

UNDERSTANDING, ENJOYING

This is our National Park. It's a very special place. The National Park Authority aims to help everyone - local people and visitors alike - to understand the value of the area so that they can enjoy it without destroying it. There are many ways in which the Authority achieves this, by providing for example:

- website at www.yorkshiredales.org.uk
- education activities for groups and events for the public;
- information boards and leaflets;
- free annual newspapers for visitors and local residents;
- National Park and Tourist Information Centres;
- the Dales Countryside Museum (Hawes).

..... AND CONSERVING

The Authority works with a huge range of people and organisations to achieve many aims, which it could not achieve on its own. All of this work is about making sure that the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales are well looked after and will be here for everyone to enjoy in the future. The work of the National Park Authority includes:

- influencing the way land is used;
- regulating new building;
- looking after special habitats and species;
- ensuring heritage features are maintained;
- keeping footpaths in good repair.
- promoting the Countryside Code

The National Park needs all of us working together to help to keep the area special.

Created for the nation and held in trust for the benefit of the nation, the Yorkshire Dales National Park is our national treasure.



'Field Study on Malham Cove' (Roger Henson, YDNPA)



'Pen-y-ghent Summit' (YDNPA)



School group enjoying Wharfedale. (YDNPA)

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Education File

Information for students and
group leaders



YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

Yorkshire Dales National Park

our national treasure

BY THE NATION, FOR THE NATION ...

The 14 most beautiful areas of countryside in England, Wales and Scotland have been chosen as National Parks. These areas receive special care, each one is managed by a National Park Authority, which helps people to enjoy National Parks now, in ways which look after them for the future.

A National Park Authority has 2 main duties:

- to conserve natural beauty, wildlife and historic features;
- to help people to understand and enjoy the special qualities of the area.

The first National Parks were set up in the USA over a century ago, to protect wilderness areas. There is no real wilderness in the Yorkshire Dales, most of the land here is farmed and it is very much a working landscape. Almost all of the land in the Park is owned privately and about 20,000 people live in it.

NATURAL BEAUTY

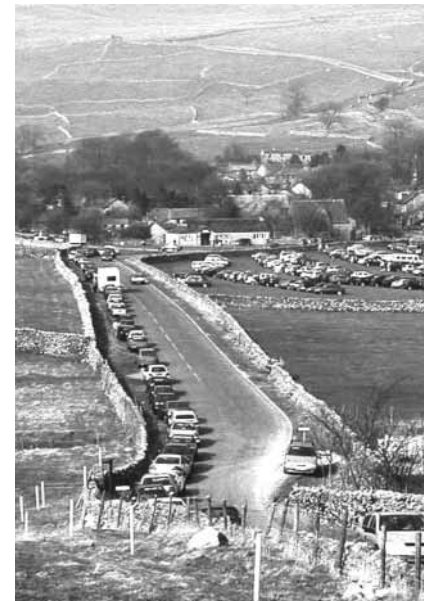
The Dales landscape of today began its life under the sea. The compact cobbles and grits of the Sedbergh area are between 400 and 500 million years old. The rocks which make up the rest of the Dales are between 350 and 280 million years old:

- limestone – made from the shells of sea creatures;
- shale and slate – made from mud;
- gritstones and sandstones – made from sandy sea bed deposits.

These rocks have been shaped by the weather along with water and ice since they were last lifted above sea level, about 65 million years ago.

The dales themselves began as winding river valleys and were later shaped by glaciers. During the last half a million years, 3 Ice Ages have covered the Dales, the last one ended about 13,000 years ago. Moving ice created many of the limestone scars (cliffs), some of them high on the dale sides. Water from melting ice helped to shape some of the spectacular gorges, dry valleys and caves of the limestone areas.

Natural cracks in limestone have been dissolved and enlarged to make limestone pavement. About half of all of the limestone pavement in Britain is in the Yorkshire Dales. Gritstones and shales have weathered to create their own very distinctive scenery.



The National Parks of England, Wales and Scotland



Barn near Thwaite (David Tarn)

WILDLIFE

The wildlife of today is very different to that which lived here in the tundra landscape following the Ice Ages. By about 8,000 years ago nine tenths of the Dales were covered by native trees, compared with about 1% today. The trees



Otter. (L. Ramsay, Yorkshire Otters Project)

HERITAGE

People are thought to have lived in the Dales for about 11,000 years. A succession of settlers and invaders from Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age peoples, through to Romans, Britons, Angles, Saxons, Vikings and Normans have all lived here. They have all left their marks in the landscape, marks which tell us lots about how they lived.



Hoffmann Kiln and a disused limestone quarry, Langcliffe. (YDNPA)

were cleared for domestic timber and fuel, and spaces to farm animals and grow crops. Much of the Park is now covered by heather moorland and grassland. The area is very important for the special habitats present and the distinctive plants in them.

The Dales are home to many wild animals some of which are threatened or rare. The red squirrel still lives in some Cumbrian woods. Dunlin and golden plover, along with birds of prey like merlin and hen harrier, breed on the heather moorlands. Rough grasslands are the nesting grounds of once common waders like lapwing, curlew and snipe. Hopes are high

During the 19th century lead mining was an important industry, especially in Swaledale and around Grassington Moor. Local quarries have been worked for building stone and roof slates throughout the Dales. Limestone has been quarried for centuries, originally to make lime to improve the soil and lime mortar for building.



Lapwing. (RSPB)

that the otter will establish itself in the Dales rivers again. Native crayfish are under threat from signal crayfish brought in accidentally from North America.



Ancient field systems, Wharfedale. (YDNPA)

Centuries of farming have left their mark on almost every aspect of the Dales: miles of dry stone walls, thousands of field barns, hay meadows and high pastures. Many paths and tracks began as drovers roads, or routes linking monasteries to their estates. Most villages in the area began as farming communities and many local customs and festivals have their origins in agriculture. Traditional stone buildings are a striking feature of many villages.

LIVING LANDSCAPE



Hay time. (YDNPA)

Most of the land in the Dales is farmland and very much a working landscape. The high fells are grazed by sheep, with grouse on the heather moors, while the valley

RECREATION

Most people come to the Dales to enjoy the scenery and the open spaces. Sight seeing by car and on foot, along with eating out, are the things visitors like doing most. Walking is the most common activity. Cycling, climbing and caving are all popular, while off-road motor bikes and 4-wheel drive vehicles are increasing.

Popularity can mean problems for the environment, for example: badly worn paths; over crowding; traffic congestion; disturbance to local people, farmers and wildlife. Other problems are more difficult



Footpath under pressure. (YDNPA)

floor meadows are managed for hay and the pastures grazed by dairy and beef cattle.

Quarrying still provides jobs for local people, providing stone to make roads and buildings outside



Dales sheep. (YDNPA)

to spot: more houses taken for visitors leave fewer houses for local people, which increases house prices and pressure to use land for building. The popularity of the area runs the risk of destroying both the beauty and peacefulness, which make it so special.

On the other hand tourism brings money and jobs to the area and

of the area. Tourism is by far the fastest growing industry in the National Park. 8.3 million visitor days were spent in the area in 1994 compared to 6.1 million visitor days in 1991.

local people benefit from more and better services and facilities provided for everyone. The tourism industry employs more than a thousand people in full-time jobs and many more in part-time work in cafes, shops, hotels and the growing number of tourist attractions. It is difficult to see how the local economy would survive without tourism.



Traffic congestion in Malham. (Roger Henson, YDNPA)