

Yorkshire **DALES** review

New Voices



.....

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.....

Friends of the
DALES
YORKSHIRE DALES SOCIETY

Front Cover: Future Leaders
course participants.
Photo courtesy of Harriet Gardiner

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Contents

3-4 News

5 A Breath of Fresh Air

Jonathan Riley

6-7 Picturing the Future

Molly Simmons.

A PhD researcher at
the University of Leeds
with a keen interest
in landscapes and
the people in them,
Molly is currently
working with various
stakeholders in the Yorkshire Dales
to understand their priorities for the
future of this special landscape.



8-9 Pictures Paint a Thousand Words

Molly Humphries.

Molly is a digital artist
currently finishing her
third year at York St
John University.



10-11 Lighting the Touchpaper

Lily Whitmarsh.

Lily is part of the
team at Campaign
for National Parks,
supporting its work
to build national
parks that are truly
for everyone.



12-17 Reflections on Malham Residential:

12 Meeting of Minds

Jessica Davison.

Jess is an
ambassador for
Campaign for
National Parks
and a full-time
ecologist based in
Northumberland.



13 Finding Quiet Power at Malham Cove

Lydia German. Lydia
is the Senior Content
and Campaigns
Officer at Lancashire
Wildlife Trust.



14 Our Place in the Landscape

Prerana Balu. Prerana is a Masters
student at Newcastle University.

15 A Growing Movement

Sarah.

Sarah volunteers with
the national park as
often as she can,
and enjoys learning
something new with
each visit.



16-17 Pictures in Poetry

Josh Burge.

Josh has worked
on several nature
reserves and tries his
hand at songwriting
as well as poetry.
He has also found
the Dales area's folk
music scene a great draw.



18-19 From Small Seeds

Saima Bibi. Saima works with
different organisations in outdoor
learning and engagement,
focussing on community groups
and young people.

19 New Lease of Life for Historic Hub

20-21 The Ripple Effect

Anthea Hanson and Willow.
Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust

22 Film Review

Bea Benn

22 Home Thoughts from Outside

Tabby McNicholas

Tabby is an
apprentice media
officer with the
Yorkshire Dales
National Park
Authority.



23 Events

23 Letter to the Editor Say it with Flowers

Joined-Up Thinking for Yorkshire Dales Public Transport

Dales & Bowland CIC has been working with the new York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority and its mayor David Skaith over the last year to strengthen current and future DalesBus services. The mayor is incredibly supportive and is talking to us about how we improve the network, which has this year introduced a new Saturday bus service 80 from Lancaster to Hawes serving Ingleton and Ribbleshead and connecting to the Dales Explorer train from Manchester. We joined the mayor for the inaugural service on Saturday 5 May, travelling on the Dales Explorer and then the new service to Hawes.

Friends of the Dales Chair Jonathan Riley accompanied the mayor for the journeys and said: 'It was very inspiring to see the mayor and his team actively supporting the improvements to integrated public transport here in the Yorkshire Dales. We are excited to be playing a key part in this with the continued growth of our DalesBus network of weekend bus services, jointly funded by York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority, including this new Lancaster-Ribbleshead-Hawes DalesBus service integrating with the Dales Explorer train service. The growing transport network is enabling more people to travel to and within the Yorkshire Dales, opening up opportunities for residents and visitors alike.'

For further information visit www.dalesbus.org.uk



Mayor David Skaith with Dales Explorer

Trip Down Memory Lane

As part of our preparations for our AGM 2025 we are appealing to our more long-standing members to send us their photos and memories of past times with our charity.

Brief recollections, funny or heart-warming anecdotes or inspiring moments and events – we'd love you to share them with us, along with copies of any good quality photos.

Please restrict your written memories to 200 words and we will endeavour to share them with the assembled group at the AGM.

Email photos and memories by 25 August to victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk or post to Friends of the Dales, Canal Wharf, Eshton Road, Gargrave, North Yorkshire BD23 3PN.



In 1991 our current vice president Colin Speakman and his wife Fleur, then Editor of the *Yorkshire Dales Review*, invited EUROPARC Federation Chief Executive Officer Eva Pongratz and EUROPARC UK Chair Theo Burrell to stay with them and have a trip on the Settle-Carlisle Railway. They were joined at Dent Station by the late Richard Harvey, then Chief Officer of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and YDNPA senior staff for a walk along Galloway Gate and down Arten Gill. This helped forge a close relationship between the Yorkshire Dales and EUROPARC, the largest network of European protected areas. The links were continued by the late Wilf Fenten, a Friends of the Dales trustee, who was a UK representative with the federation, and by current Yorkshire Dales National Park Officer David Butterworth, who was for a time Chair of EUROPARC North Atlantic Islands.

Pictured from left to right are our former Chair Ken Willson, Colin and Fleur Speakman, Eva Pongratz and Theo Burrell. If you have a photographic memory you would like to share, please do get in touch (see above for details).

Past-ures New

All good things come to an end and so we must say goodbye to John Cuthbert, who has led our Capturing the Past project for the past three years. Whilst we wish John well in his retirement, we are pleased to confirm that Capturing the Past assistant Leigh Weston will be ensuring that the good work of the Yorkshire Dales Community Archives continues.

www.dalescommunityarchives.org.uk



Sixty Years of the Pennine Way

April marked the 60th anniversary of the official opening of England's first national trail, the Pennine Way, inspired by Tom Stephenson, a British journalist and keen walker (and later secretary of the Ramblers' Association), who wrote an article in 1935 asking for a 'long green trail'.

The 268-mile long-distance walking route running from Edale in Derbyshire to Kirk Yetholm in the Scottish Borders eventually opened in 1965 at a ceremony on Malham Moor.



60th Anniversary of the Pennine Way

Speakers at the 60th anniversary event held at the Dales Countryside Museum included Chair of the Pennine National Trails Partnership Mark Allum, Director of Natural England David Drake, Andrew McCloy from the Youth Hostel Association, Pennine Way author Anita Sethi, Yorkshire Dales singer/songwriter Ben Avison and Chair of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Derek Twine.

Our Chair Jonathan Riley who attended the celebration said: 'It was especially inspiring to be reminded of the roots of the Pennine Way and the role of Tom Stephenson as well as the importance of the campaigns by groups like the Manchester Ramblers to seek access to our dales and moors for the people.'

'At a time when we need to strive for equal opportunity for everyone to access and enjoy our countryside especially in the national parks, whilst learning about the critical place of nature and farming in our lives, it was especially inspiring and moving to hear from Anita Sethi about her journey and her relationship with the Pennine Way. Put simply: "We belong here – and it belongs to us all".'

Better by Bus (and Train)

Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Media Officer Andrew Fagg recently spent a day out with DalesBus volunteers Paul Chattwood and John Carey, journeying into Swaledale from Ribbleshead for a 10-mile walk and talk (about public transport). Long-time DalesBus volunteer and former Chair of Friends of the Dales Dr Chris Wright also made a brief appearance.

Andrew's comprehensive blog highlights that whether you are coming to the national park from the east (Middlesbrough, Darlington, Northallerton), the south (Bradford, Leeds, Manchester), the west (Lancaster) or the north (Penrith, Carlisle), there are convenient, enjoyable and affordable public transport options.

The enthusiasm of Paul and John highlights all the plus points of using public transport – such as the sociability and opportunities to do linear walks from one station or stop to another and avoid having to find (and pay for) places to park. The reduced carbon footprint of bus and train travel goes without saying.

The blog finishes with an open invitation for everyone to give public transport into or around the Dales a try, with a message portal for thoughts and feedback.

Read the whole blog at www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/its-a-social-thing-visit-by-train-and-bus-this-summer/

And remember – the DalesBus new summer timetable is now available at www.dalesbus.org It can also be posted to you in booklet form – please email penny.lowe@friendsofthedales.org.uk or phone 01756 749400 leaving your full name and address.

Help us Meet Future Challenges

Diverse perspectives aren't just beneficial – they're essential for a high-performing board. True diversity – of age, gender, class, ethnicity and culture – helps boards stay informed, responsive and better equipped to reflect the communities they serve. Boards made up of people with varied backgrounds and experiences are more likely to foster meaningful debate and make stronger, more inclusive decisions.

That's why we're reaching out to anyone who loves the Yorkshire Dales and is passionate about securing a sustainable future for it. If that sounds like you, we'd love to hear from you.

Due to planned retirements and some trustees reaching the ends of their terms, we're currently looking for new members. No previous experience is required – we will offer support and mentoring to help you grow into the role. We especially welcome applications from younger people and individuals from the global majority. You don't need to live in the Yorkshire Dales National Park but the role is best suited to those within reasonable travelling distance of our office in Gargrave. Please also pass this invitation on to family members or friends if you think such an opportunity might be of interest to them.

To arrange an informal phone or video call about the role, please contact Executive Director Ann Shadrake at ann.shadrake@friendsofthedales.org.uk



A Breath of Fresh Air

Future Leaders course participants, Malham, April. Photo courtesy of Harriet Gardiner

In an ever-changing world, we must harness the insights and enthusiasm of young people who are passionate about the Yorkshire Dales, writes Chair Jonathan Riley.

In my early twenties, I was highly motivated to support several environmental and political campaigns that were gaining momentum, especially among young people. By the late 1980s, it was becoming increasingly obvious that the planet's health was far from secure – even the environment and nature closer to home here in the UK. At that time, I had a steady job — one that could have lasted a lifetime — a house that would have cost me roughly three times my annual salary, and running an old car was deemed okay and affordable. Public transport was a regular part of my life too and my involvement with the Scouts enabled deep and collective engagement with the outdoors and nature. My generation genuinely believed that our collective push would bring about lasting change in politics, environmental conservation and social equality.

Yet, decades later, I found myself venting frustration with another volunteer at Friends of the Dales — someone my age — about how disappointed we were that little has changed, and we are still fighting many of the same battles, and more.

I'm certainly not giving up, but I recognise that the world has changed more in the last 20 years than in any equivalent period in history. The pace of these changes makes it clear that younger voices must

be central in shaping the future. Though I embrace the digital age, I am, at heart, an analogue person. It's the world I grew up in, but I know that our younger and more diverse generation approach life differently, and not only value environmental protection but actively campaign for inclusion and equality of opportunity.

Young people have long provided fresh perspectives on nature, the environment and our national parks. And yet history tells us that their voices are often overlooked. While experience is invaluable in shaping policies, younger generations bring the energy and innovation necessary to tackle modern challenges. Balancing wisdom with fresh ideas ensures change is rooted in history while inspired by hope.

A visit to a national park can be transformative, sparking a lifelong connection with nature. Yet many young people struggle to experience them due to persistent barriers. If national parks are to thrive over the next 75 years and beyond, young people must be given meaningful ways to engage with and protect these landscapes.

I often hear from local young people who want to remain in the Yorkshire Dales but face very real struggles — lack of affordable housing, limited job opportunities, inadequate transport links and even difficulty accessing essential services like education and nutritious food. Decisions made far from our local communities — such as the closure of the Arla factory in Settle — exacerbate these difficulties. These challenges highlight the urgent need

for policies that reflect lived realities rather than distant assumptions.

The digital age, while offering new opportunities, sometimes distances young people from the countryside, further reinforcing the divide. Additionally, the dominance of outdated attitudes and more affluent groups can make outdoor spaces feel inaccessible to young people and many communities, who should be able to explore freely.

Opening up the Debate

As we stand at the intersection of tradition and progress, the responsibility falls on policymakers, community leaders and campaigners to ensure that national parks serve everyone. The future of the Yorkshire Dales — and indeed all national parks — depends on honest, inclusive dialogue that acknowledges the past while embracing the voices shaping tomorrow.

Moving forward, we must amplify every voice, foster collective action and champion inclusivity, innovation and hope. By weaving together diverse experiences and ambitions, we can ensure our national parks remain vibrant spaces of opportunity and inspiration.

I am proud to serve as Chair of Friends of the Dales, an organisation committed to challenging issues of representation and accessibility. Our successful youth edition of the *Review* in 2020 proved how essential young perspectives are to the future. Since then, we have successfully set up our Creative Campaigners volunteer group of young people, who inspire and challenge at every opportunity.

New Voices

Now we've invited young people to contribute to this special edition — sharing their vision for the Yorkshire Dales and highlighting the challenges as they see them.

I hope this issue reaches an even wider audience and inspires more passionate individuals, of all ages and backgrounds, to champion change and campaign for a more inclusive, dynamic Yorkshire Dales.

Jonathan Riley, Chair

Picturing the Future



Molly analyses her images of the Yorkshire Dales

Postgraduate student Molly Simmons explains how an analysis of people's responses to photographs can help to create a national park that meets many needs.

For the last few years, I've been carrying out PhD research that involves the Yorkshire Dales landscape as my primary case study. My research is broadly interested in how different local stakeholders envision the future of this landscape: what their priorities, hopes and concerns for the future are and the potential for creating shared visions among them.

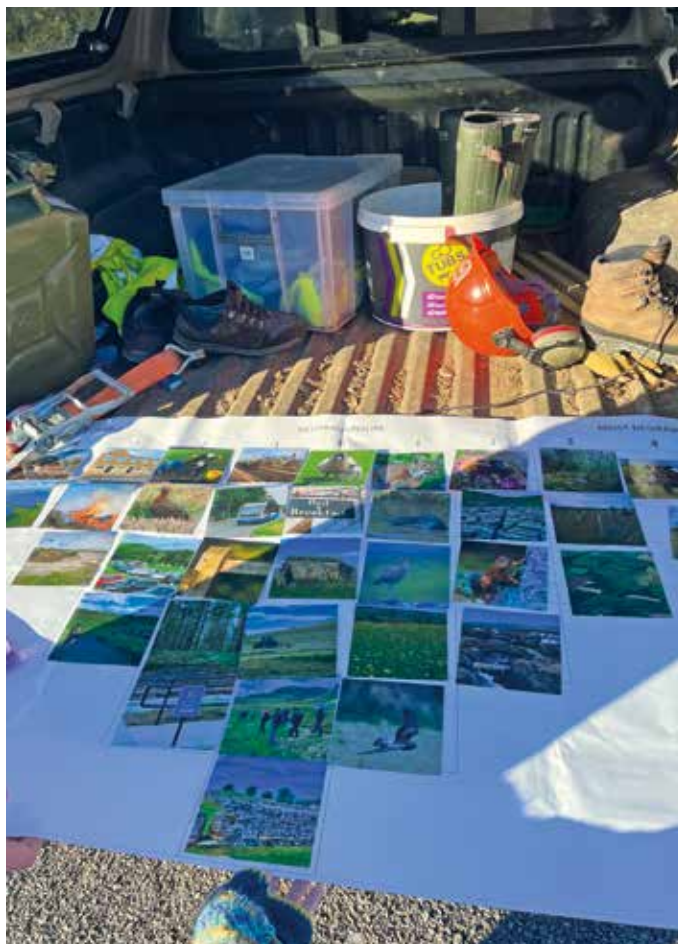
Recently, I was reflecting on where my interest in this landscape comes from. I realised that my trajectory towards researching in the Yorkshire Dales goes back further than the years spent in this role.

This connection seems to span my 26 years and start even earlier. Although I grew up living and going to school in Manchester and Cheshire, I was lucky enough to visit often. My parents spent their

honeymoon in Malham 40 years ago and had a real love for the area, which they passed on to me. About 25 years ago, I walked (or rather was carried up) the Ingleton Waterfalls Trail for the first time with them. At 18, after moving to Leeds for university, the increased ease of accessing the national park meant I could visit more. Since then, I have stayed put in Yorkshire. I recently moved to Shipley to have better access to the Dales, a great benefit to both my work and my spare time.

From an academic point of view, I have always been interested in landscapes and the people in them. It was during my master's degree in sustainability that my personal and academic interests aligned in the Yorkshire Dales. I wrote my dissertation on landowners in the Yorkshire Dales and their motivations for adopting restorative land management practices on their land. When the opportunity for this position to look into the future of the Dales landscape came up, it seemed an ideal continuation.

Before this role, I just knew the area from my own experience, mostly as a recreational visitor. This could give me only so much of an understanding of how the landscape is experienced by people. By carrying out various research methods with participants across the area, I've had the valuable experience of starting to also see the Dales through other people's eyes. Individuals' lived experiences mean they give different meanings to the landscape they live, work and play in. I have felt very lucky to be visiting their places and understanding their visions, aspirations, priorities and worries for the future.



Molly's gear in the back of a utility vehicle



Capturing Multiple Viewpoints

Visual methods have helped me to 'see' through other people's eyes more profoundly. They have been a great way to capture their views and their visions for the future. One method I have used is photovoice. Photovoice is sometimes described as a digital storytelling method, whereby participants create their own data by taking their own photographs, presenting them and picking out relevant themes. The brief in this case was to capture 'things you value' in the landscape.

Another method I have used is Q-methodology. Q-methodology is an image-sorting activity combined with a mini-interview. In this case the photos are all of elements of the Yorkshire Dales landscape that either exist now or could exist in the future under different scenarios. The participant sorts these photos in order of preference, on a grid with a scale going from 'most desirable', or what they most want to see in the future, to 'least desirable', or what they least want to see in the future. They are asked to talk through their placements.

The visual element of these methods helps to try to understand what people see when they look at their landscape and what their associations with it are. The research gives insight into the plural ways people understand the Dales, which make up the tapestry of this landscape beyond just the physical. I think it is a challenge to create shared visions that benefit everyone, but it also brings a great opportunity to understand one another and move forwards together. I hope that my findings are useful and that I do these stories justice when I retell them.

Molly Simmons, PhD student, University of Leeds

Molly's research was funded by The Peter Sowerby Foundation

PICTURES PAINT A

Illustration student Molly Humphries recommends clever use of graphics to raise awareness of the rich biodiversity of freshwater habitats in the Yorkshire Dales.

The general public needs to have a wider understanding of the life in and around rivers that is often taken for granted. Our rivers are home to some fascinating and interesting creatures, from the brown trout to the white-clawed crayfish, and each animal, insect and plant has a key role in keeping its ecosystem thriving.

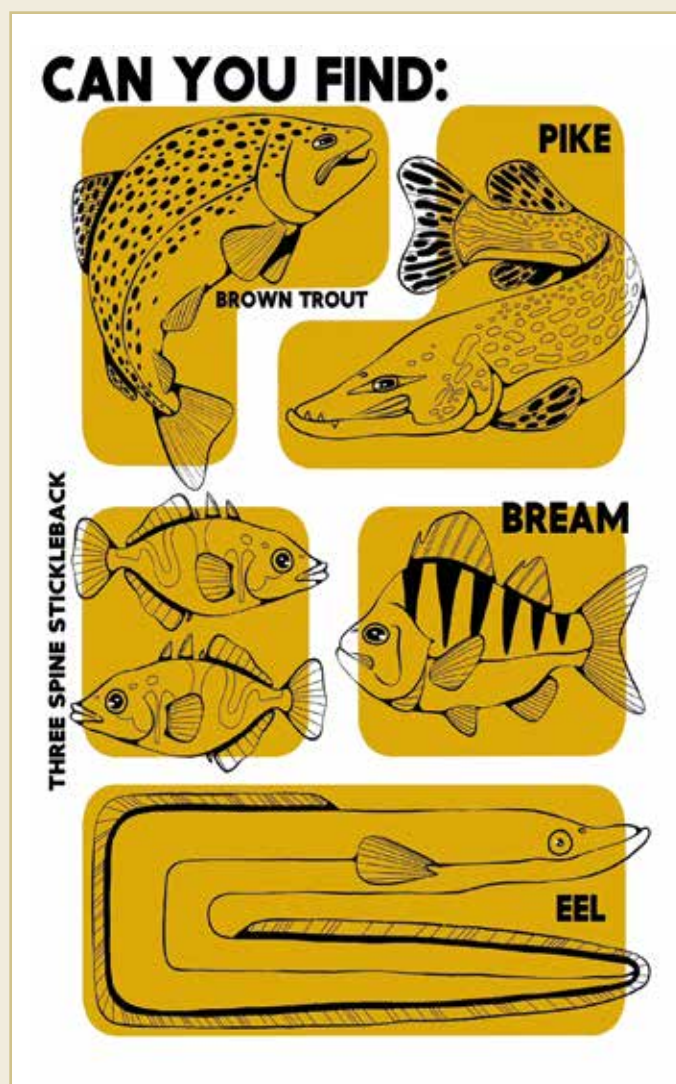
Including information around the Yorkshire Dales trails is a perfect way to tell walkers about ecosystems. However, we need to think more about the creativity of each information board, how we

can encourage more people to interact with the information and how to make them remember it. People retain facts more easily through pictures and illustrations than plain words on a page, so designing interesting information that combines these two ways of communicating will make people interested in wildlife that they would otherwise forget about.

Interactive areas along the trail would also be a great way of teaching people. These could include artworks buried into the trail floor that include games, questions posted around trails that make you think about the river and smaller boards that inform you about which wildlife lives in that specific part of the



Eel illustration



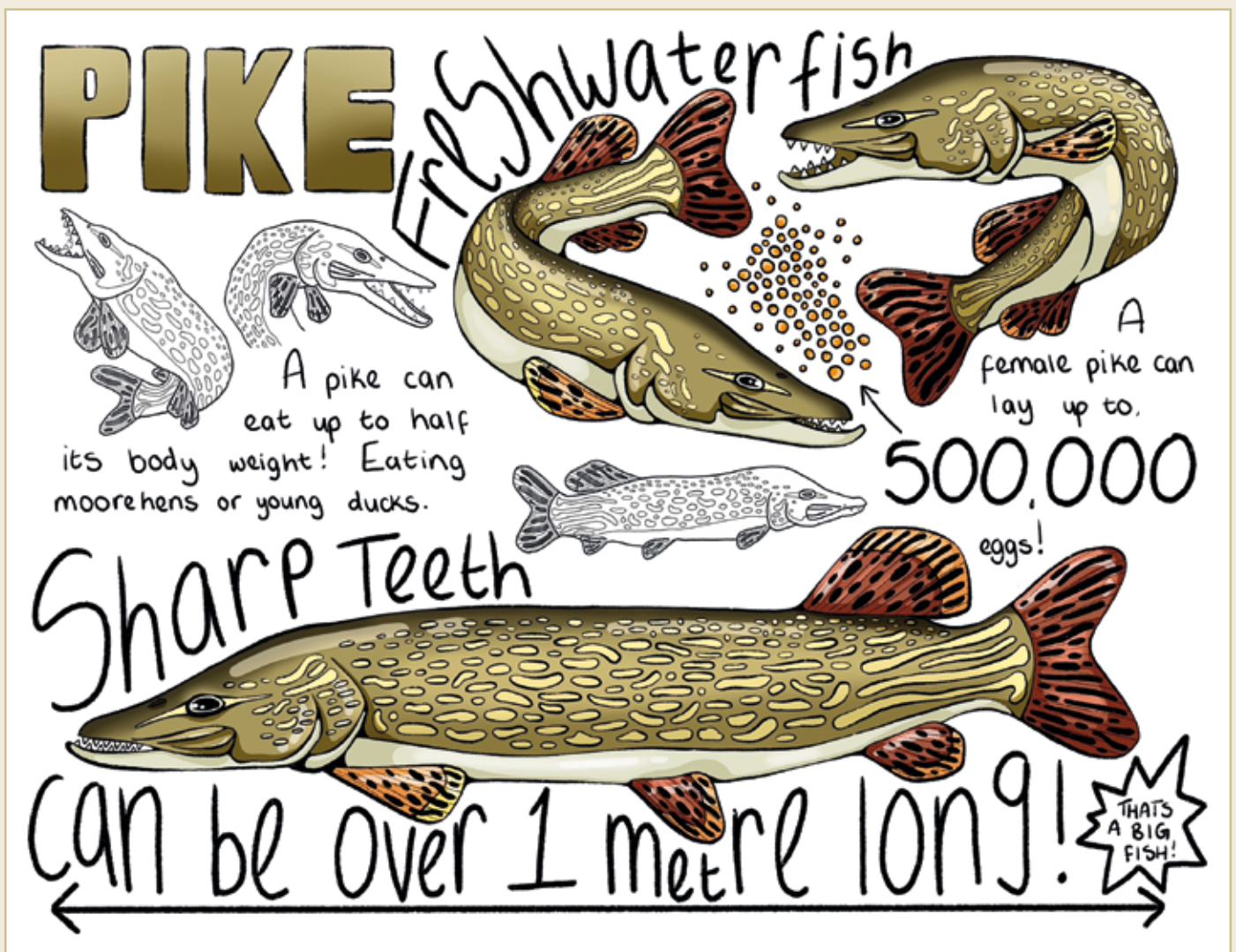
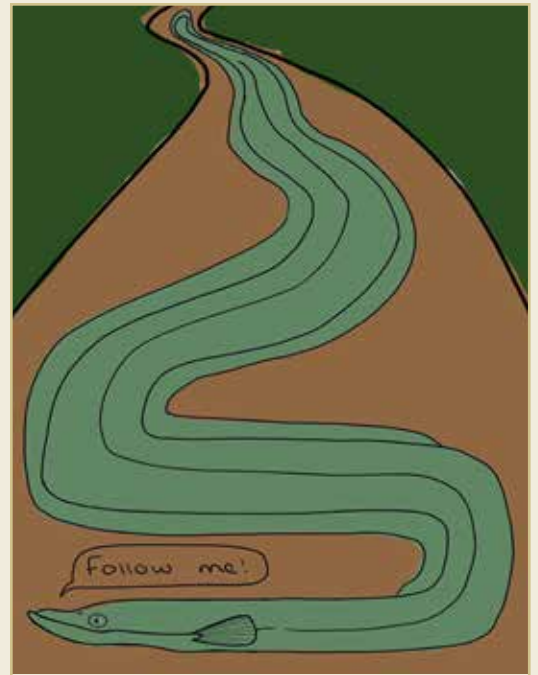
Fish collage

THOUSAND WORDS

river and whether you can see it. As more people come to know and understand the amazing wildlife within and around rivers, they will want to help conservation efforts and the rivers will continue to thrive.

Molly Humphries, Year 3 Illustration student, York St John University

Example footpath



Pike information board

Lighting the Touchpaper



Future Leaders course members make the steep descent from Malham Cove. Photo courtesy of Saskia Luqmani

In April Malham was host to a group of young people on a mission: to fight for the future of our national parks. Event organiser Lily Whitmarsh explains how the residential, which was supported by Friends of the Dales, helped inspire the next generation of change-makers.

Campaign for National Parks Future Leaders courses bring together people aged 20-30 to connect, collaborate and hone their skills in leadership and campaigning. As the organisation's Team & Campaigns Coordinator, I co-organised the residential in Malham alongside our Programme Manager Anna Bedford, supported by the wider CNP team, our expert facilitator Maria Marlow of Animo Leadership and the invaluable Ann Shadrake and Victoria Benn from Friends of the Dales.

I arrived in Malham with a vague knowledge of the Dales, based on hazy childhood memories of daytrips up from my then home in the South Pennines and more recently from reading the *Yorkshire Dales Review* when it's delivered to our office in London. This was immediately transformed by our first session: a walk and talk with Neil Heseltine and Leigh Weston around Hill Top Farm, where we were based for the week.

We heard about their experiences of pioneering nature-friendly farming and learnt about the history, culture and geology of Malham. Their local knowledge mixed with lively discussion amongst the group of course participants, who had travelled from near and far bringing their varied perspectives as campaigners, national park authority staff and budding environmentalists. Neil pointed out the divide between limestone and gritstone at the Craven Fault as I compared notes with

Campaign for National Parks – Future Leaders

one participant who volunteered in the Peak District. Others traded knowledge of landscape management with Neil and Leigh — prompting a small group to spend the remainder of the week enthusiastically planning to return in summer to scythe their hay meadow.

This sharing continued as we kicked off the programme sessions down in Malham Village Hall. Across three days, we heard from a range of speakers who live, farm, work and fight for the Yorkshire Dales every day, alongside expert campaigners and two of our very own participants. Saskia Luqmani, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead at the Protected Landscape Partnership, reminded us of national parks' roots in social justice and Hermione Pocock shared insights from working in youth governance at a European level with EUROPARC* Youth. Each helped shape our understanding of the challenges facing the Yorkshire Dales and the opportunities both within the national park and transferrable from other landscapes.

As a young person myself, the experience supported my understanding of my own leadership values, notably collaboration and radical hope. Facilitating knowledge exchange is important to broaden our

shared ideas of what national parks are, and to expand our ambitions for what they could become. An unexpected highlight for me was seeing this happen through discussions that emerged in the workshop sessions. Together, we learnt about 'leader-fulness' — how we can all embody leadership in our work as a movement for national parks. We heard ideas from every participant for tackling key issues in the Dales and ended the week with a list of book recommendations ranging from nature writing to climate activist memoir.

Making it Real

Another major highlight was being outside and making the most of our location in the national park. Two experiences particularly stood out. First was a contribution from participant Mica, who led us through a guided meditation, encouraging us to connect deeply with our surroundings by focusing on each of the senses in turn. The second was a twilight walk led by Dr Amy-Jane Beer to Janet's Foss. We were invited to celebrate the water bubbling down Gordale Beck as it enjoyed a moment in the sun for its first time in potentially centuries. As it became dark, Amy introduced us to her favourite star. These grounding experiences

brought the programme to life, giving us the chance to connect personally with the landscape we all care about.

At CNP we know that young people are less likely to live, work or be involved in decision-making within national parks. If I didn't know already, this residential proved that it's not for lack of interest or ability. These were young people with the passion to lead national parks into a better future for nature, communities and the planet — and the knowledge to do so.

This was clear in our final pitch session, where participants presented campaign plans for reforming national park governance, modernising their purposes, improving public transport in the Yorkshire Dales and ending Ministry of Defence land ownership on Dartmoor.

Fuelled by inspiration, we wrapped up with one last walk — up and over the top of Malham Cove to bask in the sun. As one participant put it 'to remind us of what we're fighting for'.

Lily Whitmarsh, Team and Campaigns Coordinator, Campaign for National Parks

**network of European protected areas*



Lunch break outside Bunk Barn.
Photo courtesy of Lydia German



Twilight at Janet's Foss.
Photo courtesy of Lydia German

Meeting of Minds

Ecologist Jess Davison draws encouragement from the opportunity to rub shoulders with other young activists and seasoned campaigners in the spectacular Yorkshire Dales countryside.

Nearly three months ago a group of 18 'future leaders' arrived as complete strangers. By the end of the week, we left as friends — connected through shared values, honest conversations and a shared hope for the future of our protected landscapes.

The views in Malham were breathtaking. I had been only once before over eight years previously and had a vivid recollection of the white limestone that dominates the small village. We were welcomed warmly by Neil Heseltine and taken on a tour of his farm, where he spoke about his switch to regenerative farming and the subsequent presence of rich botanical flora on his land. In the midst of this, he let us feed his hens.

We also took a silent sunrise walk to Malham Cove with Ann Shadrake and stargazed over Janet's Foss with Dr Amy-Jane Beer. It was beautiful listening to Amy personify the flow of Gordale Beck — it gave me a new perspective on how to see the natural world.

Throughout the three days we learnt and heard from leaders within the protected landscapes movement, who exemplified the importance of value-based leadership. We spoke openly about social justice and heard the harrowing truths about illegal raptor persecution.

The pinnacle of this course was designing our own campaigns focused on issues prevailing in our national parks. The inspirational campaigner Kate Ashbrook guided us on how to be bold, ambitious and inclusive when designing these.

Key takeaways from our developed campaigns included the fact that the current purposes of our national parks simply don't meet the urgency of the climate and biodiversity crises. We need a bold, future-facing National Parks Act — one that focuses on justice, inclusion and ecological recovery.

And crucially: young people need to be involved in shaping that future — not just as visitors, but as decision-makers. We should be on the boards, in the rooms, helping to guide what comes next.

Jess Davison, ambassador, Campaign for National Parks

The logo for the Campaign for National Parks features a stylized green and yellow wave above the text "CAMPAIGN for NATIONAL PARKS" in a bold, sans-serif font.

Feeding the hens with Neil Heseltine.
Photo courtesy of Saskia Luqmani



Creating a campaign, (Left) Kate Jennings, Head of Site Conservation and Species Policy, RSPB, and (right) Maria Marlow, Co-founder, Animo Leadership.
Photo courtesy of Joely Newell



Photo courtesy
of Lydia German



Finding Quiet Power at Malham Cove

Silence is golden for Lancashire Wildlife Trust Content and Campaigns Officer Lydia German.

I'm not usually a morning person. I can probably count on one hand the number of times I've voluntarily greeted a sunrise. But during our Future Leaders course, something shifted. At 6.30am, just as the light began to soften over the hills, a small group of us set off silently towards Malham Cove. Somehow this quiet, early walk became one of the most powerful experiences of the whole three days.

As it had been declared a silent walk there was no expectation to talk, no need to stick close together, no rush. Just the sound of our boots crunching over stone, the occasional creak of a gate and the first twitters of birdsong.

The stillness was surreal. With the clocks having just gone forward, the light was unusually soft and golden and everything felt paused in time. It was as if the Dales themselves were holding their breath.

What I loved about the intentional silence is that it allowed us to give each other space to take it all in. There were no other visitors around. A few of us paused at the base of the cove, heads tilted to the sky with our binoculars in hand, admiring a peregrine falcon perched atop the limestone cliffs.

According to the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority website, over the last 1.5 million years, Malham was probably covered with huge sheets of ice at least three times. As these glaciers ground their way over the landscape, they plucked rock from the face of the cove and carried it away. Each time the glaciers melted, huge floods of water further eroded the face of the cove.

I reached the very bottom of the cove and placed my hand on it, wondering how many other thousands of people had also touched the same spot and felt the same sort of spiritual connection to humanity. It felt like a moment out of time, a

reminder of exactly what we're all working so hard to protect, and what the world might be like without human interference.

The silent walk was just one small part of a packed, intense and inspiring three days in the Yorkshire Dales. Trying to summarise the entire experience feels impossible. We were surrounded by passionate people, big ideas and a collective drive to make national parks more inclusive, better for nature and better for their people.

But for me, it's that silent walk that has stayed with me most vividly. In a world where everything moves so fast, where even our own activism can feel noisy and overwhelming, there was something incredibly powerful about not speaking. About letting nature do the talking, and simply being with the land, with each other and with ourselves.

Maybe that's what made the Future Leaders course so special. It wasn't just about filling our heads with knowledge: it was about shifting our sense of what's possible. About rooting our work in the land itself and remembering why we care so deeply in the first place.

**Lydia German,
Senior Content and
Campaigns Officer,
Lancashire Wildlife Trust**



The Wildlife Trust for
Lancashire
Manchester &
North Merseyside



Photo courtesy of Lydia German

Soft, golden light at Malham Cove.
Photo courtesy of Joely Newell



Our Place in the Landscape

Student Prerana Balu considers how everyone can truly be part of the Yorkshire Dales.

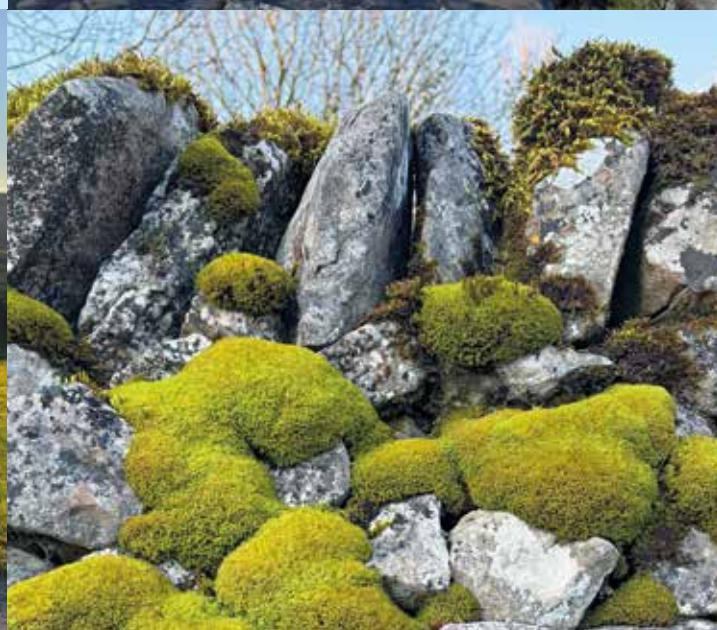
In early April, I was walking across limestone, climbing up Malham Cove and following streams up to Janet's Foss. The scenery was unforgettable, but what shifted something in me wasn't the landscape alone — it was the space to think and the people I shared it with.

We looked at conservation through different lenses — sustainable farming, heritage, community and access — and some of the conversations were particularly relevant in today's political climate, especially those about whom national parks are really for, and whom they continue to exclude. The idea that we are part of nature, not separate from it, kept resurfacing, reflecting my own personal philosophy that if people are part of ecosystems, then restoring landscapes also means addressing inequality, power and belonging. However, the laws that shape these places haven't kept up with that thinking — our final campaign called for a new National Parks Act.

There were moments of quiet creativity too — stargazing in the dark sky reserve — and these felt like quiet reminders that change doesn't always have to be loud to matter. I have come away with the sparks of new stories still in my head, ones that I can't wait to bring to life soon.

I left the Yorkshire Dales thinking differently about leadership, conservation and the stories we choose to tell and even now find myself counting down until I can be back to see the sun rise over Malham Cove.

Prerana Balu, student, Newcastle University



Photos courtesy of Sarah



Photo courtesy of Joely Newell

A Growing Movement

There is strength in numbers for Yorkshire Dales National Park volunteer Sarah.

Surrounded by the tranquillity of the village and the awe-inspiring cove, I found myself not only immersed in a spectacular landscape, but also in thought-provoking workshops and boundlessly inspiring conversations.

The residential offered a valuable mixture of group connection and engaging workshops that perfectly aligned with spring's sense of renewal and motivation. With each session came fresh insights: from the intricacies of planning a campaign to the rich heritage of the Yorkshire Dales and the ways that social justice is deeply entwined in the fight for our national parks. What struck me most was the infectious passion for campaigning shared by leaders, speakers and my fellow attendees. Despite the challenges that our national parks are up against, there was a deep sense of hope for the future.

Over three sun-filled days, it was invigorating to combine new skills and a personal passion for nature into a concept for a campaign pitch – presented as a group to round off our final day in Malham.

The trip was a call to action: a reminder that the future of national parks depends on diverse voices and bold ideas – and I left Malham feeling proud to be part of that growing community.

Sarah, Yorkshire Dales National Park volunteer



Presenting a campaign.
Photo courtesy of Lydia German

Pictures in Poetry



Wind-blown tree on a limestone cliff above Malham Tarn. Photo courtesy of Michael Spencer

Creative Campaigner Josh Burge puts pen to paper to capture the experiences, lessons and camaraderie of the Future Leaders course.

Inspired by each day and Lemn Sissay's verse collection *Let the Light Pour In*, I burned off my remaining energy each night by writing four-line poems (called quatrains) on a top bunk. Each was a snapshot of the day for me and they gave rise to a collection, which I've called Future Leaders. Four of the six poems are published here. See what images and ideas arise when you read them, then read on for a little background on their inspiration.

Josh Burge, Creative Campaigner

Tuesday

***The cliff-top bough bends back
in its prevailing...***

***Social justice forecast:
the winds will be changing.***

Three ideas that stuck with me from Tuesday's workshops were unearned advantage, systemic oppression and social injustice. These were presented using the metaphor of a great tree, whose growth and fruit is leaning in one direction (leading to unearned advantage) and away from another (leading to systemic oppression). Social injustice is created when some people are denied appropriate tools to harvest the tree's fruit and the opportunities to harvest it. In my poem, 'prevailing' refers to the wind, as a metaphor for social norms – or to persistence, because having unearned advantage does not mean life is easy or that it was chosen.

Half gold, half green. Photo courtesy of Kate Ashbrook



Wednesday

*Half gold
half green
– a brow... The rise
lets all be seen.*

*Ink our vision
onto the paper,
cycle it to the one
change-maker!*

Part one

Wednesday began with a sunrise walk to Malham Cove. We agreed to make it a silent walk and so gestures and the passing of notes began. I reflected on the different needs of people on a walk like this – removing the power of speech made me realise my unearned advantage and showed me how different my experience would be if I too were different. As the sun broke over the brow, I noticed that the top of the grassy hill opposite glowed golden while the base was in green shadow. After drafting an idea, I noticed an opportunity to split the syllable count of the lines (four) in half across two lines (half gold//half green). I felt this aligned with the splitting of the hillside in half, top and bottom.

Part two

Wednesday's workshops had us creating campaign ideas – what specific change would we like to see in national parks, and which one person could we contact who is responsible for that decision? We each created a 'vision board', cutting text and images from magazines. 'Ink' and 'paper' led me to an idea of a paper round, and I enjoyed the dual meaning of 'cycle', because campaigns are persistent, cycling back.

Thursday

*Goodbye.
A chapter's leaf is turning
and cannot be fenced in a quatrain.*

*The years went, Lucy...
and Kate,
and Sylvia.
In parting, know that there will be a
space, a green between us,
where a wicketkeeper's late shadow
is a snow angel.*

*What on Earth to do
but keep it open for all, for you?*

I spoke with campaigner Kate Ashbrook¹ during our final activity at Malham, who shared that she didn't want to say goodbye to everyone just yet. I connected so much to this vulnerability. Kate was hugely inspired by her years of campaigning alongside Sylvia Sayer² and, in a wonderful moment of the residential, inspired participant Lucy Ingham to join her in campaigning. I used indentation and line breaks to suggest the passing of the baton through history by campaigners, as they try to bring more social justice into life. I felt this was a fitting end for a course that's all about our Future Leaders.



Photo courtesy of Prue Harrison

¹ General Secretary of Open Spaces Society and former Chair of the Ramblers and Campaign for National Parks (www.campaignerkate.wordpress.com)

² Former Chair of Dartmoor Preservation Association



From Small Seeds



Watching the flowers grow. Photo courtesy of Henry Burrows

Campaign for National Parks volunteer ambassador and Creative Campaigner Saima Bibi asks how we can inspire the next generation to embrace nature.

Confidently exploring nature, connecting to nature, a young person's relationship to nature, understanding the lessons of nature: are these things that can be taught? Can they be learnt in the classroom? What does education about 'nature' mean? And then also: whom and why we are teaching? These are questions we need to ask ourselves, no matter what role we have in society, if we are serious about giving young people tools to engage responsibly and passionately with the natural world.

Working in outdoor learning and engagement with a focus on community groups and young people, these are questions that I reflect on and ponder quite deeply...or maybe it isn't that deep. Being a minority in a majority has certainly had an impact on the work I do professionally, the opportunities I'm offered and able to access, who wants to work with me and for what intent and purposes, which in most cases are certainly to tick a box.

But what's more important is to highlight those who are inclusive, promoting personal growth and encouraging development for those who do not have the same opportunities to access the outdoors on a recreational or professional basis. You don't have

to be employed by the national parks or be a volunteer to pass on lessons from nature and enjoy doing it. An understanding and knowledge of the countryside, how it works and its importance for those living there as well as visiting are certainly needed to be able to talk about it. But you can come from a different walk of life – from an urban area and a minority community – and still be able to do that.

One thing for certain is that nature is inclusive: it is wholly accepting and doesn't see colour, class, socio-economic divides or gender. But sadly some still have more opportunities to explore and engage than others. The only true way to make a difference going forward is to take a step back and look in a positive, wholesome way at creating more opportunities. This goes hand in hand with having uncomfortable conversations in a space where those speaking are heard, understood and acknowledged. Bringing the countryside to urban areas and vice versa but privileging the countryside because it has 'nature' ignores the benefits one brings the other. It is also a mindset that restricts us from understanding diverse communities, histories and knowledge. Moving forward the relationship between urban and rural areas needs to be seen as a two-way street, where both landscapes can be appreciated for what they are.

Rooted in Nature

Why do we get involved in environmental activism: to campaign, protect and preserve the countryside? There is always something quite personal that drives us all. For me it was having a mother who wouldn't leave the windowsill without a potted plant and a grandmother who would know how the slightest change in weather or season would affect the quality of any of the herbs, vegetables and fruits that she planted. My grandmother used language and had a connection with nature that I didn't hear or see until I met and had a conversation with a Dales farmer. Being exposed to my mother's and grandmother's relationships to nature whilst growing up and seeing the contentment they gained had a profound influence on me. They never explained their commitment to nature; you could just see and feel it.

Writing about my involvement with conservation seems like something from an adventure book but outside this 'world' the future is very uncertain for many children I know; they are not as fortunate as those of us who do have access to nature. But through education and Forest Schools we can allow children to be children again. There are also many in urban communities, like my mother and grandmother, who take the time and effort to create the connection with nature themselves: they do not recognise the word 'barrier', they just see opportunities.

The most important aspect of my life that has guided me is the connection that my faith has with the natural landscape; it is so drenched and intertwined on so many levels that its impact is huge. It informed me as I moved from someone who enjoyed the Dales for leisure to volunteering and being professionally involved. Water quality, sustainable and ethical farming, conserving wildlife, finding wellbeing in nature – these were all concepts that I was already familiar with; conservation and teaching have only added another perspective.

Campaigning can come in different ways for different people. There's something we can all do. For myself, I believe one of the best ways to conserve and protect the landscape is through creating opportunities for people to engage, understand and connect in ways that reflect who they are and where they come from as well as recognising the relationship people already have with nature and activism. Most times that relationship is ready to grow more.

Saima Bibi, Creative Campaigner



Herbs on a windowsill.

New Lease of Life for Historic Hub



St Michael's Lodge

Visitors can now stay at the former parish church in a Swaledale village, which has been converted into a six-bedroom hostel whilst retaining original architectural features such as the recently restored stained-glass windows.

In the autumn 2023 issue of the *Review*, Hudswell Community Charity trustee Martin Booth explained how residents were setting about securing the future of the redundant building by converting it into accommodation for walkers and cyclists. After securing almost £900,000 in grant funding, St Michael's Lodge was opened by Channel 5's *The Yorkshire Vet* star Julian Norton in May.

Historic fittings have been repurposed, with the pulpit now serving as the reception desk and the pews used in the construction of the dining table and bunk beds. The income generated from the hostel will be used to maintain the building and keep it accessible and open to the public, whilst it is hoped that visitors will help to support other community-owned businesses in the village such as The George & Dragon pub and Little Shop.

More information at stmichaelslodge.com



St Michael's communal area

Photos © Mark Wilkinson photography

The Ripple Effect

Access to nature can not only change the course of young people's lives – it can have far-reaching effects on their peers too. Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT) Youth and Sustainability Officer Anthea Hanson explains how the charity's Youth Environment Forum is helping to tackle inequalities that make it hard for young people to access and enjoy the Yorkshire Dales and nearby areas of countryside:

'Through working closely with the young people involved with the Youth Environment Forum, YDMT works hard to put their ideas into practice and help them pursue their dreams. The forum is more than just a project, though, it's a supportive family that nurtures young people to meet their potentials while at the same time protecting the future of the place that they love so much.'

From Small Beginnings

Anthea caught up with Willow, one of the most long-standing and dedicated members of the Youth Environment Forum, to find out how YDMT supported a successful funding application to the Yorkshire Dales National Park Sustainability fund, to create, document and showcase a film about **Generation Z*** and its relationship to the natural landscapes, wildlife and people of the Yorkshire Dales.



Willow interviewing YEF member Jude at a tree planting session in Ingleton in February

Anthea: Can you remember how it all began?

Willow: I don't remember much of the first session other than that it was an introduction to the Youth Environment Forum's aims and plans for the year with regards to organising the next summit, and its goal of bringing kids out of the city and into rural areas to help them understand the environment around them. Together with a few others I was invited through the Barnardo's Willow Young Carers project, which ended a few years ago now. Two of us are still involved with the Youth Forum today.

Anthea: What was your motivation for coming?

Willow: At first one of my main motivations was to escape home and the city. I grew up loving being outdoors and with nature, so this was a big opportunity for me to have an outlet where I could enjoy being around the Yorkshire Dales, whilst also spending time with like-minded people. Then, of course, there was the bonus of being able to learn and understand the importance of our environment and share this knowledge with family and friends

Anthea: What encouraged you to keep coming?

Willow: Escape was a big thing I needed when I was younger, and the Youth Environment Forum provided that for me. I went to a couple of other things (I was involved with a children's circus group in Leeds for a long time), but the forum gave me so much. I was very shy initially but having the opportunity to run workshops during the summits, and being surrounded by people I could connect with, really helped with my confidence and I became more comfortable just being myself. It also taught me how crucial it is to be aware of environmental struggles and to take care of the nature around us. This is something high school, despite giving students some talks on the subject, never really took the time to focus on in depth. This is another reason why the Youth Environment Forum is so valuable to those involved.

Anthea: How has the Youth Environment Forum influenced you?

Willow: Despite not going on to study anything environmental, I have been greatly influenced by my involvement with the Youth Environment Forum – mainly creatively, through my passion for photography and film studies. Now going into my third and final year of university, I'm thinking about my creative dissertation question ideas, with a couple of them relating to the environment. Questions such as: 'What can the film industry do to help tackle climate change and its influence on it?' or 'How have films already raised awareness of climate change and what can they do to improve on their impact?' Then I'm hoping to make a short film based on the topic I choose.

I've also been encouraged to raise awareness with friends around me (especially the ones I live with) and we all try to do our bit, even if it's small. The palm oil talks during a few of the summits were among the biggest things that stuck with me, and today I really try to look for products (from peanut butter to shampoo and conditioner) that contain little to no palm oil. It does put a small dent in my student finances but it's all for the greater good.

I'm a great believer that it's better to do something than nothing. Many people could look at how our world is being destroyed every day and lose enthusiasm to do anything about it, believing that their influence won't affect a thing. It's pessimistic and I don't like it, because even if you are determined to do just one small thing to help our planet (whether it's recycling, buying more sustainable products, sharing environmental issues on social media or joining a peaceful protest), the chances are that those close to you may be influenced to do something similar.

Now you've caused a chain reaction, making your small something into a slightly bigger something. You *can* make an impact. I have great hope that our generation has the power to make the changes our planet desperately needs, and YDMT youth engagement projects like Green Futures and the Youth Environment Forum provide the inspiration to help make that happen.

The Youth Environment Forum has indeed been a journey for me. Not only have I learnt a lot about our environment and how precious it is, but I've gained a lot of social skills – especially in my teenage years. The confidence I developed through the forum has helped me when having to pitch ideas in front of groups and/or important people at college and university. I've also grown up with a lot of the people who have been coming for years and seen how much they've grown and changed through being a part of it. I've met some of my favourite people through the Youth Environment Forum and it's always such a familiar and happy environment to come back to when I'm not in Bangor for uni. It's incredible seeing those who have joined now, knowing how much they'll benefit from being a part of such an amazing project.

Willow, talking to Anthea Hanson, Youth and Sustainability Officer, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust

Learn more about YDMT's work with young people at www.ydmt.org/green-futures



Filming after carrying very heavy equipment up the 400 steps to Malham cove

Exploring Climate Change through Films Which are Worth your Time?



With climate change a pressing concern for society, it makes sense that our worries and anxieties are explored and depicted in artistic endeavours, with cinema being a superb medium for this. From futuristic apocalypses to more understated analyses, here are some of the climate change films worth exploring:

While visionary apocalyptic films are occasionally outlandish and exaggerated, offering extreme examples of a future world burdened by the effects of climatic disaster, sometimes extreme depictions are the best way of provoking discussion. *Don't Look Up* offers a satirical view of how politics could interact with the threat of a global catastrophe but it arguably falls short, with characters that feel no more fleshed out than caricatures and childish humour.

Alternatively, Bong Joon Ho's *Snowpiercer* is perhaps a more effective vision of the future, depicting the remaining few people from the human race existing on a train due to the extreme climate conditions outside. While themes of environmentalism are integral here, Bong Joon Ho links them to how they would affect people economically and socially, with class being much of the film's focus, as

the lower classes are pushed to the back of the train while the upper classes enjoy the luxury of swimming pools and education.

Alongside these science fiction epics, there are plenty of films for those seeking something more restrained and emotionally charged. Paul Schrader – best known for writing Martin Scorsese's beloved *Taxi Driver* – wowed audiences and critics with his 2017 drama *First Reformed*. Despite the film not primarily focusing on climate change, with religion and grief also playing important roles, the existential threat of it and the future of the natural world is touched on as a father debates the morality of bringing a child into our world. Instead of being presented with the potential effects of a climate crisis, Schrader turns the discussion towards contemporary and personal concerns.

Documentary filmmaking is primarily where audiences might seek informative views on the subject, from David Attenborough's *A Life on Our Planet* to *Before the Flood*. As one of 10 BFI Film Academy Young Programmers, I previewed submissions to the BFI Future Film Festival and was fortunate enough to watch hundreds of short films made by talented young filmmakers. At the festival, one of the stand-out environmental films was the documentary *How the World is Going to End* directed by Vladislav Motorichev. Interviewing various people across the UK, the film delivers exactly what the title teases, with people providing their personal views on the potential cause of the end of our world. Of course, environmental concerns and climate change are not ignored, and are addressed by many of the interviewees. The film is not available to view online currently but it is certainly worth seeking out at future film festivals.

Bea Benn, Year 13 Skipton Girls' High School

Home Thoughts from Outside

We will all be worse off if young people cannot afford to live in our national parks, writes apprentice media officer Tabby McNicholas.

What do I need for a better future in the Dales? Money, and lots of it.

As an apprentice for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, I work in one of the most beautiful places in the country. The peace and tranquillity of this landscape is hard to find elsewhere but, at the end of my working day, I have to leave.

The reality is that the Yorkshire Dales are off limits to most young people. A lack of affordable housing means you need a high income to live here and, even then, rising prices make home ownership feel out of reach. It feels as if the only way to achieve it is by striking gold.

If people like me can afford to move here only when we're retired, what happens to the communities in the meantime? Who will keep the schools open and local businesses running?

A national park is more than scenery – it's about people. Without affordable homes, the next generation of farmers, teachers, shopkeepers, doctors and rangers won't be here to keep these communities alive. The Yorkshire Dales are at risk of becoming a seasonal playground of second homes and holiday lets instead of a living, working landscape.

We need more homes for ordinary people — otherwise those of us working here will keep commuting in, adding to carbon emissions rather than being part of the communities we care for. And as young people continue to leave, the spirit and culture of the Dales are at risk of disappearing.

Tabby McNicholas, Apprentice Media Officer, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority



Walk: Accessible Walk Around Aysgarth Falls

Thursday, 17 July

10:00am – 2:00pm

Jonathan Smith of Where2Walk and Yorkshire Dales disability access charity Access the Dales will lead a four-mile circular walk exploring a short stretch of the River Ure and its waterfalls. **This leisurely paced, stile-free route is suitable for most electric wheelchairs as well as for those who want to walk over less arduous terrain with time to chat and socialise.**

The Access the Dales hub at the national park centre can loan two all-terrain Trampler wheelchairs for those requiring assistance. (A brief tutorial on how to use them will be provided.)

The meeting point for this walk is also accessible by DalesBus 156 service, which runs between Gayle and Leyburn.

For more details or to book your place/s (and Trampler if required) visit www.friendsofthedales.org.uk/events

AGM 2025: Looking Back and Looking Forwards

Saturday, 27 September

We are delighted to give advance notice of this year's AGM, which will be held on Saturday, 27 September at Bolton Abbey Village Hall.

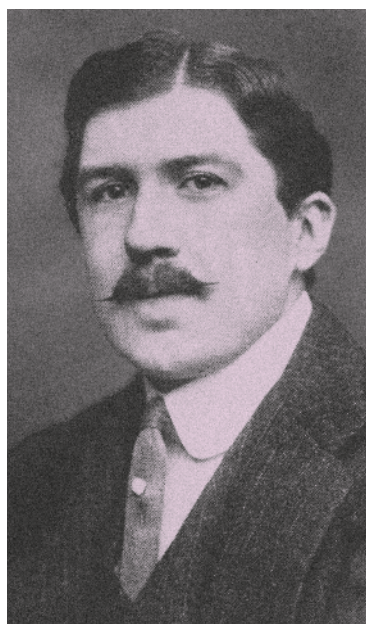
We will be offering a short business meeting with an opportunity for questions, followed by a celebratory reflection on the charity's achievements over the last 45 years. A slightly extended break (including a complimentary light lunch – donations welcome) will allow you to independently explore the village, abbey and views. In the afternoon we will be inviting a selection of inspiring speakers to share their thoughts and insights about the future.

You will receive full details by post during August including guidance for registering your attendance, giving apologies or casting your vote by proxy.

Letter to the Editor



Say it with Flowers



Reginald Farrer

Jane Smart's delightful article *An Eye for a Primrose* (spring 2025 *Review*) exploring the beauty and, indeed, significance of the bird's-eye primrose is a reminder of exactly why this small wildflower was selected by the Yorkshire Dales Society, now Friends of the Dales, as our very distinctive logo in 1982. It was inspired by the words of Reginald Farrer (1880-1920), the great Edwardian explorer, botanist and plant collector, but also early conservationist, who was born in Clapham in the Yorkshire Dales. In his highly influential book *My Rock Garden* published in 1907, Farrer describes how *Primula farinosa*, whilst rare throughout England, flourishes in the Yorkshire Dales with its 'centre of distribution in the mountain-masses of Ingleborough'.

It seemed to us then that this delicate species of wild primrose, which thrives in the high limestone pastures of the Yorkshire Dales like nowhere else in England, represented qualities that our young organisation should try to emulate.

On a walk this spring, up on the high pastures of Sulber, and even along the intensively tramped Three Peaks Walk from Ingleborough summit along Sulber Nick, we passed one of the finest displays of bird's-eye primrose I have ever seen. It was a reminder that, even in these dark days of man-made climate change and biodiversity loss, in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales there are indeed vigorous signs of hope and proof that, if given a chance, nature can and will recover. What better symbol of what Friends of the Dales is fundamentally about?

Colin Speakman, vice president



Birds-eye primrose.
Photo courtesy of Cayla Tinney

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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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When you've read and enjoyed this magazine please pass it on with our regards.