciting to see. We also see dippers and grey wagtails bobbing about on the rocks. There are many mallard ducks, and it is joyful seeing their cute ducklings in the spring.

There is also lots of flora and fauna along the banks of the river. We have often seen treecreepers and it was a delight to hear willow warblers earlier in the year. During autumn, there are often fungi to be found, and recently I found some shaggy inkcap fungi. This is quite a common fungus, but it is quite dramatic to find on a walk. I enjoy stopping with a picnic under the large oaks and sycamores and hearing the occasional splash of fish as they break the water.

Whatever the weather or season, there is always magic to be found by the river. Whether in winter with bare trees and icicles, or spring that is bursting with new life, I always look forward to what I can find there.

Tabitha Brown, Settle High School student



Shaggy inkcap fungus. Photo courtesy of Tabitha Brown



## Trustee Nancy Stedman helps to lay the groundwork for long-term monitoring of peatland above Hebden.

Friends of the Dales has made a start on the Eyes on the Bog citizen science project. We are pleased that Hebden Parish Council has agreed to join in with us to contribute to this nationwide project. The council owns a small area of moorland at Backstone Edge, just 21.44 hectares, which is currently managed under a Countryside Stewardship agreement with Natural England (due to end this year), with grazing reduced to six sheep for six months of the year. This low level of grazing means that there is already some natural regeneration of trees, mostly rowan.

In mid-October, Sheila Ely, Clerk to the Parish Council, and I arranged to meet Beth Thomas and Jessica McMaster of the Yorkshire Peat Partnership to set up monitoring plots on Backstone Edge. To my relief the day we had chosen was mild and sunny, albeit very breezy. We also benefited from the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust four-wheel drive vehicle, which, under Beth's capable steering, managed to get us a long way up the track so that we had to walk only the last 400m or so.

We were then faced with the decision about where to locate the plots. The land is fairly flat, with a low ridge dominated by heather in the middle surrounded by wet grassy bog, sloping off gently to the east. Whilst it looks quite benign, trying to walk

across it is extremely difficult – lots of big tussocks hiding dark holes and, in places, deep, narrow channels completely obscured by vegetation – resulting in one of the party sinking thigh-deep into a channel, water sloshing over her wellies...

To my relief we again took a pragmatic approach and decided upon just two plots easily accessible from the bridleway. The first plot was on the heather-clad ridge, close to recent areas of peat cutting. Residents of Hebden parish have rights of turbary, that is to cut peat for their own use. Peat cutting here has more or less ceased, with just a couple of residents exercising their rights until 2019. It was hard work both to cut and stack wet peat, and then, without horses and carts, find a way of getting the bagged peat down to the village.

### The Measure of It

Beth and Jessica quickly measured out a 4 x 4m plot, marked by canes. In the centre we pushed a steel rod down. This will be left permanently in place to record changes in the depth of peat. We were surprised and pleased to find that the peat here was over 4.5m deep and in reasonably good

condition. A second rod, treated to remove its protection on one side, was pushed down close by. This will give us an indication of the changes in water table level.

We then carried out an assessment of the vegetation within the plot – mostly heather and tufted cotton grass, with plenty of mosses including some sphagnum, and only a small amount of bare peat. Finally we took some photos of the plot and its surrounds.

The second plot was located under lower-lying grassy land. Again we marked out the plot and installed the steel rods. Here the peat was less than 0.5m deep, and the vegetation was dominated by grasses, cotton grass and mosses, mostly star moss, but very little sphagnum.

All our findings will be fed into the database managed by the University of Leeds, and over time will show where changes are occurring and to what extent. Then next spring Sheila and I will return to check the depth of peat and water table level and re-survey the vegetation cover. I hope we pick a fine day, and I hope we can locate the rods again.

Nancy Stedman, trustee

# Eyes on the Bog Grass-roots Level Science

## What?

Eyes on the Bog is funded as part of the Great North Bog large-scale restoration initiative and is a scheme that enables scientifically robust, repeatable, low-tech, low-cost, long-term monitoring on peatland sites.

Once set up, data can be easily and sustainably collected by staff or trained volunteers. *Friends of the Dales* now has eight groups of volunteers working across the Yorkshire Dales, trained up over the summer by Beth, Jess and the team at Yorkshire Peat Partnership, who are running the project. Agreeing sites with landowners and mapping out each team's 4 x 4m monitoring plot took place in the autumn months. Nancy's team, which is monitoring a site above Hebden, was the first team to go live.

The basic techniques the teams will use have been designed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature Peatlands Programme. The standardised procedures mean that peatlands can be monitored across the UK to a consistent standard, creating a network of sites that can be easily and reliably compared with one another.

## Where?

Eyes on the Bog sites can include damaged peatlands, peatlands under restoration or peatlands in good condition. Yorkshire Peat Partnership has a variety of sites already set up across the Yorkshire Dales but also welcomes suggestions from volunteers as to local sites, which it will then aim to set up in agreement and consultation with local landowners.

## How?

Since Eyes on the Bog aims to establish a simple, repeatable set of guidelines about how to collect the basic information needed to assess the condition of peatlands and the effectiveness of restoration techniques, volunteer teams use rust rods and surface level rods. They are also trained in how to conduct a Von Post test to determine soil characteristics and identify peatland vegetation.

The data gathered from the sites is fed into the PeatDataHub hosted by Leeds University, enabling direct comparison from one site to another. It also enables the Great North Bog partners, such as Yorkshire Peat Partnership, to refine the Peatland Code and test long-term climate predictions.

## Watch this space

If you are interested in becoming an Eyes on the Bog peatland monitor, we will be looking for volunteers again in the spring. Full details will follow in our spring edition of the *Yorkshire Dales Review*.

Victoria Benn, Membership & Events Officer

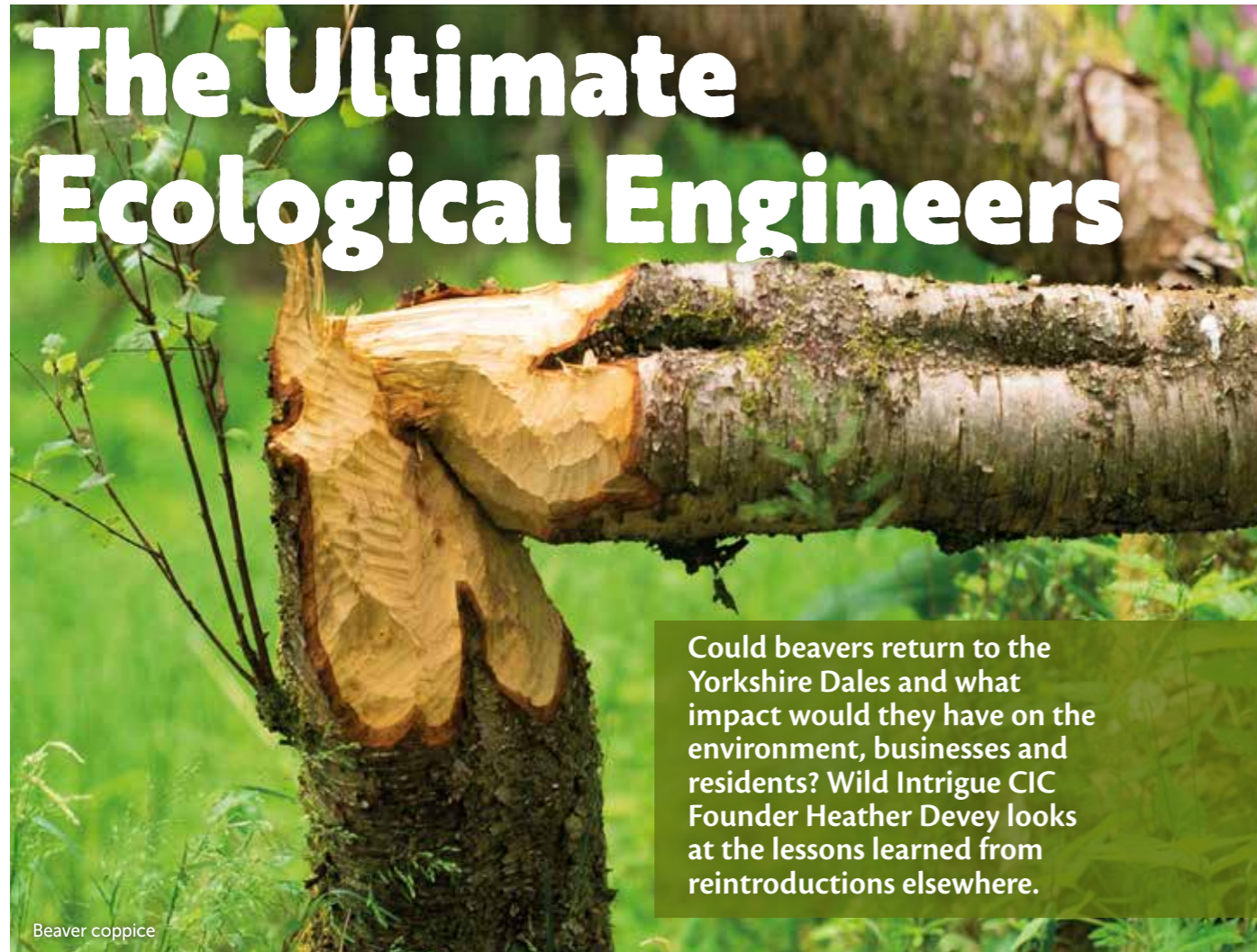


Jessica McMaster and Sheila Ely setting up a monitoring plot on Backstone Edge

# Ground-breaking Science



# The Ultimate Ecological Engineers



Beaver coppice

Could beavers return to the Yorkshire Dales and what impact would they have on the environment, businesses and residents? Wild Intrigue CIC Founder Heather Devey looks at the lessons learned from reintroductions elsewhere.

I still remember my first immersion in a landscape influenced by beavers. The trees were just turning to their autumn finery, and as I drove down the track of Bamff Wildland in Perthshire an autumn blaze of mature birch and oak cocooned me. Chaffinches and tits darted through the canopy and a pair of red squirrels dashed across the track.

But I was far too distracted by layers of woody dams that compounded water, which leached through and flowed slowly away. Between the tiers, artisan woodwork was strewn – embellished with telltale toothmarks – some blackened with age, most sprouting new, bushy life. Such carpentry and hydrological engineering had persisted on the Bamff Estate for around 20 years following the introduction of beavers, and the results were simply incomparable to anything I had seen before.

At the time, the Bamff Estate (now known as Bamff Wildland) was one of only a handful of places in Britain that had seen the return of this native species. The last Eurasian beavers (*Castor fiber*) in Britain became extinct by human hands around 400 years ago, mainly due to high demand for their fur from the European hat trade, and for their castoreum (an oil-like secretion) and meat.

Until this point, humans (and many other species) had not only coexisted with beavers but had coevolved with them. Anatomical features make beavers nature's most accomplished wetland engineers and architects: iron-enforced incisors gnaw through wood; hand-

like forefeet build dams and dig channels; and a seemingly tireless nocturnal 'work ethic' makes beavers quick to respond during periods of extreme weather events.

This unassuming herbivore has an outstanding impact on restoring wildlife and healthy water systems where (re)introduced. Beavers need at least one metre's depth of water to feel secure, so in low-energy systems where this depth doesn't already exist, they may compound water by creating leaky dams. Water is still allowed to seep through, around and over the top – depending upon the flow upstream. Dams are most often made with branches from coppiced trees, stones and mud from the stream bank – however, a prosthetic leg has even been found in one. On wider, deeper catchments, there is already the depth that beavers require – so these are not dammed.

Pools formed behind dams have been studied across Britain and Europe, and repeatedly demonstrate the return of wildlife en masse. Amphibians breed and feed on the mass of freshwater invertebrates sheltering in the woody debris. Bats roost and woodpeckers nest in drowned trees, while water voles dart for safety through freshly carved beaver channels. Fish have been found to benefit across many sites too, with dams and debris providing shelter from predators, and shrubby, bank-side coppices maintaining steady pool temperatures.

This vast impact on wildlife and hydrology also makes the beaver a 'keystone species'. Unlike us in many instances, beavers largely work *with* water, as opposed to against it; encouraging and complementing

its flow through careful, responsive management. In periods of drought, they may create more dams and deepen channels to make every drop count; whereas during extreme storm events, notches are added to dams to let water pass, whilst protecting their overall integrity and slowing the flow of water downstream.

## Living Alongside Colonies

Despite the beavers' impressive expertise in dam and water management, sometimes we will need to step in to help manage dams (following Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs guidelines) to allow neighbouring land use, such as farming or public footpaths, to continue. For example, the height of pools behind dams can be controlled with various models of 'flow devices', pipes essentially, which will allow water to pass at a height suitable for us whilst keeping the beaver colony, dam and wetland. There are many tried and approved solutions to mitigate beaver impacts in 'unsuitable' areas, which can be explored in the brilliant *Beaver Management Handbook* by Dr Roisin Campbell-Palmer et al.

Although beavers will cause problems in some locations, particularly without prior consideration of their return, it is becoming widely considered that the benefits of this species restoration far outweigh this.

Although progress has been slow, there is hope. In October this year, Eurasian beavers in England were afforded legal protection as a European Protected Species (EPS), joining their Scottish counterparts, which were given similar legal protection in May 2019. Until now, beaver reintroductions in England have been permitted only in licensed 'enclosed trial releases', with the exception of the Devon Beaver Trial – England's first (legally sanctioned) free-living beaver population. In northern England, these enclosed trials include Lowther Estate in the Lake District and Cropton Forest in North Yorkshire, with other licences for enclosed release currently being considered although no plans have been announced for the Yorkshire Dales as yet.

However, the real benefits of beavers, particularly in restoring the health and natural management of water, can truly be gained only on a catchment-wide scale ie by bringing back the beaver without enclosures. Following the announcement of legal protection for beavers, Natural England and a diversity of organisations working with

wildlife, land and water are deliberating over the results of Defra's 2021 consultation on the *Approach to the Reintroduction and Management of Beavers in England* (see [www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)).

It is very possible that the results of this consultation could soon result in licences being available for both enclosed trial and wild beaver releases, with strict guidelines and protocols in place for both to achieve a licence.

Whether you are a 'beaver believer' or not, I would urge you to think and talk about what the restoration of beavers might mean for you, and to discuss this with others.

## The European Experience

This October I joined a study trip in Bavaria, a heavily farmed landscape that welcomed the return of beavers in the 1960s. Throughout all the discussions with farmers, hunters, conservationists, local authorities, beaver consultants and others, the continuous message was to start talking with each other about beavers, to make the most of their eventual return, and to plan for living alongside them. We all have incredibly varied points of view when it comes to beaver restoration, but our discussions must follow accurate science, take rumour with a pinch of salt, and be based on trust and openness.

Beavers are already proving that they can be a vital ally to us all in fighting the more extreme localised impacts of climate change, and can make our waters, and lives, just that little bit more intriguing. We must not wait for the day that they swim through our rivers to talk about them, no matter what our outlook on this ecosystem engineer is.

Heather Devey, Founder and Co-Director, Wild Intrigue CIC

More information at [www.beavertrust.org](http://www.beavertrust.org) or contact Heather at [heather@wildintrigue.co.uk](mailto:heather@wildintrigue.co.uk)



Beaver eating. Photos courtesy of Wild Intrigue



Bamff Wildland beaver dam



# From Peat to Paddling



Fleet Moss (peatland)  
Source of the River Wharfe

Oughtershaw



Hubberholme

Cleanest spot was just up from Hubberholme Bridge

Cray

Buckden

Kettlewell

Kilnsey

Grassington

Pateley Bridge

Malham

Run-off from Farms  
(chemicals; livestock manure/slurry)



Appletreewick

Bolton Abbey

Skipton

Addingham

First officially designated bathing water status



Ilkley

Burley in Wharfedale

Ingress of Micro-plastic waste  
(Tree-guards, Bottles, Feed Bags, Silage wrap)



Otley

Pool in Wharfedale

Harewood

Collingham

Run-off from roads



Boston Spa



Tadcaster

YORK

Kirkby Wharfe

Cawood

After several months of planning, we held a very successful annual conference on Saturday, 24 September 2022, based in the Devonshire Institute's main hall in Grassington. Over 170 delegates enjoyed thought-provoking presentations from six highly regarded speakers with a wealth of professional and personal interests in the health of rivers in the Yorkshire Dales.

Chaired on the day by our Vice President, Mark Corner, the afternoon concluded with a challenging question and answer session. Visit our YouTube channel (Friends of the Dales) to see all six presentations in the comfort of your own home (filmed and edited by Ruth Garrett, Campaign for National Parks New Perspectives Bursary award winner featured on page 18). We've combined a range of personal reflections and take-aways in the reports and illustration over the next five pages.

## Mapping Out the Way to Healthier Rivers

Why is the condition of our watercourses so important and what can we do to help? Our six speakers share their thoughts.

**Tim Thom, Peat Programme Manager, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust:**

*Our peatlands are like Cinderella: they're sat there doing all the work, saving our climate, reducing our flooding, and storing all our water, and we treat them really badly.*

**How to Help**

- Five per cent of UK carbon emissions are due to degraded peat.
- Demand that your local nursery doesn't use it in any horticultural products.

**Dr Amy-Jane Beer, President, Friends of the Dales:**

*We have become disassociated from [the lifeblood of the planet] now the river comes out of our taps.*

**How to Help**

- We need greater access to our rivers for health, recreation, understanding and respect.
- Reintroduce beavers.
- Think like a river...

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

*Physical diversity begets biological diversity.*

**How to Help**

- Ninety-four per cent of the Wharfe is artificially constrained – we must give rivers space.
- We need to think of water first (rather than focus on the land and assume water will be OK).
- Resist the urge to tidy up.

**Charlotte Simons, Senior Catchment Partnership Officer, Dales to Vale River Network:**

*A healthy river is all about connections.*

**How to Help**

- Slow the flow eg increase organic matter in our soils, have a pond and/or water butt in the garden.
- Check/clean/dry to prevent the spread of invasive species.
- Support your local environmental trust.

**Dr Martin Christmas, Area Environment Manager North Yorkshire, Environment Agency:**

*Being in nature and having recreation in and around rivers is really important to all of us.*

**How to Help**

- Only put the 3 Ps in the loo: poo, pee, paper.
- Improve links with transport (and infrastructure planning): 18% of problems in rivers come from roads.

**Professor Rick Battarbee, Emeritus Professor of Environmental Change, University College London:**

*The big issue is 'river restoration': how to improve water quality and restore habitats for freshwater life along Dales rivers.*

**How to Help**

- Use tap water carefully and wisely.
- Minimise surface run-off from the house and garden.
- Become a member of the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust.
- Join a local environment group and argue the case for water.

**Key to symbols**

Site-specific

- Peatland
- Bridge
- Weir
- Sewage Works
- Award Rosette

General

- Run-off - Farms
- Run-off - Roads
- Micro-plastics







# STOP THE SPREAD

Invasive plants and animals harm the environment and block waterways. They can be small and hard to spot so are easily spread on damp clothing and equipment.

## Protect the environment you enjoy:

### CHECK

**Check** your equipment, boat, and clothing after leaving the water for mud, aquatic animals or plant material. Remove anything you find and leave it at the site.

### CLEAN

**Clean** everything thoroughly as soon as you can, paying attention to areas that are damp or hard to access. Use hot water if possible.

### DRY

**Dry** everything for as long as you can before using elsewhere as some invasive plants and animals can survive for over two weeks in damp conditions.

Find out more about invasive plants and animals and how you can help to stop the spread at [nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry](http://nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry)

# From Peat to Paddling My Take-Home Messages

Alex McDonald has a personal and professional interest in Dales rivers and attended our annual conference in September. He shares his thoughts on the most important issues addressed by the speakers.

**Professor Rick Battarbee** (*University College London*) homed in on the importance of looking at a number of sites across a catchment, not just at individual ones with high pollution rates. His presentation focused on how widespread the problem of pollution is in our rivers, occurring along most of the reach. By harnessing the power of citizen science, Rick was able to see the scale of pollution and understand where it was worse.

#### Key points

- River pollution is a catchment-wide problem and occurs far upstream.
- Citizen science is a powerful tool for scientific monitoring.
- Pollution isn't confined to urban areas and sewage discharges.

The poor status of our watercourses is a problem caused by land management and drainage, a viewpoint shared by **Dr Martin Christmas** (*Environment Agency*), who said that humans can also reverse the status of rivers and restore broken connections in watercourses that have been put in place through the use of weirs, culverts and other structures. Martin also stressed the importance of keeping cattle out of rivers and creating buffer strips to allow a healthier watercourse.

#### Key points

- A lot of our watercourses are failing the standards set due to lack of connectivity.
- It is up to humans to make the U-turn.
- It's important to create buffer strips and fence off rivers from cattle.

**Professor Jonathan Grey** (*Wild Trout Trust*) highlighted that the problem of connectivity for fish is not just physical barriers that have been put in place by humans, but also constraints on the watercourse itself, a problem occurring across the entire catchment. Letting the watercourse migrate naturally where possible allows the habitats for species to become established. Jonathan also stressed the importance of riparian buffer zones for species such as trout, which rely on food from the canopy as a large part of their diet.

#### Key points

- Even in their upper catchments rivers are constrained.
- Connectivity is a big barrier for fish.
- A good riparian buffer is important for trout and contributes a large part of their diet.

**Charlotte Simons** (*Dales to Vale Rivers Network*) focused on improving the health of watercourses by holding pollutants back and storing water, whilst also connecting wildlife corridors to the river, to allow a healthier catchment.

#### Key points

- Think beyond the river and use methods for holding back water and sediment on land.
- Linking habitats with wildlife corridors is important for the health of the catchment.
- Non-native species are a huge problem and we have a responsibility to protect our watercourses.

**Tim Thom** (*Yorkshire Wildlife Trust*) focused on peatland as a store of carbon and water. Tim's management techniques are aimed at restoring peatlands, which in turn provides benefit both on a catchment scale, by holding back water to reduce the likelihood of flooding, and on a global scale, by helping to store carbon.

#### Key points

- Peat stores a significant amount of carbon and water.
- It's important to reverse the damage created by previous upland drainage.
- Peat supports a great diversity of species.

**Dr Amy-Jane Beer** (*writer, naturalist and biologist*) focused on the sense of wellbeing that rivers give us. She looked beyond the river as merely a mechanism for moving water, but instead as a means of connecting to nature. It should be respected, not only for its tranquillity but also for its power.

#### Key points

- Rivers are an important source of wellbeing and help us connect to nature.
- Adjusting the way people think of rivers can alter how we treat them.
- Respect the power of rivers.

The main message that I took away from the conference is that we should all think about how we can better connect with our rivers, and what we can give back to reverse the damage that has been done.

Alex McDonald, conference delegate



# The Wisdom of a Bear of Little Brain

Children's author Katie Daynes revisits a children's classic and finds a surprising insight into modern environmental issues. In a preliminary sketch for a possible book project, she looks at what the writing of AA Milne has to say about our freshwater habitats.

For more on Friends of the Dales *From Peat to Paddling* Conference see pages 12-15, download the talks from [www.friendsofthedales.org.uk/news](http://www.friendsofthedales.org.uk/news) or visit our YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/channel/UCCeeQgF4Hmv5J8jtJqghAw](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCeeQgF4Hmv5J8jtJqghAw)

Illustrations by Nadira Wallace

The excellent Friends of the Dales conference on the health of our rivers brought to mind one of my favourite chapter openings in A A Milne's Winnie the Pooh stories. Our Chair, Bruce McLeod, has challenged me to interpret it, in the light of what we learned at the conference, so here goes...

By the time it came to the edge of the Forest the stream had grown up, so that it was almost a river,

Trees play an important role in river wildlife, providing shade, slowing erosion and run-off and enabling biodiversity. They're part of the HABITAT MOSAIC that's crucial for the various life stages of wild trout. As Professor Jonathan Grey confided in us, trout really do grow on trees (or, at least, little fry benefit from the safe nursery backwaters that trees and their roots provide)\*.

and, being grown-up, it did not run and jump and sparkle along as it used to when it was younger, but moved more slowly.

The river matures. It's now fully formed. Its tributaries have united. They can settle down on their journey – and enjoy the view. There's a confidence here – a self-awareness. Rivers have rights too.

For it knew now where it was going, and it said to itself, 'There is no hurry. We shall get there some day.'

Dr Amy-Jane Beer encouraged us to 'think like a river'. Rivers need time and space to be themselves. Once they reach the broader valleys and flood plains, they naturally want to slow their flow and meander. They don't want to be channelled and hurried along. Limit a river's options and it's more likely to rebel and cause flood damage. Sound familiar?



And yet a shocking 94% of the River Wharfe is artificially constrained – forced to go faster and keep to an unchanging channel. No sediment, no marshland flora and fauna, no trapping of carbon nor protection of habitat. Hence Professor Grey's call to REINVIGORATE THE RIPARIAN and Dr Martin Christmas's commitment to restoring natural flood management. To quote A A Milne's character Eeyore, 'Weeds are flowers, too, once you get to know them.'

\*Following Professor Grey's example, I'm citing wild trout here as a totemic species. Other living things matter too.



Waterfalls and rapids bring joy and awe to our experience of rivers: a purpose for a walk, a thrill for a kayaker, a challenge for a leaping salmon.

Back in the uplands, there's more work to be done. Streams have been confined to narrow routes between fields when they'd much rather be exploring. Give them a wider strip to play with and a few fences to keep out grazing sheep and cattle, then the streams are unshackled, free to go this way and that again. Vegetation grows back, habitats develop and nature flourishes.

But all the little streams higher up in the Forest went this way and that, quickly, eagerly, having so much to find out before it was too late.

The role of citizen science comes to mind. Professor Rick Battarbee and his band of volunteers managed to sample the Wharfe at each point of its journey, at exactly the same time. His results on sewage content made headline news around the country.

A A Milne's chapter opening ends here, but my rambling river thoughts continue. Dr Beer described rivers as the veins of our landscape, a multi-sensory experience of light, sounds and smell. And she marvelled at their CONSTANT FLOW.

There is an inevitability to a river's course. Somehow or other, it will reach the sea. What happens on its journey is immensely important, both to our landscape and to the nature it nourishes. But it's humbling to remember that the sea isn't the end of a river's journey. This constant flow, coursing through our country's veins, relies on the never-ending WATER CYCLE, evaporating water from the sea, condensing it in clouds and releasing it as rain, hail and snow.

That's almost enough musings from me, but I can't finish a reflection on Winnie the Pooh and the health of rivers without reference to one of Christopher Robin's favourite pastimes - Pooh Sticks.

[Sometimes,] if [you stand] on the bottom rail of a bridge and lean over to watch the river slipping slowly away beneath [you], then [you will] suddenly know everything that there [is] to be known.

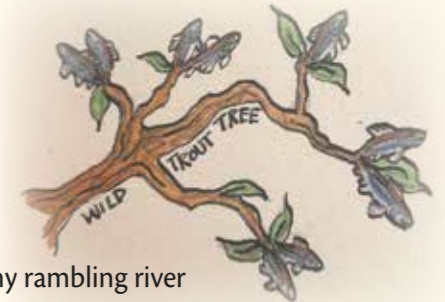


Illustration by E H Shepard, from *The House at Pooh Corner* by A A Milne

**Take from this what you will, but don't take rivers for granted.**

Extracts taken from chapter 6, *The House at Pooh Corner* by A A Milne (1928)



Anthony and Ruth with camera set up



Anthony being interviewed by Ruth

# Filming on the Farm

**Awarded a New Perspectives Bursary from Campaign for National Parks (CNP) in 2022, Ruth Garrett took up the challenge of telling her own story of one Dales farmer, creating a warm and funny six-minute documentary film. Below Ruth shares that journey, and her own love of the national park.**

I graduated in 2019 with a BA(Hons) Film & Television degree from the University of Lincoln, and promptly fled to so-called 'greener pastures' nearer London. Whilst making my living with temporary jobs, I was working out what to do with this suddenly responsible adult life of mine. Then 2020. When the first restrictions were lifted, I came home to Skipton on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

I was raised stomping round moorland and muddy woods in the Dales. The landscape of the national park was my childhood comfort and my escape. Moving back to Skipton meant I had this privilege on my doorstep once again at a time when I, like many others, needed it most. I'm incredibly lucky to be able to access the Dales and I don't take this for granted.

I've been involved in the environmental sector as a volunteer for Friends of the Dales

since I was 15, and have a strong interest in local history, heritage and conservation. Early in 2020 I worked for our Capturing the Past project, leading the digital archiving of the *Yorkshire Dales Review*. I read every one of the 150 editions published at that point. To say this was a crash course in Dales environmental history is an understatement.

## Seizing the Moment

Then in 2021 I saw an opportunity to apply for a New Perspectives Bursary from Campaign for National Parks. I hoped this would enable me to combine my media skills with my love for the Dales. The bursaries, offered in conjunction with Ocean City Media, would 'support young storytellers to share their stories about People, Climate and Nature in National Parks in England and Wales'. It sounded like it had been made specifically for me.

So what should my story be? When digitising the back catalogue of the *Yorkshire Dales Review*, I'd read an article by Anthony Bradley, a farmer from Mearbeck and at the time a trustee for Friends of the Dales. He wrote about how ruminants could have a positive effect on carbon emissions if managed correctly. I had found my topic. People? Yep! Climate? Check! Nature? Sure!

Anthony kindly agreed to be the subject of my film documentary and I applied for the bursary. I was one of just 10 successful applicants and the only Dales representative. My documentary would be on *Sustainable Carbon Farming in the Yorkshire Dales National Park*.

## More Than Just Making a Living

During the spring of 2022 I filmed at Anthony's farm. I watched a ewe cleaning her lamb, only a few minutes old, wobbling around on unsteady new legs. I went on a trip to the vets to drop off faecal samples (sheep droppings) to be checked for parasites. I saw calves leave the shed for the first time and run through fresh, long grass.

But what I saw the most was how much it all meant.

Anthony is immensely knowledgeable and has researched the best regenerative farming practices extensively to adapt them for his farm – he gave me a two-page reading list after our first Zoom call. He uses the biology of the grass and carbon cycle to optimise grass growth and create more food for his animals without using nitrogen fertilisers. 'Sunlight and rain's free i't it, and all we're

doing is turning solar power into summat you can eat.' He's open about the fact that his farm needs to make money so reducing input costs is essential. In my film Anthony insists 'It's not pure altruism at all' but, as he chuckles, 'that doesn't mean I'm uninterested in what [farmers] would call all the "bunny hugger stuff".'

I went into this film curious about the science of farming; about how you could move the jigsaw pieces around and create a method that didn't negatively affect the environment. What I didn't expect was just how much heart I would find. Farming isn't just an industry: it's an emotional core to people's lives and a way to live. In my film Anthony eloquently describes farming as a 'disease' that you don't want to be cured of, that you can't be cured of.

The support from CNP and Ocean City Media has been invaluable. My technical skills in cinematography and video editing have improved massively and I'm proud of how my abilities have progressed. I put some of those skills to practical use in filming and editing

the presentations at the *From Peat to Paddling* conference run by Friends of the Dales in September 2022. But mostly I've gained confidence in my ability as a storyteller and how to craft an emotional narrative.

I came away from this project with an even deeper love and understanding of this special area and a desire to set myself up as a filmmaker with my freelance business, Kittiwake Productions. The Dales provides for the people who live here and we can provide for the Dales in return.

Ruth Garrett, CNP New Perspectives Bursary Holder 2022

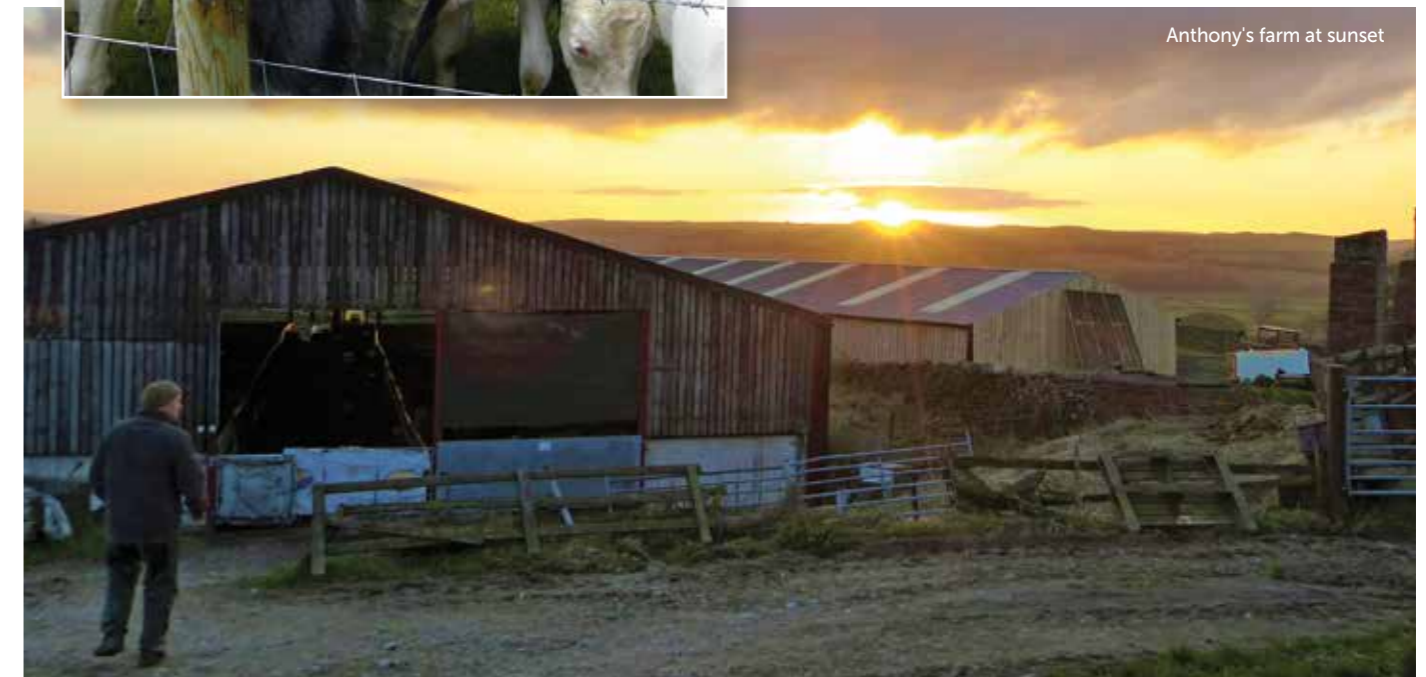
Ruth expects her film to be released by CNP in January 2023. It will be available on their website [www.cnp.org.uk](http://www.cnp.org.uk). We will link via Friends of the Dales e-news, website and social media.

Anthony Bradley is a continuing member of our policy & planning committee and has welcomed Friends of the Dales to his farm on several occasions.

Ruth Garrett can be contacted at [info.kittiwakeproductions@gmail.com](mailto:info.kittiwakeproductions@gmail.com)



Anthony's farm at sunset





# Blowing Away the Cobwebs in Three Peaks Country

## Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust Deputy Chief Executive Michael Devlin takes to his bike to explore the limestone landscapes of the western Dales.

I moved back to Yorkshire over four years ago. I chose the Dales because of the allure of the Tour de France Grand Départ back in 2014 and seeing the many fantastic cycling routes in and around the Dales - a decision I have not regretted. We are spoilt for choice: there are many small back roads with little traffic and, of course, lots of challenging climbs that reward you with amazing Dales vistas... Park Rash, Fleet Moss and Langcliffe Scar to name but a few.

I always feel privileged to work in Clapham, such an idyllic setting in the heart of the Dales. The Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT) office is based in the small old post office and now accommodates 30 staff. Thankfully we are very rarely all there at once, with people out working on a range of projects that support the communities, landscape and wildlife of the area.

When I get the chance, a favourite ride of mine is up Kingsdale. You can leave Clapham via the Old Road, which takes you all the way to Ingleton, pass over the river as if heading to the Waterfalls Trail and keep going to Thornton-in-Lonsdale. A quick right and you are heading up Thornton Lane to Kingsdale, Dent and beyond.

I'm struck by how this landscape has been managed by natural processes such as glaciation but also by farming. Just up the track from Thornton is a little-visited panoramic viewpoint that YDMT helped to install at the turn of the century. It shows the fantastic scenery beyond the Dales to the north and south and is the perfect place to sit and while away the hours.

As I continue to climb the hill that natural landscape speaks more clearly. To the right is the Roman road that now connects people to the famous waterfalls in Ingleton (the Dales are full of old roads, tracks and routes like this) whilst on the other side are the Cheese Press Stones and some of the best caving this country has to offer. I'm not a caver

myself but I'm told there are miles of magical passages all along this road and, of course, the wonderful Yordas Cave, which anyone can visit with a torch and wellies.

### Farming With Nature

Further along the road you come to Kingsdale Head Farm, where we have been working recently. This farm covers 1,503 hectares, with 1,100 being peatland. The owners are farming it in a sustainable way and the farm managers have been very welcoming. We took a group of vulnerable young adults there recently and helped to remove hundreds of plastic tree guards as part of our Plastic Free Woodlands project. We're hoping to do a lot more at this iconic location soon.

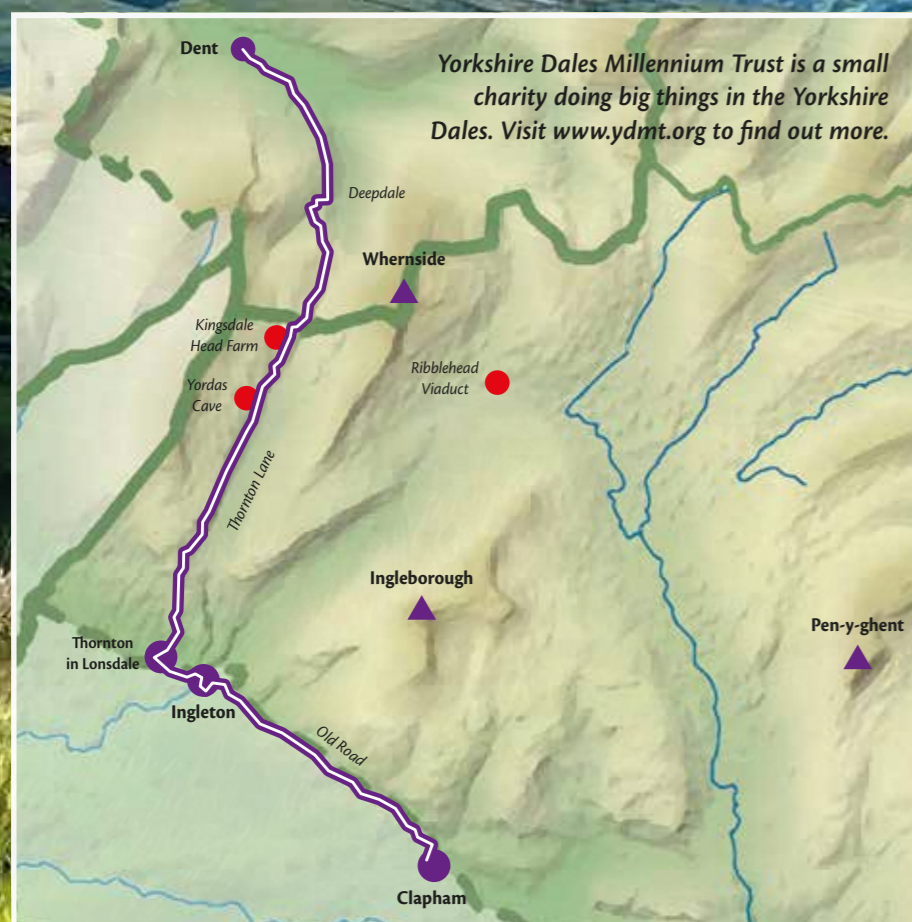
Kingsdale Head Farm is the top of the catchment for Kingsdale Beck, which flows into the River Greta and then into the River Lune and on to the coast. Along the usually dry beck the team at the farm have planted thousands of trees - and we're hoping to bring groups out there in the winter to help them do more. It's really worth stopping here to see how a greater biodiversity is already returning to this farm. This is being done by using a small herd of cattle to change the impact of grazing as well as blocking drainage channels.

By now you will be feeling the climb. The couple of farm gates provides a short respite as you push on with gradients consistently over 10%. It is worth it when you reach the

top: the view into Dentdale sweeps around and, with Whernside to your right, you do feel as if you have climbed one of the Three Peaks. The descent into Dentdale is steep with more farm gates, so a controlled one is advised...

It is one of my favourite rides as I feel as if I am in the wilderness: a secret dale that is rarely visited. For me this is when I can fully relax, appreciate life and this wonderful landscape and recharge - ready for what will undoubtedly be another busy day at YDMT. Once at the top you can turn around to head back to Clapham for a short but punchy 20km ride or, for the more adventurous, head to Dent for a rewarding pint at the Sun Inn.

Michael Devlin, Deputy Chief Executive, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust





# A Warning from the Lake District



After hugging the banks of the River Wharfe for much of their 79-mile hike, Dales Way walkers can look forward to dipping their toes in Windermere, England's largest lake. Or should that be the country's greatest cesspool?

In fact, Windermere's water is so polluted with phosphates that the resultant blooms of toxic blue-green algae pose a danger to human health. In the short film *Our Lake is Dying* zoologist Matt Staniek kayaks from the head of the catchment to the shoreline looking for the main source of the contamination.

Is it agriculture? Unlikely, Staniek talks to farmer Chris Hodgson, who has planted 15,000-20,000 trees, creating riparian strips that prevent erosion into the upper reaches of the beck that are rich in fish, frogs, dippers, dragonflies, invertebrates and aquatic plants.

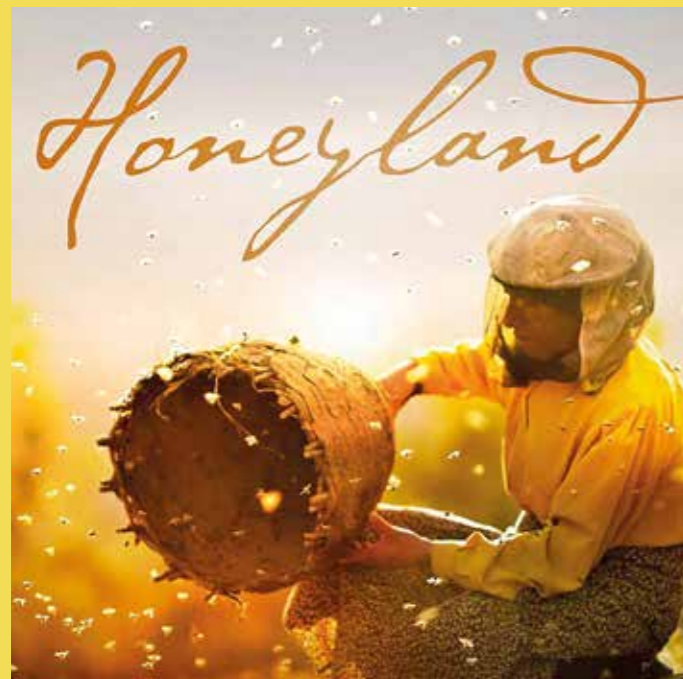
Yet beyond the confluence with the River Rothay past Grasmere sewage plant, the underlying rocks are covered in thick, phosphate-loving algae. Conditions are even worse below a second treatment works at Ambleside, where analysis by the charity WildFish has shown a 44% decline in invertebrate species.

How times have changed. In 1980, I spent a pleasant morning fishing for freshwater crustaceans and other creepy-crawlies in crystal-clear waters on the River Rothay as part of an A-level field studies course. By the end of the decade my colleagues on the *Westmorland Gazette* were reporting on algal blooms in Windermere – but nothing on the scale of 2022, when they covered the entire north basin.

Water company United Utilities is coy about releasing data but in 2021 sewage was discharged into the lake catchment for over 233 full 24-hour days.

Lynn Leadbeater, Friends of the Dales volunteer

See the video at [www.savewindermere.com](http://www.savewindermere.com)



Set in the rural landscape of Bekirlija, North Macedonia, *Honeyland* focuses on the life of beekeeper Hatidže, who spends her days looking after her frail mother and hive of bees. This documentary is a fascinating study of various environmental topics, particularly the decline of the world's bee population and the worrying part that increasing consumerism plays in this. This undercurrent of consumerism is most ironically on display when Hatidže takes a trip to her local town and purchases a box of hair dye, a direct contrast to her otherwise off-the-grid life.

The film's conflict surrounding the arrival of a nomadic family is so engaging that it almost makes you forget you are watching real events unfold. Their presence in the film is fascinating and infuriating, especially when you perceive the cruel manner in which they treat their livestock and their greed for money, an avarice prompting them to set up their own beehives. This development is much at Hatidže's expense, the film eventually showing us the impact this has on her and her bees. Having this focus in the film establishes a very personal tale about how capitalism and the climate crisis affects even the most rural areas of our world.

*Honeyland* is also a feast for the eyes, gloriously displaying the Macedonian landscape. It is a treat to see such undisturbed nature in an ever-growing industrial world. The contrast between the natural environment where Hatidže lives and works and her trips to the town are stark and disorientating as we are reminded of the world most people now inhabit. It is also impressive to note that the film crew spent over three years gathering the footage, a legacy that now provides a thorough insight into a rural way of life and the lasting influence a nomadic family has on it.

Beatrice Benn, Year 11 pupil at Skipton Girls' High School

## Events Planner - Winter 2023

### Digital Talk: Wild Ingleborough

Wednesday, 18 January 2023

4:30pm

Launched in 2021, Wild Ingleborough is a multi-partner, landscape-scale conservation project aiming to create a wilder future for the Ingleborough area of the Yorkshire Dales. In this online talk Ellie Parker, Community Engagement Officer for the project, will showcase the team's ongoing work to combat the impacts of the climate crisis by protecting fragile upland habitats, increasing the area's biodiversity and establishing more habitats for key endangered species. In the long term Wild Ingleborough aims to become an exemplary model for nature restoration in the English uplands.

This talk is free for all: to book your place email [victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk](mailto:victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk)

### Digital Talk: Plastic-Free Woodlands

Wednesday, 1 February 2023

4:30pm

Fifty million trees must be planted each year to counteract Britain's contribution to climate change. Trees often need protecting from grazing animals or harsh weather conditions to become established but, without radical changes to the way we plant trees, 1.5 billion plastic tubes may end up littering the environment and damaging ecosystems by 2050. In this online talk Mike Appleton, Plastic-Free Woodlands Project Officer for Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, will talk about its ongoing project to break our reliance on plastic and find sustainable alternatives for woodland creation. Vice President of Friends of the Dales Mark Corner will also be sharing his experiences of 'planting without plastic'.

This talk is free for all: to book your place email [victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk](mailto:victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk)

Booking for our events is easy. Either email our Membership & Events Officer, Victoria Benn, at [victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk](mailto: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](http://www.friendsofthedales.org.uk).

### Digital Talk: Raptor Persecution

Wednesday, 22 February 2023

4:30pm

As Investigations Officer for the RSPB, Howard Jones works with the police to investigate crimes against threatened wild bird species, from undercover surveillance to catching offenders right through to the courtroom. In this online talk Howard will bring 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.

This talk is free for all: to book your place email [victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk](mailto:victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk)



RSPB Recording a pole trap on Widdale Fell. Photo courtesy of G Shorrock

### Walk: Social Stroll

Wednesday, 22 March 2023

9:30am – 1:00pm

The first of our Social Strolls, created for those who want to walk over less arduous terrain with time to chat and socialise as they go. This walk also promotes the benefit of using buses to get out into the Yorkshire landscape, incorporating a linear route back. Meeting at Skipton bus station, walkers will take the bus to Gargrave, returning to Skipton by the Leeds & Liverpool canal towpath. Once back in Skipton, there will be the option of concluding the walk in a café for refreshments or lunch. Dogs on a lead welcome on the walk (though not in the café unless RAD).

This walk is free for all, but booking is essential as numbers are limited. To secure your place email [victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk](mailto: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 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](http://www.friendsofthedales.org.uk)

You can also follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

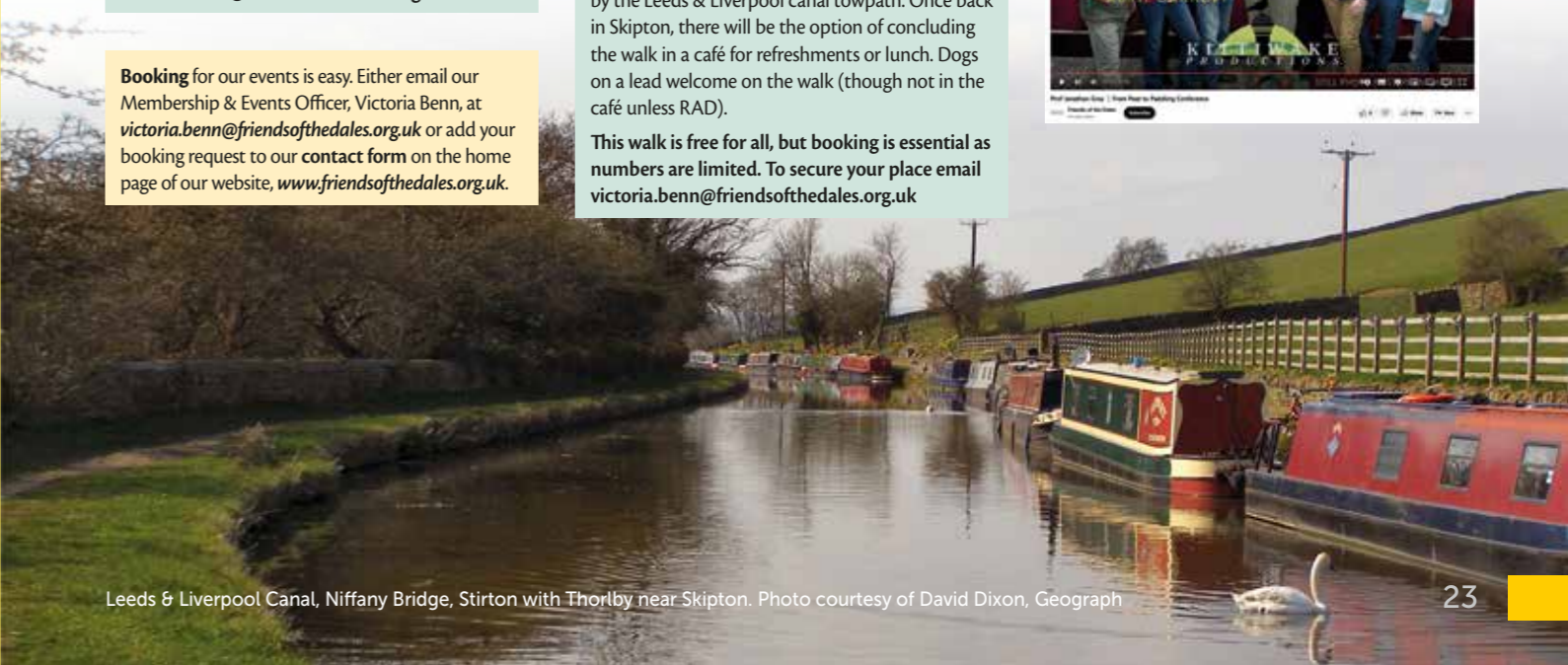


### Catch up on YouTube

If you missed one of our talks first time round, you can now watch them on YouTube.

Look out for our page and subscribe to be notified of all the latest videos.

Our YouTube channel now hosts 12 films on a wide range of environmental subjects gleaned from our successful digital talks programme. For those that prefer tuning into sound and vision, it's the perfect place to find out more about our Living Verges campaign, the plight of our decimated peatlands and what's been done to restore them, walking in the Orton fells and around Crummackdale and the work of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – amongst several other subjects. We post updates about new video uploads on our social media pages or you can subscribe to the channel to be notified. Visit [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and search for Friends of the Dales.





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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](#)

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